

DRAMATISING REALITY

The production and reception of the  
television drama-documentary DUFFY

PhD - 1981

By

TONY FLOWER

U.C.L.



**BEST COPY**

**AVAILABLE**

TEXT IN ORIGINAL IS  
CLOSE TO THE EDGE OF  
THE PAGE



**PAGE  
NUMBERS  
CUT OFF  
IN  
ORIGINAL**

**PAGE**  
**NUMBERING**  
**AS ORIGINAL**

To

**F.R.E.F.**

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who lent support during the writing of this thesis. I am particularly indebted to Professor James E. Halloran and my colleagues at the Centre for Mass Communication Research, especially Robin McCron, Graham Hurdock, Peter Golding and Philip Elliott. I am also grateful to Jean Goddard, Bridgid Travers, Margaret Crawford, Elaine Armstrong and Enid Nightingale for completing the onerous task of typing the final version.

Special thanks must go to everyone who was involved in the making of DUMMY. In particular, I would like to thank the Producer/Director, Franc Roddan, without whose patience and sensitivity this thesis could never have been written. In addition, I must express my gratitude to Charles Denton, ATV's Programme Controller, and to Hugh Whitmore, the programme's writer.

The whole crew and cast of DUMMY deserve to be mentioned too. Many of these people gave up a lot of their time to talk to me during the hectic period of the shoot and I would like to thank them all:

Crew: Simon Hinkley, June Breakell, Mike Nunn, Chris Menges, Jimmy Dibling, Tony Nicholls, Christian Mangler, Albert Bailey, Ted Pearle, Bruce Chandler, Len Ford, Tony Grestorex, Anne Hollowood, Graham Binnmore, Ruth Warren, Michael Eve, Fred Hole, Mary Louthgate, Brenda Yewell, Joe Jones, Johnny Oliver, Ron Cannon, Karen Mellor, Peter Rann and Joan Brown.

Cast: Geraldine James, Patricia Marks, Liz McKenzie, Michael Graves, Linda Brown, Mark Trewary, Paul Richards, Fred Caunt, Diana Handley, Keith Buckley, Linda Beckett, Michael Holt, Robin Hooper, Michael O'Hagan, Derek Anders, Oscar James, Sean Glen, Max Smith, Al Conway, Hope Johnstone, Alan Richards, Joan Peters, Peter Wallace, John Junior, Mike Perry, Geoff Noble, Coogie Sykes, Abigail Flint, Maureen Callaghan, Joanne Lacey, Bernard Atha, Tom Harrison, Malcolm Reid, Karen Lury, Noel Cameron, Kelwyn Harrison, Jason Ward, Fenella Stone, Michael Myers, Peter Russell, Carol Dunroo, Rosa Roberts, Bert Oxley, Dicky Arnold, Jossey Lane, Donald Nithsdale, Ken Hastwell, David Law, Susan Reeves, Danny Swift, John Breslin, Antony Gibson, Stewart Teale, Simon Clark, Alex Robinson, Chris Robinson, Nigel Clough, David Ferring, Billy Raymond, Laurie Crooks, Handy Hayler and Janet Burden.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank 'Candra' - wherever she may be.



## ABSTRACT

### DRAMATISING REALITY

The production and reception of the  
television drama-documentary DUMMY

by

TONY FLOWER

The thesis stems from a programme of research which was carried out at the Centre for Mass Communication Research, Leicester University, after which a number of key problems in the field of 'understanding television' were framed at a colloquium in Copenhagen towards the end of 1976. This study takes up many of the recommendations of that meeting in documenting the entire process of making a major television programme from the formation of an original 'programme idea' through scriptwriting, casting, shooting and editing to transmission. As an exercise in Participant Observation it records in detail the operation of a range of structural constraints and their effects upon the film and its production personnel, as well as recording and comparing a producer's original intentions and their adaption or retention within a process of production. In focussing upon a drama-documentary the thesis also examines the concept of realism and its construction within a film. It posits realism, not as a means of copying reality, but as the result of a culturally constructed symbolic activity in which both the producer and his audience participate. The thesis therefore adopts an holistic approach where 'production' is the sum of all the different moments of production and reception within a communicative process as a whole. It consequently includes a study of a sample audience and individual's reactions to the programme. The study is critical of semiotic analysis in so far as it divorces an examination of a message and its reception from its source, and it concludes that a continuous programme of investigative documentation at ground-level must be necessarily complementary to other studies of television as a medium.

## CONTENTS

### Section One

Page

Introduction: questions and context

1

The research literature

56

### Section Two

A case study of the making of a television drama-documentary 90

1.	Introduction: The emergence of a programme idea	91
2.	The subjective framework	93
3.	Developing a programme idea	103
4.	Starting work on the programme	115
5.	Working on the script	118
6.	The content of the script	128
7.	Gaining blanket approval	134
8.	Recruiting personnel	137
	a. The core unit	138
	b. Extending the production unit	143
	c. Freelance and staff	145
9.	Casting the actors and actresses	154
	a. Casting 'Sandra'	156
	b. Casting the smaller roles	161
	c. A casting session	166
10.	Preparing for the shoot	
	a. Locations	176
	b. Working out the schedule	193
	c. Camera preparations	199
	d. Sound preparations	208
	e. Wardrobe preparations	215
	f. Make-up preparations	222
	g. Special Effects preparations	231
	h. Action vehicles	235
	i. Lighting preparations	238
	j. Actors' preparations	250
	k. Law and orders	267
11.	Shooting the film	
	a. Introduction	289
	b. Five weeks in Bradford	
	(i) Day one: The production meeting	299
	(ii) Days two - thirty-three	307
12.	The Editing	
	a. Introduction	536
	b. Breaking down the material	540
	c. Cutting the material together	550
	d. In the cutting room	556
	e. Re-sequencing part three	567
	f. Final Stages	582



## Section Two (contd)

Page

13. Titles	586
14. Dubbing	
a. Introduction	589
b. Dubbing the dialogue	591
c. Dubbing the effects	599
d. The final mix	601
15. Publicity plans and the run-up to transmission	606

## Section Three

### A selective analysis of the film

1. Introduction	615
2. The raw material	617
3. Means of signification	622
a. Specific codes	626
b. General codes	630
4. The Text	632
a. Manifest content	635
b. Preferred reading	645

## Section Four

### An audience study

1. Introduction	662
2. A creative audience	665
3. What an audience did with DUMMY	677
a. Methodology	681
b. Questions and findings	
(i) General reactions to the programme	685
(ii) General understandings of the programme	692
(iii) Specific understandings of the main character	710
(iv) Specific understandings of the narrative	714
(v) 'Professional' understanding of the programme	727

## Section Five

Conclusion	745
------------	-----

## Section Six

Appendices	787
------------	-----

## Section Seven

Bibliography	803
--------------	-----

## **SECTION ONE**

**An introduction to the thesis**



## Introductory

Isaiah Berlin once identified the popular belief that it is the philosopher's job to answer humanity's three enduring questions - 'Where do we come from?', 'What are we doing?' and 'Where are we going?'. Fortunately, it has not been my task to answer these questions in any universal sense, but the following inquiry has attempted to apply a similar set of questions to one of humanity's products, namely a single television programme.

I have therefore set out to examine the circumstances of such a programme's genesis, its development within particular processes and structures and the intentions which were investigated within it. Since the principal intention involved was that the programme should convey a particular range of meaning, I have then found it necessary to use a similar approach in a study of the way in which the programme was understood by an audience. In a study of both production and reception I have therefore set out to discover what people actually do in constructing and reconstructing a given programme by trying to penetrate the frames of meaning which were employed at either end of the process. In seeking to do this, it then becomes necessary to explicate some of the frameworks which I have employed. To do so, and to answer Berlin's three questions as they apply to the following study, is the main purpose of this introductory section.

### The background to the research: first sources

The immediate answer to the first question can be traced through a number of papers produced by the Centre for Mass Communication Research

under the rubric 'Understanding Television'.<sup>1</sup> Under the auspices of the Council of Europe two colloquies had been held - one in Lausanne in 1972, and the other in Leicester in 1973 - these having been arranged in order to look at the problems associated with 'The critical reading of television language'.

While the two meetings shared a number of perspectives, the Lausanne discussion tended to emphasise a technical approach; asking questions like 'How can those who watch television get the message?' The Leicester colloquy then saw a shift of emphasis towards a more holistically critical perspective. Here the role of research was not necessarily seen as making systems more efficient, but rather as calling entire systems into question.

Following the Leicester meeting, a research project was therefore planned and carried out with the co-operation of ATV Network Ltd to examine the ways in which a given television programme had actually been understood by people in three different countries. The central question had consequently been shifted away from that of the efficient transference of meaning towards questions like 'What do we mean if we say a message has been understood?'<sup>2</sup>

The results of this research were duly presented at a third colloquium held in Copenhagen in the autumn of 1976. Various broadcasters as well as

---

1. See Halloran, J.D. (1973), Understanding Television: some comments on the role of mass communication research (CMCR).  
 Halloran, J.D. et al. (1976), Understanding Television: an exploratory study in three countries (CMCR).  
 Halloran, J.D. (1977), Understanding Television: relevance for cultural policies (Council of Europe final paper CCC/DD(77)56).  
 Halloran, J.D. (1977) Understanding Television research and broadcaster co-operation (Council of Europe).

2. Halloran, J.D. et al. (1976: 4).



academic researchers had necessarily been involved in the project, and representatives of both groups also came along to the Copenhagen meeting. The report mentioned several clashes of ideas, but it also referred to a welcome and mutual airing of both broadcasters' and researchers' difficulties, aims and resources.

One particular difficulty experienced by researchers which surfaced during the course of discussions was that of acquiring access to individual television productions. There are indeed innumerable difficulties in gaining such access, although by no means all of the obstacles are set up by the broadcasters.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, there does exist the primary difficulty of trying to study the making of programmes which have already been made before the researcher hears about them. At the meeting Michael Gurevitch made special reference to the problems of doing 'post hoc' research - the type of research which had been the *modus operandi* of the study in question - and he went on to specifically argue the case for studying production in situ. This would mean monitoring a production from the very conception of a programme idea right through to the programme's transmission, and Gurevitch felt that the actual inclusion of a researcher as part of a production team would prove invaluable in gaining a better understanding of the processes involved.

This suggestion did not fall upon stony ground. The producer of the programme which had been the subject of the Copenhagen colloquy was about to take up the post of Controller of Programmes at ATV, and was therefore in a position to act upon the idea. This he did - and very

---

3. See Halloran, J.D. and Gurevitch, M. (1970), Broadcaster/Researcher co-operation in mass communications research (CMCR).

quickly. Within a month he came up with the kind of offer which is difficult to refuse. ATV was about to produce a major drama-documentary; a true story about a young deaf girl from Bradford and her somewhat Dostoyevskian decline through prostitution to being jailed for manslaughter. The programme was at that time fairly well advanced as a working idea, but none of the production personnel or the actors had yet been hired with the exception of the writer, and his script was still in only a very tentative form. In fact, the only other person involved at this time was the man who had brought the programme idea to ATV in the first place. As the programme's producer this man had also given it a provisional title - DUMMY.

The suggestion was that the Leicester Centre could attach a researcher to the production at this very early stage in its development, and he or she would then be able to stay with it until transmission - more or less in fulfilment of Gurevitch's original plea. ATV could no doubt gain some small capital from such co-operation, but the offer was genuine enough and dependent only upon securing the producer's approval. There was, of course, one other factor to consider at this point, and that was finding a researcher who would be able to stay with the production for what was to be nearly a year.

#### The background to the research: general orientations

Having found myself in the right place at the right time, I am bound to qualify that 'right'. Why should anyone want to study the making of just one television programme, and what interests should be declared or objectives cited? The answer to that is as many as one would hope to draw from the subject.

From my point of view the possibility of being able to study a production



throughout its passage from almost the first glimmering of the programme idea was as essential as it was fortunate. Such opportunities are in any case thin on the ground, but the chance to study the making of this particular kind of programme is very rare indeed. In point of fact this would be the only full-length study of such a programme in which the circumstances surrounding the reification of a producer's intentions could be monitored as they occurred, instead of being deduced after the fact. The opportunity of making a contribution to our knowledge of cultural production had therefore clearly presented itself.

There were, however, other reasons for advocating this kind of research. In order to seek an explanation of motive, and an answer to the first of Berlin's 'universal questions' as applied to this study, it is necessary to dig a little more deeply.

Television production is of interest to sociologists purely as a social process or the site of social activity. Although the director, Michael Winner, has defined a good production team as one in which everyone does precisely what he tells them, the activity of film or television production cannot be reduced to that of a single individual in the way that the process of writing a novel can. With the exception of people like certain animators, who may personally plan, draw, photograph and edit an entire film, the television producer is almost never a creator in the Romantic sense of the term. He or she is also a member of an organisation and a profession. The producer and his or her team may then evolve segmented commitments to themselves, the product, their professions or the organisation, and this may result in either agreement or conflict at any stage. Any particular process of production is therefore fair game for someone interested in action which is being carried out

within given roles, institutions or organisations in the same way that people working in a factory, or deaf people living in a working-class area of Bradford, are interesting.

Television production can nevertheless be a special source of interest because it is a means through which a producer hopes to communicate with others, and a lot of others at that. A television programme does not have to communicate anything except perhaps to its makers. Producers may ultimately be speaking to themselves, but at least part of their intention is to produce a product which will appear to speak for itself to an audience. While working within the contextual orientations of institutions and organisations, a television producer can then be said to operate within the additional context of his or her orientations towards an audience. The interest in this particular kind of production is therefore extended beyond that of studying the overt social activity on a shop floor towards that of studying the implicit social theory invested in the product itself.

For the mass communications researcher the possibility that both this theory and the practice of production will have consequences for the product is then coupled with the idea that the product's means of distribution sets it uniquely apart from all other media. The result is an additional interest in the relationship between the production and the reception of the product; an interest which is shared by practitioners:

Television is by far and away the most important of the mass media because of the way it is distributed and therefore because of the way it is received. People can see it with all their defences down. They don't pay money or dress up. There it is. The way that 'there it is' seems to offer opportunities to the writer that have not been technologically or culturally possible before. What I write is on television or nowhere. Although my evangelical ideas have been buffeted a bit, television



still seems to be the arena for a writer to address his fellow citizens.

(Dennis Potter, talking on IWT's THE LEFT BANK SHOW, 11.2.78)

The interest is centred upon the potential power of the relationship. If people do indeed watch television with all their defences down, then the position from which a playwright like Potter, or any other practitioner, addresses his fellow citizens is likely to be very powerful. Both his evangelical ideas and the means of their distribution are therefore subject to exposure and criticism by sociologists if for no other reason than that they are usually members of that section of society who are not broadcasters. However, the sociologist's legitimate concern is not the ideas themselves, but their resonances and suggestions. If Potter really was asserting that people watch his plays with no defences raised, he would be begging the question. In theory, a television programme may speak directly to an audience, but in practice it may simply set off resonances or suggestions within that audience through a process of induction rather than direct contact. Alternatively, it may not have any effect at all, or if it did it might not be a function of its means of distribution but rather the result of a redistribution of ideas and signifying practices within existing social channels. That is why I referred only to the potential power of a relationship between production and reception; any effective changes which might occur can also be fed back to media producers, as members of society, to become causes.

Mass media would then have to be approached as signifying agencies within society as a whole rather than as the means by which autonomous producers wield direct influence upon their audience. The idea of seeking to police the noblesse oblige of individual producers can therefore divert attention

away from not only the questions of what society as audience does with media products and how society as source generates them, but also the questions which can be addressed to the medium itself.

One of the most fundamental points of departure is therefore to take an holistic approach to the study of mass media. Mass communication research has itself been traditionally interdisciplinary since the nature of the subject has made it necessary to use and perhaps to combine several different types of analysis. Elliott (1972), for example, fused a sociology of organizations with a sociology of art in his study of the making of a television series, and I will be drawing upon both 'technical' and 'value' analyses during this present study. It is perfectly possible, and it has often only been possible to study individual aspects of mass media such as the organization of newsrooms or children's reactions to apparently violent television programmes. For reasons of funding, time, access or inclination, researchers cannot always take a wider view. Nevertheless, it is essential to move towards an holistic analysis, either within a single study or across several studies, because one cannot look at a mass medium like television in isolation from society.

The reason for this is that a given television programme does not exist in the world in the same way that, say, Mount Everest exists there. A programme is in some sense a natural object, but only in the sense that it is a piece of videotape or film, or a series of electronic pulses. In every other respect it is a cultural object, constructed by people who inhabit one life-world and reconstructed by other people living in probably quite different circumstances. Unlike Mount Everest, which can in some sense be explained in terms of the sum of its parts (i.e. snow, ice, metamorphic rocks), there is no equivalent sense in which a television programme - or any other symbol vehicle - could be analysed in this way.



A programme about Mount Everest would not consist of those objects which we call snow, ice and rocks. An empirical analysis would show only that it consisted in being a number of electronic signals which we may or may not interpret as pictures of the Himalayas. If these pictures were seen as such, it would consequently be the result of an interaction between (a) a means of seeing electronic signals, like marks on a piece of paper, as constituents of symbols, and (b) an interpretant.

Neither this means nor its user are attributes of a television programme as an object, so no amount of objective analysis will reveal that which an interpretant-as-receiver understands a programme to be, or that which an interpretant-as-sender intends it to be. Without making reference to signs which have been attributed to a programme by an interpretant, and the meaning which is accredited to those signs, the analyst can only speak as an electrician. He or she can produce a theoretical model of a sign as an object if the meaning accredited by an interpretant-as-receiver can be seen to match that of an interpretant-as-sender, but the nature of that model still cannot be reduced to that of the sign as an independent entity. An equally valid model could, for instance, be produced by ignoring the interpretant-as-sender in order to compare only those understandings evinced by a number of interpretants-as-receivers. In the end, any single interpretant's model of a sign as an object will be just as valid, or just as invalid, as anyone else's - and that includes the scientific analyst.

This is not to abrogate responsibility in complete relativism. The argument simply implies that a scientific analysis of television programmes as objects is inappropriate. In fact, the sociologist's responsibility is clear. If it is true that any interpretation of a television programme is equally valid, then it must also be true that any commonalities in interpretation

which can be found between interpretants must either be random events or the result of something to do with the interpretants themselves. Given the irreducibility of a sign to an object, none of these commonalities in the interpretation of a sign could be directly linked to a programme on its own. Neither could all of them be said to occur at random; it is possible, for example, to find instances of common interpretations which occur regularly for the same people. Some must therefore be linked to relations which hold between interpretants, through which theoretical models of signs can be reinterpreted as objects. It is part of the sociologist's job to demonstrate and account for these relationships; primarily by showing that they are not themselves entered into at random, but contracted on the basis of relations which already exist in society. The sociologist's particular responsibility with reference to television thus derives from the conclusion that it can only be understood by examining the medium in a social context.

If the idea, rather than the fact, of there being objective meanings is to be found within human existence, it can, as Heidegger would say, be met with there. It cannot, however, be met with solely by questioning an individual subject because the production of the idea may draw upon resources, and depend upon conditions, of which individuals may be unaware.<sup>4</sup> An analysis of social phenomena such as television programmes should therefore be able to take account of both the consciousness and agency of individual people and social or other forces beyond their immediate control. Actual observation is thus required, and if adequate descriptions are to be generated such observations need to be as extensive as possible. As Geertz (1973: 26) comments:

... the essential task of theory building is not to codify abstract regularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalise across cases but to generalise within them.

---

4. See Giddens, A. (1976) New rules of sociological method, p.157.



This is why it was considered to be vital, in theory, to study the whole of a process of production. 'Production' in this sense nevertheless means more than just that process through which the 'message-form' is constructed by programme-makers. As Hall (1973: 2) points out, the 'message-form' or the 'mode of exchange of the message' ...

... comprises the surface-movements of the communications system only, and requires, at another stage, to be integrated into the essential relations of communication of which it forms only a part.

In performing this integration, the concept of 'production' is therefore extended as the sum of the differentiated moments within a totality formed by the communicative process as a whole; including each moment of reification in both the making of a programme and its reception, or reconstitution, by an audience.

The opportunity to study the making of DUMBY enabled this theoretical position to be worked out in practice. It made it possible to work from the bottom up, taking account of both the 'statics' and 'dynamics' of cultural production by mapping out the cultural, technical and organisational contexts involved.<sup>5</sup> It also allowed one to demonstrate that the apparently objective nature of the product rested in some fashion upon structures of subjective orientation (see Luckmann, 1978: 11). The resulting contextual analysis, in which 'a study of the message and its reception is not divorced from its source' (Halloran, 1973: ) might then help to answer questions about how people create meaning 'objectively', and about how far the conventions of objectivity actually stretch.

To speak of the 'conventions of objectivity' is to raise a new problem and an additional interest in DUMBY as opposed to television in general. As I have argued, television in general is interesting as a site of social activity and as a means of communication insofar as it operates as a

---

5. See Allitt, A. and Chaney, D. (1969) A sociological framework for the study of television production (in Sociological Review V.17).

signifying agency between different people. It can work as such because, in being a social phenomenon, television forms part of a circuit in which we, so to speak, are always talking to ourselves. In other words, if television works as a means of communication, it is because of people's capacity for objectification; their ability not only to produce meaning but to reciprocate it with other people through the use of signs. These signs can be used as objects (i.e. they can retain an identity independent of a given subject) not because they are objects, but because they are objectified (i.e. they cannot retain an identity independent of all subjects). In short, signs are used as objects by convention, so even when they are used for objects (as in the sign 'Mount Everest'), the referent will still be a way of looking at objects rather than the objects themselves.

Any television programme, as a sign-vehicle, can only therefore be used as an object, or as an entity which will speak for itself, to the extent that it is constituted as such within a social structure. However, if the reality of a programme's existence is dependent upon the circumstances in which it is used as an object (by its makers or its audience), then the reality of anything which it is used for must be dependent upon those circumstances too.

In addition to having what is therefore a professional interest in the use of any television programme as an object, the sociologist consequently has a special interest in programmes like DUMKY when they are also used for objects. The basis for this interest is that when a programme seeks to represent objects, that is to say, when it purports in some respect to be true, the reality of that which it is being used for is posited as being objective, unstructured and independent of the circumstances in which it is being used as an object.



This position is subject to criticism because a programme which sets out to document actual events must itself criticize the status of different conventions as being equally 'real'. It must, in other words, appeal to objective truth or to a preferential version of it. My argument is that it can never uphold the former appeal since in lacking the properties of an object, a television programme cannot in any sense copy reality objectively. 'Realistic' programmes must therefore appeal to what is in fact a preferential version of reality, and Realism as a form of communication must remain a culturally constructed symbolic activity rather than an instructed copy of an event.

The extent to which such forms of communication are nevertheless perceived as being unstructured; the degree to which they 'work', can therefore be used as an indicator of the relationship between a system of representation employed in a realistic television programme and the system which people take, or are thought to take, for granted. It will, in short, be a test of the extent to which the conventions of objectivity can stretch in a given case, as opposed to being a measure of a relationship between a realistic television programme and its object. As such, the generation of useful data about the programme must again depend upon 'actual' research in the historical sociological realm' (Hannheim, 1936: 275), in which domain not only the idea of objective truth, but also preferential versions of that idea are manufactured.

In summary, my answer to Isaiah Berlin's first question is simply this; the interest in television in general and in programmes like DUMY in particular has not been generated at random. It has come from a theoretically intact position which marks off communications media like television as the legitimate subject of sociological analysis, and which establishes those media products which seek to represent the world 'as it is' as the pre-eminent subject of such analysis, given the special relationship

which they demand with an audience.

### The Drama-documentary challenge

The preceding argument also helps to explain a certain lopsidedness which has developed in mass communication research through a concentration upon news and current affairs production. Fictional programming in television has not been a traditional subject of such research (see Hurdock, 1978, pp. 1-3), and drama-documentary production has been largely ignored, despite the fact that it is subject to many of the same questions as those directed towards news production.

One of the reasons for avoiding the drama-documentary is the problem of gaining access to the production process, and the special problem of maintaining that access for a very much longer period of time than may be required when studying individual news programmes. However, the ascension of the drama-documentary in television programming is also a comparatively recent phenomenon. A historical study would reveal that the form has a long and honourable pedigree, but it is only in recent years that increasing numbers of programme-makers have felt drawn to it.<sup>6</sup> There is an argument that this is directly attributable to the demise of the British film industry, since in lacking the opportunity to move across from what some people regard as the nursery slopes of straight television documentary production, would-be feature producers have moved, instead, into the potentially more creative field of drama-documentary. Indeed, the chairman of the 1977 Edinburgh International Festival argued that the British film industry is in fact alive and well, but that it is called television. It was perhaps no accident that this was said at a

---

6. Robin French (writing in the Guardian 26.8.80) traces the roots of drama-documentary back to Aeschylus' dramatised account of the recent Greek victory at Marathon in 490 B.C., but he principally sees modern 'faction' as having sprung from the 'New Journalism' of the early sixties.



gathering which was largely given over to a discussion of the drama-documentary as a form, and it is also significant that such a form should be the main talking-point at what was after all the first of these festivals.<sup>7</sup>

Another reason for the comparative delay in directing critical attention towards the drama-documentary is that it is to some extent a hybrid; a combination of several different modes. That this is the case can be explained simply through observing its institutional base. Drama-documentaries are often produced either by independent film companies or within the major production centres by combining people from both drama and straight documentary departments. As Jenny Barraclough pointed out (also speaking at Edinburgh), drama-documentary directors are often accused of making 'cross-border raids' into several different departments. In DUMBY's case, for example, personnel were drawn from regular working bases which ranged from straight documentary, through 'light entertainment' to feature films.

The problem is consequently that of aiming at a moving target. The use of different working practices and professional codes within the form, which in fact can help to isolate and identify them, also surfaces in a continuing debate about what the drama-documentary actually is. This debate usually centres upon whether or not a confusion will arise as a result of combining documentary and dramatic techniques within the same programme, and many people consequently worry that a drama-documentary is likely to blur the distinctions between fact and fiction. An equal number of people - mainly practitioners - nevertheless regard this argument as being a red herring, providing that programmes are properly labelled. In other words, a programme which is advertised as being 'the true story of ...' remains a story and should be seen as such:

---

7. For further information see Broadcast magazine's report: Edinburgh International Television Festival 1977 (published as a supplement).

Those who mistake something billed as a play and stuffed full of actors for 'actuality' are almost as likely to confuse their elbows with some other part of their anatomy.

So wrote Dennis Potter in the course of a discussion of Tony Garnett's LAW AND ORDER programmes, shortly before he described those who make such mistakes as 'inattentive cretins'.<sup>8</sup> Garnett himself has argued that he engages his audience in a very precise way.<sup>9</sup>

When we go out to make a film we go with prejudices, but we go to dig for reality; to try to make sense of it - and we make our sense of it. We say to the public, 'This is our truth; this is the journey we have been on. We have compressed it into an hour and a quarter, and we invite you to experience that distillation.'

A person in a position to control the kind of output which Garnett is talking about, Alistair Milne, is also concerned about levels of truth, but the invitation which he extends to the audience is more rigorously defined:

It (the distinction between documentary and drama) is only worrying if the labelling goes wrong. That is, if people are given the impression that something which purports to be real, and a statement which actually happened - or is happening now - appears then to be a dramatized version of the truth. Alternatively, if a play, or a dramatized expression of some other truth is so brilliantly or compulsively made that it looks as if it's a documentary statement such as a 'Play for today' - well, people ought to know by now that it is a dramatized version of some truth.

The 'some truth' which Milne talks about in this interview<sup>10</sup> is not, however, any truth in his view. In giving his reasons for not showing Roy Hinton's SCUM, he says:

I asked the question, 'Of what truth is this the dramatic expression?', and the writer and producer convinced me that they had enough factual background to say that it was the real thing. I took advice from other people who knew more about borstals (the setting for SCUM) and they said it wasn't. In the end I was faced with the question of whether the BBC should transmit a play which purported to say something which was truthful, albeit in dramatic terms, and which I was told was not.

---

8. See Potter's review in the Sunday Times, 23.4.73.

9. These two quotations are from BBC2's Arena presentation, When is a play not a play, 17.4.73.

10. As above (Note 9).



In this view the work of a playwright like Potter is theoretically admissible (even if in practice it often is not), whereas Minton's work is subject to censorship because of the essentially different way in which an audience is being engaged. Potter has said that the truth with which he addresses his fellow citizens is of itself a very unadorned beast, and that his job is to provide it with a little more pasture.<sup>11</sup> The pasture with which he provides his truth is, however, presented as fiction, whereas Minton's pasture is seen as being an equivocation between fiction and fact. Potter might admit to having reconstructed ways of seeing actual events in his play - such as in *SON OF MAN* - but it is doubtful that he would admit to having tried to reconstruct the events themselves. A drama-documentary, on the other hand, does need to make this assertion; the pasture with which it provides its truth is offered as a representation of fact.

This, then, is the source of some confusion about the form and also the source of a certain amount of invective which is hurled at drama-documentarists. Practitioners can be accused of 'trying to con people that it is real'<sup>12</sup> or of 'muddling rather than revealing the truth',<sup>13</sup> and such accusations can, indeed, be upheld to the extent that the true representation of fact in a drama-documentary must, logically, be a lie. It was Goebbels who said that the greater the lie the more chance it has of being believed, and one of the greatest lies is that the camera tells the truth. The camera does not actually 'tell' anything; it is, as Orson Welles has put it, the agent of a poet in as much as it never records, but interprets reality. Alistair Milne is therefore quite entitled to insist upon drama-documentaries being labelled as representations of programme-makers' versions of reality. But by the same argument, he cannot then usurp the right to distinguish these

---

11. Potter mentioned this during the course of an interview with Melvyn Bragg on LWT's The Left Bank Show, 11.2.78.

12. So said Jenny Baraclough at the 1977 Edinburgh Festival (see Note 7).

13. Jack Lawrence on The Trial of Leo Harvey Oswald in the Radio Times, 22.4.73.



representations from those of other programme-makers, including those of Dennis Potter and the representations of those versions of reality which are called news reports or straight documentaries. All television is a lie, even if, like art, it is a lie which can enable us to see the truth.<sup>14</sup>

Drama-documentaries can consequently be seen as being a radical challenge from within the broadcasting organizations themselves. In 'contesting the centre' they can therefore be of some danger to the conventional wisdom enshrined within established institutions, and a sensitivity to this on behalf of those in authority may be another reason for the relative paucity of independent studies which have been completed. As Brian Gibson, the director of such films as *JOLY*, has pointed out:<sup>15</sup>

... the broadcasting authorities are concerned to protect their own view of the 'truth' by keeping the line between 'truth' and 'fiction' as clear-cut as possible. Dramadoc challenges the institutions' own views of their 'balance and accuracy' because it sets out to recreate events, counter to the accepted codes which delineate the 'truth' of actual events; and that undermines the authority exercised by the institutions - and of course makes a nonsense of the simplistic legislative requirements laid on the institutions to be 'accurate'.

Being 'accurate' for the drama-documentarist can simply mean being honest to oneself. It requires that one should not only admit one's prejudices, but also make conscious use of them in manipulating reality in a closer approach to what appears to be the truth. 'Balance' must therefore be avoided when this means devaluing a point of view with an equal and opposite one, and facts must be approached and used for what they are - preferences. As Stott observes (1973: 12):

Those who practice documentary tend to be sceptical of the intellect and the abstractions through which it works; like artists, they believe that a fact to be true and important must be felt.

---

14. Art is a lie which enables us to see the truth according to Pablo Diego Jose Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno Crispin Crispiano de la Santisima Trinidad Ruiz y Picasso.

15. Brian Gibson was speaking at Edinburgh (see Note 7).



Whether or not practitioners accept this as part of their challenge to existing divisions between fact and fiction, it remains incumbent upon the sociologist to examine the circumstances in which the challenge is made. This does, however, lead to an epistemological pitfall, for in the pursuit of truth the sociologist cannot himself lay claim to any unique ontological superiority.

#### A problem of perspective

Like the journalist - Tom Mangold in this case - one can argue that 'the public has a right to know, but it doesn't know what it has a right to know about'.<sup>16</sup> In examining drama-documentary production the sociologist can therefore seek to expand the amount of information to which the public has a right of access. He or she can, for example, point out that 'reconstructions are always mediated by the collective minds of the production crew'<sup>17</sup> or that 'the preparation that society imposes in terms of the deep starting points it lays for what people think to be 'real' are very important'.<sup>18</sup> Correlatively, as Paul Hadden argued at Edinburgh:

Theoreticians and others are making a plea for the practitioners to understand what they are doing; to recognise that their own conditioning, their own upbringing, the institutions within which they work, the economics and policies of their employers and the atmosphere of their workplaces, their own proclivities and prejudices, and the friends they respect, all add together to produce a view of the world from which they operate, on the basis of which they make their choices, not only of plays or writers, but also of such seemingly trivial things as camera-angles; cutting-points, inflexions of actors' voices and set designs. This adds up to what theoreticians may call the production of ideology, and an understanding of the fact is what is required, together with an understanding that this is susceptible to outside analysis and the recognition that such analysis can be useful in approaching one's own work.

A standard opening gambit for the mass communications researcher could thus be characterized as: 'Millions of people are constantly exposed to

---

16. This particular version of the aphorism was voiced by Mangold on the BBC's Whistle Blower series.

17. These two statements were both made at the Edinburgh Festival (note 7) by Jerry Kuehl and Raymond Williams respectively.

18. As above (note 17).



a procession of sounds and images on television, the genesis of which hardly anyone understands' (see Elliott, 1972: 5, Tracey, 1977: 3, Schlesinger, 1978: 11, etc.). Subsequent moves may then reveal more critical hands. For example, given the assumption that very few people - even practitioners - really understand how programmes are made, the researcher may seek to demystify the processes involved - above all, by seeing them as processes. The idea that such demystification will then reveal the ways in which specific versions of reality are issued to the viewing public can then be emancipatory, but it can also be extremely partisan; especially when such versions are regarded as being somehow 'wrong' or the result of various levels of conspiracy.

Sociologists do not possess any truly independent platforms from which to judge those versions of reality because they cannot help but be permanently engaged in discourse with their own object (see Bauman, 1978: 246, or Giddens, 1976: 155). Apart from the fact that there are several competing modes of analysis or criticism within sociology, where battles are waged between functionalists, humanists and positivists, sociologists in general have no special claim to being 'right'. But then they need not wield such a claim; they need only claim the ability to isolate particular conventions, to see them as such and in some cases to point out those which fail to meet standards of adequacy. They can, for example, ask whether systems which seek to represent reality retain an explanatory power across different perspectives, or whether they build such a self-sufficient system of explanation that they preclude the possibility of understanding or interpreting it.

A more tenable objective can therefore be to expand the opportunities which are available for engaging in discourse by working from a position in which reality is seen as being emergent from all symbol systems, and not just from those of either sensual or scientific absolutism.



An investigation of the circumstances in which the idea for a programme like DUMBY eventually becomes a fully-fledged drama-documentary should not, therefore, focus upon whether such programmes represent reality as it is, nor should it focus upon the fact that they are specific versions of reality. It should, instead, focus upon the adequacy of the system of representation used, given such and such intentions and the degree to which it enhances our perception and our understanding.<sup>19</sup>

I do not mean to confuse 'adequacy' with 'efficiency' here. One cannot test a system of representation by the efficiency with which it represents reality, because to ask that question is to usurp the right to do so according to merely another system of representation. For example, Isaac Newton was able to formulate a number of laws about the movement of planets by arguing from a set of scientific postulates backed up by observation. He was looking through a telescope when he made his observations, but he was also looking through the eyes of an eighteenth century scientist. Given our adherence to the authority of his particular science, Newton's laws can then be said to have governed the way we looked at the effect of gravitational fields upon planets until the advent of General Relativity, but we cannot say that his laws governed the movements of the planets themselves. These laws can consequently be said to have been adequate for their purpose of explaining phenomena to generations of scientists, but the efficiency with which they represent reality can only be judged to the extent that an alternative system fails to refute them.

Nevertheless, a process of refutation, in which one's sense of direction is distorted merely by a theory thus far unrefuted, still does not necessarily amount to a steady progress towards truth. In establishing preferential

---

19. See Brown, R.H. (1977), A poetic for sociology, pp. 37-8.



versions of it, it may actually direct us away from 'the truth'. In order to account for such preferences - such as those embedded in Realism as a form of television - it is not, however, necessary to invent another point of view, for preferences reveal themselves in the light of each other. Nor is it necessary to establish an ontological superiority of one preference over another - indeed the point is that we have no means of doing so. What it is necessary to do, and possible to achieve without ourselves subscribing to a given structure of dominance, is to criticise those preferences which systematically exclude others. Obviously, this is in some sense a definition of preference, and it is possible to imagine a world in which there exists only two mutually exclusive ideas of truth. But to admit that possibility, and the impossibility of resolving the problem, is merely to admit that:

Sociology is 'socially engaged' not in spite of, or in violation of, its truth-seeking motives, but in consequence of those motives. Conversely, sociology may pursue its aim of true, as distinct from merely consensual, understanding only thanks to its active engagement with the task of promotion of equal opportunity and democracy. (Bauman, 1978: 246)

In promoting this opportunity the sociologist may be inclined to examine the efficiency of different systems of representation by reducing all worlds to the world of science as a positivist or a scientific realist, but the contention is that he or she should avoid that temptation and seek instead to illuminate each world in the light of the others as a symbolic realist. The reason for this, in summary, is that the efficiency of a scientific system depends upon the exclusion of 'non-essential' elements, whereas the adequacy of a symbolic system depends upon precisely the opposite:

Reality becomes richer and more varied in the multiplication of the forms of its symbolic expression. This is not progress, gradually encompassing more and more reality until, at



some distant time, Being has been encircled and conquered. It is rather progress in the respect of progressive revolution, in which each theory, each world view reveals another immanence in our own world, in which each vision of reality provides an additional perspective into our capacity for objectification. (Brown, 1977: 40-41, my emphasis)

In relinquishing the burden of scientific 'objectivity', an artist can explore this capacity for objectification; the capacity not only to discover reality, but also to create it. He or she can show ourselves to ourselves. However, in pursuing this aim it can be seen that, as Brown argues, pioneering artists, scientists, sociologists and - I would add - broadcasters are all engaged in essentially the same activity; that of making new paradigms through which experience becomes intelligible. While they are all, in other words, in the business of packaging and marketing specific versions of reality, some of those versions can be more equal than others; they can be more egalitarian in the sense of making their subject-matter newly accessible. Hence, while it is true that whenever a sign is present, some kind of ideology is present too, it does not necessarily follow that every ideology has to be grounded in an ossification of the status quo. A given ideological position need not therefore govern a search for the structure of social reality, but can instead frame questions about how reality can be socially constructed. The point of departure in asking questions about how this is done, and with what consequences, must then involve a plea for self-consciousness. It must involve a self-reflection of methods and interests, rather than an assertion of pseudo-objectivity, in both the observer and the observed, otherwise a point of view will simply presuppose its own superiority and be unable to inform beyond advising on the relative value of alternatives within a given universe of discourse. For example, to advise broadcasters how they can best 'get their message across' is to work within a given



system. It is a political act which is unlikely to provide any genuine breakthrough or an expansion of possibilities; as Hall (1973: 17) comments:

The decision to intervene in order to make the hegemonic codes of dominant elites more effective and transparent for the majority audience is not a technically neutral, but a political one. To 'misread' a political choice as a technical one represents a type of unconscious collusion with the dominant interests, a form of collusion to which social science researchers are all too prone.

This then brings the relevance of studying a drama-documentary into sharp focus, for in deliberately setting out to produce a dramatised version of fact, a producer is admitting to that which is concealed in straight reportage. That is to say, drama-documentaries admit to being metalanguages for speaking of facts. Correlatively, a sociological study of the making of such programmes should itself admit to being a metalinguistic account. It will itself be a dramatised account to the extent that it is an interpretive distillation; a reconstruction of perceived events. Mass communications research has already successfully challenged the idea that news is somehow objective, but it must also therefore reflect upon its own capacity for producing specific versions of reality. It must examine the basis upon which it is empowered to articulate, and thus alter, a world which has already been subject to construction, for as Novalis said, the greatest of sorcerers would be the one who would cast a spell on himself to the degree of taking his own phantasmagoria for autonomous apparitions.

#### A strategy for understanding

In order to avoid Novalis' admonition, sociological categorisation therefore needs to be based upon descriptions which take due account of phenomenological data. One can discover and examine factors which may not be visible to the actors themselves; structural determinants of their actions, but in order to move towards an explanation of actors' actions it is also necessary to take into account their understanding of those actions.<sup>20</sup> As Schlosinger (1973: 11)

---

20. Roche, M. (1973) Phenomenology, language and the social sciences, p.315.



points out, it is necessary to try to grasp how the world looks from the point of view of those being studied, and such a process of bearing witness thus requires access to 'inside knowledge', immersion in a form of life or participant observation of those actions which are under consideration.

As I mentioned above, having the opportunity to do this with regard to the making of a television programme was therefore vital, but it can now be seen to be especially important when studying a programme like DUMMIE. This is because the study of the making of a drama-documentary, which itself involves bearing witness to sociological phenomena, represents a pertinent case of what Giddens (op. cit. p.162) has called a double hermeneutic. In other words, the hermeneutic or interpretive task of understanding the frames of reference used by programme-makers (in constituting the universe of discourse which is programme making) can be extended as a multiple hermeneutic insofar as programme-making, and drama-documentary making in particular, is already a hermeneutic enterprise. In short, the drama-documentary aspiration is analogous, and in many ways identical to that of a sociologist or an anthropologist in providing an ethnographic report as well as growing out of a tradition of commitment to realism in aesthetics.<sup>21</sup> In studying the making of a drama-documentary, it should therefore be possible to move towards the provision of a case-study in the sociology of knowledge (in which the question of what it means to understand a television programme can be usefully explored which is also a self-reflective analysis of a form of sociological theory-building.

To do this it would be necessary to have special access to the production rather than the immanent existence of such knowledge in a given case, and

---

21. Here I am paraphrasing a comment made by David Chaney during a seminar at CMCR in April 1978. See also his paper for the B.A. conference of that year: A public innuendo - Mass observation and the coronation of 1937.



the contention is that if such cases are for the most part inaccessible it is with the germane exception of that type of construction known as drama-documentary filming. As Giddens has pointed out (op. cit. p 15), the production of society is a skilled performance, made possible because every competent member of society is a practical social theorist.

Likewise, the reproduction of social phenomena in the form of a film is also the result of a skilled performance carried out by practical social theorists, but unlike the majority of actions carried out in the course of everyday life, the practice of operationalising a social theory on the floor of a set is almost uniquely visible.

Like other communicators, the film or television producer elects to perform in public. He or she begins by carrying out the task of reinterpreting that which constitutes the rules of a form of life under investigation within a theoretical scheme and within the practical conditions imposed by structural contexts. In communicating this interpretation to others the producer is then publishing or staging a production which, if a documentary, needs to pre-empt every other theoretical scheme, or which, if a play, needs to be 'an equation which still has to work elegantly after all the negotiations of production.'<sup>22</sup> However, unlike most communicators, the film or television producer has, in addition, to make explicit the normally implicit sociology of ordinary language during the process of production. The way in which a communication is constructed, and in this case the way in which a communication about 'reality' is put together, can then be laid bare for an observer because the producer has to reify decisions and delegate responsibility within a production team, which - in a drama-documentary - also includes actors. People are not obliged to 'take the role of the other' to such a positive extent during the ordinary course of events; even socially critical novelists or painters can, for

---

22. Tom Stoppard, on The Left Bank Show, 26.11.73.



example, retain the option of naming their products after they are finished. The film or television producer, on the other hand, must name or identify his or her product before it is completed because it has to be sold as a commodity in advance of its production. While the production of social reality through communication is normally concealed by its end-results, some of the means of that production - its implicit strategies for action - can then be modelled with reference to an actual process, since in this case the process of reifying a set of intentions is also a process of self-revelation.

The answer to the second of Isaiah Berlin's questions - 'what are we doing' - can now be inked in. If one accepts that all ways of knowing the world are symbolic or perspectival, or if one takes on board the Kantian notion that perception produces only the mode in which reality appears to us, then everyone is entitled to reflect upon the existence of humanly produced constraints which may determine the range of such a mode. Unfortunately, there is only a limited number of useful ways of doing this. Nomothetic procedures, or processes of explanation by cause or universal law, are themselves interpretive insofar as purely comparative, structuralist, statistical or hypothetical-deductive methodologies presuppose the existence of measurable, objective regularities. They therefore illegitimately disengage the observer from his or her subject-matter, when this is the kind of intentional action which is found in film-making, by failing to acknowledge that meaningful conduct or the use of language games has to be understood from the horizon of language which is already given to us.<sup>23</sup> Alternatively, they ignore or oppose unconventional views of objectivity such as that put forward by Gadamer when he says that objectivity is no longer the absence of prejudice, but the verification of prejudice finds in its working out.<sup>24</sup>

---

23. Habermas, J. (1972). Both quoted by Wolff, J. in Hermeneutics and the critique of ideology (Sociological Review, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 1975).

24. Gadamer, H.G. (1960) as above (Note 23).



In order to examine such 'prejudices'; predispositions or ways of seeing without extracting them from their sustaining or defining contexts, it is therefore necessary to introduce an ideographic approach; that is, a consciously holistic, interpretive study of both rules and motives which can be seen to be emergent in a system. This must nevertheless be carried out without presupposing the existence of such a system, so systems are themselves regarded as being emergent from processes in which parts and whole reciprocally define and delimit each other through structures which are both a condition and a consequence of the production of interaction.<sup>25</sup>

My aim in producing a study of the production and reception of DUSTY ('where we are going' in Berlin's terms) is therefore to admit and document the possibility of what Murdock (1974: 218) has referred to as the complex and multi-layered interplay between intentional social actions and their conditioning contexts. Such a dialectical position is essential when studying the complexities of the working out of a personal vision within the dynamic and multi-layered structures of a means of production like film-making. It is essential, for instance, to be able to cope with change, accident and revision within such a process as well as accounting for 'measurable regularities'. The reason for the inverted commas here is also essential because the ability to pick up such regularities depends in part upon the system which the observer is using, and this ought to be made at least as clear as the system being observed. Thus while the subject - a drama documentary - is a self-confessed system for structuring appearance, this does not mean that a study of its production will be any less of a structured version. Indeed, if it was an instructured copy of events it would, like a truly naturalistic film, be impossible to understand.

---

25. See Giddens, A. (1976) as in Note 4.



This is why an attack needs to be levelled against the armchair critic who is armed, so to speak, only with the chair he sits upon. Naturalism in both films and accounts of their production is a myth, but accounts which purport to be naturalistic without drawing upon a range of resources are dangerously mythological insofar as they can limit rather than expand an horizon of understanding. This study consequently aims to maintain a mid-way position between structuralism and phenomenology, or between naturalism and realism; not for the sake of equivocation but because it has no other choice. It is, for instance, a comparatively lengthy study, since it deliberately sets out to parallel the form of the process under consideration in a naturalistic fashion instead of trying to impose its own structure upon the material. The account has nevertheless been edited, revised and, above all, written down in a particular form and can only therefore aspire towards being a naturalistic description. As a realistic account of a process, it nonetheless transcends the personal realism of phenomenological reportage or structural categorisation by admitting elements of both. For example, the genesis of the idea for a programme like *DUTTY* cannot be defined solely in terms of the producer's avowed desire to 'extend the margins of tolerance'; it must also be interlocked with the circumstances within which that definition could be worked out. Such circumstances would include, for instance, the producer's understanding of his possible future career; other people's view of that, the known limitations of a budget and the unforeseen constraints of location filming.

In order to take account of such a range of 'defining variables', the present study has needed to produce a distillation from eclectic sources. Indeed, to avoid the obvious pitfall of being taken over by the producer's



viewpoint it has needed to cast a rather wide net. Despite the fact that it is legitimate to admit a sympathy with such a viewpoint, a variety of opposing views was therefore collected and recorded during the course of many formal and informal interviews with everyone concerned. Differing judgements about the organisation of the production, and particularly of the role of the unions involved, could consequently be juxtaposed (as could more personal opinions about the film itself) in order to produce a comprehensive overview of the process. Some of the comments recorded might, indeed, reveal more than was intended, which is one reason why I have referred to people by their job-description rather than by name.<sup>26</sup>

#### A note on method

Just as film-making can itself be fitted into a tripartite classification, so the present mode of analysing such processes can now be seen to fit into such a scheme too. In film-making terms, '1st. Cinema' can be characterised with the word 'Hollywood'; a production milieu associated with, say, the star-system or big-budget films from certain studios at a certain date. '2nd Cinema' would then be that type of film-production associated with identifiable individuals or 'auteurs' such as Hitchcock, or nowadays Herzog or Resnais. The sociological armchair critic's Hollywood might therefore be Old Compton Street or Glasgow, where structuralist starlets occasionally become auteurs in their own right, purveying personal semiotics of startling ingenuity. There is, however, a '3rd. Cinema' in which film-makers allow the people about whom a film is being made to part-write it, and this is the approach which has been adopted in this study of a production process. That is why the study reflects the details of the process as minutely as it does in certain places - always permitting

---

26. I have also consistently referred to the people about whom DUFFY was made by the pseudonyms used therein.



the constraints of my own reportage - and that is also the reason for including a large number of direct quotations from interviewees.

It is important to stress here that the interviews conducted during the course of the study were also conducted during the course of the process under consideration. Many production studies rely upon the method of interviewing producers after the fact, but post hoc interviews are likely to throw up ideas and opinions about a given production which have themselves been modified and adapted by that production. Hence problems encountered whilst making a film or a play may become submerged or rationalised for reasons of personal integrity or even through a simple lapse of memory. So just as a straight analysis of a text may miss practical reasons for the inclusion (or exclusion) of specific items in a programme, so post-hoc interviewing of personnel involved in a decision-making process may only derive post-rationalised explanations.

Straight interview studies can perhaps provide researchers with an overview of key occupational groups working within particular areas. They can also reveal the particular views and experiences of personnel in terms of their own overview of situations, which may be easier to formulate outside of the particular context of a production which they happen to be working on at the time. Muriel Cantor's study of Hollywood series producers (Cantor, 1971), which was conducted through a series of interviews, can for example lead to the construction of useful categories which enable one to reformulate entrenched, and possibly erroneous ways, of looking at organisations. Indeed, as Murdock (1977: 10) points out, such studies can

... add considerably to our knowledge of the social dynamics of drama production by providing a wealth of indispensable material on the backgrounds, views and working lives of a



key group of creative personnel. In addition, by revealing the diversity of their motivations and responses, it helps to redefine the terms of the creativity and control debate in a more subtle and satisfactory way.

The point is that the diversity and motivation of individuals' responses may nevertheless have little to do with the day-to-day workings of individual productions, and may hide the 'unintended consequences' of action on the studio floor or out on location. It would therefore be much more satisfactory to combine an interview technique with the 'processual' approach to observational production studies of which Elliott's 1972 study is arguably the most important example.

As a processual study, the following project nevertheless aims to be reconstructive rather than deconstructive, recognising as it does that such reconstruction depends upon the observer having to perform acts of categorisation at critical junctures. However, unlike the person who might take a watch to pieces to reveal how it works as a machine, but who ignores its value to its owner as an object or even as a means of telling the time, this study has attempted to submerge its own acts of categorisation beneath those of its subject-matter. Through a process of partial socialisation of immersion in the subject, the aim has therefore been to become a kind of amateur, enabling those people who have been involved in a process of production to self-report their own categorisations as they might in a diary. The study is then in some sense a practical fulfilment of Barbara Castle's impractical (if tongue-in-cheek) suggestion that anyone in power should be forced by law to keep personal journals, such that a comparison of these accounts would then reveal a closer approximation to 'the truth'. At this level the



following account should then be read in comparison with others in order to move towards a complete picture of cultural production, and this is one reason why the project is offered as a case-study rather than as an historical or internally comparative dissertation.

Correlatively, I have not set out to criticise DUMY as a programme. For example, I have not sought to ask whether such a programme explains or reinforces the problems associated with being deaf, although I have certainly asked other people about their understanding of the problems insofar as it was the producer's intention to portray them. Nor have I delved very far into the effects such a programme may have had upon the people about whom it was made, except insofar as such effects reciprocated with the production to change its course in some way. A form of linear, before-and-after study of private individuals and their involvement in a given programme might indeed prove to be most valuable, but such an examination was unfortunately considered to be beyond the central brief of this project.

#### The research at ground-level (1) DUMY's production

One is consequently left with the kind of production study which Peter Golding, in an unpublished paper, has described as the least known region of mass communications analysis; a form of 'sociological voyeurism which few venture and from which fewer return unscarred'. The research itself was carried out during the greater part of a year from late 1976 to November 1977, using a variety of techniques as they became applicable to the job in hand. Since DUMY was already a viable proposition as far as gaining financial backing was concerned, the first task was to interview the three people who were by that time centrally involved in the project. The producer, writer and head of department at ATV were consequently interviewed before Christmas 1976 in order to provide a record of the



programme's early development. The producer himself then had a number of other commitments until the beginning of 1977, since being a freelance programme-maker meant that he had several different projects, or potential projects under way at the same time. As a result, it was not until after Christmas that he became heavily involved in recruiting personnel and actors, but by then I was able to get in on casting sessions and meetings, employing the basic techniques of 'sociological voyeurism'; observing activities and procedures, decisions which were made, conversations held and sometimes arguments which were entered into. A great deal of information was consequently gathered from both solicited and unsolicited comments made during formal encounters and informal conversations in cars and pubs. Interview schedules were always drawn up beforehand, but people were usually more than ready to discuss what they were doing with the minimum of prompting; a function, perhaps, of their being both professional communicators and also regularly unemployed professional communicators who sink or swim according to their ability to sell their ideas and expertise to others.

The producer himself was interviewed on several different occasions during the period between casting and shooting DUTTY in order to gain as comprehensive a picture as was possible of factors which would have been very difficult to observe directly. Many minor - and some major problems arose whilst organising the logistics of the shoot, such as those surrounding the negotiations for permission to film in public places, legal restraints and the liaisons with the main unions involved, and it would have been very difficult to monitor all these processes without actually tapping people's telephones. However, providing that a degree of caution was exercised when dealing with self-reported information, an adequate picture could be reconstructed after the event in such cases



by making sure that several different people's views were obtained. Many decisions made during this period in any case had direct and observable repercussions during the shoot itself, such that reported events could be further validated by their consequences.

The shooting of DUTY was carried out entirely on location in Bradford during April and May 1977, and I was fortunately able to be present throughout. The techniques of participant observation then came to the fore, which in theory could deliver the required information as discussed above, and which in practice has been defined by Aaron Sloman as that method where a researcher ...

... joins a social group and to some extent engages in the same activities as its members, while observing and recording what happens, either with or without the group's knowledge. (See Bullock and Stallybrass, Eds. 1977: 453)

The extent of this engagement can perhaps be judged by the producer's observation - made during one of the less smooth-running days of the shoot:

Well, the props aren't here and the actors aren't here, but Supercnoop is always here.

The 'group' did, of course, know that I was snooping, or one might prefer observing, the process since I spent much of the time wedged between lights and other pieces of equipment taking copious notes. If only because of my omnipresence, the members of the production unit were nonetheless happy to take the time to explain how they became involved in television, what they saw their jobs as being and how particular features of those jobs needed to be adapted to different situations. Most of the technical personnel and the actors were additionally given more formal interviews, where standard schedules were once again used, but people were always allowed to develop unsought lines of argument, to air grievances and talk about their personal histories if they wished.



The overall approach to the observation of the shoot was that nothing was likely to be irrelevant, so I tried to act like a sponge, soaking up events and conversation from as many sources as possible - delving into situations rather than abstracting from them much as Elliott describes his own experience of similar situations when observing the making of The Nature of Prejudice (op. cit. p171). Unlike Elliott, however, I did not adopt the position of 'passive observer with minimal clarifying interaction'<sup>27</sup> except under the special conditions operating during the course of actual takes, preferring instead to become involved in discussions and to participate on the process where possible. There were several reasons for this, and several methodological difficulties centred upon the problem of one's own objectivity. Participating in discussions can help to elucidate a problem, and by sublimating the role of the observer, can help one to delve rather more deeply into particular concerns which individuals have, and the theories with which they operate, but this approach can also alienate the researcher from people if he or she goes too far. The observational study of the shooting of DUMY was consequently a constant struggle to balance the need for information against the need to retain access to that information; a struggle which, on the whole, met with a reasonable degree of success, due in no small measure to the patience of the crew, actors and the producer concerned. Between the shooting of the film and its eventual transmission some six months later, it was processed, edited and dubbed in London, and again I was able to monitor a good deal of the operation. The editing process in particular was, however, a wholly different operation from that of shooting the film if only because fewer people were involved. Occasionally, a director will edit a film by himself with perhaps just one technical

---

27. See Elliott, P. (1972) The making of a television series, p.172, and his footnote, p.175.



assistant, and in the case in point there were usually only three people directly involved (the producer/director, the editor and his assistant). Hence the inclusion of myself within the darkened confines of an editing suite could, and sometimes did, significantly alter the nature of the group. Editing in fact demands the formation of a particular kind of intimate relationship between a director and his editor, so on certain occasions their requests for privacy had to be honoured. On other occasions the relationship led to protracted arguments over tiny points of content or form and I sometimes found myself being used as a third party; a position which may have compromised the theoretical objectivity of my role. On occasions such as these in both the editing and the shoot I have therefore kept a record of any direct intervention which may have occurred.

In view of these difficulties it was not possible to monitor the editing as comprehensively as the shoot, so a series of short observational studies were made, increasing in frequency as the film assumed various stages of completion. By comparison, the observation of the dubbing process was more straightforward. The whole operation of adding and manipulating the soundtrack was carried out in just three days at a commercial dubbing theatre in Oxford Street where the viewing theatre was specifically designed to accommodate guests. As a result the whole process could be observed quite easily, and as with the other main stages a record was therefore kept of all the decisions, arguments and conversational meanderings associated with making scenes 'work'. This last stage in the production in fact proved to be especially revealing, not least of all because the dubbing editor was one of the few people still involved at that time who had not previously seen any of the material. He was therefore able to make a number of more objective judgements about



the programme at this stage than, for example, I was, since by then I had probably seen certain sections of the film upwards of twenty or thirty times.

In fact, such a degree of immersion in one's subject-matter might very well have inflicted the kind of damage to which Golding refers in the quote given above, and it illustrates the need to move beyond pure immersion in order to emerge relatively unscathed and in a fit state to form a sociological perspective. Indeed, both during and after a period of direct observation a researcher must be able to disengage or pull back from the subject-matter in order to ensure that a reconstruction models relationships within the subject other than those which it forms with the researcher. John Le Carre has said that the secret of being a good journalist is that often you belong and yet don't belong to the subject with which you are dealing; you must be both reflective and self-reflective. Sociologists must take this a step further - in maintaining a second-order view during a process of reconstruction in which one is trying to understand events from the point of view of those involved, it is also necessary to criticise such constructions in order to 'broaden the range and sophistication in the possession of theoretical knowledge'.<sup>28</sup> In other words, those in fact of the group known as 'Critical Theorists', the interpretation of cultural meanings (i.e. Reconstruction) also ought to include an examination of the conditions in which such meanings exist (i.e. Criticism).

Prior to the directly observable action of constructing a programme like DUMNY one might, for instance, expect there to exist, for each actor, a web of motives and intentions defined within a set of 'ultimate' and 'key' paradigms, institutions and roles. A critical reconstruction ought then to be able to catalogue these such that a profile or

---

28. See Paul Connerton's introduction to Critical Sociology (1976).



'significance system' could be drawn to include a range of defining variables from logistic constraints to personal predilections without forgetting that apparently rigid, deterministic structural constraints can also be subject to manipulation and adaption.

In the following study I have therefore set out to plot, in particular, the producer's ultimate paradigms (his social missionism, ambition and perhaps the desire to transcend a working-class ethic), his key paradigms (the desire to expand the limits of tolerance, or the degree to access to information within a democratic society), the characteristics of the institutions in which he was working (his anticipation of these and their unforeseen constraints) and the particular roles which could be adopted within these institutions (as defined by terms like 'Producer/Director' or 'Freelance'). In terms of the production as a whole, I have then attempted to relate the producer's motives and intentions within a mapping of the structural terrain across which manoeuvres could be planned, or through which new routes could be driven. The process could then be analysed as a fluid, interlocking system in which individuals can both manipulate, and be manipulated by, the routinisation of production.

During the course of a critical reconstruction of DUMY's production, I have therefore set out to catalogue a repertoire of constraints and the range of adaptive strategies which might accompany them. Such a repertoire may prove to be extremely extensive, ranging from the domain of the purely technical limitation (such as that imposed by a particular type of filmstock) to that of the more universal constraint. Any study of this nature must, for example, take account of the kind of cosmic constraint which the sculptor, Henry Moore, cites in saying that if we were like horses, and able to go to sleep on our feet, then all our art and architecture would be different, because our ideas of shape and



form come from the human body. As with other forms of cultural expression, to make a film like DUMY a producer would therefore have to start from a point on a human scale of judgement. Moore's observation actually obscures the fact that artists and architects have not only been human, but predominantly male. Apart from the possibility that many of our ideas of shape and form may then have come from the female rather than just the human body, the fact that DUMY's producer was a man may also have influenced his choice of a girl as the subject of the programme. Entrenched social mores which dictate that women are more likely to be victims, or in need of assistance, certainly appear to have constrained the choice of a central character as a symbol for the male producers of missionistic programmes from CATHY COME HOME, through EDNA THE INEBRIATE WOMAN, to SCROUNGERS or even DEATH OF A PRINCESS. DUMY may consequently be seen to follow a traditional line in this respect; a tradition of preference for using women as symbols of subjection or inequality.

Traditions of preference can also be analysed as historical-sociological constraints of the kind put forward by Erwin Panofsky in Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism (1957) where an architectural style is identified with a prevalent contemporary philosophy. In the present context, a similar argument would state that the very idea of making a programme like DUMY depended upon the prior existence of a realist-informative mode in contemporary Western culture.<sup>29</sup>

Such a mode can be consciously articulated by a producer in relation to known roles and institutions as an identifiable type of cultural production. Documentary film-making can then be seen as being deliberately and precisely a la mode, but then that same prevailing fashion can also impose constraints upon the range of an individual's subconscious or

---

29. Elliott, P. discusses this in his paper, Press performance and political ritual (1978), CMCR.



intuitive predilections. While it is the artist's subconsciousness which the playwright, Edward Albee, commends one to trust 'above everything', he may then in fact be trusting in a consensual ideology rather than a set of purely intuitive insights. For example, it can be said that the Victorians trusted in the edict that heaven helps those who help themselves, and thus transformed the profit motive from being an overt form of structural domination into a virtue. Concomitant with this point of view was the need to be able to predict market forces, and this required the establishment of stability and order. A contemporary predilection for order can then be traced, not only in the politics of imperialism or the supremacy of the scientific imagination in both the natural and the social worlds, but also in the imposition of balance and symmetry in nineteenth-century art and architecture. By contrast, it has been argued that a lack of order and a spirit of experimentation in early twentieth-century art reflects, and was oriented by, that state which Tom Wolfe has dubbed 'the Rubble-World' of the period following the first world war.

In DUNN's case, some of the producer's more unfathomable predilections may prove to be explicable in terms of such 'upper range' constraints too. If, for example, he was found to be working within a contemporary realist mode, it should be possible to isolate and identify some of the codes of practice being used instead of simply accepting the film as being the product of personal whim. To pursue this goal, the following study has therefore tried to locate the reasons for choosing particular camera-angles, locations or actors as well as documenting their results. The choice of particular locations or actors may, of course, have been oriented by a greater range of constraints or operating conditions



beyond those which can be linked to the production of the film as a realist form. The very idea of making such a film in the first place may have been conceived within the conditions of having to earn a living, and the choice of different components of that film may have been governed by the unavailability of other, possibly more preferable, constituents. The study has also, therefore, sought to analyse some of the financial considerations, the constraints of time operating on the production schedule or the length of the film itself and the technico-legal restrictions which surfaced during the production period.

#### The research at ground level (2) DUMMY and its audience

In combining a first-hand documentary reconstruction of the making of DUMMY with a second-order survey of the circumstances in which it became a finished programme, it is clear that this study raises questions, not only about a producer's use of the tools of the trade, but also about what tools are available in the first place. The study can therefore integrate two opposing perspectives in exploring the hypothesis that a programme like DUMMY is not solely the view of an auteur, but also the product of a system of structural constraints. Indeed, with Anthony Giddens (1976: 161), I argue that such structures must not be conceptualised as simply placing constraints upon human agency, but as enabling that agency to exist at all.

This is not a determinist, but rather an interactionist perspective. It is not saying that structures determine the direction in which an action must proceed; it argues that they may constrain actors' choices in making their agency possible. Within this perspective the production of a television programme as a system of signs and symbols can then be analysed as being the result of the reciprocation of both structurally-



constituted action and action-constituted structures. Television production, in this view, is thus a medium of practical activity, but as I argued above, the production of meaning in a television programme occurs only at that moment within the communicative process as a whole when it is objectified by an audience, whether the audience is the producer or someone else. As well as regarding the original production process as a medium of practical activity, the programme itself can then be seen as being such a medium for any audience insofar as they use it to produce to objectify meaning.

Insofar as MEANING was seen as being meaningful, its audience is therefore posited as being active or creative in this study. Indeed, by making a television programme a producer is specifically asking an audience to do a certain amount of work, so he or she is also arguing consciously or otherwise, that the production of a programme does not cease at a point where it becomes a tangible object. In fact, I argue that it never does become such an object except insofar as it achieves that status in the mind of a member of the audience.

The programme itself is not then regarded as a medium through which a producer's ideas would necessarily be delivered intact to a passive audience, but neither are members of the audience assumed to be actively seeking stable gratifications based upon generalised needs which would lock them into a stable equilibrium with the medium. As Elliott (1973: 31) points out, the very unpredictability of audience response to a given programme is a good reason for treating the two 'sides' of the communicative process as largely separate, if interacting systems.

This is just as well, because a communicative process depends upon



meaning being sustained with reference to other meanings. It depends upon an interpretant being able to synthesise, objectify or produce an understanding from among all the available data, and not just from those data which can be found in a given sentence, picture or television programme, for to find such information is to know, in principle, how to look for it.

Seeing a television programme as a medium of practical activity does not therefore imply that such activity is random. The formation of an understanding of a programme only becomes a practical proposition insofar as an audience is enabled to frame such an understanding with reference to principles which obtain beyond that programme.

An audience's agency, like a producer's, is therefore bounded, but not to the extent that members of that audience can be treated as if they were objects. For example, the difference between someone who understands something and one who does not need not be a difference in empirically measurable behaviour. As Ziff (1972) argues, the difference between obeying an order to open a safe and merely behaving in a way that constitutes compliance with an order to open a safe is not an overt behavioural difference. Nor is understanding anything sufficiently based upon being able to make an inference from it, since understanding admits of degrees. You would, says Ziff, have to make all of an infinite set of inferences in order to understand something completely, and he rather obliquely points out that making no more than about twenty inferences a second is a likely upper limit of which humans are capable (such that humans as individual objects could never reach an infinite set of inferences). Being able to paraphrase a statement is similarly not a strict definition of understanding it, since people who do not possess the apparatus with which to paraphrase - such as unlettered natives -



nevertheless demonstrate consistent reactions to statements.

The notion of paraphrasing does, however, appear to be closer to the notion of understanding than the other two suggestions, and Ziff concludes that 'it is not implausible to think of understanding a use of words as something connected with the completion of a decoding process.' Understanding an utterance can in this sense be seen as being a matter of data-processing, where a hearer - on completion of the processing - will have a 'correct morphologico-syntactic identification and classification of the constituents of the utterance'.<sup>30</sup>

But ...

The process involves synthesis as well as analysis: the utterance that is understood is analysed into words, but synthesised into sentences.  
(Ziff op.cit., my emphasis)

Just how people go about synthesising meaning in this way is what J.R. Searle sees as a relationship between meaning and use.<sup>31</sup> He is interested in what people actually do with language, in common with a line of thought which can be traced through Wittgenstein and Austin to Chomsky, and in which Quine formulates a view of meaning in terms of people's disposition to react to language.<sup>32</sup>

The contention here is that it is people's disposition to synthesise meaning, not as objects, but as members of a social structure which enables them to understand an utterance or a whole television programme. What they actually do with such a programme could depend, firstly, upon their predisposition to look for meaningful relations between symbols. Having generally tried to understand 'what is being got at', the way in which these relationships are formed should then depend, secondly, upon the principles which are available at a given time to a given

---

30. Ziff, . . (1972) Understanding understanding.

31. See Searle, J. (1969) Speech Acts.

32. See Quine, W. (1964) Word and object.



individual. Such principles or meaning systems, in being action-constituted structures, would thus enable individuals to engage in a reciprocation of signs as if they were objects, and so enable structurally-constituted action, and thus communication, to exist.

In this view a study of media 'consumption' cannot therefore be isolated from such social processes. It ought to be able to detect some of the signs which were actually attributed to a programme by an audience as well as recording those signs which were intended to have been lodged in the programme during production. In short, a study ought to explore both the encoding and the decoding processes involved before seeking to explore the relationships which might hold between them, for these processes need not mirror one another, nor need their objects be congruent.

Having mapped an encoding process in studying the making of DUMY, and having accepted that such a process formed only a part of the communicative process as a whole, it thus became necessary to discover whether the programme had actually set off any resonances and suggestions for an audience, and how it might have done so. The initial task was therefore to find out how open to objectification were the signs used in the programme - i.e. did the programme have any meaning for an audience? Next, the audience study sought to discover how such meaning had been constructed, using the hypothesis that the programme could be used as both a source and a channel for the different meaning systems available in contemporary society.<sup>33</sup>

The study did not expect respondents to be necessarily able to pinpoint the principles by which they apprehended meaning in the programme, but given the methods of data-collection can themselves construct reality, part of the intention was to demonstrate that apparently

---

33. See Elliott, P. (1973) 'Uses and gratifications' research: a critique and a sociological alternative, CICR, p.33 and Parkin, F. (1972) Class inequality and political order.



unequivocal messages can mean different things to different people. The existence of different meaning systems could therefore be revealed by illuminating one preference in the light of another.

In locating some of the co-ordinates of meaning which were being used, the study could then begin to outline the degree of isomorphism which might have existed between different respondents' understanding of the programme. It could, in other words, begin to ask how objectifiable were individuals' objectification, or to what extent a programme could become a unitary signifying agency within society as a whole.

Since one is nevertheless positing the existence of a plurality of meaning systems as both a prerequisite and a constraint upon communication, the degree of isomorphism in the interpretations of their users is never likely to be absolute. One would therefore expect the typifications employed by communicators - such as broadcasters - to be capable of sustaining more than one meaning, but the possibility then arises that none of these meanings need equate with the intended meaning of an utterance or a text.

One of the chief purposes in mounting an audience study was to examine this possibility in order to see whether, in practice, the encoding process could be related to the decoding process as performed by a wide range of respondents. In other words, given that 'decode variance' may not only be normal but necessary, how adequate could a programme like DUMMY be to the task of enabling a producer to address his fellow citizens in the way that he wanted to?

In considering this question a number of points need to be raised. First of all, the way in which a producer wanted to address his fellow citizens would need to be documented with reference to an actual case,



which is one of the main reasons for conducting the production study. Secondly, a comparative study of an audience which posited the existence of systemic decode variance would be advised to ensure that such an audience was large enough for replicable observations to be made by other researchers - which is why this part of the study was carried out in the manner described in Section Four. Thirdly, the questions which this audience was asked would need to be designed to illuminate different respondents' understanding of the programme in the light of that of the producer. Individuals would then be asked to report, in effect, how well their understanding had been enhanced, or how well the programme's subject-matter had been made newly accessible to them on the producer's terms. The study was therefore concerned, not only with the possibility of an audience being able to form any understanding of the programme, but also with their ability to form a preferred understanding of it.

While I have so far been discussing the possibility of being able to form an understanding of a symbolic vehicle, it is also, therefore, necessary to consider the possibility of being able to form the required understanding from the point of view of a communicator. For example, it can be argued that to fully understand an utterance (as opposed to merely forming an understanding of that utterance) is to do more than classify its constituents and systematise them into intelligible patterns with reference to one's own system of meaning. It is also to perceive the intentions of the utterer in conveying meaning through what Searle would call his or her speech acts. In order to achieve such perception, an audience's agency would therefore have to be oriented, not only by its own meaning systems, but also by a system of meaning with which the speech act was originally constituted. From a communicator's point of



view, to attempt to ensure that an utterance or a programme will 'work' is therefore to use a theory about other people's meaning systems which states that there are common points of articulation with one's own system, or that such commonalities can be invoked through the use of a symbolic vehicle constituted within mutually accepted rules of language. From an audience's point of view, to engage in authentic communication in the sense of truly understanding rather than merely decoding an utterance similarly requires both the means of decoding any message and, in theory, the means of accurately decoding particular messages in mutually corrigible terms.

The problem is that all communicative media lack, to varying degrees, the facility to absolutely ensure such corrigibility if only because the extent of mutuality is limited by one person's knowledge of another's experience being based on inference.<sup>34</sup> In addition, it can be argued that mass media in particular suffer from the problem of not being able to update the rules of the language which they use in the face of change. In fact, if a degree of reciprocity of perspectives cannot be immediately negotiated through the kinds of feedback which are available in face-to-face contact, then someone like a television producer may be forced to assess his or her work by internal criteria and conventions, and thus further diminish the possibility of achieving any genuine communication.

Information about the audience may indeed depend upon extremely flimsy sources of evidence. Tannenbaum reports the existence of an attitude held by some broadcasters which says that "The audience shows their appreciation through ratings, and if that's what they want, then that

---

34. See Hasperu, J. (1956), An introduction to philosophical analysis, p.382.



is what they should get'.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, John Birt reports that<sup>36</sup>

There is an unspoken and unarticulated presumption on the part of many broadcasters, which, put at its exaggerated extreme, is this: that society consists of a gooey homogenous mass of people, not very bright, almost childlike, capable of not much more than sniggering at rude noises or someone caught with his pants down. There are a few eggheads floating on top of the gooey mass, of course, and we quite properly have BBC2 for them.

In articulating the apparent dilemma of the artist doomed to inhabit a mass medium, a thankfully anonymous television producer has also despaired that one cannot draw fine lines with a thick pencil, adding 'but then fine lines are going to be lost on a thick audience'.

Such opinions about the relative density of the audience are nevertheless open to scrutiny insofar as the typifications produced by both parties can be compared by a third. As a third party, one could not then discover the exact nature of any mutual knowledge which existed between a broadcaster and his or her audience because, by the above argument, an understanding of respondents' experiences remains subject to the inferential powers of the researcher (and that understanding is likely to be even less complete when questioning lay members of the audience as opposed to someone like a television director, part of whose job it is to be articulate and self-revelatory).

One could, however, posit the existence of mutual knowledge inasmuch as it can be represented, through a collection of different responses, as a theory or a series of factual beliefs about what is common.<sup>37</sup> In comparing a producer's sense of what is common (insofar as it is represented in making a programme) with that of an audience (insofar as their commonsense is represented by that programme), a study could

---

35. Tannenbaum, P. speaking at the 9th symposium on Broadcasting at Manchester, 1978.

36. Birt, J. writing in the Listener ('Ratings rule O.K.?') 20.4.78.

37. See Giddens, A. (1976) New rules of sociological method, pp.157-8.



therefore confirm or dispute the mutuality of the theories involved; a mutuality which, in this case, is represented by that series of factual beliefs which constitutes, and is constituted by a programme's realism.

Within this scheme the notion of there being a rigid interface between producer and audience can be broken down and replaced with a theory of interaction. From an interactionist perspective both the producer and the audience can then be identified as users of interpretive schemes through which mutually recognisable characterisations of social activity can be generated in circumstances which do not permit a face-to-face monitoring of those schemes. Producers may still be seen as 'producing for themselves' within this perspective because so can the audience. The question, indeed, is not whether either party forms their own interpretive schemes for producing meaning, but to what degree such schemes can 'cancel one another out' such that the programme itself can appear to be unstructured, to 'ring true' or to be 'showing ourselves to ourselves'.

In the present study one can therefore compare the theories which people have formed about a programme like DUMY and thus provide the kind of mediated feedback which is normally absent in the mass media by reconstructing any mutually recognisable characterisations which can be found. The frequency with which these occur for different people might then serve as a better indicator of a programme's success as a means of communicating a producer's ideas than headcounts of those people who merely liked (or hated) it. However, one is accepting that such mutuality is possible because a producer is not only using the technical language of his or her form of life as a producer, but that he or she is also mediating this and ordinary language as a member of society in



producing his or her theoretical schemes about what is common.

The basis on which such theories are constructed can then be criticized, as well as reconstructed, by explicating their ontological status with reference to their structuration by different meaning system rather than by reality itself. So beyond understanding a programme on one's own terms and understanding it on those of a producer, the question also arises as to whether a programme which seeks to represent reality affords any basis for enhancing understanding in general. The key to this is not to simply ask whether such a programme enabled mutually recognisable characterisations to be generated, but whether it enabled the generation of such characterisations which could also be instrumental in the expansion of what has been called the rational autonomy of action rather than the consolidation of a status quo.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to studying the 'routinisation of production', this second stage of the research on the ground therefore sets out to complete a complimentary examination of what might be called the 'routinisation of reception' - the purpose of this being to see how far DUMNY had been able to enhance, rather than reduce an audience's chances of achieving a breakthrough in understanding.

In actually dealing with such issues when conducting the audience study one was inevitably facing the familiar problems of inference - the problems involved in trying to record people's understanding through their verbalisations. A number of checks and balances were consequently built into the study, but the limitations of this (and every other) study should not be underestimated. I have in fact used some of the standard methods of data-collection as described in section four, and have therefore taken on board a number of those criticisms which can be levelled against survey-based macroanalysis and against the unsubtle categorisation of respondents

---

<sup>38</sup>. See Giddens, A. (1976) New rules of sociological method, p.159.



upon which such surveys usually rely.<sup>39</sup> However, in contrast to writers like Belson,<sup>40</sup> it has not been my task to produce a psychological study of perception in which due account needs to be taken of every possible variable from socio-economic class to left or right-handedness in adolescent boys (a dire prospect in view of the fact that you can never take account of all such variables). Nor has it been my task to produce a report on the reactions of the thirteen million people who saw DUMY by questioning a statistically representative sample of that audience. The point of the study was to generate enough data to be able to discuss how it is possible to relate encoding and decoding processes. It was never the intention to produce an authoritative report of the programme's overall effect because such authority is itself open to question.

Much of the usual panoply of statistical obfuscation has therefore been abandoned in favour of a variant of participant observation in this part of the study. A postal questionnaire was sent out to a stratified random sample, but this was chiefly intended to provide data for the hypothesis that people living in the area in which the film was set might form different understandings of it than those living elsewhere. The survey data was also used as a check on that generated by three discussion groups, in which (unlike a questionnaire) little of the response was rigidly structured by the observer, and from which much of the response would be presented in the form of direct quotations rather than statistical frequencies.<sup>41</sup>

The ability to pick up an unstructured response - unstructured by the observer, that is - through a form of participation in an audience's

---

39. See Douglas, J. (ed) (1971) Understanding everyday life, Ch.1, for a critique of macroanalysis.

40. See particularly Belson, W.A. (1967) Methods and findings in programme research.

41. This approach is comparable to that used by Linné, O. and Karosi, K. in their contribution to the Council of Europe project referred to above (Note 1), published as Understanding Television: a study of viewer reactions to a documentary film (1976) pp. 4-5 (Danish Radio Report No. 4.B/76).



experience of a programme is absolutely vital. A simple questionnaire can help to back up a hypothesis that, say, a technical knowledge of the meaning of cuts or fades is necessary but not sufficient in understanding a film. It is, however, unlikely to throw up the kind of unsought-for, but nonetheless determining variables which surfaced among the members of the discussion groups.

This is not to imply that to use such groups in an audience study is to guarantee 'free' discussion, for we do not possess any completely value-free methods of data collection. Precautions can be taken, but perhaps the most important of these should therefore be to remain self-reflective. People in a small discussion group may, for instance, report what they think you want them to say; they may strive towards cognitive consistency within such a group (especially when it has been preselected on the basis of socio-economic class) and they may seek to consolidate that consistency, not only by adopting a particular societal perspective in relation to that which appears to have been encoded in the programme, but also by forming specific relationships with the observer. The mere fact that people are being asked to participate in the strangely public act of watching a television programme as a group, in a strange location, should also alert the observer to the dangers of forming artificial constraints.

The existence of such dangers does not, however, detract from the central aim of this part of the study because it did not set out to produce an all-embracing, objective account of DUTY's reception by its audience -- and actually disputes the veracity of any such account. The aim of the study as a whole was to set up the terms of a debate which criticises the view that some debates do not have terms. Such a debate criticises, for example, the presupposition that there is a clear division between 'factual'



and 'fictional' television and argues that any form of communication depends upon the possibility of being able to frame terms and thus structure reality. It disputes, not the existence of pristine reality, but the possibility of apprehending and reproducing it without recourse to some form of constructed mediation such as the language of film realism - language being a social phenomenon operating within as well as between social structures. Within this scheme there is no necessary guarantee that any form of mediation will afford an access to reality itself, but it is certain that any common interpretations or objectifications which occur will be either accidental or 'linked' to relations which hold between interpretants. It therefore becomes important to ask questions about the kind of contexts through which such relations might be generated, some of which, during the course of several studies, may emerge as being predictably determining. People's socio-economic class would obviously be a likely candidate for this accolade, but within the confines of this study it was regarded as only the most important example (along with such variables as people's professional experience of film and their geographical proximity to the subject-matter) of the kind of context through which reality can be constructed in relation to a signifying agency such as a television programme.

In a set of given cases the differences between the illocutionary act of encoding meaning in a programme could thus be compared with the perlocutionary act of decoding it in order to illuminate some of the preferences which could be involved. The production study described in section two can then be regarded as an attempt to analyse the former and to provide a base for relating it to the latter. In concluding this section of the thesis it is, however, necessary to provide further context for the study as a whole by surveying some of the literature to which I have referred from time to time, or from which I have inevitably drawn otherwise unacknowledged ideas.

### A brief survey of the research literature

Given the pervasiveness and ubiquity of television in general, and the degree of interest and concern for programmes like DUMMY in particular, one might expect there to be a considerable hinterland of sociological research posing complimentary questions about the structures and contexts in which such programmes are both produced and received. In fact, there are surprisingly few comprehensive case-studies of any type of television production, and it is even more rare for such studies to take into account the way in which a producer's intentions have been presented to, and interpreted by an audience.

This is one reasons for the comparative brevity of this review of the relevant literature, but there are several other reasons for being succinct. First of all, the introductory section has already attempted to map out the general orientations of the research and to indicate its more specific foundations. Secondly, criticisms of different ways of approaching the problems of understanding television have been deliberately integrated at appropriate points within the main body of the study instead of being assembled together as a separate review. Thirdly, this study was carried out in the field, rather than in a library, since it was the intention to produce an analytic narrative of a given process and not a lengthy critique of other people's texts about such processes.

Such a critique can therefore be regarded as being peripheral to the main project, but it is nonetheless implied in considering it necessary to carry out the research in the first place. Without repeating much of what has already been said (both here and in more general reviews of the state of mass communications research), it does therefore become



important to briefly itemise those sources which have informed this study and to indicate the ways in which existing texts are considered to be inadequate.

It is, indeed, the limited number and range of existing studies which constitutes the most obvious inadequacy. Even a decade after Philip Elliott was writing his seminal study of the making of *THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE*<sup>1</sup> there are still, as Elliott himself points out, 'vast gaps in our descriptive knowledge of the way particular media and types of cultural production are organised and of the roles and functions of those who work within them.'<sup>2</sup>

The available studies of media institutions and their processes have been categorised - and ably catalogued - by Tracey (1975, pp 40-105) in terms of the emphasis which is given to either the institutional or the cultural restraints which have been found to operate upon production. In fact, as Tracey observes elsewhere (1976),<sup>3</sup> the principal emphasis of research has tended to centre upon questions of control, and ...

Such research has presented an image of broadcasting as a world of 'determinations', a heavily structured process in which the end product is a result of something other than the simple transmission of a pure 'message' - the 'noise' in the system is, as it were, deafening.

Both Tracey and Elliott have also identified a number of recurrent styles of research. These range from the functionalistic or sometimes

- 
1. Elliott, P. (1972) The making of a television series.
  2. Elliott, P. (1977) Media organisations and occupations: an overview in Curran, J. et al (eds)(1977) Mass communication and society, p 142.
  3. Tracey, M. (1976) Observing the broadcaster in Television Vol. 16, No. 3, p 6.

conspiratorial approaches which were adopted in some of the early 'Gatekeeper' studies, through the phenomenological or ethnomethodological perspectives which have appeared in more recent American contributions, to what Elliott calls the more 'pragmatic and exploratory approaches' which have been adopted in Britain.<sup>4</sup>

These pragmatic explorations have tended to look beyond the immediate site of production towards its overarching economic and political conditions of existence. Macro-analyses of broadcasting's relations with the State (i.e. Smith, 1973), or with changing social and political climates (i.e. Kumar, 1975) have been joined by careful studies of the commercial environment in which broadcasting operates. Murdock and Golding have been particularly active in this area, having mastered the techniques of deciphering company reports on their way to developing a 'political economy of the mass media'.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of such work, Elliott is able to conclude that variations in the organisations and occupations through which Britain's 'unique' media culture is produced are dependent upon the existence of a mixture of elites in British society, but that such variation 'takes place against a ground base provided by the commercial logic necessary for the economic survival of these organisations of cultural production'.<sup>6</sup>

---

4. Elliott, P. (1977) (Op.cit) p 143.

5. See Murdock, G. and Golding, P. (1973) For a political economy of mass communications in Milliband, R. and Savile, J. (Eds) The Socialist Register 1973.

6. Elliott, P. (1977) (Op.cit) p 169.



The micro-analyses of variations in individual productions which contribute data for such conclusions do not, however, form a comprehensive body of knowledge, for most of the sociological studies of production which could be listed and categorised have concentrated upon news or news-based operations. In fact, a content analysis of our stock of production studies - a good many of which are listed in the bibliography - reveals the spectacular lack of attention which has been paid to subjects other than news, current affairs and straight documentary in mainstream sociology. Drama or drama-based productions are particularly under-represented in the available literature, and one of the most conspicuous gaps to which Elliott refers in the quote given above could therefore continue to be ignored in concentrating upon a constant refining of our understanding of the determinants of news production.

'Factual' programmes have become such a traditional target for observational study that the practice of producing such studies can itself be subjected to a form of participant observation by the sociological community. One observation which can certainly be made of this pursuit is that it is a comparatively easy option. News production usually operates within a twenty-four hour cycle, and current affairs programmes have to be constructed within the definitions of their own topicality, so an observer can often complete the basic fieldwork within the space of a few days. An observer must, of course, first negotiate access to a given production, and that is often a difficult task.<sup>7</sup> Many observational studies of news production have

---

7. See Halloran, J.D. and Gurevitch, M. (1970) Broadcaster/researcher co-operation in mass communications research (CMCR).

also been conducted over long periods - Schlesinger, for example, spent ninety days inside BBC newsrooms while researching Putting 'reality' together (1978). However, the compression of news production does enables an observer to locate certain structures with some economy of effort, even if an explanation for their existence then requires a much more extensive survey of broadcasting institutions.<sup>8</sup>

The point is that while the central location of newsrooms and the time-based routinisation of decision-making processes facilitate the 'locational' approach to their observation, these factors can also circumscribe the nature of the observations made.<sup>9</sup> For instance, the application of organisation theory to the raw data from short-term studies can lead to an over-representation of the faceless mechanics of production, and it can do so at the expense of exploring the ways in which those same mechanics can actually be manipulated by creative personnel for their own ends or for the sake of a programme in which they happen to believe. Even on the level of discussing conventional techniques like the use of 'vox pops' it would, for example, be foolhardy to imply that broadcasters generally fail to realise that such techniques are only conventional and no subject to iron law. Writers like McArthur (1978) nevertheless continue to make such implications as part of a generalised critique, as, indeed, the early 'gatekeeper' theorists like White (1950), Breed (1955) or Gieber (1956) tended to do in overemphasising the role of mechanical constraints.

---

8. Certainly in my own experience of studying regional television news magazine programmes, data which would support a 'gatekeeper' thesis became evident after only a very short period of observation.

9. The locational approach to the study of decision-making processes within newsrooms is discussed more fully in Murdock, G. (1978) Fabricating fictions: approaches to the study of television drama production, CMCR. (p.11).



If the academic literature overstresses the restraints and inhibitions of broadcasting processes in general, it may therefore do so because (a) these are the characteristics which immediately impress the outsider, and (b) they represent the mechanics which one discovers (or which one expects to find) when analysing the peculiar requirements of news. A locational analysis of the day-to-day strictures of working in a newsroom cannot, however, be applied wholesale to other forms of production, and such an analysis is probably, at least, applicable to drama or drama-based projects. As Murdock (1978:6) points out:

Unlike those involved in news and current affairs production, drama personnel are not constrained by requirements of objectivity, balance and impartiality. Consequently, their personal enthusiasms, interests and experiences are much more likely to play a part in shaping the productions they are involved in.

Personal enthusiasms and interests are evidently curbed during the production of dramatic programmes, and the question of control cannot be avoided. It does, however, have to be approached differently. On a production like DUMMY, many of the equivalent functions and operations of a newsroom are absorbed within the person of the producer. He or she is therefore unlikely to be physically or permanently tied to an easily-observed, centralised office even though the prescribed routines of office may still be followed. The difficulty for an observer therefore lies, so to speak, in following the producer rather than the flow of information within the confines of a single location.

This difficulty is compounded, not only by the drama - or in this case drama-documentary - producer's geographical mobility, but also by his or her likely attachment to a single project over a lengthy period of

time. Adequate observation consequently requires a special kind of access to the processes in which a producer is engaged, and this can be negotiated in only a limited number of ways.

One way of approaching the problem of understanding the highly-complex world of dramatic production is to be already partially involved in it. Some of the most useful sources for the present study have therefore been drawn from that body of descriptions of production processes and biographical accounts of individual careers which have been written, not by sociologists trying to locate and define the 'noise in the system', but by journalists, scriptwriters and directors trying to describe what actually happens on the ground.

Many of these studies lack a theoretical rigour, and some, it must be said, lack a good deal more than that. The actor Roger Moore's account of the making of the James Bond film *LIVE AND LET DIE*<sup>10</sup> should perhaps have followed the advice of its title, but most of these accounts and descriptions provide a wealth of information about the behind-the-scenes activity of different productions. Lillian Ross's book about the making of Huston's film *THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE*<sup>11</sup> is a classic case in point, and the flashy cover of the Ballantine edition of *The making of King Kong* (1976) should not deter one from reading a carefully-researched study of the genesis of this film.

There are also many informative, processual descriptions in this category which are specifically devoted to television productions.

---

10. Moore, R. (1973) Roger Moore as James Bond 007.

11. Ross, L. (1952) Picture.



John Elliot's Mogul: the making of a myth (1970) and Taylor's Making a television play (1970) are by authors writing about their own productions. Similarly, the producer of an enormously successful science fiction series - Gene Roddenberry - has collaborated with Stepehn Whitfield to write The making of Star Trek (1968). The death of a less successful series 'by a thousand cuts' is recounted in Only you Dick darling (Miller, M. and Rhodes, E. 1964) and John Russell Taylor has produced an observational account of a pair of Armchair Theatre plays in Anatomy of a television play (1962). Television itself has also contributed some self-reflective insights in the shape of such imaginatively-titled programmes as BEHIND THE SCENES (1977), which was about the making of the BBC series SECRET ARMY.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most important things that such studies show is how programme ideas originate from individual's personal experiences, their social and professional contacts, their preconceptions about audiences and their understanding of the organisations for which they work or to which they sell those ideas. We also have other 'views from within', such as Irene Shubik's Play for today: the evolution of television drama (1975), which go on to show how these ideas can be accommodated

---

12. There have also been a number of television plays which have taken television or related themes for their subject. Mardock (see note 9) cites David Mercer's Day of publication, Dennis Potter's Only make believe and Frederick Raphael's Glittering prizes as examples of writers taking their situation as writers for their subject. Further examples of plays about television itself could include another Potter play, Double Dare, or the BBC2 serial An Englishman's castle (not to mention the feature film Network). For a comprehensive bibliography of production studies and related material see appendix.

within - or adapted to - specific processes and organisations. The demands of commercial logic will, for instance, tend to transform a playwright's original idea into merely one of several negotiable assets for a television company, and those same demands can easily lead to its rejection. As Shubik points out in her capacity as a series producer, her main task is to find scripts which can be made for the amount of money that is available.

Perhaps the most pertinent observation which can be made of this category of literature is not just that it represents a valuable source of information from the horse's mouth, or that it is therefore likely to be subjective and piecemeal. The common denominator is that these studies are pre-eminently concerned with drama, whereas I've indicated that the more academic studies have concentrated almost entirely upon news or other factual programmes. We do have a major sociological study of certain types of drama in Goodlad's The sociology of popular drama (1971), but the status which is accorded to such a book - a book which is solely concerned with content analysis and audience effects - underlines the lack of attention which has been paid to the production of such content.

The paucity of academic production studies of straight drama or programmes like DUMMY is, moreover, exacerbated by the lack of detail and comprehensiveness in what studies there are. For example, independent observers like Buscombe and Alvarado valiantly set out to 'Fill a gap' in producing a full-length study of the making of a drama series, but found that they were unable to observe such vital processes as the dubbing of the programmes concerned. In point of fact, these



writers deliberately produced Hazell: the making of a TV series (1973) with some speed in order to catch a particular market, and both of them were employed in other capacities at the time of writing the book. Neither author was consequently able to devote as much time to the project as they would have liked, and a lack of detail in some areas is therefore to be expected.

The practical difficulties which stop participant observation being taken to anything like its theoretical limits can, however, be overshadowed by the difficulty of gaining access to a given production at any level. Tracey (1975:32), for example, admits that his initial aim of emulating Elliott's study was thwarted because 'no-one at that time was willing to grant the necessary access'. Despite its problems, Buscombe and Alvarado's work therefore represents a significant addition to our knowledge of dramatic production insofar as it is based upon even a limited amount of direct observation. As a result they can legitimately ask how and why a series like HAZELL turned out as it did by identifying some of the forces at work within a highly organised system. They can, in fact, deduce what a textual analyst can only infer in concluding that:<sup>13</sup>

In part these forces are the result of people working towards deliberate ends; in part any television programme is determined by structures beyond the control of the individuals who produce it.

One of the most important aspects of the process which Buscombe and Alvarado were able to trace was the degree of movement which occurred within interlocking practices and structures. Once again, they could

---

13. Buscombe, E. and Alvarado, M. (1978) Hazell: the making of a TV series, p.3.

only record the shifts of emphasis which took place during the making of different episodes by mounting a processual study, and they could then observe that such changes of direction partly reflected power differentials within the production team, and partly resulted from the effects of organisational and commercial factors which pulled the production towards a status quo; towards proven, saleable formulae.

As independent observers, Buscombe and Alvarado were arguably in a better position to judge the comparative strengths and weaknesses of such constraints than, say, a producer writing about his own programme might be. They could, in other words, take a second-order view in examining television as a system in which each part of the whole both affects, and is affected by the other parts. For example, they could record the fact that HAZELL had to be commercially viable, and that this to some extent meant that it had to conform to parameters which had been set by other programmes which had also been 'successful'. At one end of the spectrum they could then trace the genesis of the programme from within the context of Thames' drama requirements (and the fact that ITV in general was under severe competition from the BBC at the time). At the other end they could show that the creativity of different writers on the programme was bounded within a series of ground-rules set by the producer (in the form of 'Chairman June's little read notes'). However, they could also show that programme formulae, the results of cost-benefit analyses and the constraints of time could act - apparently paradoxically - to reduce the conflict between commerce and creativity by providing a challenge rather than a straitjacket for creative personnel.



In one sense, the possibility of such a challenge emerged from the nature of the programme itself. An obvious feature of a programme like HAZELL is that it was intended to be good, entertaining fiction. Indeed, Jeremy Isaacs (then director of programmes at Thames) had asked his head of drama to 'please find something that will help me to do my job, which is to pull in an audience that will keep people advertising on Thames and which will therefore fund the programme-making'.<sup>14</sup> As a brief for producing a piece of popular fiction this could afford a considerable degree of manoeuvrability, or creative space for those involved; a room to move which might not exist within other production situations. If Isaacs' brief had been applied to a discussion programme or a drama-documentary, for instance, it might have imposed more serious constraints upon the choice of a subject and the way it could be handled. This points to a fundamental problem which the 'Hazell' book encounters, and one which all other single case-studies raise - the problem of typicality. It is true that to produce more and more case-studies is itself a strategy towards comprehensiveness because patterns may then emerge between different types of production as well as within them, but the atypical aspects of Buscombe and Alvarado's subject should also be born in mind when comparing their findings with those from other studies. Peter Golding, for example, has produced an observational study of the making of a discussion series (Granada's OPEN NIGHT) in which he found that the original intentions of the production team were all but crushed beneath the demands of economic, professional and organisational pressures.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, in his case-study of a programme

---

14. Buscombe, E. and Alvarado, M. (1978) Hazell: the making of a TV series, pp 27-8.

15. Golding, P. (1973) Open Night, CMCR.

designed to promote social action, McCron explores some of the unintended consequences of 'treading a tightrope between producing a popular television programme and successfully promoting volunteer recruitment'. (McCron, 1978:145).

Both of these studies seek to expand our knowledge of actual or potential constraints which operate upon programme-makers' autonomy, and both are based upon direct, processual observation. In searching for such comparative studies one is nevertheless faced with the problem of comparing like with like again, for neither of these studies are concerned with dramatic production. Nor, indeed, is Elliott's study of the making of a documentary series, but The making of a television series: a case-study in the sociology of culture (1972) warrants special attention because of the methods used and the detail involved. Elliott's study of ATV's THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE grew out of a fusion of previous work on the sociology of organisation and the sociology of art which had been formulated within a paper written with David Chaney: A sociological framework for the study of television production (1969). As Elliott states in the later work (1972:16):

The aim of the framework was to show how the projected case study could deal with both the statics and dynamics of cultural production by looking at programme-making as a social process, and by setting the programme-makers into a series of socio-cultural contexts: the work group, the organisation, the medium or occupational milieu and the general socio-cultural system.

This contextual approach aimed to situate programme-making within 'wider social processes' by establishing production personnel as brokers between society-as-source and society-as-audience; brokers who also work creatively within the contexts of the medium itself.



The model employed consequently differs from that used in most studies, and particularly those studies of news-production where information is seen to flow in a linear, if interrupted fashion from communicators to their audience.<sup>16</sup> It also differs from what Elliott calls the 'persuasive' model (which arose from early studies of propoganda and advertising) and the 'interpersonal' model (which was generated by those scholars who drew analogies between face-to-face and mass communication).<sup>17</sup>

In focussing upon the actual activities of production personnel through long-term participant observation of the processes in which they were involved, Elliott hoped to produce a more radical model in which the professional communicator is posited as the creator of a self-reflexive image; an image, that is, of society-as-source re-presented to society-as-audience and mediated at different moments by sub-sets of technical, organisational and occupational 'contexts of orientation'. 'Orientation' is a key term here because it allows for change, movement and even simple humanism in a world which is often characterised as being static and deterministic, or bounded within the confines of an implacable, inanimate organism. Elliott did not see the process as operating within a wholly closed system; what he set out to identify was a range of powerful social and cultural contexts which would tend to produce such a closure.

---

16. i.e. 'Gatekeeper' studies such as White, D. (1950) The Gatekeeper A case study in the selection of news, in Journalism Quarterly, 27, 1950.

17. Elliott cites Pye, L.(Ed) (1963) Communication and political development as an example of the former, and De Fleur, M. (1966) Theories of mass communication for examples of the latter.

In the course of the study he was able to isolate a number of factors which could be seen to be operating in a given case, and although he was looking at a different kind of production, several of the conceptual tools which Elliott used have proved to be useful in my own analysis. For example, he argues that long before a programme gets as far as the studio, the basic programme idea will have been generated through three chains of factors. The first of these, the 'subject' chain, includes the means by which a producer decides what 'ought to be covered'. In this case the programme was to be about the phenomenon of prejudice as a whole, including those types of prejudice which the producer saw as being most salient in contemporary society. DUMMY, on the other hand, was about prejudice of a specific kind, but still included the producer's views of what prejudice or intolerance meant in that context. In both cases it is thus important to note that the 'subject' chain also involves exclusions in being rooted in a producer's past experiences and world views, his past planning for programmes and his access to available research. The implication is, therefore, that these factors should be taken into account if an analysis is to be adequate to the task of helping one to understand the process as a whole.

Similarly, Elliott demonstrates the need to study the 'presentation' chain as a set of primary factors in the genesis of programme ideas. Here the time-slot allocated to the programme, the budget available and customary methods of programme production start to play a part in forming the ideas themselves. The third set of factors is the 'contact' chain. Through 'contact mechanisms' of personal connections, institutional sources and media publicity, the producer and his immediate colleagues can begin to extend the range of information available to



them and thus consolidate or change components of the programme idea. This may not, however, lead to a general extension of the limits of possible discussion because the use of these contact mechanisms tends - Elliott argues - to perpetuate a particular cultural perspective:

The co-operative and collaborative enterprise of production and the need to use outside sources and intermediaries make it difficult to adopt a definition of a problem varying widely from the common beliefs in society shared by all those involved in the process. Rather it seems likely that there will be an unavoidable tendency to follow such beliefs. Similarly, the way in which the three contact mechanisms generate particular types of programme content and the general stress placed on personal relationships seems to have the latent consequence that programme content will develop within frameworks of meaning widely shared and available, which form the most important part of a distinctively media culture (Elliott, 1972:62).

In fact, Elliott extends this conclusion after having studied the process of turning a programme idea into a script. He found that:

... programme content was less a manifest consequence of decisions about its substance than a latent consequence of its passage through the production process itself (Elliott, 1972:85).

As he followed this passage Elliott was able to details some of the consequences of social as well as cultural contexts for the finished programme. For example, he uses Burns and Stalker's distinction between 'mechanistic' and 'organic' systems of management in an analysis of the organisation of production at a 'shop-floor' level.<sup>18</sup> Here he concludes that the course of the production process depended upon a coincidence of personal goals and the development of personal

---

18. Burns, T. and Stalker, G. (1961) The management of innovation.

relationships, but that this was a consequence of an organic style of work organisation. In other words, the apparent autonomy of the production team was still being worked out within frameworks set by the organisation in which certain resources and facilities were provided (and others excluded).

Such observations, together with Elliott's discussion of occupational milieux which can overlay an organisational hierarchy, such as freelancing, are highly relevant to my own study. However, it is chiefly the fact that Elliott was able to break down the picture of a production team as 'alienated processors of routine material for programmes in an established genre' which makes his study particularly pertinent.<sup>19</sup> He was able to do this through maintaining a rare degree of immersion in the subject-matter and by forming a theoretical view of that subject which identified professional communicators as crucial intermediaries between the society as source and the society as audience. Elliott therefore attempts an holistic analysis in which the intermediary role of broadcasters cannot be typified in either the simplistic terms of being passive channels of information flow or in terms of being wholly purposive persuaders.

His main conclusion is that television production tends to ensure cultural repetition and continuity, and this leads to the suggestion that 'mass communication' may be a contradiction in terms (because the means of production tends to reduce the meaning contained in the

---

19. Elliott, P. (1972) Op.cit. p.143



output). However, Elliott himself points out that (1972:166):

... the argument that mass communication is not communication is an extreme one, designed not as an absolute assertion but to focus attention on a tendency.

Apart from focussing attention on the 'contradictions rather than the conspiracies of capitalist society', the analysis consequently leaves room for one to use Elliott's conceptual tools in an examination of this tendency in other contexts.

One of these tools is his 'Typology of mass communication' which outlines a continuum of varying scope in the role of those involved in production. According to this typology, and in contrast to those involved in producing *THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE*, the scope of those involved in 'one-shot' plays (including those with documentary components) is likely to be more extensive. The scope afforded to the producers of a programme like *DUMPTY* could therefore begin to provide an audience with the opportunity to respond to something other than cultural repetition and continuity. In short, a programme of this nature could begin to communicate to the extent that audience reaction could be less of an emotional response to familiar symbols. However, if (as Elliott implies) the extent of the scope afforded to production personnel varies in inverse proportion to the degree of access of the society as source to the society as audience, then that degree of access needs to be examined very carefully in each case. This is because even in a production with an apparently extensive scope (where the control of the access of society as source is almost entirely in the hands of the production team), that degree

of access may in fact be higher than either the observer or the production team are immediately aware.

An argument can therefore be put forward that it is important to examine the kind of social and cultural contexts identified by Elliott within a range of different productions, but that it is particularly important to pursue an examination of such contexts as one considers the more extensive, creative world of dramatised documentary or straight drama production. This implies that while the importance of contextual factors like complex 'contact chains' may well be underplayed or even unrecognised by creative personnel, it does not mean that they do not exist or that they do not represent a considerable degree of access of the society as source. Elliott's book is, as the back cover proclaims, required reading for anyone interested in how television works, but it does share some of the problems which other processual accounts have encountered. As a single case-study it admits the obvious criticism of being unrepresentative of every kind of production, but it is inevitably uncomprehensive in other ways too. The analysis is holistic in the sense that it identifies cultural producers as crucial intermediaries within three separate systems, but it offers less than a complete explanation of cultural production at every level. It is, for instance, somewhat partial in its coverage of the conflicts and goals within the production company at boardroom level,



and it has also been argued that the book fails to situate the production process in wider political contexts.<sup>20</sup>

At least two practical reasons for a lack of comprehensiveness in such areas can, however, be offered. Murdock (1978:12) rightly advocates the need to examine the overall processes of resource allocation and production control, but this means 'extending the level of analysis to include what happens in the executive suite as well as what happens on and around the studio floor'. The obvious reason why it is usually impossible to do this is that access is rarely freely available to crucial executive meetings. A second reason for a lack of comprehensiveness in processual studies is that one has to decide upon particular units of analysis within each study. If a specific production situation is going to be approached with the attention to detail which it undoubtedly warrants, then a single study cannot also attend in detail to the whole structure of the production company or its role in a widely diversified parent company without becoming massively unwieldy. A research programme can widen the focus to include production studies and studies of relations operating within whole departments, companies and the

---

20. In his doctoral thesis upon which The production of political television (1977) was based, Tracey, H. argues that Elliott ultimately fails to situate the process of programme production in its 'wider social and political context' (p.72), and cites a contemporary review by Grace Wyndham Goldie in support of this view (Goldie, G. (1972) The sociology of television in the Listener 19.10.72).



capitalist state, but individual studies should perhaps integrate themselves within such a programme rather than attempt a single-handed voyage around it.<sup>21</sup>

Some studies have adopted a wider perspective, but this has often been a function of a method which has been used to negotiate access when direct observation has proved to be impossible or impractical. If one is not already professionally involved in production or able to become attached to productions like HAZELL or THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE, then an alternative strategy is to carry out an interview study. This approach may well be used in conjunction with direct observation, but it essentially involves carrying out detailed interviews with individual producers, or with other members of an occupational group, in order to draw up job profiles, to analyse such aspects as the possible routes of entry into a profession or to classify broad social patterns among those group members. If the focus of attention is a particular production then an interview study is often the only option open, since the production itself may already have been completed. For example, in Halloran and his colleagues' study of how a documentary programme had been understood

---

21. The Centre for Mass Communication Research at Leicester University has maintained a good working relationship with its 'local' television company - ATV Network Limited - for many years and in connection with several different projects. Elliott's 1972 study was of an ATV production, as was Halloran et al's 1976 study of the way a programme had been understood in three countries. Similarly, an ongoing project on the production of television drama is based upon a study of this company. A great deal of information has therefore been amassed about this particular organisation and its position within the ITV system, and I have not sought to repeat these findings in the present study which happens to have been based upon a programme from the same company. For a detailed analysis of the company and the frameworks in which it operates see Halloran, J.D. (1978) The production of television drama: An exploratory study of some of the factors that influence the production of drama in an independent television company in the United Kingdom, CMCR.



in three countries, all the information about the actual production of VIETNAM - STILL AMERICA'S WAR had to be gained through post-hoc interviews since the programme had originally been transmitted prior to the start of the research.<sup>22</sup>

Such studies make use of the most popular, economic and convenient method of gaining an overview of different productions, but they also effectively shift the responsibility of observation onto the production personnel themselves by asking them to self-report their considered views of given situations through guided or informal discussion. Halloran is well aware of this, and points out that the interviews conducted with production staff during the course of his research do not represent a 'production study' as the term is properly used. The point of the exercise in this case was to provide information about the values, aims, images and assumptions of the producers in order that they could be compared with the reactions of viewers.

Other interview studies have focussed upon the role of producers in more general terms than those set by particular productions. Perhaps the best, and certainly the most often cited interview study which has dealt with drama-based productions is Muriel Cantor's study of Hollywood series producers.<sup>23</sup> She did in fact spend some

---

22. See Halloran, J.D. et al (1976) Understanding television: An exploratory study in three countries (p.12).

23. Cantor, M. (1971) The Hollywood film producer: His work and his audiences.

time in direct observation of producers at work, but her thesis is chiefly based upon a series of personal interviews with people whom she divides into three types. Members of each of these categories (the 'Old line' producers, the 'Writer/producers' and the 'film-makers') were interviewed in order to establish how they selected programme content, and how they saw this selection as being subject to control by various aspects of the industry in which they worked. Of the three reference groups which Cantor identifies as being significant factors in a producer's choice of action, she concludes that the actual viewing audience and the aesthetic referees within the producer's own craft group were always secondary in importance to the demands of the controllers of the medium - the network chiefs. In saying this, Cantor is not, however, simply reproducing that view which Murdock (1978:10) describes as being 'haunted by the spectre of the sensitive artist, the Scott Fitzgerald figure, whose talent was distorted and destroyed by fat men with cigars and thin men carrying account books'. She is in fact arguing that both producers and controllers respond to a series of audiences extending from the immediate reference groups of an individual's social world to the social, political and economic structures in (in this case) American society. The nature of this response can indicate the existence of conflict between individual producers and representatives of particular bureaucracies, but it can also indicate the existence of different ways of working out an accommodation or acceptance of a professional ideology within the working environment.



Useful though Cantor's work is, it does raise a number of problems. Firstly, it is concerned with a situation in which 'the demands of the network' are arguably more powerful than they are in this country, so her general conclusions may not be particularly applicable to the British state of affairs. Secondly, the particular categories which Cantor uses to describe different types of producer are deliberately broad, but it can still be difficult to apply any one of them to a given individual. DUMMY's producer, for example, can clearly be described as a 'Film-maker' since he was primarily oriented to a career in feature films and was to some extent using DUMMY as a means to that end. On the other hand, having found the story, researched it and co-written the script with the object of 'expanding the margins of tolerance', he also fulfils most of the requirements of being a 'Writer/producer'. There are even grounds for seeing him as an 'Old-line' producer since he made it quite clear that he was concerned to address a mass audience through a programme which was both informative and entertaining. DUMMY was, after all, chosen as a vehicle partly on the basis of a cool reading of the market for such a programme.

The implication of this line of argument is that a study which seeks to produce a number of ideal types from descriptions given by representatives of those types may be inadequate to the task of describing the dynamics of a given situation as it actually occurs. An individual producer can easily adopt apparently contradictory positions as it suits his or her overall purpose, which is to get through the process of producing a film. Making a film is in many ways an art of the possible, and what is or is not possible at any

given moment may be subject to a level of negotiation which is unlikely to show up in post hoc self-reports delivered under the strange conditions of a personal interview.

As I have argued, when personal interviews are combined with direct observation in a processual study there is better chance of being able to study what Elliott calls the 'statics' and the 'dynamics' of production. Indeed:

A phenomenological approach to social research, keeping in sight the dialectic between idea and reality and the overarching social importance of abstract institutions and groups seems to offer a way of approaching 'socio-cultural wholes' from the bottom up. (Elliott, 1972:10)

However, in addition to those gaps in our descriptive knowledge of whole production processes which Elliott set out to fill, there are also large gaps in our knowledge of the statics and dynamics of reception. Audience studies have always formed a major part of mass communications research, and there have been numerous forays into the realm of statistics in the measurement of patterns of viewing, or into the psychology of perception in the examination of such aspects as violence on television.<sup>24</sup> Gaps nevertheless occur in our stock of parallel, complimentary studies of the production and reception of the same programme, and little has therefore been added to our knowledge of the ways in which programmes have actually worked as a means of communicating specific ideas.

---

24. See Bibliography



To pose complimentary questions about the construction and reconstruction of meaning with respect to a given programme is, in part, to criticise a mode of inquiry which has traditionally sectioned-up different moments in a communicative process as if they were not interlocked within a greater whole. Lasswell's 1948 research formula for mass communications study - 'Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?'<sup>25</sup> still persists, even though it is potentially abstractive as a framework for analysis. An overemphasis on the 'what' in content analysis at the expense of the 'who' in organisational or structural analyses of production or reception can, for example, lead to the development of ideal types of communications processes which Dr Johnson might have said were neither ideal nor typical. Similarly, studies which concentrate upon discrete areas of the formula like the 'effect' upon an audience of a given programme presuppose the possibility of measuring such effects in the absence of information about how messages have actually been understood.

Most studies seem to have perpetuated the compartmental approach, and have often done so because it has simply proved to be impractical to observe the production of meaning on both 'sides' of the putative content of a programme or any other message-vehicle. Such analyses are nevertheless in danger of circumventing some of the most central problems of continuity and change, or communication and understanding in social and cultural life. Worse, by attempting to reconstruct the

---

25. Lasswell, H. (1948) The structure and function of communications in society, in Lyman, B. (Ed) The communication of ideas (p.37).

'objective' features of one aspect of a process solely with reference to another, some analyses have been in danger of committing the fallacy of *pars pro toto* - of taking the part for the whole. In the case of content analyses, for instance, a great deal of useful information can be generated about the existence and frequency of occurrence of particular forms of content (as in Gerbner's work on 'cultural indicators'),<sup>26</sup> but one cannot infer from such observations anything about the intentions or practices of cultural producers or about patterns of perception among audiences.

The trouble is that many people do. Content analysts and their sometimes more sophisticated brethren, the semioticians, occasionally forget their debt to sociology in trying to study objects without subjects or culture without producers. Scholars like Umberto Eco<sup>27</sup> do at least have the grace to admit that 'the analysis of the public comes in necessarily as a second "checking" phase of semiotic research' but others appear to be somewhat more arrogant. For example, in a piece about Spielberg's film *JAWS* (in which Spielberg is not even mentioned), the semiotician Stephen Heath explains that the film is '... the constant process of a phasing-in of vision, the pleasure of that process - movement and fixity and movement again, from fragment

---

26. i.e. Gerbner, G. (1970) Cultural indicators: The case of violence in television.

27. Eco, U. (1965) Towards a semiotic inquiry into the television message. Reprinted in WPCS (3) p.104.



... to totality'.<sup>28</sup> The comment which I have missed out of this quote is one parenthesised by Heath in which he asserts that the movement from fragment to totality is 'actually thematised in JAWS as dismemberment'. The question is, 'thematized' by whom? Spielberg, his audience or Heath?

Similar assertions can be found in the work of the Glasgow Media Group or writers like Fiske and Hartley. In their book Reading Television (1978:pp 97-8) there is, for example, a discussion of ITN's coverage of the 'Cod War' in early 1976. An on-the-spot reporter's apparent inability to actually see a collision between an Icelandic and a British ship is explained, by Fiske and Hartley, in terms of cultural determinants (insofar as it would run counter to certain myths to come right out and say that the British ship had deliberately rammed the other). This may be true, but the authors cannot assert this in the way that they do without referring to the events themselves as well as the text. The reporter in question may indeed have been 'perfectly articulating the journalistic codes of impartiality', but he may equally well have been in the loo at the time of the collision.

A small point, perhaps, but an important one. Any assertions about the activity of given groups or individuals need to be backed up with corroborative evidence, but when that activity is directed towards the construction of meaningful discourse one needs to be particularly

---

28. Heath, S. (1978) 'Jaws', ideology and film theory in TLS.

careful not to 'usurp the right to judge the veracity of meanings and then to present (these) decisions as verdicts supported by the authority of science'.

So writes Zygmunt Bauman (1978:244) towards the end of one of the most lucid reviews of a basic problem in sociology. This is a problem which has a special relevance to the sociology of communication, and one which Bauman explicates in terms of various historic responses to the challenge of hermeneutics. Bauman (and writers like Anthony Giddens) have discussed this challenge at a considerably greater length than is possible here, but - briefly - it creates the problem of finding a way of validating interpretations of meaning which would 'measure up to the standard of cogency and authority of the natural sciences'. (Bauman, 1978:14). Equally briefly, it can be noted that no such method has yet been found. This is because:

... the rationality of discourse in cultural sciences, comparable to that of empirical-analytic sciences, cannot be codified without reference to the social dimensions of the debate  
 ... in other words, the epistemology of hermeneutics cannot be detached from the sociology of communication.<sup>29</sup>  
 (Bauman, 1978:244 - his emphasis)

This implies that sociologists cannot explain other people's interpretations of communicative phenomena except by re-interpreting them in some other form, and that this cannot, therefore, properly

---

29. Compare Goldmann, L. (1969) The human sciences and philosophy p.44: 'When it is a question of studying human life, the process of scientific knowing, since it is itself a human historical and social fact, implies the partial identity of the subject and object of knowledge'.



be described as 'explanation' in the sense that a methodology of true interpretation can be wholly reduced to a set of universal rules. The argument undermines the explanatory power of compartmentalised studies like textual analyses or 'effects' studies which reduce the 'meaning' of the content of language to the analyst's interpretation of it, but it does not emasculate sociology's concern with language (including televisual language) as a social phenomenon. In fact it underwrites that concern.

Language remains a primary focus of attention because its function is to describe the world as veridically as possible. It does not simply represent objects in the world, but ways of seeing such objects. No form of 'copy theory' of language can therefore explain its use in any given situation because its use depends upon its entry into the constitutions of social activity as a process. To begin to understand other people's understanding of something like a television programme we must therefore penetrate 'the frames of meaning which lay actors themselves draw upon in constituting and reconstituting the social world' (Giddens, 1976:155). In doing so we would still be employing an interpretive procedure, but 'the hermeneutic explication and mediation of divergent forms of life within (the) descriptive metalanguages of social science' (Giddens, Op.cit., p.162, my emphasis) can enable us to illuminate one frame of meaning in the light of another (and not just in the light of one's own prejudice).

When it is a question of studying communicative processes, the emphasis should therefore be upon conducting comparative analyses of different cases of language-in-use. A move can then be made away from a shallow,



two-dimensional model of communication in which meaning can supposedly be located according to the uniplanar co-ordinates of formal semantics. Instead, a more holistic model can be employed in which the co-ordinates of meaning will include those which occur along Bauman's 'social dimensions' - the structure of the social situations in which the negotiation of meaning takes place.<sup>30</sup>

Within such a multidimensional model it then becomes difficult to speak of the efficiency with which particular channels transfer ordered meaning in a Lasswellian sense, and questions begin to be begged about conventional methods of defining an audience's 'misunderstanding' of a message. Indeed, within a dialectical approach in which the whole must be understood in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole, cases of 'misunderstanding' will normally need to be redefined as simply examples of different ways of understanding a given message. Similarly, the 'message' will itself need to be redefined (as in Halloran, 1974:15) as a 'message vehicle' containing several potential messages which only take on meanings in terms of the available codes or sub-codes in society.

This line of thought permeates the work of writers like Stuart Hall, and the present study acknowledges several cues which have been picked up from his discussion of encoding and decoding processes in mass

---

30. See Halloran, J. D. (1974) Training in the critical reading of television language: the implication of media research for cultural policies. Council of Europe CCC/DC(74)58 - p.14. Halloran discusses the notion that the primary codes for a word like 'cow' will enable it to be decoded as 'a cow is an animal' (whatever language is being used), but in order to understand 'a cow as sacred' one would need to refer to sub-codes of a particular culture as well.



communications.<sup>31</sup> Hall has tended to promote the use of a semiotic paradigm at the expense of conducting complimentary participant observation studies, but he eschews some of the more dogmatic assumptions of the neo-structuralists in adopting a semiotic perspective which does not index a 'closed formal concern with the immanent organisation of the television discourse alone' (Hall, 1973:1). He argues that such a perspective...<sup>32</sup>

... must also include a concern with the 'social relations' of the communicative process, and especially with the various kinds of 'competences' (at the production and receiving end) in the use of that language.

The central concern is not, therefore, with a televisual message as an object (as in pure content analysis), but with its perception as such by people who either encode or decode programmes as 'meaningful discourse'. Hence:

Before this message can have an 'effect' (however defined), or satisfy a 'need' or be put to a 'use', it must first be perceived as a meaningful discourse and meaningfully decoded. It is this set of de-coded meanings which 'have an effect', influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences. In a determinate moment, the structure

- 
31. See Hall, S. (1973) Encoding and decoding in the television discourse. Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, and Hall, S. (1977) Culture, the media and the 'ideological effect' in Curran, J. et al (Eds) Mass communications and society.
32. See also Bourdieu, P. (1968) Outline of a theory of art perception in International social science journal, Vol. 20 (4) pp 589-612, and Hall's footnote reference to Hymes, D. (1972) On communicative competence in Sociolinguistics ed. Pride and Holmes.



employs a code and yields a 'message': at another determinate moment the 'message', via its decodings, issues into a structure. We are now fully aware that this re-entry into the structures of audience reception and 'use' cannot be understood in simple behavioural terms. Effects, uses, 'gratifications' are themselves framed by structures of understanding, as well as social and economic structures which shape its 'realisation' at the reception end of the chain, and which permit the meanings signified in language to be transposed into conduct or consciousness. (Hall, 1973:3)

This view builds upon that of Elliott in seeing the audience as both source and receiver of the 'message' by identifying production and reception as only differentiated (if determinate) moments within the communicative process as a whole. It therefore implies that an abstraction of any one of the three traditional subject-areas (production, content and audiences) from this totality is likely to result in a less than complete explanation of the process. Perhaps most importantly, it leads to a rejection of 'selective perception' theories insofar as the notion of 'de-coding' is at odds with the idea that an audience's perception is 'selective, random or privatised' (Hall, Op.cit., p.14). In Hall, the transposition of the meanings which are signified in language into conduct or consciousness is 'permitted' (in Giddens it is 'enabled') by social structures. In order to understand the nature of a communicative exchange and the degree of symmetry between actual cases of encoding and decoding it is therefore necessary to look at the codes which are being used and at who is using them. To paraphrase Giddens (1976:162), the production and reproduction of meaning with respect to a message-vehicle must, in other words, be explicated as the accomplished outcome of human agency;



an agency which is accomplished, permitted or enabled (and not just constrained) by structures of understanding or frames of meaning which may extend far beyond the immediate context in which a programme is constructed by a producer or reconstructed by an audience. It is these frames of meaning which I have set out to penetrate in the following pages.

## SECTION TWO

### A case-study of the making of a television drama-documentary

It cannot be said too often that the work of social and cultural science is only secondarily a matter of methodological procedures; it is primarily the establishment of a consciousness of process, which will include consciousness of intentions as well as methods and of working concepts.

Raymond Williams. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974: 121)



### The emergence of a programme idea

If DUMBY had been made in France, the programme's producer<sup>1</sup> would probably have been billed as its 'Realisateur'. This is in many ways a more appropriate title since a producer's job is to preside over a process of realisation of an idea; the object being to transform that idea into an artifact.

An original idea may remain essentially intact throughout such a process, but the people involved in realising or reifying it are also likely to contract relations with a variety of both static and dynamic contexts through which the idea acquires a perceptible and modified substance and form. Like a topographical description, an account of the process will consequently have to locate the various features of the landscape which orient the route taken, and to map the formal and informal strategies employed in negotiating these.

The first stages in planning any route involve determining the co-ordinates of the places between which the route will pass, and picking a likely 'corridor' through which any of several possible routes could travel. If, like the proverbial crow, you could fly in a straight line through that corridor, the strategy employed would be almost indistinguishable from the intention. But for the filmmaker, the medium (the technical, organisational and occupational structures of production), the lie of the land (society as source) and the people for whom he or she ostensibly constructs a route (society as audience) are all variables. The chosen corridor, the intervening variables and the producer's access to different strategies of action

---

1. DUMBY's producer also directed the film. However, I will normally refer to him as 'the producer'.

may consequently subvert the intention, so for the purposes at hand a number of assumptions have to be made, based upon previous experience and often the creative and innovative synthesis of perceptions, feelings and values which go altogether to form 'intuition'.

Having a good idea for a programme is therefore not simply a matter of pure inspiration. Like having a good 'nose' for a story, you have to have an idea of what a story or a programme could be. The 'programme idea' thus stems from a relationship between a particular way of looking at the world and a particular way in which that perspective can be given form. It is the result of a convergence of intention and prospect, and it is this convergence which needs to be examined here.

The moment at which the programme idea coalesced for the producer in this case was when he saw a brief article in the Daily Mirror on the 22nd January 1976 under the headline, TRAGIC DOWNFALL OF DEAF GIRL. The article was a sympathetic court report about a young girl who had just been sent to prison for manslaughter. She had "tried desperately to overcome the handicap of being born deaf and dumb, but had fought a losing battle, changing over the years from sunny schoolgirl to loner, prostitute, drinker and, finally, killer".

The producer was immediately intrigued. Being a newspaper story, the bare facts of the girl's life had already been processed into a narrative form, it had acquired a measure of 'human interest' and incorporated a strongly sympathetic stance towards someone who had basically been sent to prison for killing a man. An interesting perspective. Furthermore, the story resonated with a number of 'news values' which could be transformed into 'dramatic values' in a



television treatment. The story had, for example, an identifiable 'oddity' on which to peg the tone of the article (the girl's disability), and a relatively linear storyline with plenty of scope for such subheads as **EXPLOITED** and **STABBED** - as a court report the story was also, and importantly, verifiable and suggested the availability of further information.

These factors do not, however, provide a sufficient reason for the newspaper report being established as an idea for a television programme. The producer was not 'immediately intrigued' with the content as such, but with what it represented for him.

When you start making television programmes you start looking for good stories anyway. Sometimes you just come across these stories, and other times you are forced into a position where you have to look for ideas. In this case it was both of these but the story seemed a great symbol to me, of a deaf girl who wasn't coping very well - of someone who lacked information. It was a very clinical approach first of all, then it seemed like a good idea for a story.

That the story could perhaps make 'good television' was not so obvious that other producers were reaching for the telephone, nor was the formulation of the programme idea simply a matter of chance for this producer. In order to excavate the motivation behind this subjective action of forming an idea for a television programme, it is necessary to look behind and beyond the event itself at the inter-relating features of the producer's personal and professional experience.

#### The subjective framework:

Happening a subjective frame of reference is open to many of the pitfalls of inference and compression which a film-maker encounters in trying to reconstruct a series of events. Apart from oversimplifying complex



relationships, there is, for example, a great danger of artificially establishing cause and effect linkages between paradigms which an individual might appear to hold and the actions themselves. If a film-maker thinks of himself as a creative artist - as an architect as well as an engineer - then many of the choices and decisions which he makes may be seen as being simply intuitive. But such intuitions can also be seen as being rooted in particular strategies, as being receipts from particular cultural and linguistic sources, and as operating within a range of more immediate social contexts.

DREYER's producer was thirty years old when he first became involved in the project, having already made some fifteen films since leaving school in the early seventies. He had been brought up in a family of nine in an industrial town on Teesside and, following family precedent, he had found his first job in engineering at a local shipyard. However, the producer quickly discovered that the job was unlikely to offer many short, indeed long-term, prospects, so he left to spend six or seven months travelling in the Middle East; an experience which he felt had served him well in terms of consolidating a drive for independence and survival.

An early interest in film had developed while at grammar school in the north of England, and an encounter with a film unit which had used the school as part of a documentary programme increased the producer's interest still further. This initial attraction eventually led to a decision to apply for a scholarship at the London International Film School, which the producer won by submitting a portfolio of photographs and an original script after his return from the Middle East. While still a student at the school he received a nomination for a BAFTA award for a film made during his final year, but finding a job afterwards



still proved to be difficult so he filled in with temporary jobs like being a postman until finding a position with an advertising company.

At first the producer mostly found himself writing advertising copy, but the job proved to be a point of entry into professional filmmaking as he was later to direct several of his own commercials. He regarded that experience as an excellent source of discipline in learning about 'pace' and 'balance' in the construction of a film, but it was not until 1973 when the first real breakthrough came with the making of *THE FIGHT* for the BBC, a documentary about the preparations for a title bout between the boxers, Bugnor and Frazier. Since making that film the producer had worked as a freelance director of such films as *MINI* (a BBC documentary for the 'Inside Story' series about a little boy who set fire to his school) which won a Press Guild award in 1975. He had also worked as co-director on Paul Watson's documentary series *THE FAMILY* while continuing to make commercials with a Bond Street production company.

Working from this basic biography, some fundamental contexts of orientation can now be mapped out. First of all, the producer was conscious of having left a particular section of society behind him in Teesside whom he regarded as being in many ways less capable than himself - not in terms of being less intelligent, but in terms of having less experience or access to information. Linked to this was another key paradigm which was his perception of a lack of tolerance which is sometimes shown towards particular groups or individuals in modern-day society. Specifically, the producer was concerned about the tolerance which he observed towards people who lacked experience or information for reasons beyond their control, and several of his films had attempted to explore and illuminate examples of this. *MINI*, for



example, was a film about a case of what he called 'juvenile injustice' towards a small boy who had been incarcerated as being 'too dangerous' to be allowed to be free, whereas his resort to arson could have been explicable in terms of his family background and the sheer frustration of an intelligent individual finding himself trapped and isolated from both his family and his school. Similarly, *THE FAMILY* has been an attempt to explain and illustrate apparently irrational phenomena 'from the bottom up' and both ventures contain elements of what might be called the 'social missionism' which has been a major axiom of the documentary film tradition for several decades now.

John Grierson, who has been called the father of documentary, once said that he had a desire to 'bring the citizen's eye in from the ends of the earth to the story, his own story, of what is happening under his nose'. *DUMMY*'s producer shared a similar point of view:

You could be interested simply in style. I could have been an art director for instance, but I can't separate film-making from its content. If I was interested in style alone I would be doing something else, but the best films have more than just style or technical know-how; they have something more to offer. They shed light on common things.

The illumination of everyday life is a basic point of departure for the documentarist, as indeed it is for the social scientist. James Cameron, for instance, has said that 'In documentary, you start with the truth and then illuminate it', but for the documentary film-maker this ethnographic aspiration to explain ourselves to ourselves is also firmly linked to a potential for mass communication. As the producer explained:

I am conscious of making films for a mass audience, I want them to be talked about the next day in the pub. I want to use them to extend the margins of people's tolerance ... if you can do this then I think you are going to get a better society. Film isn't necessarily the best way of doing this, but it's a very good way.



The producer was in the position of being able to put such value-orientations into operation; values rooted in his personal biography, partly through having established a track-record as a documentarist, and partly through being a freelance. Unlike a staff producer working to contract, the freelance has a greater freedom of choice in the films he makes, but because of this there is also a greater need to work out personal career-paths, to develop a philosophy and a style which will be identifiable and marketable, and to devise strategies of action towards achieving this.

Such a strategy of action may well embrace a much broader instrumental rationale than mere choice of content. It is likely, for instance, to be linked to perceptions of occupational structure. Towards the end of 1975, the producer felt that he was reaching what he described as a 'documentary plateau'. His work to date had been firmly within the documentary tradition, and he was beginning to look around for a project with which he could extend his repertoire. Such an extension was specifically directed towards a long term ambition to make feature films for the cinema, and in many respects the producer felt that his work in television and in making commercials was an apprenticeship for full-scale film-making. He did not feel that making both serious documentaries and commercials was an equivocal thing to do:

You can use every moment of the day to behave either for or against society, even when you are driving down the street you have the opportunity to be either aggressive or not. I think that you can put the same sort of slant into whatever film you are making, even commercials. Some work I see as experience, as stepping stones. I look at my career in terms of steps and plateaux, and the next step is drama. If I could get someone to let me do a ninety-minute drama I would be advancing myself.



Film-makers are often involved in a search for the extension of creative space, and the resources available are seen to extend along a continuum running from the simple technical facilitation of televising, say, a weather forecast, through the selection of content in news and straight documentary, to the creation and manipulation of content and form in drama. The feature film is seen to lie very much towards the latter end of this continuum, with a form like the drama-documentary occupying an intermediary position. Having built-up a reputation in a straight documentary, the producer was consequently looking for a form with which he could expand his creative space:

The reason I wanted to do a drama-documentary was that I thought you would have more chance to interpret the material. I think I could get more across with this kind of approach. With a straight documentary you are more at the mercy of the action; the action dictates what you do. You can try, by altering the juxtaposition of shots, to bring about things which you have seen yourself, and which you think it would be interesting for other people to see, or to know about, or to confirm certain ideas - but you can't always pull this off. That was what was so frustrating about *MINI* - there were certain things that I couldn't bring out because I couldn't manipulate the action. What I want to do now is to manipulate more, the director's job is after all to manipulate the action.

Apart from seeing a newspaper article as a potentially good source for an idea, professional and career-oriented criteria also therefore play a part in choosing a 'corridor' for that idea. The producer's overall strategy was in fact clarified by his insertion of an article in Screen International (12.9.77) to coincide with *DUMBY*'s transmission. Referring to programmes like *DUMBY* as 'The other kind of low budget feature', the producer outlined the case for giving people like himself the opportunity to establish 'a truly indigenous British film industry':



The opportunities for the young director in the cinema are few and far between. Television, on the other hand, offers not just the facility to learn the techniques of the craft but, more importantly, the committed director, prepared to move between departments and from company to company is able to develop his own philosophy and style. A director must have the freedom to choose his own subject and develop his own themes if he is to grow in stature. Few directors in the British cinema have that freedom today ... It's difficult to understand on what criteria the British film entrepreneur decides what will be successful and what will not. Usually, if not from some jaded intuition, then a vague attempt to repeat someone else's past success. This is doomed to fail. The only way to have a vigorous and exciting cinema is to be able to anticipate trends. This anticipation can only be achieved by an acute awareness of contemporary reality. I believe many film-makers in television have this awareness; what they do not have is the chance to translate it to the big screen. In the past, the movement of directors between television and the cinema happened quite regularly, usually to the benefit of the latter. We have to remind ourselves that such notables as John Boorman and Ken Russell spent their early days working for the small screen. Nowadays the directors are stacked up like planes waiting to land; the chances to 'move across' are extremely remote, and this can only be to the detriment of the cinema. It's not just a question of the creative ideas they bring with them, or whether their technical abilities can be matched by those already 'out there' - more important is the kind of experience they bring. It is the experience of 'people', of the problems, aspirations and language of the society we live in. This is what many of the better television films have concerned themselves with. And in the past ten years many powerful and moving films have come out of it: this cannot be said of the British cinema ... Why then if television offers so much opportunity and freedom to the director, should he aspire to the big screen? The answer is simple - the need to develop further, to make bigger and better films. Cinema is a quality medium, in the end the big screen and the big budgets offer better standards.

In deciding to make *DUFFY*, the producer was also, then, expecting to be able to use it as a 'calling card' in an assault on the film industry (and a successful one at that, since at the time of writing his first cinema feature *QUADROPHENIA* is about to be released). Future



expectations nevertheless combined with past criticism in deciding how to approach the project, as the producer explained at the time:

The reaction of the press, audience research, letters I receive, confirms my opinion about what I'm doing. Sometimes the reactions I get surprise me and give me more information. It's nice to get praise for a film; I was proud of the letter from Sam Peckinpah (in response to MIMI), but at the same time, the more praise you get the more you begin to concern yourself with the subject, the people themselves ... the best feedback I can get is interest in the subject. If people feel concerned enough to write in, or talk about it, and if a large number of people do that, then you know your film has made some impression. It is important to know whether it has made an impression so that you can carry on in the same, or an improved way. I think I know anyway, but I would be interested to know if particular ideas have come across. In my first film (THE FIGHT) I didn't know, for instance, whether certain little things, nuances that myself and the editor know about would be picked up by the audience ... it would be interesting to know to what degree people understand the film. I want people to notice looks and smiles and around things - it's those things actually give people a personality; give them a reality.

The producer operated the hypothesis that an audience would form an overall gestalt of his films, without necessarily picking up all the little points of detail, but he therefore felt that an inattention to that detail (on his behalf) could easily rupture or damage that gestalt. In order to ensure that this did not happen, professional friends and colleagues were then used as a 'meta-audience', both in the sense that the producer sought the critical comment of professionals and in the sense that the producer was sensitive to the manner in which other films had been made in the past. In the first sense he felt that he actually made films for a professional audience, since if he could satisfy them then everything else would follow:

You do want to make a film that people in the industry are going to admire. I want professional people to look at my films, or for editors to say 'That's well edited',



or for cameramen to say 'That's well shot' - if you satisfy critical comment then the thing is going to do what you want it to do for a mass audience, because we are the most critical. We know when it is a bad cut; we are trying to please a set of standards which are higher than the norm. In other words you are baking bread for bakers rather than baking for people who don't get bread very often.

In the second sense the producer particularly admired the work of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Herzog, and similarly respected the personalized themes which directors like Scorsese had taken up in America. In the Screen International article, for instance, the producer noted:

The reason that MEAN STREETS and TAXI DRIVER are so successful is because of Scorsese's sensitivity to social currents and his cultural awareness of the New York in which he lives. This knowledge is as important to the success of the film as his technical ability.

Again, the producer was obviously aware of the work of people like Kenneth Loach and Tony Garnett, and was personally acquainted with such film-makers as Brian Gibson (who made JOEY) and John Purdey (of THE HONG-KONG BEAT and SAILOR), all of whom would provide actual or potential points of reference.

A new project was also expected to fulfil more general requirements as a text, as the producer explained:

I'd like it to exist on several levels. First of all it should be entertaining so that people will want to watch it. It should also be a dramatic story; that is what attracted me to this in the first place. It should also be informative, and then it can do other things too, like the social things I'm interested in.

Buried beneath these statements is the implicit necessity of having to formulate a marketable idea. A good idea cannot stand alone, one has to go through a process of selling it to a sympathetic market, which means in turn that you have to be aware of what a sympathetic market would be. This necessity then reciprocates with the initial choice of



a programme idea such that ideas are sought which have the potential of being both entertaining and dramatically interesting as well as fulfilling deeper personal motives. So despite the individualistic and creative goals which may drive a producer to make programmes, the selection of a particular programme-idea is made in relation to a number of different constraints which are external to the idea itself.

DUFFY's producer once said that he would like to have been a poet given different circumstances; Spielberg would have been a composer, but both have chosen to work out their creative needs within an organisational - rather than an individualistic - setting, which means that the freedom of the individual as a creative force has to be negotiated in relation to existing structures. It is the way in which this apparent paradox is managed at many different levels which needs to be understood, since 'the concept of creativeness and the concept of the healthy self-actualizing, fully human person seem to be coming closer and closer together, and may turn out to be the same thing' (Diamond, V. Quoted by Gould in New Scientist, Vol.180, No.1133: 841 1978). This, in part, is what the producer was arguing in his Screen International article in equating structural constraint with the foreclosing of individual creativity. Interestingly, an awareness of this is not unconnected with the producer's underlying concern for the lack of tolerance which he saw as restricting people like Sandra's opportunity to become 'self-actualizing and fully human'. Whereas he had access to sufficient information to enable him to manipulate existing constraints, Sandra did not, so her story was 'immediately intriguing' as a symbol of the producer's professional philosophy as a communicator as well as being symbolic of his personal philosophy as a social observer:



The basic attraction to me in the story, apart from any compassionate reasons I may or may not have, is that if you can't communicate then you get taken advantage of. If you have information and yet you cannot use it then people take advantage of you. I see a whole group in society like that; I see a whole group where I come from in this way. Seeing this girl is a great symbol to me, and that is why I want to do it.

#### Developing a programme idea

Working from the bare bones of the Daily Mirror article, the producer began to research the story early in 1976. Being a freelance, he was also working on several other ideas, including some for a possible feature film, but he began by trying to establish a chain of contacts, initially through institutional sources such as the girl's probation officer. At first this approach failed, and the producer sat on the story for some weeks, but having turned the possibilities over in his mind during this incubationary period, and having discussed the idea with friends and a few professional colleagues, he began to realise 'how strong it was' and went back to the probation people again.

This time the producer managed to persuade an assistant to give him the name of the girl's social worker, Coleman, and discovered that this man had a considerable interest in the special problems of the deaf, having acted as interpreter during Sandra's trial. Coleman was at that time teaching in Edinburgh, but the producer eventually arranged a meeting in Birmingham, whereupon the social worker mapped out the whole story in great detail. The producer explained that this had been 'much better than I had imagined, in terms of the content it was more intriguing'. This primary contact was also fortuitous in other ways, since Coleman functioned as both an institutional source and a personal contact which would lead to direct contact with the family itself.



Two major features in the making of DUMY had already been established by these early stages which interconnect with the establishment of the programme idea itself. The producer was very much the prime mover of the whole project, and all the functions of what would later be the 'work group' of producer, director, researcher, writer, etc., were collapsed into one person. Indeed, the fact that the producer would also direct the film was already part and parcel of the overall concept, since as a result of being a freelance operation, the motivation and organisation of the project was being generated from outside of direct institutional constraint, which might normally separate the two jobs. Secondly, and in connection with the latter, the producer was relying heavily upon personal contact. Elliott (1972: 60-62) points out that there is a general tendency within television production to value and use personal, particularistic relationships, and this is particularly relevant here. DUMY was, at the very least, a difficult subject to approach, and a great deal of cooperation needed to be sought from various parties in order to get it off the ground. Using a good deal of direct personal contact could therefore help to allay suspicions about one's motives with individuals as well as 'public or formally organised bodies with developed status hierarchies' as Elliott puts it. A less formal approach in building up a contact chain also correlates with the individuality of the producer and of the product. Elliott coolly reflects that access through formal channels is potentially open to anyone, whereas the producer aiming to create individualistic programmes can achieve this goal partly by obtaining material through personal contact; contacts which are not open to everyone.

Meeting Coleman, like many aspects of the research for DUMY, was unofficial, informal and heavily reliant upon a frank exchange of ideas.



The producer did not have expert knowledge of Sandra's story or of the special problems of the deaf, and Coleman was uniquely placed to supply information in a condensed and usable form. He gave the producer the name and address of Sandra's family in Bradford; the producer wrote to them, and Coleman cleared the way for a meeting.

It turned out that Sandra's elder sister was now virtually running the family, since the mother was dead, and the father had left during Sandra's early childhood, so it was the sister who became the producer's main source. She had been understandably suspicious at first, but admitted later to having nurtured a hope that 'Someone might one day write a book about our Sandra', and seems to have been won over fairly rapidly. It is true that the family eventually received monetary and other benefits as a result of making the film, but it would be grossly unfair to suggest that this played any part in the proceedings here. The producer was well aware of the sensitivity and responsibility involved in setting up this kind of venture, and as will transpire, it was not all going to be plain sailing.

having gathered a good deal more information from the family, and a general, if not blanket, approval to go further, the producer next contacted the solicitor concerned with Sandra's case, and he agreed to release all the relevant papers providing permission was gained from Sandra herself. Sandra was, of course, still in prison, and the producer had already tried unsuccessfully to get Home Office permission to see her. The contact with the Home Office had necessarily been a formal one where putting one's case as a 'Journalist' or a 'Television producer' might be expected to fall on stoney ground, especially in view of a number of programmes which had appeared around this time which had



investigated facets of various Home Office operations (some parts of NINI had involved filming inside a borstal, for example).

The official reason for refusing permission was reported to have been the protection of Sandra's interests in view of a possible confusion concerning the producer's intentions; the Home Office seems to have inferred that the film was going to be about a deaf girl's experience of prison life. In any case, obtaining Sandra's permission to release the solicitor's files remained an essential step to take and the producer eventually had to resort to subterfuge in order to see her in prison.

One reason for the direct contact with the sister had been simply due to the fact that she felt very uncomfortable about writing letters and did not have a telephone. Combined with the fact that the prison was some seventy miles away from Bradford, the sister had had virtually no contact with Sandra either by letter or a visit despite Sandra's having been in prison for nearly two months at this stage. The producer therefore offered to take the sister to see Sandra, partially to pose as her husband to see the girl himself. As he explained, "It was quite good for Sandra, it was good for the sister and it was also extremely good for me." He took along some nylons and flowers together with the release document, and apart from nearly being caught out by a warder, all went well and Sandra's permission was obtained. As a result the solicitor gave him all the prosecution papers, probation reports, police maps concerning the crime and the court statements.

The programme idea was consequently very much a going concern by this time, since the producer had a basic narrative, corroborating evidence and cooperation from the principle parties concerned. About two months



after seeing the original newspaper article he therefore began to look for backing for the project and started a correspondence with the BBC.

From the producer's point of view, contacting the BBC would have been a natural move to make, since he had established a number of contacts there through his previous work on *THE FAMILY* and the prize-winning *MINI*, and from the corporation's point of view the producer had established the vital prerequisite of a good track record. At least three other factors militated against backing the venture, however. First of all the project was likely to be very expensive because of its length, content and the plan to shoot it entirely on film. Secondly, the producer himself represented a risk insofar as his track record was in straight documentary rather than drama, and thirdly the producer was a freelance whose employment might have been in conflict with the traditions of the corporation, which tries in general to 'look after its own'. The BBC was certainly interested in the idea, but saw the programme more in terms of being a documentary rather than a drama-documentary, and was perhaps less willing to take on the dual risk of filming what was shaping up to be a mini-feature with a producer-director who was relatively untried in that field.

A certain amount of conflict between an administrative and a creative force within an organisational setting like this could have been a major determinant of the film's existence, and in fact the whole project was left in abeyance for two to three months as the producer continued to work on his 'bread and butter' work in commercials. The basic idea still seemed to be a viable proposition, however, and the producer decided to try again, and this time he contacted the person who was at that time Head of Documentaries and factual programmes for ATV Network Ltd.



The two men met in June, and appear to have struck an immediate rapport. In comparison to the approach to the BBC, a much more organic relationship developed through a coincidence of personal goals and available organisational provision. The presentation of a particular idea to a particular person at a particular time was certainly opportunistic on the producer's behalf, but it was also fortuitous. The producer was, for example, aware of the Head of Documentaries' own track record, but he had never met him personally and could not have been sure of his reaction to the idea, and, correlatively, the Head of Documentaries also had the opportunity to judge the idea on its own merits.

From ATV's point of view, the idea had a number of very practical merits; although there was as yet no script, the producer had been working on the idea intermittently for over four months, and was presenting an integrated package rather than a preliminary outline, so much of the basic research had been completed without any direct cost to the company. A related point was that if the programme was going to be a reconstruction issued as a 'True story' with ATV's name on the credits, then the research would have to be both accurate and comprehensive. As the Department head said, "I wouldn't begin to do this kind of programme, a reconstruction, if I didn't have the reality in front of me" - so the fact that the producer had gone to Birmingham armed with a considerable collection of corroborating documentation was a significant factor in the process of selling the idea.

Apart from the fact that ATV was more able to bear the cost of producing the programme than the BBC at that time, it could be argued that the company needed to do a programme like DUMY. ATV had, for example,



been attracting criticism from some quarters for overplaying the international flavour of some of their networked output, and for not having a networked current affairs programme, so buying a property like DUTTY could have provided some useful ammunition against these critics. Indeed, the company's managing director was later to cite their willingness to back freelance ventures of this nature in answer to just this kind of criticism, and DUTTY figures prominently in the company's promotional literature for the following year.<sup>2</sup>

A further element in the argument can be seen as being related to the complex question of the spectre or blessing (depending upon one's point of view) of a second ITV channel. DUTTY's producer represented an increasingly important lobby of young, independent producers or directors who were seeking markets wherever they could within existing network companies, or more radically, within the hope-for rebirth of the British film industry. By encouraging freelance directors or producers to work for a company like ATV, the Head of Documentaries can then be seen to be offering them the facilities of a large production house in return for a kind of insurance insofar as a floating capital of independent talent was being built up as a source of contact should

- 
2. See ATV YEARBOOK 1977-78, where DUTTY is featured along with the awards and recommendations which it won. In his address to the Press Guild in February 1978, ATV's managing director, Lord Windlesham, had pointed out the company's willingness to axe programmes like NEW FACES at the height of their popularity as proof of the company's concern for improving output. He had dismissed the 'jingoistic chauvinism' of the journalist's concern that programmes like THE MUPPETS were too transatlantic, and specifically cited the company's willingness, and historically proven track record in attracting freelance talent on to their documentary output (DUTTY's cameraman, Chris Hedges, had already worked for ATV on several projects in the past, for example, along with other freelancers such as Adrian Cowell and Antony Thomas) - see BROADCAST 27.2.78.



the need arise to fill the virgin territory of a second channel.<sup>3</sup>

The commissioning of single programmes nevertheless involves both corporate and personal risks, and DUTY was no exception. In fact, it could be described as a special case, since it already involved a fusion of forms in being a drama-documentary, and was generally considered to be breaking new ground both in terms of its form and the degree of involvement with the subject. Most of the actors and crew were to find making the film a novel experience. The Associate producer, for example, said:

I've never worked on a programme quite like this before, where you are dealing with someone who is still alive, and who was actually in prison during much of the planning. One is dealing with existing human elements, and there is a very strong emotional buzz about the film with which I haven't been involved before.

The decision to mix studio staff with a freelance camera and sound unit would compound the element of experiment in the venture, and the actual

3. Since the network companies would still be able to contribute to the OBA, whether the OBA or ITV2 came into existence, the existing ITV companies would still have to reconcile their commercial needs with those of independents. The existing structures of the ITV companies would therefore have to expand their areas of operation to help independent producers or directors comply to fill the new space, so the use of independent people within existing structures can be seen as a useful precedent. As Charles Denton has subsequently said in a television interview, "We are now in the business of encouraging freelance producers and directors every day of the week. I am seeing freelance producers and directors who wish to bring particular works into ITV via the company I work for - ATV. There is no reason whatsoever why that shouldn't develop over the next year or so, as it must do to provide the sheer weight of material that's going to be necessary for a fourth channel." The interviewer, Anthony Smith, then asked if this applied to the OBA, since independents would then have a prescriptive right of access to the new channel, and Denton replied, "I don't see why that should necessarily be a more secure way. I believe they (the independent producers and directors) want to work with technical and production facilities which existing institutions have, because they have built them up over the past few years. I don't see why we shouldn't move fairly smoothly from a position of employing a large number of freelance producers and directors, as we do at the moment, to supporting a raft of independent producers (- in ITV2 or OBA)."

(See Anthony Smith's BBC2 programme Tx 14.5.79 'Independence for independents'.)



compliment of the crew was to cause some problems between the Elstree studios and the production office in Portman Square.<sup>4</sup> Another distinctive factor was that both the department head and the producer were engaged in upwardly mobile stages of their careers at the time, since DUFFY was to be one of the last productions commissioned by the

- 
4. The ACTT in particular is apprehensive about new developments in independent and semi-independent film-making of this nature. The union's leader, Alan Sapper has said that his suspicions are based on "the hard historical experience of our union and the film industry, where independent film-making, although producing some of the highest levels of technical excellence and creative excellence, have produced a great deal of unemployment and instability in employment. We don't want to develop in that way in the television industry ... successful programme-makers who work pretty regularly have a creatively fulfilling life, and an economically fulfilling life, but for every one or two successful people, there are literally hundreds of people who never get any work, and you ask those people if they like freelancing and they say it's another word for unemployment. That's the tragedy ... we say that you must make your programmes according to the relevant trade union agreements. It's not just our agreement, it's EQUIT, The Musician's Union and NATKE. We say yes, make your programme, and if the programme companies wish to buy them on film there is no difficulty. The difficulty is when areas of independent production are trying to make programmes on the cheap as we say, and then try to slip them into the networks and into the BBC for main transmission." (See Smith, Ibid.)

This view is in conflict with that of Charles Denton, for instance, who argues for a change in these union agreements precisely in order to allow for a company like ATV to secure a foothold in ITV2 or the CBA; in the event of either occurrence, Sapper would still argue (as is his job to do so) for at least 75% permanent employment.



Head of documentaries before he became Controller of programmes for the company,<sup>5</sup> and the programme itself represented a significant advance for the producer. The success of the programme can thus be considered to be of strategic importance for both men, as well as being an intrinsically desirable objective.

In contrast to many programmes, neither the production schedule nor the budget was rigidly fixed during the early stages of operational planning, and the producer considered that he had been given quite an unusual degree of freedom to choose his own personnel at that time. Having been given a five-month contract and a provisional shooting date for February of the following year, he also had enough time to wait for weather conditions of his choice, and this also gave him the flexibility to wait until particular members of the prospective crew had been released from their existing commitments. As he said later,

- 
5. Denton was in the process of taking over as Controller of programmes for ATV as DUMY was being made. This was part of a minor revolution at ATV in which three new departmental bosses were appointed, including the innovationary appointment for the company of one for Documentary alone. It could be argued that with Denton as Controller the nature of the 'funnel' through which independent or semi-independent productions would have to pass had changed quite radically - as a senior executive was quoted as saying in BROADCAST (78), "You've now got for the first time creative and professionally responsible people in positions of some authority. It's a profound shift for ATV, and one which was needed." Stemming from decisions taken whilst still Head of documentaries - such as the decision to mix staff and freelance on DUMY - Denton now believes that "The ITV companies - programme controllers - are operating on the basis of programme judgements. I certainly do myself; I'm not operating primarily on the basis of a cash relationship between myself and the market, I still consider myself to be primarily a producer concerned, and in fact occasionally obsessed, with television, and I think we are going to be looking to encourage material that is good within British television now, wherever it comes from." (See Smith, Ibid.)



I could have gone in and made the programme very quickly as one would normally have done. I could, for instance, have met Sandra just the once, said to hell with the various agencies concerned and just made it, but I think the result would have been less true, and of less value than what we are actually doing now.

Although the producer was being paid for five months, he was actually going to be working on the programme for nearer eighteen, and as he explained, "You can't normally afford to make one film in eighteen months." By the same argument, it would not have been feasible for ATV to put a staff producer on a single drama-documentary for that length of time, so some of the flexibility of the schedule depended upon the producer being freelance, which was a significant factor to be considered in buying the programme.

The decision to go ahead with the project was not, however, wholly determined by a form of cost-benefit analysis. Apart from weighing up the organisational and technical factors involved in taking on the programme, the Head of documentaries was also relying upon his own experience in making judgements of both the programme idea and the producer himself. Having come up through the ranks, the departmental head commanded a good deal of respect among people I talked to, and was well known as a documentary film-maker in his own right. A degree of empathy with the personal goals, and a professional experience of the technical difficulties of making a programme like DUTTY was consequently apparent within his position, as indeed was a certain element of patronage. Nevertheless, it would be easy to overlook the basic ingredient of mutual respect in the relationship. "I actually think he is a very good director," the head confided, "or at least he will be", and from the producer's point of view, the former "asked the right questions" and "immediately recognized the symbolism" of the original newspaper article



at their first meeting. Both men also concurred on the basic motivation of the programme, the producer's desire to "extend the margins of people's tolerance" being echoed by the department head's hope that "the film may possible expand people's horizons, it may provide just a bit more humanity."

One of the reasons for "asking the right questions" is likely to have been rooted in the department head's personal experience of the problems of deafness in young children, and whether or not this influenced his original interest in the programme idea, it may very well have highlighted some of its potential dangers. There was, for example, the possible risk of implying that deaf girls are likely to be more promiscuous, and the department head made it clear that it was ultimately his responsibility to monitor such contingencies and to act if necessary.

To transform the programme idea into a finished film was the responsibility of the producer, but it was the head of department's prerogative to exercise editorial control in the last instance in anticipation of possible legal or institutional constraint. He can also be seen to exercise control in the first instance, not only by fixing the running-time of a programme so that it will fit into a network slot and through providing, or withholding, particular resources, but also by employing particular programme-makers.

In order to ensure that a programme is going to be "dramatically acceptable and within the bounds of propriety", as he put it, the head of department has to make a number of judgements about the producer and his intentions. Qualities like commitment, energy, integrity and confidence were all mentioned as values in this context, in addition to the existence of a respectable track record, and the departmental head was clearly impressed



on this score given some comments he made in private. Following the initial meetings with the producer, he also became increasingly confident about the programme itself; the actress playing Sandra was later to be told that her role was "one of the most important parts we have cast for a decade" and even allowing for a little expeditious flattery here, it is clear that buying the programme was considered as an investment.

#### Starting work on the programme

The producer had already completed much of the background research and the establishment of a chain of contacts by the time he approached ATV, but having now obtained definite backing for the project he could begin to work in earnest. The first step which financial support enabled the producer to take was to expand the creative work group to include a writer. As a documentalist, the producer was not very familiar with script-writers or playwrights, and at first thought of the more well-known names such as Dennis Potter or John McGrath. Apart from the fact that such writers would probably have been heavily committed to other projects, the producer also had to consider the choice of writer in relation to the nature of his own ideas. Potter, for example, was not known for his sympathy towards naturalism, and although McGrath was felt to be in sympathy with the "Northern industrial flavour" and the political content of the idea, the producer decided that he could probably contribute this aspect himself, having been brought up in a similar environment.

As a result of these initial thoughts, and having been given a free hand by ATV to choose a writer, he then decided to look for "a seasoned dramatist who could look at the material in an experienced and objective way" rather than someone who might have injected a specific perspective into the story.<sup>1</sup> He began to speak to several writers and discovered that one particular prospect had a similar response to the Head of documentaries



at ATV in being drawn into the central themes of the programme idea. This writer described their first meeting as "extraordinary", and was clearly intrigued with the idea from the beginning:

I had never met (the producer) before, and he came over to see me with all these files and documents, and the photographs. It was really quite exciting; even though he is quite a salesman, I could see how important the story could be.

From the producer's point of view, this writer certainly fitted the bill as a "seasoned dramatist". He had left RADA in the mid-fifties, and had worked as a staff writer for a television company before going freelance with a string of plays for both television and the theatre. During his twenty-odd years as a professional writer his range had been considerable, having written single plays and multi-part works like A THINKING MAN AS HERO; adaptations such as MOL FLANDERS, THE ADVENTURES OF DON QUIXOTE and CIDER WITH ROSIE, and major stage plays such as STEVIE.

Looking at this record, it was perhaps surprising that the writer would have been interested in scripting a drama-documentary, but he had also written a number of factual plays in the past, including 84 CHARING CROSS ROAD, a television play reconstructing some aspects of the Kruger spy case. STEVIE had basically been a biographical study of the poet, Stevie Smith, and THINKING MAN AS HERO had revolved around the making of a (fictitious) television documentary about a (factual) person; Ludwig Wittgenstein. As the writer pointed out, the fictitious programme within this play would probably have made quite a good documentary in its own right, since Wittgenstein's life had been chronicled with some care, although the playwright had received at least one congratulatory note afterwards, praising him for having invented "this lunatic Austrian philosopher".



In the writer's view, the point at issue was the narrowness of the line between fact and fiction:

Even a straight documentary is very heavily edited; the way it is shot gives you a built-in opinion, together with the use of music and sound-effects. The documentary only gives you the appearance of authenticity since no film can be truly authentic, simply because nobody is going to behave with a film camera in front of them as if it wasn't there. Certain techniques can give you the impression of authenticity; Ken Loach's films do this, for example, but I actually question whether that is a good thing, because if you give the impression of authenticity you are actually removing from the viewer a certain area of critical faculty. If you make no pretence about it, and say 'This is a true story', but that it is a story, then you are engaging the audience in a slightly different way. I, in fact, profoundly disagree with Ken that one should lull the audience into the belief that what we are watching is real life.

The playwright had once written a television play called HELLO, GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME about a TV chat show, which was staged in a studio with actors playing the parts of guests in front of an invited audience who had been told that the play was a real pilot for a real show. One of the 'guests' was supposed to have a nervous breakdown in the middle of the programme, and the results had apparently been so convincing that the audience believed it entirely. One of the BBC's commissionaires had even complained to the writer that it had been disgraceful to allow that 'guest' air time; and the latter suggested that ...

The ease with which one can now create apparent authenticity is really quite dangerous, but you cannot level a charge of authenticity against a documentary with any more validity than you can against a play. There are still so many processes between the event and the viewer, whether those events are filtered through a documentary producer's eye or through a play director's eye.

I can honestly say that I only have one main aim, and that is to be truthful. The interesting thing about drama



is the possibility of presenting a life; we are all so bound up with the minutiae of day-to-day living that we don't often have the chance to stand back and look at the progress of life. That is what I am principally interested in doing.

That is also what the producer was looking for in his search for a writer who could approach the material objectively. The writer's own interest, or more accurately, his preoccupation, with character as the organic centre of drama would then provide a structural rigour for the programme as a whole, as he explained;

I am not really a documentary writer or a propagandist, you see, my main concern is the people; the character. I work from the character rather than the plot, and this play seems to me to be mainly about the survival of a character. If you are that poor and that handicapped, and yet you come out of it, as Sandra is today - really quite jolly and bright, it is astonishing. The film is about the survival of the human spirit: her spirit, although obviously damaged, is still intact, despite the inability to communicate.

The writer nevertheless shared with the producer the prescriptive intent of the idea, and something of Wilfred Owen's view that the duty of the poet is to warn:

Bradford is actually quite a small place, surrounded by that basin of hills, and Sandra is swallowed up in it. She is swallowed up in it, and nobody really cares. That's the whole point; you hope that someone watching the programme in some city somewhere will just stop and think. If you see someone peeing on a bomb site, or being sick in the street, my instinctive reaction is to cross over the road. But that person may have been someone like Sandra, and I think our intention here is to encourage a bit more humanity, to encourage people to think.

#### Working on the script

Having been given a certain amount of time to play with, the producer had decided to postpone any filming until after Sandra had come out of prison on the 29th December 1976, and this also gave him and the writer time to work closely together on the script material. Soon after



the writer had agreed to do it, the producer drove him up to Bradford and introduced him to the family:

The sister began to unfold this amazing story, and the dramatic possibilities began to open up. When I first met (the producer) I think we knew very little of the story; we knew she had been a schoolgirl athlete, and that she had fallen from grace and so on, but as we talked to the sister I became more and more interested in this terrible Dostoyevskian descent.

When we first went up there, some of Sandra's relatives were quite rightly alarmed about the fact that we were going to do the film. We assured them that we were going to do it with as much sympathy as we could, and that it wasn't going to be a sensational thing. One of the old aunts said that the whole idea reminded her of the Quentin Crisp film (THE NAKED CIVIL SERVANT). Well, I was surprised that she'd seen it since it was on very late at night, but it had obviously affected her, and she was now inclined to see homosexuals in a different light, even though she was a catholic. I thought this was enormously encouraging - that she had followed this extraordinary bizarre man through, and at the end felt sympathy for him. The aunt was obviously very distressed over Sandra's prostitution, so the fact that she had reacted favourably to the Quentin Crisp film was very encouraging.

Although the sister had agreed in principle to the making of the film, her three aunts had, indeed, been very unsure about the whole idea at the beginning. The producer described them as 'very tough Yorkshire ladies' and both he and the writer were closely questioned about their plans and motives. From a purely clinical point of view, these early meetings with the family represented a very critical point in the film's development. There was by this time a growing investment in the project in terms of both time and money, and the involvement of further members of the production team, like the writer, both increased this investment and complicated the relationship with the family. Any change in that relationship would almost certainly have led to a renegotiation of the whole project, perhaps to the extent of abandoning it altogether, so the producer tried to keep the number of people



having contact with the family to a minimum from this point on, and at the same time consolidated his own relationship through the maintenance of close personal contact.

Limiting the number of people involved to just himself and the writer also enabled the producer to maintain a unified concept of the programme itself during this period, but both men needed to extend the range of primary information which they were receiving from the family. For instance, they particularly needed to contextualize the central problem of deafness, and to this end the producer introduced the writer to Coleman, the social worker, and he in turn introduced them both to various agencies (like the RNID and the Breakthrough Trust) and recommended several books on the problems of being deaf:

It was all a process of introducing ourselves gradually to the problems of deafness itself. Professionally-speaking it was just the writer and myself, although I was reporting back to Denton all the time, and we spoke to educated deaf people, working-class people, friends and colleagues. I was constantly making 'one-liners' - notes in Bradford, or on trains. I had met, for instance, a photographer during a train journey who had a deaf daughter, and he told me about her temper, and the way she shuts herself off from other people. It was all useful.

The writer had meanwhile been accumulating tape-recordings of conversations with people involved, and had been working through the documentation provided by the solicitor, but the growing commitment to the project also meant that the two men needed to see Sandra herself under more favourable circumstances than those afforded by the producer's first visit. The writer had already made a brief visit to the prison, but the Home Office had now decided that Sandra could possibly have some home leave towards the end of October, and both men eventually met her with the family during the second of five days' leave.



This particular visit enabled them to tie up a number of loose ends, and also helped to cement the relationship with both the girl herself and the family, but it also emphasised the problems involved, since communication with Sandra proved to be very difficult. The dissonance on this level, as well as on the broader social axis, was a problem of which both men were very much aware. The writer, for instance, had already commented upon the two 'different worlds' separated by just a four-hour journey in the car between his life in London and the family's life in Bradford, and the producer knew that his experiences 'of living in the big city, of travelling around the world and of working in television' were vastly different from the experiences of the family. Not long before he had started working on this project, he had been working with Dustin Hoffman in New York, and in a newspaper article, described the contrast as 'stunning'. 'As soon as I finished the film I was making for Dustin - about the ballet world - I was dealing with prostitutes and pimps in one of the roughest areas of England'. He nevertheless justified his understanding of Sandra and her family's situation in terms of his own working-class origins,

I know the background, you see, when I walk into the sister's house, or the local pubs, I know what it all means, it's not alien to me. I can tell by the furniture, the street, people's possessions the ambitions that group has. I know what they are talking about because it is a part of my own experience. I'm not making it up.

The writer, on the other hand, negotiated his relationship within a professional criterion of objectivity.

When looked at from a distance, and over a period of time, you can draw conclusions from the patterns of people's lives rather like a psychoanalyst draws conclusions about patterns of behaviour from a subject ... I think I am being fairly objective, and in fact I need to be. I have actually deliberately avoided seeing too much of Sandra, although by contrast I am writing - or



trying to write - a play at the moment about a friend of mine whose wife died at an early age from cancer, which I am not at all objective about, as I am personally involved. In a way, it's not coming as well as I had hoped because I am involved.

It would have been asking a lot of the writer to suppress an emotional response, and as the producer pointed out,

Once you start to get to know the people personally, and start getting involved in their problems and anxieties, you start to get drawn into it, and (the Writer) began to get as drawn into it as I was.

Most of the people who were to work on the programme found that they had to decide, at various junctures, exactly where they stood in relation to either their immediate function within the unit, or in relation to their personal feelings towards the subject; like a news cameraman deciding whether to film a fire or pour water on it. As the producer explained,

We have to work out our own morality, we have to decide where we stand - as producer or writer - in relation to Sandra and in relation to her family. I don't think we ever actually worked this out completely, though, except in terms of each individual scene.

As drama-documentarists, the producer felt that he and the writer were committed to making each scene of the film with as much accuracy as possible, such that the whole reconstruction was intrinsically true. Whether or not the sum of these parts amounted to an overall gestalt which was also extrinsically true was a function of dramatic structure rather than the accuracy of each section; as the producer explained after having shot the film:

We improvised a lot of the scenes; they developed as we went, and we did change a lot of the script. But this is a dramatized documentary, it's not a play, and what I didn't want to do was to get away from what happened to Sandra. We're not making this just for fun, it's about real life. I was trying to make it more authentic and accurate in manipulating things.

The key phrase here is 'about real life'. The film necessarily had to be an abstraction of reality (or a 'distillation of the truth' as the writer put it) simply in terms of its compression. The running-time of the



programme had not been finally fixed at this time, but at fifty or ninety minutes it was shorter than the twenty-nine years it hoped to cover and so the initial task was to produce a precis, an outline of essential constituents. The writer explained that he would start out by thinking about the subject itself and decide whether it seemed to be 'potentially fruitful', and would then find out as much as he could about the background, the people who would become the central characters, and the main events ...

I find that once you have assimilated all this, then certain things 'poke up' like tremendous peaks which are obviously going to be good. The murder at the end is obviously an astonishing sequence of events, for instance, the thing which always sticks in my mind is the policeman writing out the caution - as she was deaf - and the whole middle-class boyfriend bit interested me enormously. If it hadn't been for that the film might have been, well, drab; dramatically drab, it gives it a really unexpected quality which I would never have invented. Then there is the motel scene, which I found very unpleasant, but important because it's a scene of great degradation. To be absolutely heartless, hitting someone over the head with a club is violent, but to hit someone over the head with a cover of a radiator has a sort of tragic weight about it. Because of the extreme violence of that, her experience is lifted, dramatically, beyond just bang-wallop violence into something much deeper ... after finding these 'peaks' I suppose I then begin to think of a shape, and in this case I think I latched on to this idea of a decline and fall, or rather a rise and fall, which seemed to be a good dramatic shape. As for the actual process of writing I think one just does it. You see it like a film.

The process of transforming the facts of Sandra's life into a programme had already been mediated by the nature of the sources; the reports of the sister, the family and official documentation. The demands of 'seeing it like a film' were now imposing a further level of mediation, where real events became 'scenes'. The producer described the process as being akin to making a jigsaw puzzle; they had sectioned up the material into different pieces, discarding some, and fitting the remainder together as a coherent picture -



We had gathered all the information together over a period of two to three months, and by about the end of October had written it all down. We eventually got it down to a shortlist of things which we wanted to include in the film, which turned out to be about three pages long, and then thought of the things on that list in terms of structure and in terms of their relationship to one another, and then reduced this down to just one page, which was a list of scenes.

It all seemed perfect after our three-month research period, but we realized that it was not just a case of a straight line going forwards, more a series of humps. We found that we had to adjust the reality slightly, never by adding to it, never by putting in something which wasn't true, but sometimes by taking out things. We have to write what appears to be true, rather than what is true, because film is film and life is life. You have to work to the medium.

The page of embryonic scenes was then expanded into a 'proto-script' with a paragraph for each one, with the producer consulting other directors and colleagues in order to decide what could, or could not, be done in terms of sequencing and order in a filmic sense ...

Candra's life has been very violent, for instance, but if you make very much of any single piece of violence it would appear to be disproportionate to the total amount of violence in her life. Six weeks before she stabbed this man, she had been picked up in a club and taken to a motel thirteen miles outside of Bradford. There was a fight; she had her face kicked, broke her jaw and was nearly killed. That was a very important part (of her life) and will be the end of part two of the programme. But we had originally become enamoured with the journey itself; it was through very bleak hills, and we thought this was really dramatic, but if you play on that journey then you immediately anticipate the action - it means 'we are building up to some violence' - whereas the important thing about that violence was that it is unexpected. This is what I mean by changing reality; you have to put things into perspective.

As in a painting, perspective is a constructional device for creating the illusion of reality. Paintings also extract and emphasise portions of reality by defining borders within frames, and DUFFY was similarly structured, like a Bosch triptych, in terms of three major compartments. The likely length of the script had, by the end of October, led to the



adoption of a ninety-minute slot, and this happily implied that there would be two commercial breaks and therefore three parts to the film. The writer explained that he and the producer had specifically constructed the film on this basis:

The first part of the film will be very much a sympathy-getting segment. We must try to make people feel sympathy for her, even when she is with the methys and dossers in the last part. The first part will look like an ordinary documentary; 'Poor deaf and dumb girl makes good - has idyllic relationship with good-looking middle-class boy' and so on. Then it all starts to go wrong, but hopefully the audience will retain something of the sympathy from the first part. We toyed with all sorts of methods by which we could remind the audience of this, but I think that would have been cheap. There is a very ill-defined line between becoming promiscuous and becoming a prostitute in the second part, for instance; the trouble with that segment is that it is so compressed; so much more actually happened in real life. I think that if you give the impression of promiscuity, and develop that into scenes of obvious prostitution, then the audience will accept it as a casual drift in terms of what they have retained from the first part.

The producer was also interested in the stylistic structure of the film at this stage:

The first third of the film is kind of historical, so I want to make it feel different from the rest of the film in more ways than just by using different dress, wallpaper and furniture. I want to shoot it in a more static way; to use more static shots. This might add to the feeling of the period. The second third is going to be more flashy, since it takes place in the sixties, and the third part is intended to be very documentary-like, with lots of hand-held shots and shooting on the run in order to bring out the grit.

Given this overall structure, the separate scenes could then be articulated together as a narrative as part of the process of rebuilding the jigsaw. The writer's 'tremendous peaks' of the middle-class boyfriend episode, the motel scene and the murder were consequently erected towards the end of each of the three parts like tent poles, with the rest of the fabric stretched at varying tensions around them. The playwright's chief concern then became dialogue, and for this he relied heavily upon the



experience of his visits to Bradford and the tape-recording which he had made there. He listened to these recordings constantly whilst working on the script, and frequently incorporated complete phrases and expressions from actual conversations into the dialogue. One of the techniques used for enhancing an authentic effect was to take some of these conversations intact, and work them into the script as discrete icons without any necessary relationship to the narrative. The 'world' of the film could thus be extended beyond the immediate flow of the story, giving it depth and a different kind of perspective. For example, an old woman appears briefly in a pub where some of the main characters are drinking, and the audience hears a fragment of her conversation:

"So there I was, trotting down Lumb Lane, and this car pulls up. So I went across and I saw this feller, winking and that. 'Do you want business?', he said. 'No, thank you,' I said. 'I'm nearly sixty-two, I'm half dead.'"

Although this character's speech has a broad relevance at that point to the theme of prostitution, the lady herself takes no further part, and the writer explained that ...

The (actual) old lady who told me this story was an amazing creature, with badly dyed hair and everything, but she had nothing to do with the story, and probably wouldn't have been included had this been a straight documentary for that reason, but this is, I think, true of the bulk of the script. There are lots of reasons why you do things like this which are no reason at all; it's good to include things for their own sake.

The writer did not think that he was writing for any particular audience except possibly himself - "I don't think you can do it any other way" - but he was nevertheless conscious of using specific techniques to introduce different characters and ideas. This was especially true, for example, of the introduction of Sandra's disability right at the beginning of the film. A number of clues are given, such as the mother dropping a milk jug with no reaction from the child, and the writer reminded me that:



The audience won't know she's deaf at first, you see. It will have been in the press and the TV Times, but they won't bother to read that. So I think you have to lead the viewers fairly carefully by the hand at the beginning, and (the jug breaking) is a little con-trick, because you can get the audience to think they are one step ahead of you, so that they can say 'Here, look - she's deaf!' - then that gives them the confidence to sit back and relax and imagine that they are not therefore going to be put off by the deafness. Later on you can then shock, appal or enthrall them, but you've certainly got to entice them to watch it properly in the beginning. The worst thing about television is that people do not watch; they are eating or talking, which is very depressing.

One device which is occasionally used in documentary forms was by definition unavailable to the makers of DUMNY, and this was the use of first-person narration. Being unable to communicate in a normal manner also meant that the central character occupied a virtually non-speaking role within the narrative itself, which led to some special difficulties for the writer. Other characters, for example, were sometimes given lines which explained communications made by Sandra 'off stage', and both the writer and producer felt that the main actress contributed a great deal in interpreting the part. The important point to be made here, however, is that television is often seen as being a verbal medium; the writer felt that television tolerates far more words than other media such as cinema:

If you are working on a movie, I always think one tells a story visually, and supplements it with dialogue, whereas in television one tends to tell the story in dialogue and supplement it with pictures.

Visually important sequences on television, and especially action sequences containing less dialogue, are often shot on film of course. But film inserts for, say, a drama series, are usually kept to a minimum because of their high cost relative to studio work. DUMNY was to be shot entirely on film, and the writer therefore saw it as occupying the special category of 'A film which is being shown on television'. The script nevertheless



contained a high proportion of dialogue, partly because of the need to cover a great deal of ground within the ninety minutes, and one of the major worries was that the draft script was indeed too long. There were a hundred and ninety-eight scenes in the original, some of which the writer thought would play for over two minutes ('Playing-time' is much longer than 'Dialogue-time' since one has to allow for movements and actions in between lines of dialogue). "I think it will play much longer than ninety minutes, let alone the fifty we were originally offered", the writer pondered. "It will be interesting to see how much is imposed upon it."

#### The content of the script

Having determined the overall structure of the script and its essential requirements, the writer took the outline, tape-recordings, documentation and photographs back to his home near Clapham Common and wrote the working draft in three weeks during November 1976.

As the writer explained, his job was to link all the information together as a coherent story; adhering to conventions of logic and balance, avoiding 'longeurs' and repetition, and maintaining pace without losing essential information. As Buscombe and Alvarado<sup>6</sup> point out, writers rate their professionalism highly in terms of putting their writing skills at the service of the production itself, and the writer felt that working out the story was like 'flying on automatic pilot' for him:

If you are a skilled craftsman then the story should be entertaining anyway; you are able to make it through sheer craft.

The results of his labours are included in the appendices, but at this stage it will be helpful to run through the overall content of the script and then examine some of its implications more closely.

---

6. See Buscombe, E. and Alvarado, H. (1978), *Hazell: the making of a television series*.



Part OneOriginal  
Scene No.

- 1-10 It is 1948. People are going to work, some of them in a mill in Bradford's industrial heart amidst noisy, clattering machinery. One man in particular is singled out and is seen drinking in a pub before going home to simple, working-class surroundings and his hard-working wife. They have a baby girl, and there are other members of the family around to help out, but the situation between husband and wife is strained.
- 11-18 As time goes by there seems to be something wrong with the baby - she doesn't react to loud noises - and an aunt persuades the mother to take the baby to see a doctor. The doctor tests the baby's hearing, and as a result the mother takes her to a specialist at a hospital where she is told that the baby is profoundly deaf. This increases the strain at home, and a place has to be found for the child at a special school for the deaf. When she is old enough, she starts attending the school with other young deaf children, travelling there by bus with her aunt. The father in particular cannot understand where the deafness has come from and there are angry, anguished scenes at home. The child is growing up, however, and is taught lip-reading at school. She is quite normal in other respects, and plays happily with other children in the street in between learning to form words at school and with her patient mother. Other people are sometimes disturbed by her jumbled speech sounds, however, and the child herself does not seem to be getting on as well as some of her fellows at school. On one occasion she is punished for using sign language rather than proper speech, and shows her temper and frustration at home; throwing her coat on the floor. She nevertheless excels at sport, and easily wins races at school, but has great difficulty in making herself understood, even in a simple transaction such as buying fish and chips. As she gets older she seems to become less able or willing to learn at school in comparison with her fellows, and obviously prefers sports, or dancing with her mother and sister at home. By this time Sandra is nearing the end of her childhood, experiencing her first period, and trying 'grown up' things like having illicit cigarettes in the playground. Her father has left the family now, and a social worker tries, rather unsuccessfully, to help, explaining that Sandra's problems represent a special case since, being totally deaf she cannot learn speech in the same way as those with some hearing can. Sandra's speech is indeed, extremely poor in comparison, and she seems, instead, to divert her attention to less academic pursuits such as swimming and her first encounters with boys at the school. She eventually leaves school and starts her first job at a local dry-cleaning factory, meeting a new group of people. Having money of her own now, she can go out on her own, and on one occasion goes to a local fair where she meets a boy from a very different background who seems to ignore the fact of her deafness. The
- 19-21
- 22-24
- 25-29
- 30-32
- 33-36
- 37-38
- 39-40
- 41-42
- 43-46
- 47-48
- 49
- 50-62
- 63-67
- 68-72



73-84

relationship blossoms and opens up new vistas for Sandra, as the boy is not only quite good-looking, but comes from a well-to-do middle-class family and plays in a pop group. He seems to genuinely care for Sandra, and she now seems blissfully happy, despite her disability.

### Part Two

85-91

92-97

98-105

106-107

108-112

113-115

116-121

122-123

124-125

126-129

130-134

135

136-138

139-147

The relationship continues to progress; Sandra goes to clubs where the boy is performing with his group, goes on picnics and has intimate encounters at his home. After one of the group's sessions, she, her boyfriend and his brother (the drummer with the group) return drunkenly to his house and a fight starts over her, and between the brothers. It gets out of hand, the brother is stabbed and Sandra is slashed across her face with a kitchen knife. She is taken to hospital, but returns home with a livid scar; the boyfriend fails to call to see her, and Sandra returns to work and starts to go out with her workmates to city centre pubs. She has changed, becoming older; coarsened. In a pub, she is encouraged to pick up a man (a rather rough character) and eventually takes him back to her house, causing an angry scene with her mother. She leaves home to stay with this man, who is unemployed, but he commits a petty robbery and is arrested. Sandra has meanwhile become pregnant by him, and the mother decides to look after the baby, despite being ill herself. The baby's father comes out of prison and Sandra returns to live with him again even though he treats her badly. She has another child and the mother eventually arranges for her sterilization on the advice of a doctor and without Sandra's consent. Having come out of hospital again, Sandra returns to her old haunts, and after an impromptu striptease in one of these clubs, is picked up by another man (the first one having disappeared). They go to bed together and quickly marry, but her new husband starts to use her as a prostitute. The mother meanwhile dies and Sandra tries as best she can to make her own life, even though her husband is now assaulting her at home. She contracts Venereal disease, and whilst in a V.D. clinic explains to her social worker that she still thinks 'hearing people are best'. Prostitution has now become a way of life, and she is mixing with other prostitutes in the pubs and clubs of the city. On one occasion she is picked up in the street by a neatly-dressed man and driven out of Bradford to a motel. The situation at the motel rapidly turns nasty, and Sandra is viciously beaten almost to death.

### Part Three

148-150

151-154

Sandra comes out of hospital to live with her sister, but soon leaves and meets a new set of rather down-and-out people around the low pubs. One of them introduces her to some soft drugs, and Sandra stays with him, sharing a meagre existence of church benches and waste grounds by day, and pubs by night.



155-160 An old, gentle West Indian is one of her group by now, and  
 there are a few happy interludes represented by an occasional  
 Indian meal with these people. But one of Sandra's companions,  
 161-163 a girl with crossed eyes, displaces her relationship with the  
 man who gave her the drugs and Sandra sinks lower, moving in  
 with two dossers. She is quite desperate by this time, and  
 tries to telephone her sister for help, even though she cannot  
 164-170 hear, or indeed speak. She turns to the West Indian man  
 171 and stays with him, as meanwhile the social worker visits the  
 sister who tells him how worried she is. Sandra spends her  
 time increasingly on her own, crying over pills and glasses  
 172-179 of beer, hanging around bars and clubs, but sometimes meeting  
 other prostitutes and drinking companions. After one of these  
 sessions, several of them, including the cross-eyed girl  
 and Sandra's erstwhile lover, are ejected from the pub and  
 return in a drunken stupor to his room. They continue  
 180 drinking and Sandra is abused and insulted, cowering in a  
 corner. Eventually people start to leave, and Sandra stumbles  
 into one of them in the hallway. Totally confused and  
 frightened by the drunken man's staggering in the darkness,  
 she stabs at him with a small knife she carried and runs off,  
 finding a taxi to take her to the West Indian's rooms. The  
 stabbed man meanwhile staggers out to the main road and  
 collapses; a car stops to see if he's all right and the  
 police and ambulance called. The man dies, and police later  
 arrive at the West Indian's and arrest Sandra who is taken away  
 in a police car. Dawn starts to break; people start waking  
 181-198 up; Bradford life goes on.

The major implication of this storyline is that of extreme narrative  
 compression, and two major constraints had to be taken into account in  
 it his respect. Firstly, the running-time was known to be an hour and a  
 half, and secondly, the shooting schedule was being fixed to about five  
 weeks. Furthermore, the running-time was only notionally ninety minutes,  
 since with commercial breaks the actual length of the film would be  
 down to ~~seventy-eight~~ minutes, leaving a little over twenty-five minutes  
 for each of the three parts (or an average of less than half a minute  
 per scene).

The 'ninety-minute' slot was a fixed constraint for several reasons.  
 The structure of the independent network's scheduling requires that  
 programmes shown over the whole network must be able to mesh with those



transmitted by different companies under the opt-out system, and the longer the programme the more critical this becomes. The 'News at Ten' slot from 10 o'clock to 10.30 is also a relatively fixed point around which programmes can be moved. The Head of documentaries at ATV was particularly anxious not to 'throw away' DUFFY after the news, so the only feasible slot would have been between 8 and 10 o'clock. The IBA has, however, agreed on a watershed at 9 o'clock before which violence should not be shown, so DUFFY's slot was pushed up as close as possible to the news, giving a starting time at 8.30 (the first bit of serious violence occurring in part two with Sandra's scarring - after 9 p.m.)

The time-scale of the story itself also carried a number of special implications. Since the film was to cover nearly thirty years (from about 1948 to 1976), special attention had to be paid to period costumes and locations, make-up and props. The mother, in particular, would have to appear to age from being in her mid-twenties to late middle-age, and Sandra herself had to be depicted from babyhood right through to her late twenties. Casting the mother would therefore require a particularly astute judgement of an actress's skills, and Sandra's babyhood, childhood and adult life would have to be carried by three, or possibly four, different people who would then have to share a number of characteristics in order to ensure continuity.

The script also indicated a relatively large cast, with some thirty speaking-parts plus walkons and extras, some of whom would be required to perform highly specialised tasks. Finding an actress who could sustain the central role would be difficult, but there would be additional problems in finding, for example, an actor to play Sandra's first boyfriend who could pass for a competent musician as a member of the pop group.



Similarly, the teachers would need to be able to demonstrate specialised instructional methods, and the schoolchildren themselves would present the dual problem of casting and directing juveniles who were also handicapped.

The possibility of needing a large production unit was also indicated by the script in relation to agreements between the production company and the unions. All the ITV companies operate agreements with their employees' unions in addition to those agreed with EQUITY, the actors' union, and these help to manage potential conflict through the adoption of codes of practice, rates of pay and hours of work. The two main unions who were to become involved in the production of DUTY were the ACTT and NATKE, and one of their chief concerns was - and is - the distribution of labour within a production. The ACTT is primarily concerned with production staff (directors, production assistants, designers, floor managers, casting directors, lighting directors and camera/sound crews) and NATKE looks after wardrobe, make-up and props staff together with transport drivers and some secretarial posts. In view of the content of the script, these bodies would be likely to argue that agreements should be honoured, such that the demand for period locations would require the use of a designer, and the inclusion of actions like Sandra's scarring and the stabbing in part three would require a special effects technician. Similarly, the inclusion of 'Action vehicles' in the script, such as police cars and ambulances, would require a specialist, and even a tiny detail such as having a photograph on a mantelpiece would require using a Stills photographer. All of these crew members would be required in addition to the 'standard' crew which would be attached to most productions of this kind, and this core production group would itself be expanded later on in view of the sheer scope of the script.



A further implication for the logistics of the film was the need to obtain 'blanket approval' from interested agencies. On the broadest level this meant obtaining the family's permission to make the programme, and an adherence to the laws of libel, but it also meant assuring agencies for the deaf of the producer's intentions - for amongst other reasons - the practical necessity of cooperation.

### Gaining blanket approval

During the period in which the script was being written, and up to Christmas 1976, the producer was principally concerned with obtaining as much cooperation as he could, both from people in Bradford where the programme would be filmed, and on a more national scale from the British Deaf Association and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. Opposition from such groups could certainly have damaged the project's prospects, since it would not have been politic for ATV to unnecessarily antagonize them, but the producer was also concerned that his intentions were seen to be honorable. His case was that if one wants a society where people are compassionate to one another, then you have to inform the individual, and inform him or her in a particular way:

If I want to say 'be kind to deaf people', then I have to show warts and all. If I were to show a partially deaf, successful person, then that would be a Sunday afternoon God-slot programme, which nobody watches. What I want to do is to show someone in an extreme situation, someone who has really broken the rules; she is a prostitute, she has killed somebody, and she is as rough as hell. But at the end of the film you will like her, and not only that but you will care for her a great deal; you will worry about her.

The BDA and the RNID were horrified at first, and wanted the producer to choose a successful deaf person rather than this polar case. They were also particularly concerned about the possible connections which could be



drawn between deafness and prostitution, and there was an extensive correspondence between the two sides before a working agreement was reached. As part of this agreement, the producer had given the agencies an assurance that he would let them know the final content of the programme before transmission, and had also suggested writing an article for DEAF NEWS, setting out his intentions and hopes for the programme. It would be overstating the case to say that the agencies were enthusiastic about the idea in the end, but they were not so opposed to the producer's plans to stop him contacting associated people in Bradford. The producer had particularly needed the cooperation of the RNID and the BDA if he was going to use deaf children in the film, and he had at one stage contemplated using a deaf actress in the main part, but it was also vital to obtain cooperation on the local level. For instance, the special school which Sandra had attended was approached, and provisional approval was given by the headmaster there to film inside the school during classes. Several conditions were imposed, however, including a proviso not to publish people's real identities and the need to obtain the permission of the Education Authority and the Board of Governors. The former approved, but the latter at first did not, which led to a lengthy series of meetings between the producer and the Board during which conditions and agreements were exchanged. For instance, as a result of a connection between the authorities here and the Social Services, one of the concessions which the producer had to make was to officially curtail his link with the original social worker, Coleman (whose patch had since been taken over by a new social worker). On the other hand, the school provisionally agreed to allow some of its pupils to play the younger versions of Sandra, providing parental permission was also granted.



It was vitally important at this stage to maintain a balance of cooperation, since the plan to make the film had now moved from private discussions into the 'public sector', involving more and more people in both private and public capacities. Yorkshire County Council, for example, had by this time heard about the project, and had initially opposed the plans to shoot it in and around Bradford. Whilst there was some doubt whether this body could actually veto the plan, they could certainly have stopped the producer from filming inside institutions like the Bradford Royal Infirmary (for the hospital scenes), so the producer was continually involved in diplomatic exchanges between various official bodies; winning some battles and losing others. The County Council, for example, eventually agreed to the plans to film inside public buildings, giving the blanket approval which the producer was seeking, whereas the DISS declined permission to film inside a social security office.

From the producer's point of view, setting up the film was a matter of 'internal' and 'external' problematics, the former involving the machinations of finance, crewing, casting and scheduling, and the latter being the negotiation of cooperation with interested parties. Some of these negotiations were only indirectly connected with the film itself, however, having more to do with the direct personal involvement with the family. Sandra had, for example, come out of prison at the end of December during the holiday period and there was a good deal of confusion over finding her somewhere to live (since the probation officer concerned was on holiday and the sister was about to have a baby). Two places had been found for Sandra to stay, but one 'had a hardboard door, damp mattresses and no cutlery' and the other was in the same area in which the stabbing had taken place. The sister consequently contacted the



producer to see what he could do, and he tried to mediate with the social workers involved, and in addition obtained a hundred pounds for the family in advance of a 'research fee' from ATV. In view of these events there was some thought about changing the script to accommodate them in the film, but the original decision to stop at the arrest was retained as a matter of dramatic tactics, 'to make people wonder what had happened to Sandra'.

In the period before Christmas 1976, the 'internal' problems were chiefly those of crewing and casting. The producer had had secretarial support from ATV throughout the period of writing and the second research phase, but he also needed to extend the 'work group' beyond that of himself and the writer (whose contract had effectively ended on the delivery of the script at the end of November).

#### Recruiting personnel

In his role as Director of DUMMY, the producer would have the major say in casting actors and actresses for the film, and in some cases would make direct contact with people whom he had already seen in other roles. But in view of the number of actors required, and the producer's relative lack of experience in straight drama production, one of the earliest appointments which needed to be made was that of Casting Director. ATV has its own casting department to provide a service for producers and directors in finding and selecting actors, and to negotiate conditions and contracts with them and their agents. Sometimes a Casting Director will be attached to a production through having a special interest in that particular type of show, or because they have a special range of contacts applicable to that production, but in this case ATV's Head of Casting decided to work on the project herself, seeing it as a



new departure and 'a chance to get out and meet some new people'. Casting can in many ways be seen as one of the most crucial stages of production, and directors such as John Frankenheimer have described it as the crucial stage; 'Sixty percent of directing is casting the right actors'. Certainly, in the case of a drama-documentary it is crucial for the purposes of authenticity to find actors with whom one can improvise, and the less you have to direct the greater is the chance of achieving a naturalistic effect. Ken Loach, for example, has been described as searching for actors who can live, rather than act in his films, and the search for the right people can take up a great deal of time. The producer and the casting director consequently worked closely together over a period of several months on the casting for the film, which will be covered in a section of its own.

#### The core unit

The core production unit can be described as those people who are centrally involved in the production such as the camera and sound units and the producer's immediate assistants - in this case a production assistant (PA) and an associate producer (AP). The producer described the process of hiring these personnel as a matter, in the first instance, of pooling experience and exchanging advice between himself and his immediate executives, or more particularly at this stage, the Head of Department. The latter had already demonstrated the degree to which he was prepared to back the project, and this also ran to the extent of expanding the resources available within the company to include the recruitment of freelance personnel. There were many ramifications attached to this decision, some of which ran deeply into the internal politics of ATV, and included considerations of both finance and future



planning. The apparent advantage to the company of reducing costs through the short-term hire of freelance personnel could, for example, be seen as being outweighed by the inclusion of such costs in above-the-line budgeting, and the relatively higher fees which freelancers attract in the first place. So the use of freelance personnel can also be seen as part of a more general argument centred upon existing agreements on manning within the company and the possibility of changing these, perhaps in a similar fashion to those changes which have occurred in the organisation of movie production, where individual producers or directors tend to sell packaged deals to production companies rather than vice versa. More particularly, the setting up of precedents in manning agreements with respect to programmes like DUMY could enable the head of department to open up new avenues of exploration in relation to proposals for a fourth channel.

Both the producer and his head of department had been especially impressed with the work of one particular cameraman, who on the rare occasions when he has been tracked down for interviews, has been described as one of Britain's top freelance cinematographers. He had begun his career in 1959 as an assistant editor with a small production company (which was later to become Alan King Associates) and had then moved to Granada as assistant cameraman before becoming freelance in the mid-sixties. Since then he had worked with Loach and Garnett on KES and POOR COW, with Stephen Frears on GUMSHOE, and on numerous documentaries such as THE TRIBE THAT HIDES FROM MAN and THE OPIUM WARLORDS (with Adrian Cowell). He had already worked for ATV and the head of department was particularly keen that he should be contracted for DUMY, so a script was sent off to the cameraman, and he agreed to shoot it on his release from an existing



commitment in Hong-Kong after March 6th, 1977. Since obtaining the cameraman was considered to be a key appointment, the date from which he would be available then became a fixed point in the schedule, and since this was some three to four weeks later than the provisional shooting date, it also gave the producer a little more time on which to concentrate on casting and location-finding.

Being both director and producer on the film, and having already been heavily involved in the writing and preparation of the script, the producer's workload had nevertheless increased rapidly as the shooting date approached. Since this load could only increase further during the shoot itself, one of the earliest people to be recruited was an associate producer. This position is more usually found within a feature unit, but as the producer explained, his own dual role required the addition of an associate producer to the core unit:

Normally I would be worrying about the filming, the scheduling and the organisation at the same time (as producer/director), but this time I want to concentrate on the action itself during the shoot, so I think my main concern at this point is to start delegating responsibility.

The cameraman had been contacted as a result of a recommendation by the department head, and on the basis of a mutual acceptance of his reputation within an occupational milieu, but the appointment of an associate producer was made through direct personal contact by the producer. The former described how this came about:

Strictly speaking, I haven't had a lot of television experience, but I've been in the film business since 1962; starting in the laboratories and then in the cutting room, and then out on the floor as a first or second assistant, mainly in features or commercials. I'd directed three films of my own of a documentary nature, and had worked with one of (the producer's) best friends, who recommended me to him. It was at a screening of one of his films just before Christmas that he was able to say 'I think I've got a film coming up - would you like to work on it?'



The fact that the Associate producer was more experienced in feature production than television was significant, since the producer wanted to shoot the programme 'like a mini-feature', and both men had originally seen the job as being the equivalent of a first assistant director for a feature:

Financially, the programme was not as good for me as working in features, and Bradford at the time made my hair crawl, but I was attracted by the idea of being first assistant; I was very interested in working with (this) lighting cameraman, for example, since as a first assistant you stay on the floor all the time. You act as a pivot around which everything else circulates in terms of supply and demand.

In the event, the associate producer's job was to change quite significantly:

When the producer first described it to me, he was thinking very much in terms of taking a small documentary crew off to make a reconstruction of this woman's life, but it gradually became apparent that it was a much bigger beanbag. I don't think the reality of the potential size of the crew was apparent at the time, and my job eventually became administrative; being in the office the whole time - the opposite of being on the floor - or setting up locations, doing the financial deals, facility fees, liaising with the hotel. It's liaising with the London office as far as artists and contracts are concerned; being a back-up to the floor manager and integrating movements during the day from the hotel whilst the unit is out somewhere.

The core production team continued to be built up through a system of personal contacts; the head of department, for example, recommended a freelance P.A. who could further relieve the producer of the administrative loading, and she was to take over many of the 'first assistant' functions on the shoot itself. The ACTT requires there to be at least two people each on camera and sound, as well as two production staff during filming, and these members of the unit were hired through the independent production company with which the cameraman was associated, AKA.



The Camera and sound crew were very much an integrated team. The assistant cameraman had worked through AKA for about ten years, and had worked consistently with the cameraman himself for some five years: 'When he's worked, then I've worked'. Again, he had started out in a film laboratory in order to obtain the essential union ticket, and had begun his main career as a clapper-loader on the puppet series THUNDERBIRDS before becoming a freelance concentrating chiefly upon television documentaries. His contact with DUMY came only indirectly through ATV, since the cameraman had telephoned him from Hong-Kong to ask if he was available. AKA actually have a permanent reservoir of editors, cameramen and soundmen who customarily work together even though contracts may in the first instance be negotiated separately. The soundman thus heard that the job was coming up through a direct contact with the production office at Portman Square (and an inadvertant meeting with the head of department) but most of his negotiations were carried out with the cameraman after his return from the Far East. All of the people in this core unit agreed upon the importance of working as a team with people they knew well. The sound-recordist, for example, said:

I just find it more comfortable. It helps if people are of like minds, especially if it is going to be a long and difficult shoot. I like the idea of the old Berliner Ensemble, where a group of people work together for a long time, otherwise you spend the first two weeks of a new shoot just getting to know people and trying to integrate yourselves as a working unit. If you already know everyone's potentials and their strengths and weaknesses, then the instant you hit a location you have already gone through all that business of who is good at what, you've already worked out a form and a style; the logistics of working. All I knew when we started was that it was going to be a dramatised documentary with a young director who I'd not heard of before. But the most important thing for me was that Chris was going to be shooting it, that Jimmy was going to be his assistant, and that I could have an assistant of my own choosing. This meant that there was going to be a very tight band of the four of us, so if everyone else was lousy, at least the four of us would know what we were doing.



With the exception of the casting director, all members of the core production unit were freelance, and shared with the producer a background in documentary. In fact, the basic unit at this stage was the equivalent of a documentary unit, and very much like the kind of crew which the producer would have been used to working with on his previous films. As the associate producer had mentioned, the original plan had been to restrict the production unit to a minimum, which at a pinch could have amounted to about ten people:

It could possibly have been done with the AKA people (i.e. cameraman, assistant cameraman, soundman and boom-operator), a freelance art director, one props man, one spark from a company like GBS (i.e. a lighting technician from a freelance film lighting company), myself on the floor, a PA and the director/producer

There would have been several advantages in having such a minimum crew. Firstly the budget could have been restricted to the original figure of about £50,000 by reducing the costs associated with accommodating a large crew away on location, secondly the producer wanted to shoot the film as a 'low-profile operation' where a large crew could possibly have had a disruptive influence in sensitive locations, and thirdly the producer was used to working with small crews in documentaries and commercials where creative control was at a maximum.

DUTTY was not, however, to be a straight documentary. As a drama-documentary it had the additional requirements indicated in the script of special make-up, wardrobe facilities, special effects and the like, which started to indicate in turn the need for more extensive crewing arrangements.

#### Extending the production unit

The question of making some or all of the programme in a studio had never arisen, partly because of its documentary component, partly because of



the producer's own background in the film, and partly because of the prohibitive expense of building studio sets for such a production. The argument for using the specialist skills of a freelance core unit had also been broadly accepted given the prestige and value which could then accrue to the production and its overall success as a film. But within ATV itself, and within the independent companies in general, there is a constant tension over the use of freelance as against staff personnel, and over the use of film as against video. For one thing, television companies are primarily equipped for studio production, both in terms of massive capital investment in the studios themselves, and in terms of staffing, which is also a reason for contracting out certain types of film work to people like AKA, or for setting up specialised subsidiaries like Thames' Euston Films.

In view of the history of the craft unions involved within the companies, the use of freelancers compounds their problem of trying to maintain traditional manning levels within non-studio productions in which manning-levels are already customarily reduced. So the fact that DUMMAY, as a non-studio production, nevertheless required the additional talents of people who were more usually associated with studio productions, was not seen by the unions as a case for setting the precedent of co-opting additional freelancers onto the crew. They argued that studio personnel should be used, and correlatively, that studio manning regulations should then apply. This meant, for example, that if costumes were required, then there would have to be not only a Wardrobe supervisor, but possibly an assistant and certainly a dresser for either sex. Similarly, if props were needed, then there would have to be enough people to handle large items such as settees or TV sets, plus a props buyer to acquire those props.



Much of the period after Christmas, and before the start of the shoot was then taken up with negotiating an agreement on manning levels, with the issue being in its simplest terms that of obtaining the minimum crew possible for the producer, and the maximum possible for the unions.

Significantly, the interests of the producer-as-creative-artist and the interests of the executive administration were linked at this point, the former striving to retain control of his production unit by choosing its members, and the latter moving towards a possible change in system operation. In the event there was a good deal of discussion over the issues involved, and sanctions used, which resulted in the acquiring of a production unit somewhat larger than had been intended by the producer.

From the producer's point of view, the process of recruiting crew in addition to the core unit was a matter of adhering to organizational constraint rather than the perceived requirements of the programme itself. The eventual size of the unit being about three times larger than that originally conceived, although according to some members of the crew, some three times smaller than it ought to have been. While the number of people who were becoming involved in the production was an important factor in the transition from the particularistic, individual nature of the programme idea to the more extensive, social context of the programme's production, the more pertinent problem for the film was that of the relationships operating within the unit.

#### Freelance and staff

As Elliott (1972: 134) points out, 'the development of freelancing is itself an important structural reason for the emphasis placed upon



personal contacts and relationships within the occupational milieu of television', so the occupational position of, for example, the cameraman provided status qualifications which were independent of an internal organisational hierarchy, and which required the producer's personal knowledge of his track record, competence and availability in order for him to be selected. The operation of personal judgement, contact and responsibility which had characterized most of the producer's negotiations up to and including the recruitment of the core unit therefore came into conflict with the more routinised structure of internal staffing procedures. Here the attempt which the producer wished to make to get everyone as involved as he was in order to generate 'the maximum creative common sense' would become more difficult in proportion to the number of people involved, and in proportion to the routinization and flexibility with which people were used to working. The working practices of the studio personnel, for example, can be seen as being far more routinised than those of the freelance personnel. Studio people are generally engaged in the performance of formally specified tasks within an organization, through which they are rostered onto many different programmes; often for short periods and sometimes with only a minimal involvement with the programme as a whole. The freelancers, on the other hand, frequently work on the same project for long periods and, by definition, for several different organizations. They often negotiate their own conditions and fees, and live or die by their reputations. As the cameraman remarked, 'The very nature of being a freelance means that you have to be on the ball. You cannot live in this kind of market if you're no good.'

Neither the cameraman nor myself are implying that staff personnel are anything less than 'on the ball', but simply that the freelancer's



structural situation requires him to be so for any particular project. If a freelance is sacked from a production, as the cameraman admits he once was, finding another job might prove to be very difficult indeed, whereas a member of staff can be transferred to another project within the organization without any immediate or necessary loss of income.

A freelance crew can be said to have a vested interest in any film on which they are working to an essentially different degree from a staff crew in view of these observations, and they will also therefore choose to work on films which appear to have the potential of enhancing their professional portfolios where sufficient work is available. In short, freelancers tend to orient themselves through their mobility and elite competitiveness to the organic systems operating within individual productions, and staff personnel tend to work within relatively fixed, mechanistic systems operating across several different productions. The model is naturally less than exhaustive, but can be illustrated by some statements made by different people working on DUTTY:

Up to a point we have a freedom of choice in what we do, although I think this is changing now - the amount of work we are getting from television is going down because staff people say that work shouldn't go out to freelancers. The main difference is that we can specialize much more. You have to do the other stuff of course, just to be able to live, but it does mean that you can work with certain people. One of the criticisms about staff people is that they tend to get moved around different productions without very much consideration for the sort of people they might like to work with, or for the sort of things they do best, it depends upon what's on next. It's very easy to say that because you are a freelance then you are obviously going to be very much more involved in the production. That's a very elitist way of looking at it, and it's not strictly true since there are some very good staff people around, but you do actually find that freelancers tend to be very much more involved in productions because they have to be. If you don't get involved then people don't ask for you.

(Freelance Assistant Cameraman)



Duration-wise, this is the longest job we've ever been involved in, and it's all in one hit. That's odd in itself. I wouldn't like to do it too often, when this ends I hope I won't be involved in a similar thing for a long time. It's partly to do with being away from home, partly I want to get back into a pattern of work again like we've done in the past on the MUPPET SHOW and CEDAR TREES. Actually this is completely foreign to what we normally do. On this job we cut corners like mad. In the studio we are bound by rules and regulations; safety things and other rules, but here we are really like free agents, you know, Jack-of-all-Trades. We have to rely on the help of other people to perhaps get materials out in a hurry, whereas in the studio proper people are readily available if you need them. It's all different, even getting (electrical) supply. It's OK in the studio, but here we've got someone's house which is adequate for a few household lights, or the odd hoover, and we're trying to pull, say, eight kilowatts of light. You've got problems.

(Staff Lighting Gaffer)

Freelance companies like AKA used to do about 90% of the best work simply because they had the best technicians. Then you could count the number of good cameramen on one hand. Now there are dozens, but it's organisations like Alan King's that are responsible, because they broke down the creative barriers. This isn't to say staff people weren't potentially good, it was just the attitude to the way we worked was different in freelance companies. We were encouraged to be part of the creative process, to participate in the creation of films, and we responded to that. Unfortunately, except for ATV, companies only occasionally engage freelancers now.

I went into (DUTY) with some trepidation when I was told that we were going to have Elstree staff; I'm freelance myself and have always worked with freelance people. But in fact I was just staggered, because they were very good and worked well. Obviously there were problems - problems of co-ordination - filming is very different from video and the demands are much greater. People got very tired because, to be fair to them, they are not used to working those long hours as we do, but they were extraordinarily resilient. I thought it would be a nightmare.

(Freelance Lighting Cameraman)

I think ATV has only just started doing these drama-documentaries. I've mostly done light entertainment stuff, that's what I started off doing, things like the TOM JONES SHOW, big American spectacles and things like that.



I've always been mostly interested in costume design, I mean historical costume design, period costume; that's my favourite, the thing I like doing best, but you don't often have the opportunity to do it. Most of the time you are just put on something; for (DUMY) I was just told by my head of department that I was to do the wardrobe, I wasn't asked, I was told, and I think I felt in utter despair at the time. It's so different being out here (on location) you see, with the main problem being so many people whose measurements you haven't had a chance to take. The director likes to choose things and if you haven't got an alternative, well, it's hard choice really, if you were back in the studios you could just nip up to the stockroom and find something else. We haven't had the time here; the night before I hope we have prepared most things, but it always seems to end up as a mad scramble.

(Staff Wardrobe Supervisor)

Crewing on DUMY was not, then, simply complicated by the number of people involved, it was complicated by differing sets of attitudes, working practices and experiences which, in the producer's view, were in conflict with the programme itself:

In the final analysis, using both staff and freelance people worked, in the fifth week (of the shoot) everyone was working together really well. But at the beginning of the film we had to spend a lot of time getting to know each other, and it didn't work. I still think the film should come before internal agreements to choose his own unit. If you don't choose your own unit you might find that you have people working with you who are not totally in sympathy with what you are trying to do, or who are not familiar with the areas in which you are working. This might be for professional or personal reasons, but it affects the film. If you are working for a television company, they will give you the personnel who are available, and some of them were excellent, but when it comes down to the film it doesn't matter how nice they are, or how hard they work, if they don't give anything extra to the film then it loses out. I think we spent too much time accommodating each other, which you wouldn't need to do with a picked crew; and too much time trying to accommodate the rules and regulations.

The conflict which underpinned the problems of manning the production unit, formulated by the producer in terms of the film itself, can be seen as the first real disjuncture experienced in the course of production between



the demands of art and the demands of commerce. The producer had already had to employ a number of complex adaptive strategies in order to steer the programme idea through an intended corridor and between the horns of a cultural dilemma. That is to say, he had to negotiate between creativity and constraint on levels ranging from the consideration of his own employment and career, through the moral ambiguities which surfaced during research, to the access to resources provided by the production company and 'external' agencies such as the Home Office and the DHSS. At the end of these negotiations the subject remained, however, within the control of the producer. Indeed, the provision of a rigid time-slot or the refusal of permission to film in certain buildings can be seen, not as constraints, but as positive aids to the creative process. Working to known time-limits can often provide the discipline necessary for working out the values of 'pace', 'rhythm' and 'balance' in a programme, and the withholding of a location can lead to the adoption of inventive alternatives like 'shooting in the bag' with a concealed camera.

The ability to adapt to varying situations whilst retaining control of them is part of the professional ethic of broadcasters, both as creative artists and as members of a professional group. But since creativity is itself a form of dominance, the retention of the autonomy to exercise that dominance is considered to be an essential prerequisite by many film-makers. This is particularly true of those film-makers identified by Cantor (1971) as 'writer-producers', and even more true of DUFFY's *primum movere* who was effectively to be writer, producer and director.

As an extension of the individualism of other creative artists, the 'writer-producer' seeks to expand his creative space by controlling that of others. One way in which this can be achieved within the production



unit is to surround oneself with members of an 'inner circle' or other professionals with shared understandings, values and experience, and even a shared or elliptical language through which a unified concept can be maintained. Hence the process of filming, as Ingmar Bergman has remarked, needs to be 'like creating a little universe of your own' in which any rift or disjuncture can have the potential of damaging the essential identity of the artist with his art. The aim of DUMY's producer to create 'the maximum creative common sense' within the unit can thus be seen as a strategy through which the dilemma of the creative artist in an organisational setting could be resolved by breaking through structural constraint to create a unitary space equivalent to that occupied by an individual.

The allocation of a studio crew had, however, potentially dissipated the control which the producer could wield by foreclosing his range of options; by extracting the 'demands of commerce' from the 'demands of art'. Bergman has emphasised his previous point by saying that his concentration whilst making a film was like having a virus, which 'must infect everyone else on the unit', the essential problem in manning DUMY being that people could be differentially immune to that virus, vaccinated, so to speak, by a structural determination of practice and experience if the personal choice of the production team was taken out of the producer's hands. Another factor to be considered in the equation was, for instance, the fact that the hand-picked core unit had a solid grounding in documentary, whereas the members of the studio unit were generally drawn from backgrounds in drama or light entertainment. From this perspective the ad hoc nature of 'shooting on the run', filming in real locations and negotiating with the general public could only compound the difficulties from the studio crew's point of view. This would be particularly true of someone like a designer, for example, who would normally conceive and design



a set and its props from scratch, working closely with the director in order to match his designs to the characters and overall 'feel' of the production. In this case, the designer felt that DUMMAY was a wholly new departure for his department, and he felt a strong sense of anomie throughout. 'Everything,' he explained, 'is based upon facts which the producer has unearthed, you see, so there is no room for imaginative characterization in terms of either people or design.'

In the event, the marriage of studio and freelance personnel within the unit was generally agreed to have worked out more successfully than had been feared. One of the reasons for this being the physical change of environment which the studio crew experienced through being out on location in Bradford. Living and working together twenty-four hours a day in a different context was viewed by some of the studio unit as a novel and exciting experience, with several people forming lasting friendships with 'civilians' in the city. One of the side effects of having a mixture, however, was potentially that of alienation on an individual level (which shows through in some of the preceding quotations) and one of the fears was that this feeling could also then spread through to the structurally independent core unit, and drive the level of paranoia beyond that which can be seen as occupationally normal for a film unit.



Fig. 1

The production personnelPre-production

Writer (F)  
Casting Director

Associate Producer (F)  
Production Assistant (F)

Producer/Director (F)

Production

Camera/Lighting Cameraman (F)  
Assistant Cameraman (F)  
Clapper-loader (F)

Sound Recordist (F)  
Boom Operator (F)

Designer  
Assistant Designer (F)

Wardrobe Supervisor  
Male Dresser  
Female Dresser

Make-up Supervisor  
Make-up Assistant

Lighting Gaffer  
Electrician

Programme Co-ordinator  
Floor Manager  
Assistant Floor Manager

Props Buyer  
Props Men (3)

Special Effects Supervisor

Set Painter  
Drivers (Chargehand + 3)  
Still Photographer  
Action Vehicles Supervisor  
(F)

Editing and dubbing

Editor  
Assistant Editor

Dubbing Mixer (F)  
Dubbing Assistant (F)

Freelance personnel indicated by (F))



Casting the actors and actresses

One of the surest ways in which a director can deflect his audience's attention from the narrative of a drama is to miscast his actors. The more naturalistic the form, the greater is the danger of failing to provide the illusion of reality through an audience's 'willing suspension of disbelief' if the actors neither look nor feel 'right'. Casting the 'right' people was therefore an absolutely crucial stage in making DUMMY, and also one of the least accessible to analysis since the final choice was often a matter of almost pure intuition on the producer's behalf.

The choice of actors and actresses nevertheless involved a series of decisions which would lead up to a point where a subjective preference could operate, and one of the chief functions of the casting department was to provide that choice. Fortunately for directors (and unfortunately for actors) the acting profession is traditionally underemployed, so the casting director can act as a broker between directors, actors and their agents in drawing up lists of 'possibles' for each part in a production. A casting director can draw on several different sources in making these lists; there is a casting directory called SPOTLIGHT which is divided into sections for Male, Female and juvenile actors and actresses which is continually updated with photographs, details of height, age, special skills and general career history, and this can be used for making an initial selection of facial types, rather like sifting through 'mugshots' in a police file. SPOTLIGHT is only intended to be a guide, or a source of contacts, however; casting directors will inevitably have their own lists of actors and actresses culled from frequent visits to the theatre and even drama schools, and, of course, from watching a great deal of television. Actors, like freelance directors, also have to indulge in a good deal of hustling, such that any forthcoming performance which the actor considers to be a worthy showcase for his talents will be accompanied by a barrage of letters to prospective employers, asking them to watch or attend that programme or play.



A casting director will therefore have access to hundreds of actors and actresses which, in the ordinary course of events, the individual director will not, so DUMMY's producer was able to rely upon ATV's Head of casting to deal with the initial selection of the cast and to provide him with a shortlist of people to interview.

Such a shortlist could actually be quite extensive, and could easily include several hundred people for a production like DUMMY in which at least thirty-eight people were specified in the original script. The script also mentioned an unspecified number of 'Pub customers, Children at deaf school, passers-by, pakistanis, etc.' and after a number of script revisions the eventual cast, excepting people in pubs and passers-by, amounted to seventy-three. Apart from finding suitable candidates for all these parts, it was also the casting department's job to negotiate contracts, production and rehearsal fees and overtime rates with the actors or their agents plus day-to-day expenses in accordance with going rates and the overall budget of the production. Thus actors would be hired according to agreements with their union EQUITY over the type of role they were to play as well as the length of time they were to be involved in the production. Minimum rates would be negotiated for 'Walkon ones' (actors performing 'individually in medium shot, or more closely, a special function peculiar only to the trade or calling that his character is supposed to represent, eg. a bus conductor collecting fares on a bus...') or for 'Walkon twos' (who perform the functions of walkon ones in addition to being required 'to speak a very few unimportant words'). 'Extras' are also specifically defined as performers who are 'not required to give individual characterisation nor to speak any word or line of dialogue except that crowd noises shall not be deemed to be dialogue in this context', and all these functions had to be defined in addition to those of the main cast who might negotiate individual agreements based upon their standing and experience in the profession.



Casting the artists for the main roles was to be a crucial task for the producer, and this was to be particularly true of the 'title role' of DUMMY, for which an actress had to be found to play the part of a deaf girl who could carry all the difficulties and responsibility involved.

### Casting Sandra

The producer had at one time considered the possibility of using a deaf actress to play the part of Sandra, but he had been unable to find someone who could also fit the bill in other respects. There had also been a suggestion that the real Sandra could be persuaded to play herself; perhaps not all the way through the film, but possibly at the end, in a scene showing her coming out of prison. This was rejected on dramatic grounds, since it was felt that it would only confuse an audience (in the same way that dramatisations like KING - about Martin Luther King, or SPEND, SPEND, SPEND, studiously avoid the use of real newsreel film of people involved,) but it was also rejected on humanitarian grounds, since the real Sandra 'didn't need the notoriety'.

Finding a suitable actress was complicated by a number of specific requirements:

1. She would have to be relatively unknown, at least in terms of previous television appearances, since casting a known actress would tend to destroy the feeling of authenticity required. (You can get away with casting a very well known actress like Judi Dench in a true story like ON GIANT'S SHOULDERS because she is only rarely on television, being chiefly a theatre actress).
2. Despite being 'unknown' she would nevertheless have to be a superlative actress given the requirements of the script and the central difficulty of portraying deafness.
3. She would need to have some of the physical qualities of the original, as the producer said, 'a certain sexual quality and a physical confidence' and a broad resemblance to the original would also help the actress and



the director to visualise the part since both would spend some time with the real girl.

4. She would need to be able to play the part over a time-scale; from at least the age of about mid-teens up to late twenties.

5. She would need to be prepared to play a number of physically demanding scenes, such as winning a swimming gala and handling difficult sexual and violent episodes.

6. She would need to be available over several months to include research, rehearsals and the whole of the shoot itself.

One requirement which the actress did not need to fulfill, which the other artists did, was to have a passable Yorkshire accent. The script contained lines of dialogue for Sandra, but these were to be used as a guide for the almost incoherent speech-sounds that she would have to make, through which an accent would be barely audible.

Since the central role was of such vital importance to the film as a whole, the producer had been looking out for a suitable actress from very early stages; from about June of 1976 he had considered actresses who looked the part, or who seemed to be able to cope with the special demands of the role, but had not found anyone with a combination of these attributes by the time the script had been completed in November. Meanwhile, a young theatre actress, had been writing to several casting departments asking people to watch her first television part in an episode of THE SWEENEY called 'The pay-off' in which she played a gambling croupier. One of the casting departments she had written to was ATV's, and DUMMY's producer had also caught that episode of THE SWEENEY himself, and recognised in the actress some of the physical attributes he was looking for. He contacted the department straight away, and the actress explained what happened next:

ATV rang me and said could I get down there as quickly as possible about a lead in a drama-documentary. They came straight to me, not to my agent, and I was quite excited since it was so soon after THE SWEENEY. I didn't really ask what it was about at the time, as I presumed that since they had just seen THE SWEENEY it would be



something to do with croupiers. I saw the producer that same day, and he seemed to be very keen. He told me the story, showed me lots of photographs (of Sandra) and my excitement grew, thinking that this was the next thing that I wanted to do career-wise.

As far as the producer was concerned, the actress confirmed his initial impression that she might well be suitable. She possessed the physical confidence and attractiveness necessary for the part without being too glamorous, and whilst comparatively young, at twenty-six, was a first-rate professional actress. She had trained at the Drama Centre, Chalk Farm, from 1969 to 1972 where she gained experience in method acting, and had then spent three and a half years in rep, gaining her EQUITY card during a schools theatre tour with the Theatre Centre: 'Eighteen pounds a week; four shows a day starting at six in the morning for six months'. This was followed by a year and a half at the Gateway theatre in Chester, and a season at the Northcott in Exeter plus a spell of 'pure purgatory' at the Belgrave in Coventry before returning to London in December 1975. In London the actress understudied Jane Asher for four months at the Royal Court in TREATS, and made four student films for students at the NFS and the Royal College before being offered the SWEENEY part. At the same time she was in an Edward Bond play at the Almost Free theatre, and was committed to playing in the Black Arts Festival in another play called SWEET TALK in Lagos during January 1977.

The producer was himself committed to a filming contract in America over Christmas, and a final decision over casting the actress was not taken until the first week of January, by which time she was also up for a prospect to play Ophelia. ATV's Head of Casting had agreed, however, that the actress was right, and the producer took her out to lunch - 'we were talking about politics or something, and then he suddenly said that I could have it; gave me a script, and we started negotiating.'

The actress read the script, regarding it with some reservation because of the sparse way in which a television (as opposed to a stage) play is written, and because of the content, which required her to do some extremely



difficult and technically demanding acting. Her biggest fear, however, was typecasting:

So far I have avoided it, having done mostly theatre. It is much more easy in the theatre to play an old lady one week, and a little girl the next. In television you do tend to be seen doing a barnaid well, and they say 'we haven't got time to worry whether you can do something else, so you can do a barnaid again'. It's not the actor's fault that you keep seeing them doing the same things. Derek Jacobi did THE IDIOT, so when it came to casting I CLAUDIUS, they knew he could do it. From my part in THE SWEENEY I think (the producer) thought that I was very working-class, which I'm not. I think he got quite a surprise when he met me, but the fact that he is taking a risk with me is great. Most directors, having met me, would have said that I wasn't right at all, and would have gone for someone who had been brought up in the area.

While the ability to play a working-class Yorkshire girl depends upon more factors than simply having the appropriate accent, the fact that the actress was not a north-country girl was, as I mentioned, not so important in this case. One review of the programme, commenting upon an award which the actress was to receive afterwards in fact asked 'What will she win when she speaks'. Had the reviewer spoken to the actress, she would have revealed the well-modulated speech of a Doctor's daughter from Maidenhead. Furthermore, in the special case of the central character, the producer had felt that using an actress who was personally remote from the real Sandra's environment could be a definite advantage, since the actress would then have more opportunity to stand back and observe the situation, and deal with the special problems involved in her own time. A good deal of acting is in reacting; to the text, the other actors, the people on the set, and one's emotions and feelings (and, on the stage, to the audience). If this is linked to the particular case of playing Sandra, where most of the scenes involve things being done to her, then the actress' task becomes even more reactive, such that the ability to objectively observe how the real Sandra would react becomes very important.

A potential disadvantage in casting the actress, however, was her lack of experience of film. Apart from some work with student's films, she had only had the limited experience of working on THE SWEENEY, which was itself a typical, since the crew on that programme had been working together for



about four years, and knowing the ins and outs of the programme backwards, could give their maximum attention to the artists. Having worked mainly in live theatre, the actress also felt that she would miss having an audience with which to gauge herself or her performance, and was later to make the important point that acting in a film is essentially discontinuous:

When the cameraman or the director are setting up a shot they have the whole scene in mind, but they are seeing it as a shot. I know now that when we do a scene we are only going to use a third of it if we are lucky, and they are picking shots from it. But as far as we are concerned as actors it is a scene. When you act a scene it's very difficult to act it as shots. That's my major difficulty, I don't think I'm technically accomplished enough to cope with film: I can't turn on instantly the sort of things I'm being asked to do. At the funeral, for example, the director said 'Go over to the grave and get into it' - I mean the part, not the grave, so I went over and the guy started reading the service, and there were flowers and messages from relatives, and I knew there wouldn't be any problem if he wanted an emotional reaction, so I got on with it, and then suddenly it was 'Cut!', 'Let's get the long-shot now' and by the time we got back to the closeup again I just had to say 'Sorry, it's gone'.

In the event, the actress' doubts were generally agreed to have been unfounded, after the film had been completed I asked the producer if there had been any part of the process which had exceeded his expectations, and he said,

I would say that there is one thing which has continually come across like that, and that's Geraldine. She was totally the character; she never stopped acting, even where you are only seeing the back of her there is still a little something extra coming through.

At twenty-six, the extreme lower age-limit which the actress could play was mid - to late teens, so the producer had already decided to use a number of different girls to play Sandra from babyhood up to that age, with the main actress taking the role from that point up to almost present-day into Sandra's late twenties. Three other girls therefore had to be cast, that number being chosen with respect to the script's structure, giving three transitions in all.

Casting juveniles is more of a problem than casting mature artists, simply because there is less of a choice, but casting juveniles who could



PLATE - 1



Geraldine James as Sandra ( with make-up scabs )



convincingly carry off the parts of deaf children would be almost impossible. The producer therefore decided to look for three children who were not professional actresses, but who were really deaf, and he found them from among the children at the special school which the real Sandra had attended in Bradford. The Children for whom he was looking would need to have a reasonable similarity with each other and to the main actress, and the producer would also need to generate a special relationship with them in order to be able to direct them, both as non-actors and as deaf children with whom communication would be doubly difficult given the strange (to them) circumstances of filming. He consequently spent a good deal of time at the school, gaining the rewarding and instructive experience of talking - or trying to talk - to different children.

Permission had to be obtained from parents as well as from the school, plus a dispensation from EQUITY, but eventually three children were cast with the ages of two, six and thirteen.

#### Casting the smaller roles

Again, for the purposes of retaining an authentic feel to the film, the producer wanted to cast people for the remaining roles who were all relatively unknown. As such, they were also less likely to command large fees, which was an important consideration when taking on a cast of more than seventy people. Similarly, the correct accent was now an important factor to look for in prospective artists, and the producer wanted to cast as many people as he could locally, which would also save on the costs of paying expenses for actors to travel up from London or elsewhere. It was in the casting of the smaller roles that the casting department really came into its own. Using the resources of SPOTLIGHT, and a wide range of contacts with artists, agents and specialist agencies such as ATS in Leeds, the Head of casting drew up lists of 'possibles', often making the initial selection on the basis of artists having 'good faces'. In fact the immediate visual impression which an artist can make becomes almost more



critical in inverse proportion to the length of time he or she is on the screen, since the audience will then have that much less time in which to draw connotations from other sources. Hence it was important, for example, to cast an actor to play the 'Shabby man' who could really look the part given the short space of time that he would be in shot, and the first impression would then need to carry sufficient information about the character without going as far as to create a characature.

One of the most important aspects of acting in this respect is that it has very little to do with imitation, or as the writer said 'We are not in the Mike Yarwood business'. Much of the process of casting is concerned with judging how an actor can intuitively 'take the role of the other' as George Herbert Mead has said in another context, such that the technical ability to perform in front of an audience or to camera is more or less assumed, or backed up by the Casting director's prior knowledge of the artist's curriculum vitae. The director is then primarily looking for particular qualities which the artists can bring to the part in question; qualities which might well be independent of the fact that he or she is a competent actor. Thus the actor who played Sandra's husband, for instance, was cast not only because he was a skilled and competent artist, but for certain qualities which the director was looking for as a character. 'It was his eyes,' the director explained afterwards, 'He just looked as if he could be a bastard.'

Several of the artists who eventually obtained parts were originally put forward for quite different parts in the film. The actress, who played the Mother had, for example, originally been suggested for playing Sandra's sister, and the actor playing the Neat Man in the motel had originally wanted to play Basher; Sandra's father. Both were chosen for the different parts, and for different reasons. 'The Neat man' was a particularly experienced actor, and was felt to be able to handle the transition from normality to almost psychopathic violence in the Motel scene, and in view of that violence, someone with considerable



professional technique would be needed to ensure that the main actress was not actually hurt in the process.

'Mother', on the other hand, could not have played the sister in her teens, as was required in the script, but was given the more important part because it was felt that she could physically handle the change between about twenty-five years old through to about fifty. On top of this, the director was looking for a special humane quality which the 'Mother' would have to show in contrast to the bullying, frustrated father and as another actress explained, 'She has this kind of innocence about her as the mother of this deaf baby, and you naturally think 'poor thing' - why did this have to happen to her?'

'Mother' was one of the few artists in the film who were required to have a Yorkshire accent for whom it was not her natural way of speaking, and again, she was primarily a stage actress rather than a television or film performer. She described the process of casting as follows:

First of all, the casting department saw me as the sister, and contacted me, not the agent, having seen my photograph in Spotlight. I was just told the basic idea; that it had to be authentic, and that it was Yorkshire, so I went down to the BBC archives and listened to recordings of Yorkshire housewives for six hours a day for three days, and then went out shopping and so on - using this dialect. Then after about four days I went up to see the producer and conducted the whole interview in a Yorkshire accent. I told him that I'd been seen as the sister, and he said 'Oh no, I see you as the mother' and mentioned that they had seen a lot of people for the part, and that mine was 'The first face that fitted'. Although I think he thought that I really was Yorkshire, the main problem was that he hadn't seen any of my work, and it wasn't for some time that I actually knew that I'd got the part.

Other artists were better known within the casting department as being able to turn in particular characterisations without being so well-known that they would immediately be identified with other parts. One of these was an actress with whom the producer had worked before in a commercial for the OBSERVER newspaper. She described herself, tongue-in-cheek, as 'The queen of documentaries', and had worked consistently in television for several years. She was cast to play Sandra's long-





Patricia Marks and Liz McKenzie - Sandra's mother  
and Auntie Amie



suffering aunt -

I quite often play the same sort of part; working-class women, but I do other things too, like the Peter Terson play *LOST YOUR TONGUE* on the stage, and *READY WHEN YOU ARE*, Mr. McGILL, but then I've worked a lot for Kenny Loach and the like. The first documentary I was in was *CATHY COME HOME*, where I played the mother of the kids who got burned in the caravan, and I was a nurse in *FAMILY LIFE*, and have just been in a play for Yorkshire Television - a Ken Barstow play in the *COST OF LOVING* series.

The producer knew my work before, but I'm not sure whether he had always had me in mind for the part. There is a family resemblance though, and I was brought up in the low end of Newcastle, so I know what it's all about. Then we are going to be working with real locations so we've got the atmosphere, and let's face it, we are professionals; we are doing what we've done before. In a thing like this it's not what you say, it's what you don't say that counts, and I think the fact that I come from the north helped a lot.

Casting some of the younger, and perhaps less experienced artists represented more of a risk for the director, and correlatively, more research into their backgrounds and abilities was required. The actor who was to play Sandra's first boyfriend is a case in point, since his role was also an especially difficult and pivotal feature of the film. This actor had to convincingly carry the part of a young, middle-class boy who had a positive and genuine relationship with a handicapped, working-class girl, but who subsequently stabs his brother and scars Sandra for life. As the main actress explained:

We have to get the 'life line' through the story, we have to make this very clear. If you read the script as it stands it is just a series of events; 'This happened, and then - my God - that happened etc'. It's up to the actors to create the life within this action; you have to show why things happen, how they happened, who the people are that make it happen; what those people are like. My job is easier in a way because at least you see (Sandra's) life. With the boyfriend it's different; he just comes in, nice, middle-class and apparently successful, and then he stabs his brother, hurts his girlfriend and slashes his own wrists. If you just do that people will baulk, you have to show the sort of person he is right from the start; the sort of person who could - believably - do those things. Slashing your wrists is an extraordinary thing for a nineteen year old to do, so you have to show why he does. Is he perhaps a bit manic, is he a repressed psychopath or what? All those questions have to be answered and described right from the start; you have to sow the seeds. I mean not to the extent that we show him doing karate chops on the bed while nobody is looking, but things in the fairground for example - the aggression in him should show through right from that point. It's the same



for the other people too, you've got to be able to say 'He looks like a bit of a right one', you've got to be able to show that people are capable of doing the things which they eventually do.

The director would therefore be looking for a youthful actor who could sow these seeds of aggression, as well as affection, who could also pass muster as a competent musician (since the boyfriend was a member of a pop group). Several actors were consequently interviewed for the part, and interviewed several times before a decision was reached. The successful applicant described his own experience:

I heard about the part from a personal friend, and then an interview was arranged for me to meet the producer. I had a whole series of interviews because in the end the producer was not sure whether to give it to me or another bloke. The problem was that I had to sing, and I'm not a musician, whereas the other guy actually was a singer, although I think the producer was worried about his acting. He was worried about sacrificing the one for the other. Anyway, I was brought up to Bradford to rehearse with the band, still not knowing whether the part was mine, and eventually, after two sessions with the band was given the part. I think I was chosen chiefly because of my looks and my attitude, although he also wanted a reasonable actor; but the producer had also done quite a bit of research on me, he had talked to Mike O'Hagen who had directed me in a play, and also to another casting director to find out more about me. In the end, though, it was probably a matter of instinct on his behalf.

Apart from having solid background information on actors and access to the accumulated experience of the casting department, it would be easy to undervalue the part played by 'instinct' in casting actors. By the nature of the programme the producer was looking for actors who could react to circumstances as they happened, (rather than sticking resolutely to the script, which in any case provided only the bare bones of the action) he was looking for people who would react naturally rather than act imitatively, or in Loach's terms, people would 'live' rather than 'act'. Hence he told actors that he was 'putting them in a false situation in which I want you to be real', and was looking for people who could react to what actors call the 'major stimulus' of unrehearsed lines, real locations and unexpected events. Very few of the actors were therefore asked to read for the part, with the producer relying more upon the 'look' and the 'feel' of the people he interviewed. He was, in fact, searching for individual's underlying attitudes and motivations



which might determine the way they would react in different circumstances as people, rather than as professional actors, which can be seen as a legacy of the producer's documentary training as well as being a result of what was generally agreed to be native talent. In point of fact, the producer had intended to use as many real local people from Bradford as possible, partially in order to obtain the desired authenticity, and partially for reasons of economy. Except in very special cases, however, (such as the use of the deaf children) the actor's union EQUITY would raise objections to this, so the greater bulk of the cast was made up of bone-fide artists.

Most of the smaller parts were therefore cast in Yorkshire during February and March of 1977 through the ATS agency at the Leeds City Varieties theatre. The Head of casting arranged a series of interviews here, and she and the producer travelled up to Bradford several times to look at people who could be walkons and extras as well as filling some of the more major roles, many of the actors concerned were 'part-timers', having 'normal' jobs as well as taking on acting assignments whenever they came up. This is a practical necessity in view of the fact that acting assignments could easily be months apart, but it was also something which the producer particularly admired, and which was considered to be a positive advantage when casting for 'real life' roles.

#### A casting session

One of the casting sessions was held in the bar of the Leeds City Varieties theatre on March 10th, attended by the producer and the Head of Casting. The bar itself was not in operation at the time, but the room provided comfortable and informal surroundings for the interviews to which the Casting director had invited a number of 'possibles', giving them a basic outline of the parts concerned.

For each interview, the producer himself asked most of the questions,



with the Casting director making specific enquiries about eye-colour or height, of which details were noted down on standard casting forms together with information about the applicant's name, age, address and telephone number. Space was also given on these forms for notes about the artist's previous experience in theatre, television and films and any personal details which would be useful for the purposes of Make-up and Wardrobe. The producer also took colour polaroids of each person in order to compare these with those of other actors, and with the collection of photographs he had accumulated of the original people.

Before the first interviewee was called, the producer and Casting director briefly confirmed with each other the three main questions to ask, which were: (a) Were the applicants 'naturals' in the sense of 'looking authentic', did they, as the producer said, 'look as if they come from Bradford rather than the South', (b) Did they have a good Bradford or Leeds accent, and (c) Were they happy about playing the parts 'for real'.

The first person to be called in was a boy of sixteen who was a 'possible' for the part of Sandra's first boyfriend's brother (who would be the drummer in the pop group). He was still at school, but was in real life a drummer for a small local group, and the producer felt that this was an obvious advantage, not only because of the musical ability, but because the boy could virtually 'play himself' in the role. The boy was, however a little diffident, partly because his agent had come into the bar with him, and the latter was asked to leave. After this, the producer laid his cards on the table, explaining that the boy would have to become involved in a fight, and asked him if he minded 'touching up a girl', which he didn't, and was also asked if he could be 'off-hand and casual'. After the agent had left, the boy was in fact noticeably more casual, and explained that his parents thought he was 'off-hand all the



time'. He also explained that he was attending a private school, which the producer felt would help in the portrayal of middle-classness necessary in this case, and did not mind having his hair cut in order to conform to the period (the mid-sixties). Throughout the interview, the producer was adopting a fairly aggressive stance towards the boy, using explicit language and not pulling his punches at all in order, as he said, 'to try and spook him'. Having remained relatively unspooked, the boy appeared to be a likely candidate; the casting director had written 'Very nice face; good face - casual manner' on her casting form, but had also noted down his height, which was about six feet. As the boyfriend's younger brother, the height might take precedence over all the other factors.

The next interviewee was a tallish, clean-cut man of thirty, who had previously had walkon parts as policemen or passers-by, and appeared to be content to continue taking such parts. The producer rapidly decided that he might be suitable for another walkon in DUMY, but not for a larger part as he 'Looked like a policeman'. The third applicant had a muscular, tough-looking bearing as he walked into the room, and the Casting director started to write down a comment, but stopped as he started to speak in a very soft voice, explaining that he had mostly played monks or stretcher-bearers. The producer made a note that the actor could possibly be an extra or a walkon and asked for the next interviewee.

This applicant was a possible for the part of Sandra's first boyfriend, and whereas the previous interviewees had approached the session with a certain amount of timidity and diffidence, he strode confidently into the room, explaining that he had spent three years at Drama school, and was also a trained dancer. He was at present putting together an act with two girls 'to get a bit of glamour into my performance' and could play guitar 'very well'. He had also, as he explained 'Always fancied being an actor' and spent some time discussing the possible fees involved for the part.



The producer was beginning to lose interest, and leaned over to ask the Casting director some questions, but then the interviewee started talking about his acting experience, which had included some quite major parts, including some highly relevant experience of 'Smashing people in and snogging behind bushes and that'. In addition, he knew Bradford very well, and had the correct accent for the middle-class boyfriend role. The producer's interest had returned, but he thought that the young man's attitude might be too 'flip' for the part, and told him so. He explained that the part would not tolerate any trivialisation, and that the actor would need to be very honest and straight with Sandra in the early stages; 'You will have to laugh with her, rather than at her' he pointed out, 'It's got to be credible.' The young actor had climbed down considerably by this time, and explained that he was being deliberately 'flip' in view of the circumstances of a casting session, which was 'A hell of an experience'. The producer had taken several notes, however, and explained afterwards that this part was particularly critical, and that the actor concerned in fact fulfilled a number of the requirements that he was looking for - 'he can drive, is good-looking, middle-class, plays guitar, and is in contrast to Sandra'. This particular actor was nonetheless rejected in the end - chiefly because the producer remained concerned about his attitude and the fact that he was possibly too good-looking given the context of the part. (The fact that the boyfriend takes up with Sandra in the first place was already considered to be unusual, and the episode's credibility could be strained further if the contrast between the two youngsters was too great.)

The next person to see was a lady; a woman in late middle-age who came in wearing an overcoat and a headscarf, who at first sight looked as if she had popped in off the street. This first impression was, of course, important, as was the lady's broad Yorkshire accent, but she was in fact a character actress with a string of roles to her credit. She had been in KISSES AT FIFTY, Colin Welland's LEEDS UNITED, THE PENDLE WITCHES, SHABBY



TIGER, SAM, CORONATION STREET, and ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL among many other productions. The Casting director had noted down her form that the actress had a 'very good, strong voice' and the producer said afterwards that he had liked her conversational tone and her 'air of mischief'. At the time she explained that she had always played 'strong ladies' and did not mind using abusive language, 'I'm very good at swearing, in fact you have to be if you've been in a Colin Welland play'. The producer felt sure that they could use her, perhaps for the old lady in the publ who has to deliver the line about being 'over sixty, and not wanting any business' - he asked her to say the line during the interview (both with and without her dentures) and tentatively offered her a part on the spot. The Casting director had meanwhile noticed that the lady bore more than a passing resemblance to the comedy actress Beryl Reid, and had noted this down as a possible danger. This was one of the reasons why the actress was eventually not used for the part in question, although she was hired for another scene in the film; unfortunately that scene was then itself rejected for technical reasons.

Outside the interview room, the actresses had talked to the next actress waiting there, and had warned her that she might have to take her teeth out too. This did not add to her confidence, and the second actress was so nervous that it was difficult to tell how she might react in a given role. She was also basically a theatre actress, with little experience of television and the wrong accent. She had brought a set of professional stage photographs with her, showing the actress in some quite young roles, but the Casting director noted down that she was 'Too theatre; about fifty and looks it'. Both the interviewers therefore agreed that they could not use her, and called in the last applicant of the day.

This man was a tall, well-groomed actor of twenty-six, who had been in a variety of productions from straight plays to musicals, but he did not have a trace of a Yorkshire accent and had the general bearing of a London



Solicitor rather than a Bradfordian down-and-out. The producer said as much, pointing out that he did not have 'the look for the central group of the film', but the actor wryly explained that he had not been expecting to be offered a part in DUMMI. at all. He in fact lived close by the producer in London, had heard that he would be casting in Leeds with ATV's Head of Casting, and had travelled up for the casting session simply in order to 'get my face known'. Both the producer and the Casting director accepted this quite readily as a legitimate ploy, and the latter asked the actor to send her some photographs - 'I might need a Russian officer in DISRAELI'

---

Casting continued, through 'bulk' casting sessions and individual interviews, to within two or three weeks of the shoot itself, with each artist being considered on his or her merits in relation to the specific requirements of the role, and in relation to the overall requirements of authenticity. Whilst artists still had to be competent actors (to cope with accents, time-scale differences, the absorption of character and the disciplines of filming), casting was occasionally influenced by other factors, such as an artist's physical resemblance to the original. The actress who was cast to play Sandra's sister, for instance, had trained as a dancer and then worked for two years in television prior to being cast for DUMMI, taking relatively small parts in CORONATION STREET, MY BROTHER'S KEEPER and THE NEARLY MAN, and she had also worked with one of DUMMI'S other actresses on READY WHEN YOU ARE, Mr McGILL. She was contacted through her agent by ATV's Head of Casting as a possible for Sandra's sister, despite the fact that she had a Scottish accent, and was told to go and see the producer without any make-up and with her hair left undone - 'I walked into see him, and he just stared at me and said 'Oh Christ, you look just like her' - and that was it'. The producer obviously made sure that the actress could handle the Yorkshire accent, and was suitable in other respects, but she was given the part four days



later.

172

Other parts had proved to be more difficult to cast. The role of the yobbish, small-time criminal whom Sandra lives with after leaving home was not, for example, cast until the beginning of April. The producer had been unable to find someone from among the Leeds 'possibles' who could immediately project the almost stereotypical thuggery combined with a certain sexuality which the part demanded, and he eventually took the risk of casting quite a well-known actor who had played similar parts before; the actor explained:

I've always played people who are not very nice, but then type-casting has its benefits, it's an actor's bread-and-butter in many ways. It fascinates me why I am always cast as a villain, even in the old days when I was, in parentheses, 'pretty', I was still cast as a villain. I suppose there is a sort of insolence in the face, and I've been told that I have an angry quality. I do actually have a natural streak of violence too, and some directors see that straight away, although you then tend to be used as a puppet; like set-dressing. In this case though, the guy is a totally unthinking person, just a job - not a thinking villain. Although I've always played thugs and villains they've always been intelligent ones. At the interview the producer asked me if I was capable of dropping the intelligence in my face, which may sound simple, but was very astute of him. I've only met two other directors who can visualise like that; like John Sturges, who can look through the very long hair and moustache you are wearing at an interview, and say 'Right - Luftwaffe pilot'.

With the casting of this actor, two weeks before the start of the shoot, the castlist was virtually complete (see fig. 2). All the artists had been cast within the general remit of obtaining authenticity, and the producer can be seen to have employed a specific 'system of representation' in order to achieve this as part of the process of constructing a symbolic vehicle. Only in a case such as the casting of Sandra's sister did the process come near being an unstructured copy of an event, and even here the decision was made within the context of a professional evaluation of the artist's competence as an actress. The professional and cultural values of looking for artists who were relatively 'unknown', or who did not have an irretrievable immersion in the practices of 'The theatre' had also been important and explicit subscriptions of the system of representation which the producer was using. These were then linked to



the more implicit factors of finding people who could act intuitively; people who could react to real locations and events subjectively as individuals, rather than objectively as actors. Hence in many cases, actors were sought with relevant backgrounds (such as the middle-class brother of Sandra's boyfriend) or 'local' knowledge (such as the people cast in Leeds). Several of the main artists were also paid to spend time researching their roles with the original people. The actress playing Sandra, for example, spent four weeks prior to the shoot with the girl herself, as a result of which the producer wanted her to 'know more about (the real) Sandra than I do myself.' Thus the less the director had to direct or manipulate the action itself, the greater, it was felt, would become the objectivity and the authenticity of that action.

All the same, the conditions in which the producer placed actors 'in false situations where I want you to be real' were generated by a specific set of decisions made during casting. The decisions being made here were oriented to the context of the medium itself (insofar as actors operated within a professional context of competence, and the institutional contexts of availability, fixed payments, professional stature and such factors as the fear of typecasting) and to the contexts of 'Society as source', where judgements were made about appropriate accents and social backgrounds, facial types and the ability of artists to use cues and symbols which have become embedded in our culture (such as qualities of expression; of eyes or demeanour - one actor was cast, for example, because he 'looked like an ageing Teddy-boy'.) All these factors were also viewed within the perceived context of 'Society as audience', where actors would be rejected if they resembled other artists, or where they were likely to be identified with other roles in such a way that 'the contract of authenticity' would be broken.



Fig. 2. The castlist

S = Main speaking part

W = Walkons

C = Credit given in the  
titles.Names as in the film

Sandra	S C
Baby Sandra	W C
Child Sandra	W C
Teenage Sandra	W C
Mother	S C
Basher (Sandra's father)	S C
Aunt Annie	S C
Joan (Sandra's sister)	S C
Child Joan	W
Child Lyn	W
Headmistress	S C
Teachers (2)	W
Games Master	W
Fish fryer	S C
Fish fryer's assistant	W
Fish shop customer	W
Hospital Consultant	S C
Hospital Surgeon	S C
Ian (Sandra's boyfriend)	S C
Ian's father	S C
Ian's brother	S C
Male Social worker	S C
Female Social worker	S C
Phil (petty criminal)	S C
George "	W
Cyril "	W
Cross-eyed Anne (Sandra's friend)	S C
Raymond (Sandra's husband)	S C
Best man	W
Heat Man (Motel)	S C
Motel manager	W C
Charlie (Sandra's friend)	S C
Billy	W
Joe (Stabbed man)	S C
Pat	W
Old West Indian	S C
Police inspector	S C
Police constable (2)	W
Detective Sergeant (2)	W
Plain Clothes officer	S C
Police photographer	W



Joan's husband	W
Aunts (2)	W
Clergyman	S
Nurse (VD Clinic)	W
Clinic visitor	W
Special Doctor (hearing test)	W
Bookie	W
Working men (2)	W
Working girl	W
Working girl	S C
Coalman	W
Rooming House tenant	W
Factory foreman	W
Asthmatic woman	W
Dossers (2)	W
Cortina driver	W
Cortina passenger	W
Traci driver	W
Drag Artists	W C
Pop group (3)	W C
Shabby Man	W C
Extras (people in street, ambulance men, passers-by etc.)	



## Preparing for the shoot

### Locations

From reports of the facts of Sandra's life, an ordered sequence of events had been distilled as a story, and defined in terms of characterisation within the structure of the script. Actors had then been cast as part of the process of reconstituting the producer's experience of the original facts, and now a further stage was needed in order to provide a context within which the actors could work.

Placing actors within the context of a studio set, or simply in relation to a few props, like a chair or a telephone, gives their actions a perspective; it places them in an apparently spatial relationship with objects 'in the world'. Thus the more that 'world' is built-up or defined in terms of sets or properties the greater is the depth of perspective, and the more authentic that perspective becomes, the greater is the expansion towards naturalism, providing that the other constituents of reproduction are working towards the same end (such as considerations of wardrobe, lighting and camerawork.)

There are three major ways in which this world can be defined. Firstly, complete sets can be built from scratch within a studio, secondly, an existing environment can be used as it stands, and thirdly, a combination of these can be used by taking an existing building, street or section of the landscape and 'dressing' it with anything from a discarded packet of cigarettes to a complete row of house-facades as in a Hollywood back-lot.

From very early stages in the production of DUMY, the producer had wanted to use the second of these alternatives wherever possible in order to preserve an iconic correspondence with the 'real' world, and therefore a greater degree of naturalism in the film as a whole. Furthermore, he wanted to use the actual locations in which the original events had taken place, or places which met closely similar criteria, such that an



'objective' view of what Raymond Williams has called 'the flat, external appearance' of reality could be incorporated indexically into what was otherwise a reconstruction of the apparent facts of Sandra's life. The fact that the film was already only a partial reconstruction is clear insofar as the degree of correspondence between the film and the original events had been predetermined by the producer's interpretation of (reported) information and the mediation of different contexts of production. For example, the producer had already had to reduce and edit in order to transform 'real time' into 'film time' within the ninety-minute slot, and on a more complex level he had necessarily had to reconstitute the observed qualities of the original people in terms of the qualities which he had elicited from actors.

The use of real locations could therefore be seen as a mechanism by which the producer could 'claw back' a direct relationship between his film and the real world, by moving from a realistic account of 'life-in-general' to a documentary view of 'life-in-particular'. He could then aspire to that system of representation with which the straight documentarist or the news reporter operates, and use the professional ethic of 'objectivity' to justify the veracity of the reconstruction.

This analysis raises a number of difficulties, however; the producer himself had been careful to draw a distinction between 'real reality' and 'film reality' during our conversations, the latter being a particular system of representation of the former, where 'real-seeming' events are reproduced instead of reality itself. The distinction is that which separates 'Realism' from 'Naturalism' which is a highly contentious area of discussion which merits a debate of its own. For the moment, 'Realism' from 'Naturalism' which is a highly contentious area of discussion which merits a debate of its own. For the moment, 'Realism' can be defined as an aesthetic; a method of signifying reality through a "conventionally coded premise of belief in a correspondence between 'work of art' and 'reality'"



(Schiller 1977), whereas 'Naturalism' is defined as a form of cinematic or literary positivism which seeks to reproduce reality intact.

As a drama-documentary, DUFFY can be defined within the terms of Classic Realism in which reality would be manipulated through a "signifying practice within and on behalf of an existing ideology, within, that is, the 'self-evidence of lived experience'" (Stephens 1978) in order to produce meaning rather than convey it. In this respect a great deal of actual violence of Sandra's life was, for example, removed from the narrative because it was judged to be 'over the top' in terms of the structure of the film, and many of the important and possibly determinant details of her life were never included for fear of introducing 'red-herrings' which would detract from the logic of the film. (The original Sandra, for instance, had a deaf brother in addition to the sister, and she was actually engaged to be married to the boyfriend when he slashed her face with the kitchen knife.)

That which constitutes 'realism' will also change in relation to many variables; over a period of time, for example, the 'realistic' portrayal of a feature like violence in a film may change considerably. In earlier days it was sufficient to have an actor clutch at his arm to signify that he had been shot. Nowadays the action is more likely to be signified through remotely controlling the explosion of a small bag of pig's offal which has been attached to the actor's arm, thus giving the impression of human tissue being torn apart and a theoretically more 'realistic' effect, even though the action is no more 'real' than the former.

Since 'realism' is conventional and liable to change, it is implicitly less 'objective' than pure naturalism, but it is precisely this aspiration to 'objectivity' which is so vociferously challenged by many film-makers. As Tony Garnett has said,

Even the most factual of programmes - news or documentaries, contain personally and uniquely an imaginative response. In fact this is



true for so-called factual programmes and for so-called fictional programmes, and they work best when there is a tension between both of these things. The world is illuminated best when these things are in a relationship to one another. You cannot say that so-called factual programmes are necessarily true, because they might be consciously lying with their facts, and you cannot say that fictional programmes are lies just because they do not deal in the sort of fact that so-called factual programmes do.

(TV interview: BBC2 17.4.78)

Or take Jack Gold's point, made during the same programme in which Garnett appeared, an ARENA presentation which asked the question 'When is a play not a play':

There isn't even such a thing as an objective documentary. Merely by choosing a subject, or by choosing where the camera is going, or choosing which particular incident you are going to film you are immediately interfering with objectivity.

Even by using the actual locations in which the original events had taken place, the producer could not therefore guarantee an objective transference of 'reality' onto film (simply because a transference had taken place) and unless the audience had prior knowledge of the events and their location there would be no necessary reason why actual locations should appear to be any more 'real' than 'realistic' ones. If the film had been a straight documentary, the producer could perhaps have used a narrator or a commentator to indicate that real events had taken place, thus foreclosing the range of connotation which an audience might make in decoding the sequence of images. In this respect, although speaking of another film (Michael Whyte's BILLY) Felicity Grant commented:

The absence of a guiding commentator... has certainly taken away the element of 'security' in watching disturbing material in the company of reliable and sure hands... we are no longer anchored by the received morality of the interpreter of events, whose overt statements can readily be seen and sometimes challenged.

(Broadcast 23.1.78)

In the event, DUMY used the definitive closure of a caption which said that the film was a true story, but within the terms of the narrative, DUMY (like BILLY) had to be its own witness in testifying for its veracity. Without the corroborating evidence of the 'guiding commentator'





**This is a true story.  
The events took place  
between 1950 and 1975**

Front Caption for DUMMY





Front Warrington Terrace -  
16.4.77 (last Kib + 52 in period (W/S))

Exterior location : outside young Sandra's home.  
Child Sandra ( extreme left ) plays in the street  
with friends.



it then became even more important to ensure that each separate element of the film combined to form a coherent whole in order to give the impression of reality. Hence the 'received morality' of a narrator was replaced by the extension of naturalistic space within the film as a mechanism through which the construction could be disguised, and its realism increased. This is precisely the opposite of providing a truly objective account, since the degree to which the film 'worked' as a realistic narrative is a measure of degree to which its ideology was denied insofar as the latter 'ceased to be a message of the text and turned the text into its message' (Stephens 1978).

As a signifying practice, then, the use of real locations was not so much a method of ensuring a direct relationship between the film and the reality of Sandra's world through a 'correspondence' theory of truth (in which a proposition is true if it reports an actual state of affairs), but more a way of generating a belief in that correspondence through a 'coherence' theory of truth (in which a proposition is true if it corresponds with other propositions in mutual support.). Thus the more coherent the film became in relation to the conventional definition of realism (ie the conventional view of what a full and authentic report of human experience would look like) the more disguised would become its own construction, and the more compelling would become the premise for a belief in the correspondence between the film and the events to which it referred.

To put these points together, it can be seen that the producer was unable to reconstruct Sandra's life as an 'unstructured copy' within a positivistic notion of 'objectivity', so he had to employ a system of representation which would signify that a copy had been attempted within the 'conventional objectivity' of Realism, within, that is, the bounds of a culturally constructed symbolic activity. To film objects or locations such that their 'unadorned tracings are left on the celluloid' (Andrew



1976:145) was therefore a way in which authenticity could be signified by balancing the viewpoint of the film against the equally structured outlook of an audience to the extent that the two universes of discourse overlapped and cancelled out one another. Thus the degree to which any aspect of the film appeared to be 'self-evidently true' was the degree to which it balanced, or cohered with, the culturally constructed propositions of an audience (and not the degree to which it corresponded with 'objective truth').

This balance of one element against another was a primary concern of the producer in making films that would be in the first place credible, and in the second, true:

The juxtaposition of certain things can bring about a balance which people can then see as a truth - it's that kind of truth which makes a film convincing. I want people to notice the detail of characterisation because the juxtaposition of those details can point towards a truth. If you step outside of this, by making a character or a movement 'too big' or 'over the top', then you begin to make it unacceptable to an audience. In the cinematic process you do sometimes want to go to an extreme, to get away from that line of acceptability, but even in a comedy, where extremes are a stock in trade, there is nevertheless a line which you have to stick to. If you go too far over - just ten degrees out in a slapstick comedy - then it no longer remains funny, and the audience begins to get distressed. Equally, in a cowboy film, a certain amount of movement is required, and it annoys people if you don't do it. If you are trying to build up a belief, and there is a certain amount of information which you are trying to get the audience to understand, then you have to keep in line. If there is a line of information, built up in blocks of, say, One to Five, and One to Three is in line with Five, but 'Four' steps out completely, then the audience may say that they therefore cannot believe in step Five, even though it is in line with the previous steps. If the film contains too many false premises, you will lose the audience's belief, their credibility, and if you distort reality for the sake of fitting it into a story too much, then you will outrage the audience, like in *THREE WOMEN* (Altman) where in all that modern society they didn't have a telephone.

In literally making sense of reality in a way which was complicit with a denial of that construction (by maintaining a 'line of acceptability' with regard to an audience) the producer operated the hypothesis that the tiniest error in detail could shift or skew the sense which he was trying to communicate -



Characterisation works on a lot of little nuances. What separates one person, or one location from another is a matter of very small details, and if you get those details wrong, the audience will suddenly find that they have a completely different class of person, or a completely different type of architecture before them. So by using real locations there is often a greater chance of getting near the truth, since people recognise the differences.

By allowing real locations to dictate the transference of some of this detail onto the film the producer therefore had a 'short-cut' means of registering particular relationships of objects to one another. This registration was still, however, part of the 'signifying practice' of realism, for while a film theorist like Andrew (1976:145) can define the 'realist pretence' in film as 'The disposition to seek and present the significance one finds in objects by means of the objects concerned rather than by using these objects to body forth an idea not already implicit in them' the significance of those objects is only 'implicit' insofar as people make it so (objects having no meaning on their own account). So in order to obtain the detail required of different locations such that they were 'Self-evidently true' the producer specifically chose locations for the purposes in hand. The criteria he used were, in the first place, those of authenticity, and in some instances, the actual places where the original events had taken place also looked sufficiently authentic for them to be used intact. Hence Bradford Royal Infirmary could be used for the hospital scenes, and the special school, the registry office and some of the pubs could all 'play themselves' in the film. For other locations, the producer had to look farther afield:

When locations already existed it was easy; we could just use the locations as they were. When they didn't exist I had to use different criteria. The first for me was often that places were in the right economic background, and this choice was based on personal experience; I know what bedsitters are like, for example, and I know what sort of places (Sandra) had lived in, so I knew what the places should have looked like. This came partly from things I had picked up during our research period, partly from my own information, and partly from the fact that (Sandra) did actually live over in those areas where we filmed. Sometimes the locations would be in the right area, but were wrong for their 'look' and their 'feel'. A lot of people wanted me to use an attic room in the house (which had already been used for other scenes) in Woodbank Terrace, for instance, but I felt that room - for all its emptiness - still



The 'look' and the 'feel' of particular rooms or exteriors was an important factor in the equation for less obvious reasons such as the effect they could have upon actors. Apart from the sheer expense of building authentic-looking sets in a studio, actors often find studios to be very static, unreal places - 'Its like working in a factory' one of them told me. Most of the actors felt that they could assume their characters much more quickly and easily within the context of a real location, and indeed the cast had been chosen from among actors who the producer felt could react to the situation at hand. The actress playing Sandra's mother explained that

Its much easier than being on the stage - I seem to be able to become the person I'm playing far more than I usually do. You have to forget about the lights and the technicians of course, but because you are working in the close confinements of a little house, or someone's back yard, the whole atmosphere is more truthful - it creates a more faithful atmosphere which helps you as an actress.

The cameraman felt that working in real locations could 'help everybody' -

If you are making a factual documentary, or a very naturalistic film, it is to our advantage to follow the forces that dictate how people actually live. The light controls everything to some extent; people put their furniture in certain places within a room because of the light, and they live in a particular way within that room because of the way the light comes into it. If you can re-create that then you are already closer to reality. This applies if you are filming in a real room or just in the daylight itself outside.

Other criteria which the producer was applying to the selection of locations were more purely aesthetic. There is a strong sense in the original script of the city of Bradford existing as an impassive, continuous backdrop to the immediate action, which the producer wanted to capture in the film. As Jean Louis Borges once commented, ' a city outlives its inhabitants', and many of the locations were chosen in order to position Sandra within the wider context of the city itself through using longshots of exteriors where the girl is walking along streets or through alleyways. The location of the cemetery, for example, not only contextualises the immediate action of the funeral, but was intended



to balance the 'life going on' in the city itself, visible in shot beyond and below the cemetery. A few locations, chosen for more practical reason, also afforded the opportunity for almost purely 'aesthetic' shots, such as the use of a twisting stairway at the Deaf school, down which 'Mother' and the headmistress walk in a long, panning shot by the camera which is positioned at the foot of the staircase. Generally speaking, the producer wanted to use real interiors 'so that you can relate them to the outside, so that the insides and the outsides seem to be part of the same thing', but using existing rooms could also help to draw an audience into them by emphasising foreground information and adding apparent depth to the image. This raises the all-important criterion of technical facility in the choice of locations.

Using even very wide lenses (down to twelve millimetres for many scenes in DUMMY), the camera still has to be about three feet back from the action in order to register a sufficient angle of vision to enable the viewer to see into a room. Plus there has to be another three feet or so behind the camera to enable it to move, or to allow for the spread of a tripod's legs. If the room one is filming within is only eight or ten feet across, the physical space left for the action is therefore extremely limited. Keeping the action within the frame thus becomes very difficult, actor's movements more critical and the information available to an audience more limited.

Similarly, the problems of lighting a real room will impose certain restrictions; whereas in a studio one can flood the whole set with light to enable the director to place his camera(s) anywhere he likes, once a location, and especially within the confines of small rooms, much of the light will have to come from one source (such as through a window). This light will nearly always still be artificial, but in order to retain an authentic 'feel' it was kept to a minimum on DUMMY, which in turn meant



that special fast lenses (Distagons) had to be used, which then makes focussing more critical; a difficulty compounded by having the action very close to the camera. Hence, some of the criteria used in choosing locations were related to technical considerations rather than for authentic or aesthetic reasons; as the producer explained:

Once we had made the initial decision about the look or the feel of a place, I then had to think about the camera; whether there was enough room to swing a cat, what the available light was like, whether the decor was right. The decor not only had to look right, but you have to consider whether you are going to get any separation between the skin tones. Certain tones of wallpaper are the same tones as skin, and you find that people tend to get lost against the background.

The cameraman on DUMY acted as Lighting Cameraman as well as Camera Operator, and he consequently checked over locations with the producer before the shoot started, he explained his role in this context:

Mostly I'm concerned with the story as a whole, rather than individual technical problems, but I have to pay attention to these problems, and if they are too enormous you just have to put the boot in and be a spoilsport. For instance, it became very clear to me that it was going to be very difficult to do the scenes in Yates Wine Lodge the way they had originally planned it...

(The original plan had been to clear the pub and use artificial lights to bathe the interior such that a scene containing a lot of action could be covered without people disappearing into shadows. Because the camera would be moving about too, following the action, it would have been difficult to avoid getting the lights, or their stands, in shot)

...My idea was to Chemtone it (ie to use an American fast film process) and to then use the pub as it stood, with real people as well. We could also have then used a concealed camera, but we all chickened out on that because with a concealed camera a certain amount of error can creep in since you're not looking through the lens, and since the chemtone process is done in New York, it meant that we couldn't have seen the rushes for two weeks, and we could obviously have screwed it all up (by not viewing the action at the time). So what we did in the end was to use chemtone, upped the existing lights (ie by putting larger bulbs in the pub's existing lights) and used the camera normally. That's an instance of where I can help when looking at a location. In any case, I would have hated to have lit a pub.



A different kind of technical consideration came into play when looking for locations which had to be not only authentic, but authentic for a given historical period. The bulk of the first third of the film was set in the fifties and sixties, so exterior locations for this section would have to avoid anachronisms such as having 625 line television aerials on rooves or modern signs and advertising hoardings which could not be easily disguised. Similarly, streets would have to be found which did not have modern lampposts, and from which modern vehicles could be removed without causing too much local disruption.

As far as interior, period locations were concerned, the fittings and fixtures of places like the school and the hospital were deemed to be suitable as they stood, but much of the action in part one was to take place within Sandra's home, and this also had to appear to age through time. In this case a whole house was hired for the duration and used very much like a set, rather than as a 'real location'. The producer explained that this was a matter of convenience:

In this case, the choice of a location was a matter of straight practicality. The house was there and available, and it would have been very difficult to find another empty house each time with the right decoration plus the freedom to shoot in it. It was just a practical decision.

This house was therefore extensively altered for the film's requirements, being stripped and repainted by a staff painter from the Elstree studios and 'dressed' from scratch with different sets of period furniture. Several exterior shots needed to be made in relation to the house, so a number of alterations were also made to houses in the vicinity and to the street itself. A modern lamp-post was, for example, removed for the producer by the local council, and replaced with an older one (at a cost of some £30), a house opposite which had been bricked-up was reglazed and painted, and about twelve tons of rubbish was removed from the house's back yard.



The other interior which had to be altered extensively was a kitchen in the 'Middle-class house' where Sandra is scarred by her boyfriend. Here, considerations of period meant that some modern appliances in the existing kitchen had to be disguised or removed, and the Designer had some false cupboards built to fit around a modern cooker and a refrigerator. Some prop furniture was used to replace the existing tables and chairs too, but the reason for this was chiefly a concern that the property of the house-owners might get damaged in the ensuing action. Because of this action, which meant that the camera would have to follow the actors' movements around the room, the existing lighting would have been inadequate, and conventional film lighting would have interfered with the action. A battery of fuorescent tubes was consequently taped to the ceiling to cover the whole floor area with light, and again, this particular location was used in a fashion more akin to a studio set than as a 'found' location. The major difference between this and working in a studio was still the question of sheer confinement, however, and in this case the producer/director, sound and camera crews had to move about the room in unison in order to keep behind the camera (and out of shot) within a relatively small room in which there were already three actors involved in vigorous action. To give the impression of being inside a room within the context of a studio only two or three of the walls may be made up as flats, with all the lights being above the ceiling-less set. If the set is completely boxed in (with all four walls made up) it is still possible to 'float' any of those walls to enable the camera to move back and cover the action, and the fact that the producer was unable to do this with the real locations posed some problems as I mentioned. The producer explained that -

Sometimes, because of these technical problems, the use of real locations actually begins to detract from what actually happened. On the whole, the attempt to use the town itself was the right decision since by using real locations you are closer to the truth and this imposes a mood upon both you (ie the director) and the actors. By using the actual Motel, for instance, you get the mood



of the situation right. There was an attempt to use the locations as they were as much as possible, but sometimes you wonder if it was worth it when you get hit with the technical problems, and also the problems of relationships with local people - you have to work hard and manipulate yourself into those locations, and then you might find that it is after all destructive.

This raises the problem of actually finding and obtaining permission to use locations. The producer had already gained a 'blanket permission' to use places such as the hospital, but he also needed to obtain permission from the police for certain exterior scenes, and many of the interior scenes required extensive negotiations with private individuals and landlords. There are 'location agencies' which collect registers of different kinds of houses and properties whose owners are prepared to hire for short periods to production companies, but in most cases DUMY's producer wanted to use specific houses in Bradford which were in exactly the right areas. Much of the preliminary 'location spotting' was carried out by the producer himself, by simply driving around Bradford looking for suitable-looking houses and streets which would match the descriptions given by the original family. Then the Associate Producer began to become more involved, chiefly in dealing with the financial arrangements, and on his return from a previous commitment in Hong Kong, the Cameraman too. The Cameraman was chiefly looking at the technical angles involved, and particularly problems of lighting as I mentioned. In this respect, one of the major problems was electrical supply, so the Lighting Gaffer also accompanied the producer and Cameraman on some of the trips up to Bradford. A major technical restraint was that a decision had been taken not to hire a mobile electrical generator, partially because of the expense (possibly £50/day with an operator), and partially because of the noise it would make and the problem of parking it in small streets (and further disrupting the neighbourhood), so the Lighting Gaffer had to pay particular attention to finding adequate sources of supply in some of the older properties. In the event there was considerable difficulties in this respect, and some of the extremely expensive shooting time was lost through a failure of electrical supply.



A number of compromises had to be made in finding the locations themselves, since people were not always keen to allow the original choices to be used, and as Associate Producer explained, the process was often a matter of expediency rather than rigid design -

We went along to the sort of area we wanted, but it wasn't a matter of knocking on doors. We have tended to go to people who we've previously found out would be sympathetic; landlords etc., and have then said 'This is what we are looking for, have you got something like it?' Often we have gone straight to a landlord and chosen a place that he's offered rather than the other way round. A perfect example of this is Mr R... who has already got all those awful rooms, some of which could possibly have fitted the bill. Having found a place it's then up to me to arrange how long we are going to need the place; when we will need it and how much we will pay.

Paying for locations can be an expensive business. The standard rate for a house in London or the Home counties was about £50 - £75 a day at that time, depending on how much alteration was needed, but 'in the provinces' that rate could be reduced somewhat. Even so, the AP explained that -

I've actually felt that there has been a reasonable amount of money available for this side of things, and a lot of the people with whom we have been negotiating really desperately need that money, so I have had no compunction about adding a fiver or a tenner on. There wasn't really any haggling as such, I've just been saying 'Here it is, £50, is that OK?' and they usually just say 'Fine.' Generally people have been happy about using their places. There are obviously instances where some damage has been done - somebody's wallpaper has been damaged or whatever - but one sees them alright in some way; you have to allow for that sort of thing. I think what has confused and staggered people that I have talked to afterwards is the size of the unit; this amazing caravan of people and equipment.

The size of the unit had indeed become a bone of contention in this respect; the producer had wanted to 'creep around Bradford' with as low a profile as possible, partly in order to disrupt the neighbourhood as little as possible, partially to preserve the authentic flavour of the film itself, and partially to avoid focussing the attention of the Press and others upon the original family. In terms of filming in the cramped conditions of real locations, a large crew could also prove to be unnecessarily unwieldy and could also prove to be positively dysfunctional. The people from whom the 'middle class house' was hired were, for example, in a





16.4.77 Ext. Wembley pl. F. Winstanley  
 Prop. Lory, 4/10

The location used for young Sandra's home; the director discusses the action with 'Mother' and 'Aunt Amie'. The lamp-post has been changed for the correct period, and the coal-lorry has been specially obtained by the Action Vehicles Manager.



constant state of agitation at the number of people who were taking over their house, and were understandably worried about such practical problems as the strain which was being imposed upon the bathroom. The owner in fact commented that he would never have given permission in the first place had he known how many people were to be involved. The AP explained:

We haven't always been exactly straight with people; we haven't said 'When we come there are going to be thirty-five people and six vehicles; we are not going to finish at Seven, it will be a quarter to ten.' One obviously can't say that, but then, by the nature of things, one doesn't always know exactly what the situation will be.

While many of the 'public' locations, such as the pubs, the school or the swimming baths, were the actual places where original events had occurred, it was felt to be too much of an imposition to seek permission to film in some of the more personal 'original' locations, such as the sister's house. An absolute authenticity was thus limited in respect of the fact that the producer then had to search for similar rather than actual locations. On one occasion, however, a pub was chosen which was currently being used as her local by the original Sandra. Here the fine balance of trust between the producer and the family was nearly disrupted by increasing a direct identity between the film and the girl herself, and in fact the sister threatened to obtain an injunction through her solicitor to stop the filming altogether. She was only mollified by a good deal of extra-curricula negotiation by the PA and the main actress, and the whole episode could very easily have led to the abandonment of the project, since this and other involvements with the 'real' people provoked a series of concerned memos from within the unit to the Head of Department (who took the step of visiting the unit during the shoot itself). In the event, that particular scene was shot, but not used in the finished film, and the producer pointed out that:

It was a shift of emphasis on the part of the family, because we had, at the time, total co-operation to shoot in that pub. What often happens at the start of a film is that people begin to set cold feet, and then there is a crisis point, which is what happened here. After that everything is fine again, and I'm just



glad that it happened then (The fourth day of filming) rather than later.

(The later a crisis occurred, the greater being the potential loss of investment of time and money.) Another aspect of arranging locations was the role of the Designer; DUMMY's Designer was of the opinion that it was a very bad idea for myself to be observing the production since it was completely atypical, which indeed it was for him. Normally, that is in a studio, the Designer would work closely with the Director from quite early stages of the production, planning and designing sets from scratch. He would be continually involved with rehearsals and 'blocking out' (working out actions and movements in relation to a set) and would also be on hand throughout the actual process of making takes. The Designer would in addition, have a great deal of information about the characters (since they would usually be invented, fictitious ones where their individual idiosyncracies could be worked out in consultation with a writer and the director) and, most importantly, he would be expected to use his professional and artistic judgement in creating sets. Few of these parameters applied on DUMMY, simply because in most cases the locations were used as found, and characters could only be 'created' within the fairly narrow bounds of known information about them. Because the producer found that he had to clear the small rooms of all but the immediate crew and the actors simply in order to see what space there was available in which to move and place the camera and lights, the Designer (along with everyone else) found that he could not very often stay 'on the set' to supervise props or to suggest improvements. Hence his role was considerably limited in comparison with his normal scope of action on the studio floor, and except for designing the interior at the period house (for part one) his role tended to be restricted to dressing different locations with small 'handprops' or acting as staff manager to the props men. He did not, for example, have much of a hand in choosing locations themselves, since much of this had been carried out



before he had been rostered onto the production, and in any case the choice was limited by the tenets of authenticity and technical constraint rather than the more aesthetic values of creative design. The Designer's chief function with regard to the locations, was, then, limited to the selection and deployment of props rather than sets, which from a propman's point of view involved the following:

The art department, that is the designer and the props buyer, would have chosen a big list of all the possible props we might need, having read through the script and talked to the director, and then every night before a day's shooting we go through all the scenes listed on the call-sheets and see what props are needed which the Designer has listed on the script breakdown. We make sure we've got everything that's needed, and normally take along a lot more too in case the director changes his mind. That often seems to happen on a documentary like this. Documentaries are sort of different. Its ad-libbing all the time, you see, the director might suddenly get the idea to go off and shoot in a nightclub or something, and we've got to have plenty of different props ready in case. A typical day would be filming in a pub or something; the ideal thing is to get there the day before the unit arrives and get the pub ready however the director wants to see it, what period he wants, you know. Usually we have a couple of props boys to do that, and we just dress it with bits and pieces we have brought along, and I suppose the designer will tell you where to put a lamp or a poster or something. Then during a take you will stand by with the 'essential props' - the handprops which an artist might need, like a wristwatch or an umbrella.. That's a 'Standby props man' as we call it. The process is therefore ad-libbing for us too, as well as for the director, which is different from proper filming. In the film industry I think you are more involved in the filming, as you are in a television show, because everything is so much more preconceived. To be honest I don't think we are really with-it on this sort of programme, I mean a documentary thing, we're just labourers really.

Much of the filming was indeed carried out on an 'ad lib' basis, but this was only possible within an extremely detailed and well-planned overall schedule. One of the major considerations in working out that schedule was the availability of locations. Places like the house which was to be used for Sandra's home were available over a flexible period of time, and many of the exterior shots could be made at virtually any point during the five-week shoot. Other locations had to be booked for specific days; the hospital, for example, needed to have advance warning of which days the unit would need access, and a location such as the Fairground would only exist for a specific period (as the fair would move on to a new site after



a week or so). Similarly, a location like the swimming baths would have to be booked for a day when the filming would not disrupt the normal operations of what was after all a public amenity, and filming at the cemetery would have to be fitted in at a time when there were no real funerals going on.

#### Working out the schedule

The availability of locations was only one of several factors to be considered in planning a shooting schedule for DUMMY. An overall time limit of five weeks filming had been set by the production office in addition to items such as a four week research period for the main actress and time for location spotting for the Cameraman and Associate Producer. This limit was the result of assessing the minimum time a film like DUMMY would actually take to shoot (at a rate of perhaps three to five minutes of final running-time per day including breaks - DUMMY actually averaged just under three minutes per day) in relation to the size of the unit, the length and nature of the script and the overall budgeting of the department. Having agreed to take on the studio crew, the overall length of the shooting schedule then had to take account of the availability of studio personnel in relation to their existing commitments at Elstree (where they would normally be working for shorter blocks of time on each project) and union requirements in terms of working hours and overtime. Overtime, for example, is worked out in terms of how far one works into an agreed break period between each day's shooting, rather than how far over a standard day you work, which means that after a certain time the overtime starts applying to the next day, which is an important consideration in view of the fact that at least one of DUMMY's working days was over fourteen hours, and most of them were near the limit. There are also 'local' agreements for different personnel such as those NATKE members who were transport drivers. The union naturally insists that drivers should be employed to operate the props vans and minibuses (rather than letting other personnel



drive themselves) but these drivers are not supposed to work more than a ten-hour period in any twenty-four, whether or not they are actually driving for that period, which is an agreement in concord with other transport rulings, but not necessarily so in relation to the vagaries of filming. Similarly, there are set agreements on meals and mealtimes in the studio, and these would have to be carried over into the context of a location shoot where time would be allocated for a hot mid-day meal followed by another one not more than five hours later.

Within the five-week shooting period everything then had to be scheduled around various fixed points. The availability of the fairground is a particular case in point since it was only going to be operating during the very first week of the shoot. The original plan had in fact been to shoot the fairground scenes much later in relation to the overall schedule, since they would be both technically difficult (in terms of lighting, hand-held camerawork and dealing with crowds of local people) and dramatically difficult (since this is where Sandra meets the middle-class boyfriend, where it was vital to make the scene credible in view of the ensuing action) so the producer wanted to have had plenty of experience of working with the unit and the actors before tackling this scene. Also, filming the fairground scenes during the first few days of the shoot would mean that the producer would have to work achronologically; that is to say, the main actress would have to play an older version of Sandra before she had played a younger version in 'real time', which would have been both difficult for the director and disorienting for the actress. Obviously, a great deal of filming has to work in this way, but a pivotal scene such as this would normally be given priority. The reason why the fairground scene had been pushed forward to the beginning of the shoot was not because the fair had moved, but because the shooting date had, and as a direct result of the manning dispute mentioned earlier - because of the difficulties of manning DUMY, the whole shoot had been put back to start



at April 12th to allow time for matters to sort themselves out.

The schedule was also worked out within the general principle of limiting the number of changes that had to be made between different locations and periods. All the action which was to take place within, for example, the 'middle class house' was then scheduled to be filmed on the same day (whether or not it took place on the same day in 'film time') to save having to come back again on different days and setting up the lighting and decoration twice over. Similarly, the producer had to allow for different changes of costume for the actors, and especially in the case of the main actress and the actresses playing 'mother' he had to allow for make-up changes, since these two artists would have to appear to age over a period of some ten years through the film. It was also important to allow time for changes of mood by the artists between different scenes, since it was possible that the state of mind generated for a highly-charged emotional scene filmed, say, before lunch, would be difficult to dissipate for a relatively light scene filmed afterwards. Then the question of light had to be taken into consideration; some scenes could be filmed 'day for night', where in an interior shot, for example, the natural light could be blacked out by covering a window such that a 'night' shot could be filmed in the daytime. Other 'night' shots would actually have to be shot in the evening, such as the fairground and the stabbing scenes, and time would have to be allowed to move the unit from a 'day' location to a 'night' location when working out the schedule.

These factors would not necessarily be mutually exclusive, and a number of compromises had to be made. For example, although there was a considerable change of mood between Sandra's wedding and her mother's funeral, both scenes were actually filmed on the same day since they were chronologically close together in 'real time' and a number of the actors who appeared as walkons in the wedding (Best man, aunts etc) would also appear as mourners for the funeral, so filming both on the same day would save having to



obtain (and pay for) these actors on different days.

In order to arrive at a shooting schedule the script had therefore to be broken down into separate scenes and organised within the above parameters by the producer and his production assistant. This process resulted in a document known, oddly enough, as the Script Breakdown (see appendix) in which all the scenes to be filmed in each separate location are listed on different pages along with the characters needed; the props required and notes for wardrobe, make-up and any special technical facility appropriate to the action. One of these pages would look like this:-

TITLE: DUMPTY

SET: INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE: KITCHEN

LOCATION: 22 W... Road, Bradford

CONTACT : Mr. B...

BRADFORD 24634765

SCENE NO	D/N	CHARACTER	CROWD	PROPS	YEAR
39	D	SANDRA 3 MOTHER		School catchel, armchair 1957 ironing board, iron, radio. ART DEPT. Fire- place to be changed to practical tiled fireplace WARDROBE DLPT. Clothes for ironing.	
46	N	SANDRA 3 MOTHER	JOAN	SOUND DEPT. Possible playback	1959
49	D	MOTHER/SOCIAL WORKER SANDRA 4		Family snapahots, Mirror	1963
67	N	MOTHER/SANDRA 4/CHILD	LYN	Pound notes, pay packet	1964
107	N	SANDRA/PHIL/MOTHER		Radiogram (Break-away repeats)	1967
114	D	SANDRA/MOTHER/JOAN 1 Baby (Sandra's baby)		Practical TV, Baby food Baby's cradle	1969
124	D	MOTHER/JOAN		Mother's pills	

(Nb. 'SANDRA 3' and 'SANDRA 4' refer to younger and older versions of the girl; there were also SANDRAS no. 1 and 2. A 'Practical' fireplace or TV set is one that actually functions, and the 'Possible playback' in scene 46 means that the sound department may have been asked to play back their recording of some dance music at that point together with the dialogue to



ensure continuity in any reverse shots that had to be taken. The 'Break-away repeats' for the radiogram means that a number of identical covers for the radiogram's speakers would be needed in case they became damaged in the action at that point, such that in any ensuing takes the covers would appear to have remained intact.)

Having broken down the script in this way, the production assistant then prepared a day-by-day Shooting Schedule by grouping the major determinants indicated in the script breakdown (locations, period, day or night conditions and Actor's requirements) in relation to the expected time needed to shoot each scene within the overall duration of the shoot itself. Hence all eight scenes associated with the 'Motel' sequence were scheduled to be shot on the same day, whilst another whole day was scheduled for just the one scene at the swimming baths to allow for the organisation of a large crowd. Two days from the shooting schedule would then look like this:-

---

SUNDAY

23rd April	INT. SWIMMING BATHS (1963)	58	D.	SPECTATORS/ COMPETITORS DEAF SCHOOL/SANDRA/ MOTHER/JOAN/CHILD LYN/AUNTIE AMIE.
------------	----------------------------	----	----	--

---

TUESDAY

4th May	EXT. MOTEL	141	D.	SANDRA/NEAT MAN
	INT. MOTEL BEDROOM/RECEPTION	142,143	D.	" "
		144,146	D.	" "/MOTEL MANAGER
	INT/EXT SALOON CAR	140,145	D.	" "
	EXT. LUMB LANE	139	D.	" "

---

Using both the Script Breakdown and the Shooting Schedule each department of the production unit could then work out the general requirements (of props, wardrobe and make-up etc) needed for particular days. The exact details would then be listed on the Call Sheets which would be issued before each day's shooting. These call sheets acted as a 'bible', and a



typical example would take the following form:-

TITLE: DUMMY  
DIRECTOR: FRANC RODDAM

DATE: SUNDAY 24th April  
UNIT CALL: 10.00 am LOAD  
10.15 am leave  
Hotel

SETS  
INT. SWIMMING BATHS

SCENE NO.  
58 Day

LOCATION  
WINDSOR SWIMMING BATHS, MORLEY STREET, BRADFORD. Tel.....  
CONTACT Mr. L...

ARTISTE	CHARACTER	MAKE - UP	WARDROBE	TIME ON SET
GERALDINE JAMES	SANDRA	To be on location		10.30
PATRICIA MARKS	MOTHER	9.30	10.15	11.00
WENDA BROWN	JOAN	9.30	10.15	11.00
LIZ MCKENZIE	AUNTIE AMIE	10.15	9.30	11.00
ABIGAIL FLINT	CHILD LYN	On location at:		11.00
CHAPERONE: Mrs FLINT AUDIENCE ON LOCATION AT 1.30 pm				

#### PROP

#### REQUIREMENTS

#### PROPS

As per script and breakdown page 11 to include; dressing for swimming gala to include line markers, cups, shields, continuity medal as dressed on 'prize table'

#### GALA OFFICIALS

STARTER, TIMEKEEPERS AND JUDGES under the instructions of Mr B...

#### BATH OFFICIALS

To include attendants/life saver as directed by Mr L...

#### CONTESTANTS

As organised by Mr D...

ON BEHALF OF ATV and the film crew we'd like to thank the swimmers. The city of Bradford Met. Council. Odsal school for the deaf, Bradford A.S.A. and the audience for making the filming of this sequence possible.

#### ROUTE

Approach Jacob's well roundabout and turn right on to Princess Way. Turn left at Traffic lights on to Little Horton Way. Bear right on to Morley Street. On the bend on the road turn right on Great Horton Road. Swimming baths entrance is through yellow door marked 'Men's baths'.

In a sense, the Call sheets were a final reminder to the different departments of the unit to make sure that they brought along the required pieces of equipment, the right props, clothes and make-up facilities. But the details of these requirements had already been discussed some time



before the shoot started through a series of production meetings which had taken place at intervals throughout February and March of 1977. The specific preparations which each department had to make can be listed under their respective functions, starting with the core unit.

### Camera preparations

The Cameraman had played an important role in checking the possible locations for their suitability in terms of having enough space to move, and he had noted the nature of existing light-sources, background textures and colours. Working with his Assistant Cameraman, he also had to make a number of specific arrangements in terms of obtaining appropriate equipment with which to film in and around these locations.

As freelancers, the camera crew were mainly selling their experience and flexibility to the production company rather than a range of special equipment, and since the capital cost of such equipment is enormous, a great deal of it was hired. (The value of the contents of the camera van was conservatively estimated to be about £30-40,000) The main camera to be used was about £8000 worth of a very new French Documentary/studio machine called an Anton 7. This 16mm camera had a number of advantages for filming a production like DUFFY because it is relatively quiet in operation (only 28dB to 31dB at 1 metre from the film plane) which means that the sound of the motor and film transport would be less likely to be picked up whilst filming within small (real) rooms. It is also a very light machine which means that it is much easier to handle for long periods of hand-held shooting such as that required for much of part three of the film, and has a large 'spare frame' around the actual film frame to enable the cameraman to look out for boom-shadows and reflections through the viewfinder before they impinge upon the film frame itself (the 'viewing frame' or 'spare frame' being about 20% larger than the super 16mm film frame.) A useful addition on the Anton is the provision of automatic TV bar elimination,



which means that for filming the scene in part three where a television set is operating, the familiar bar travelling up the TV screen could be avoided. (This bar is caused by an interference of the scanning rate of the television set with the frames/second rate of the camera). One facility which the Anton does not have is variable speed, and for the scene in which Sandra is scarred by her boyfriend a decision had been taken to have the actress react to the cut in slow-motion (real time) which would then be speeded up in film time to give the effect of a fast slashing action. For this effect the camera would need to be undercranked for the duration of the shot, and since the Anton was single-speed only, the cameraman had to obtain a 16mm Eclair to do the job.

As a general principle, however, the producer wanted to avoid 'trick' shots and camera movements such as tracks or dollies (ie mechanically guided movements of the camera relative to the subject) as part of the pursuit for authenticity. The technique of 'subjective camera' was generally preferred in this case as the producer explained:

The camera can be an eyeline point of view (POV) for a character, such that the audience gets what they would expect to see if they were in the room. You can use the camera as if it was actually a person if you like; it can wander through a street, or it can run and it can be chased; then it can turn and look as a person would. The audience is being given a particular POV here (ie in DUMKY) and that is a normal eye-level POV. If you are filming in a very small room, for example, I am avoiding very high shots, because that's not what a person would see as they come into a room; I'd rather get down to table level in fact. I think camera-angles are often misused, especially if you are trying to create reality. If you are being stylised - as in THE THIRD MAN - you can do anything you want to, and it is a matter of basic grammar that if you shoot up at someone then you get a certain emotional response, but there is a danger of creating an unreal sort of space with shots like that.

The cameraman emphasised the point:

The idea of a drama-documentary is to try to make it as real as possible, and therefore as simple as possible, which should help people to concentrate on the story and not on the cleverness of what we are doing. If you've got a good script it doesn't really matter how you do it, but to help a script and make the story as real as possible it also helps to keep the camera work simple.



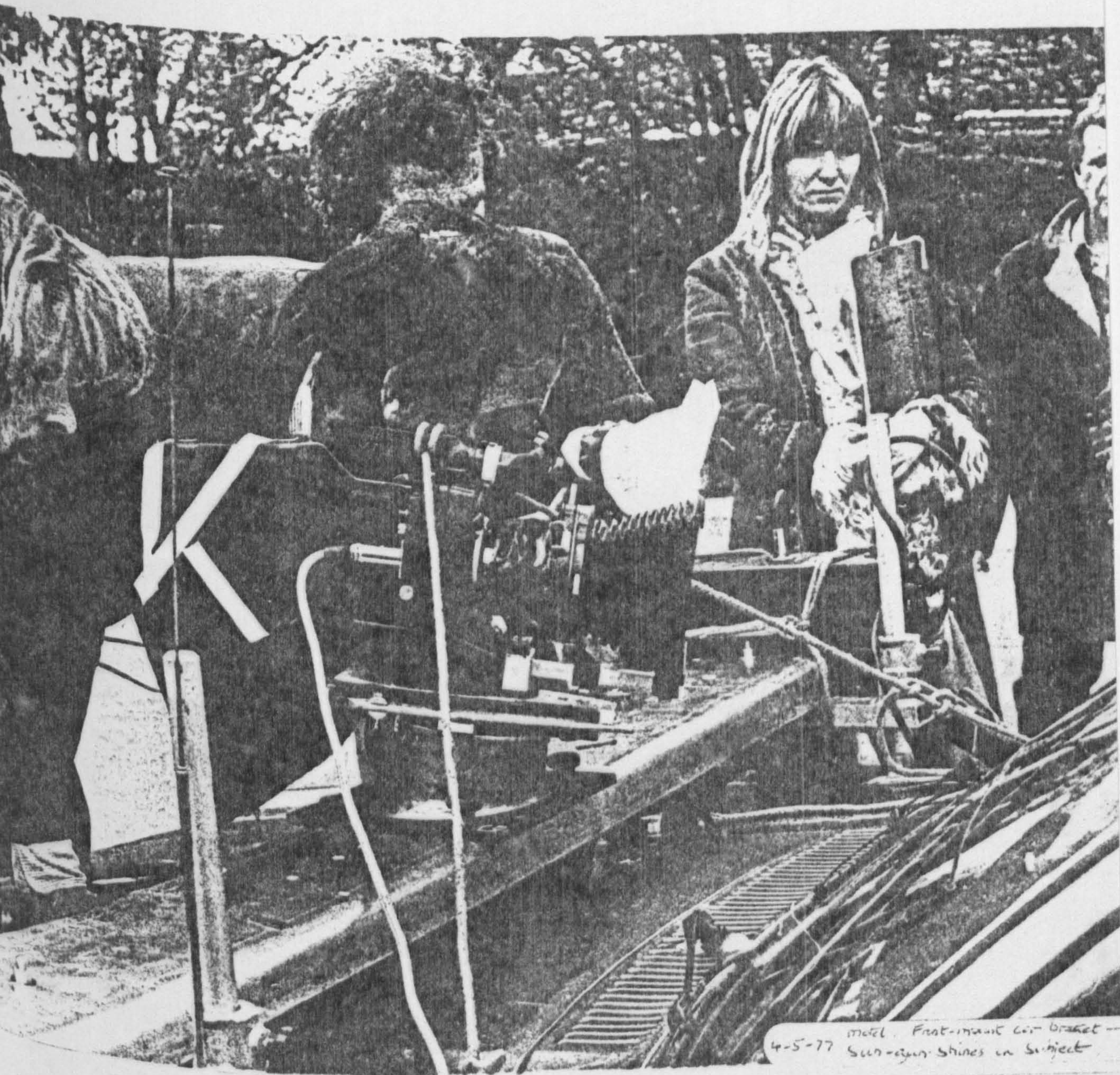
Mind you, the camerawork here is not as imaginative as other films like this anyway, which is as much a criticism of me as anyone else, plus the script wasn't all that clear in that area. Also we have been working under a lot of pressure and therefore went for the simple way because of the time factor.

Since the camerawork was to be kept simple - for aesthetic reasons and a deliberate intention to create an authentic feeling within the film (the pressures of time notwithstanding), the cameraman was not required to arrange for the hiring of special equipment like cranes or dollies. Those tracking shots which were needed did not, then, make use of proper camera-tracks and a rolling dolly, but were improvised with such items as an invalid chair and a Citroen 2CV. (The tracking shot along the edge of the swimming baths being achieved by pushing the cameraman along in the invalid chair whilst hand-holding the camera, and the tracking shot of Sandra entering the Hotel being similarly improvised by setting the camera on a tripod inside a Citroen car - from which the roof can easily be removed - and then co-opting half a dozen members of the crew to push it smoothly along.)

Some aspects of the film demanded the use of certain special items of equipment which were hired for the day from specialist suppliers - the camera crew arranged for the hire of two different types of car-mount, for example, to enable shots to be taken of the inside of moving vehicles whilst at the same time providing the perspective of exterior scenery going by. These mounts consisted of lightweight fixtures which could be clamped to a door or the bonnet of a car to enable the camera to be mounted on the outside, whilst being controlled remotely by the cameraman who would hide within behind the back seat. A few smaller items also had to be specially prepared before the shoot started, which as the Assistant Cameraman explained, the crew would not normally need in the context of documentary filming:

When he (the Cameraman) returned from Hong Kong we had a little chat about it, because there were a few specialised things which needed doing. Normally one doesn't know a great deal about a production





4-5-77 motel. Front-mount car bracket --  
Sun-gun shines on subject.

Mo-Kit Camera front-mount for 'Neat Man's ' Cortina at the motel



beforehand so there isn't much for us to do, but here we were taking delivery of a new camera so I had to get used to that and do some camera tests on it. Then all the equipment which we normally use is still in Hong Kong, so we had to gather all the equipment we needed from different sources; I mean all the normal equipment like tripods. A couple of things we had to do specifically for this programme were the hidden camera and some special lights. I've made the hidden camera bag myself, and this involved buying an airline bag and putting a wooden frame in it. I then went to a leather worker to have it modified so that it would be strong enough to take the camera. I'm quite pleased with it actually. I also did a little bit of work on lighting for the inside of the car - nothing very sophisticated - it just involved getting some car bulbs and wiring them up. This is usual; you often have to make up things which are just sufficient for the job, not on a long-term basis.

Unfortunately for the Assistant Cameraman, his hidden camera was never used for shots in the finished film, since it was eventually decided that the risk was too great. This was not only an ethical risk (of shooting people unawares) but a technical one too, since you cannot be totally sure that the camera is pointing in the right direction with a concealed system, and the overall constraint of limited time meant that going back to do 'pick-ups' would put back the rest of the schedule. ('Pickups' being the re-shooting of scenes which subsequently prove to be technically faulty, or which fail to 'work' in other ways on viewing the rushes.)

Another technical preparation which had to be made was to obtain a set of very fast lenses called Distagons. Again, these were extremely expensive pieces of equipment costing upwards of £1000 each, but given the very minimal light that was available in some of the locations, the hiring of these lenses was considered to be necessary. Some of these lenses also had a 'zoom' facility (ie the ability to move away from, say, a big close-up back to a medium close-up during the course of a shot) but this facility was not used as a general rule for the same reason that the producer had wanted to keep the camera angles simple. In fact, there is only one proper zoom in the whole film, where Sandra as a teenager is seen smoking an illicit cigarette in the school playground, and the frame closes upon her in order to mark her personal reaction off from that of



her friends. (Only 27% of the finished film contained any kind of camera movement).

One of the most important ways in which the camera crew could prepare for the shoot, in common with other members of the unit, was to thoroughly familiarise themselves with the script. A script can often help the cameraman to visualise his shots in advance such that he has a clear conception of the film as a whole, as the cameraman said -

More creative thought comes from maybe two or three people thinking about something than one person in isolation, but that inspiration as often as not comes from a good script. Whether you are a scientist developing new fibres for ICI or whatever, the creativity often comes from teamwork, but scientists don't work very well in a vacuum, and in the same way craftsmen - which is what I suppose we try to be - can develop something as a creative team by working with a script which fills that vacuum. That's what I want from a script. I am reading one now which is just brilliant, I can already feel the shots, the light, I can see how the whole thing goes together. Now that may not be the way it actually happens, but I bet you it will be pretty near. With a script like that you already know what you are after - it's like reading a really good novel where you find yourself visualising it - you can see the people, feel the light and see the reality, and this helps you to build up the total.

In DUFFY's case, however, the cameraman felt that he had to leave much of the detailed preparation until he had actually seen the locations and the actors involved, and had discussed the film's intentions with the producer. There were several reasons for this; firstly the writer had pointed out that he had tended to concentrate upon dialogue at the expense of description in writing the script (seeing television as 'radio with pictures' to some extent) and this resulted in a working script which was considered by many of the crew and actors to be quite 'sparse'. In general, the actors preferred this, since the lack of 'stage direction' was felt to enable them to interpret the action much more, and from the producer's point of view, a 'sparse' script would enable him to improvise and adapt the action in order to generate the spontaneity and the authentic feeling which he was seeking.



With the possible exception of the main actress, the actors were only concerned with their own parts in the film, however; they literally only needed to have a partial understanding of the whole. The producer, on the other hand, already had a detailed knowledge of the intended shape of the whole film and has also played a major part in writing the script. On top of this he had access to a mass of background information upon which that script was based, so the script itself did not need to describe the 'world' which he wished to re-create. The other central creative figure in the unit - the cameraman - did not have this background information to anything like the same extent, however, so the script became theoretically more important to him, although in fact less useful or catalytic the more sparsely it was written. Hence for the cameraman, the process of familiarising himself with the script was a matter of preparing for the technical facility that he might be called upon to provide, rather than a process of establishing that facility to any certain degree of definition. In short, the whole of Sandra's life was represented for the cameraman by the script itself, and taking it in isolation, he found it relatively difficult to visualise the 'world' which was being re-created.

Much of the cameraman's day-to-day preparations consequently consisted of frequent discussions with the producer over matters of action and sometimes dialogue as well as matters of straight technical provision -

Sometimes I would have a technical say, especially on questions of lighting, and sometimes we would talk over the script itself, how we could improve on the action and the reaction, rather than from just a photographic point of view. For example, in the scene where (Sandra and the first boyfriend) are together for the first time after the funfair, the script says that they have a rollock on the bed upstairs. We argued about that a lot, since I really thought that it should be quite gentle and quiet; not really a proper rollock. There were a lot of little things like that which we discussed, and a lot which we didn't. The problem of being in TV is that it is such a rat-race; pressure and ambition is all mixed up such that everyone thinks it is impossible to make suggestions, that might be good or bad, to help the project. Everyone thinks that it is an ego thing, whereas what we are really fighting for is our responsibility to the film - a public service.



Sometimes people get into the whole trip of supposedly helping the director with suggestions, whereas they are only really boosting their own morale. You ought to be able to say what you feel, and then it is up to the director to use it or not, and that was our relationship.

Most of this tactical decision-making was carried out in private. While on the floor of the 'set' the camera crew's job was to support the director by making sure that each take was as technically good as possible such that the subsequent choice of takes for inclusion in the finished product could be made on the basis of aesthetic or dramatic judgements rather than through rejecting technically faulty prints.

To minimise the possibility of this happening, the cameraman explained what he was actually doing when looking through the viewfinder:

I always try to use a wide-ish lens - not wide angle - so that you can feel that people are living in a real environment. For EMMY I tried to use lenses where you could get a feeling of as much of the room as possible. The easy way with television is to use close-ups all the time, but in documentaries it is perhaps braver to shoot things wide. The images are not so strong then, but they are more real. Cartier-Bresson (The stills photographer) always uses the 50mm or occasionally the 35mm, which is in our case a wide-angle lens, and very occasionally he uses the 90mm which is in our case a close-up lens - the reason he does this is because he wants to see people in their environments, which is what we've tried to do, we want to see how figures move in an environment; how they are a part of nature... because there is a lot of information coming into that frame I have to constantly scan the viewfinder for people's feet coming in (ie. the crew's feet, for example), boom-shadows, lights, flares (ie. from polished surfaces or windows) and mirrors (in which the camera itself could be reflected). You also have to anticipate what actors are going to do; the secret of being a good cameraman is to anticipate. In documentary filming in particular, you have to listen very carefully to the dialogue in order to anticipate anything that anyone might do. Written stuff is relatively straightforward because you hear a rehearsal, and there will probably be one take that is H. G. (ie. 'No Good') so by the second take you've got it right. The secret really is where you have not got it written down, because then you have to listen very carefully. The way people talk and respond will tell you what they are going to do next. If you are able to anticipate that you are on a winning ticket, otherwise you will always be left behind.

(\* The relatively low definition of the television picture in relation to a cinema picture means that the use of wide shots risks the possibility of weakening individual shots by subordinating characters to the back-



The ability to anticipate an action, which the cameraman mentioned, is absolutely vital. If, for example, an actor has to stand up from a sitting position, the camera must move slightly in advance of this action by tilting up or by moving back before the actor exits the frame. If the camera followed the action, it would risk losing the top of the actor's head out of frame - similarly, if the camera is to remain static during an action, the cameraman must know in advance the spatial limits of that action in order to contain it within the frame of a particular lens. Occasionally he will also have to allow for changes in light, which might mean stopping the aperture up or down during a take. A good example of this occurred whilst filming in one of the pubs for the 'Stripper' scene, where the camera follows an actor into the pub from the daylight outside in a continuous shot which required an eight-stop movement of the aperture. This very large change had to be very carefully worked out in advance in several trial runs, and was even then described as 'virtually impossible' by the cameraman.

Whereas in a studio production many factors such as these would be planned well in advance by 'blocking out' the shots and action on the floor of a rehearsal room, in the context of real locations the cameraman found that much of his preparation was limited to the use of his experience as a documentary man. This was particularly true of those sections of the film which were filmed in 'Wobblyscope', that is, with a hand-held camera, and probably on the run. The stabbing sequence and its aftermath was deliberately intended to look very documentary-like, for example, and beyond setting up the circumstances of the action (by briefing actors; action vehicles and the crowd) the sequence was filmed in quite an ad hoc, documentary fashion for which the camera crew could make only the minimum immediate preparation.



The other two members of the camera crew were the Assistant Cameraman and the Clapper/Loader. It was the Assistant Cameraman's job to rig up the special equipment mentioned above, but apart from this there was little special preparation that had to be made for the film. The Clapper/loader, for example, carried out the same functions that he would perform on any other project, which were to operate the clapperboard and keep at least one of the spare camera magazines loaded with film (The clapperboard being a piece of apparatus upon which the name of the director and the production is written, and on which the scene number and take number can be recorded. At the beginning of each take the cameraman shoots a few frames of this board as a reference for the Editor, and a hinged arm on top of the board is snapped down such that the sharp noise it makes can be picked up by the soundman, thus giving a visual reference to the soundtrack to enable the two to be synchronized. Where a take has to continue in rapid succession to a previous one, the 'board' is sometimes put at the end of a take instead of the beginning, in which case it is held upside-down to signify that it is an 'Endboard'. A case in point would be where the producer was trying to get a shot of 'Baby Sandra' where she was not crying; to 'frontboard' such a take might have set her off crying again because of the sharp crack of the clapper.)

The Assistant Cameraman worked in a slightly different way than he might have done on other projects, since he was primarily involved in focus-pulling during the takes themselves. Focus-pulling is literally the job of adjusting the focus of the camera's lenses during a take while the cameraman himself concentrates upon the action, focus being more critical the wider the aperture one is using and closer one is to the subject. Since the Focus-puller cannot actually see through the viewfinder, (the cameraman obviously has that prerogative) he must physically measure the distance between the lens and the subject at each point in the action, transfer these measurements onto the back of his hand with a biro,



and then read these off during the take, adjusting the focus-ring as the take proceeded. The Assistant Cameraman described his day-to-day job as follows:

It is basically concerned with the maintenance of all the equipment, making sure that things are running well, charging batteries etc. On this particular production, where we have had three on camera instead of two, the Clapper/Loader has taken some of the load, and during takes I am almost entirely involved in focus-pulling. This is actually quite difficult for me because we are shooting at very wide apertures, and there is a lot more focus-pulling than one would normally expect to have to do as a result.\* The job is therefore more specific than it generally is, since the cameraman would normally do most of the focus-pulling himself. This is true of a big production for other people too; each job becomes more specialised.

(\* Wide apertures were being used because of low light conditions.)

#### Sound preparations

Although the script was available to the sound recordist from about a month before the shoot started, he did not actually see it until the last week before the unit had moved into the hotel in Bradford, since until that time he had been filming in Jordan. Being thoroughly familiar with the script was not, however, as important for the sound crew as it was for other members of the crew, since recording the sound for a production like DUMKY almost entirely depends upon taking account of the situation as you find it. As the sound recordist said:

I am only a slave to whatever the camera does. I cannot actually do anything until I see what the action is, and particularly what the camera movement is going to be. Our area of operation is directly related to the camera.

Very little specific preparation had to be made in fact, since as the sound recordist explained, his basic equipment would be the same whether he was involved in a small commercial or a relatively large-scale production such as this. Where he might have had to make special preparations was in relation to 'on site' difficulties at locations. Had DUMKY been a feature film, for example, (where the sound has to fill a much larger space with a correlatively higher fidelity) the sound recordist would probably have used a good deal of blanketing - the actual use of blankets pinned onto



walls - to damp the natural 'boxiness' of small rooms. Most of the rooms used in the film were, however, sufficiently small that the crew themselves could act as dampers, and in any case, the quality of reproduction in the average domestic TV set would not have picked up much of that effect. Using real locations could have posed other difficulties, such as a high level of ambient noise from outside traffic; railway lines or factories, but such noises were positively welcomed as naturalistic components providing they were not so obtrusive that they occluded the dialogue. In this respect the sound recordist relied heavily upon the cameraman's experience in finding locations:

I knew he (the cameraman) was going to be checking out the locations, he has directed and edited his own movies, has shot on almost every conceivable sort of location, and in almost every kind of environmental condition, so I knew that in checking out the locations then anything he might say would be OK as far as I was concerned.

In other words, the cameraman would have already made sure that there were no insuperable difficulties in terms of sound such as the presence of road-drills or low-flying aircraft. It should not be inferred that the sound recordist's job was therefore cut and dried; it is the sound crew's brief and their professional goal to record the dialogue as cleanly as possible, and with the maximum amount of separation from the background noise. The reason for this is that a scene is rarely continuous, whereas background noise often is; hence a scene which is made up of a number of wide shots reverses and close-ups which may be cut together from many different shots taken over a whole day's shooting could not hope to use the appropriate dialogue tracks for each of those shots if they also contained audible background noise. If, for example, one had a two-shot (ie. a wide shot with two people in frame) with the sound of some children playing outside which would then be cut together with a close-up of one of these people as part of the same action in film-time, then the sound of the children would have to continue smoothly under the close-up to ensure continuity. If the children's sound had not been recorded on a different track from



the dialogue this would be impossible, and hence the separation of the dialogue from ambient sound is crucial.

Sometimes background noise is unavoidable, especially when filming outside in a street where there is a lot of traffic noise, but here the cameraman can help by making sure that somewhere in a shot the audience can see the source of that sound; the sound recordist described a particular example of this:

We had a lot of traffic noise at the back during the wedding scene, so it adds to the shot if we can actually see the traffic going by. If it had been a full-scale feature film where we were not supposed to have been in a street, that whole scene would have had to be a post-synch job (ie. where the dialogue is dubbed to the film after the event on a clean track) because having all that traffic noise over the dialogue without seeing the traffic would have destroyed the mood of that scene. If there are extraneous noises in a scene which are beyond our control, then the cameraman will somehow manage to include them (ie. their sources) within the context.

One of the Sound recordist's major concerns, like the cameraman, was to maximize the possibility of choice for the director and his editor in the editing process:

You should always try to work towards excellence. If you shoot 100,000 feet it is not a question of 50,000 being good, 25,000 not bad, and the rest rubbish. You should try and make sure that 90% is excellent, with maybe just 10% which is n.g. for technical reasons. The Editor's or the Director's choice should not be limited to technical considerations but to the interpretation of artistic possibility... I appreciate the criticism of the Editor probably more than anyone else, since he is the one who actually has to assemble the tracks. To turn in the ideal job would be to have the situation where the Editor would only have to lay a minimum of tracks - an A and B roll - which is the dialogue track, the effects track and perhaps a music track. That would mean that the recording which I've given him was so perfect throughout that he has not had to lay any extra effects, or had any difficulty in cutting things together; it's just flowed all the way through. This must, however, depend upon the environmental conditions in which you've found yourself. If you are dealing with a place where every seven minutes a plane flies over you can't always wait until it's gone, otherwise you start getting into a tremendous amount of overtime and so on, so you have to try to shoot round it as best as you can. Up here (in Bradford) it has been so quiet that it has been very easy for us, the sets have been so small and contained that we have had few problems.

It was also the sound department's job to maximize the space available in which the actors could work on the set, a major professional ethic of



technicians in general being to increase the freedom of other crew-members and actors to do their respective jobs. For the sound recordist, this meant arranging his microphones within the dual criteria of obtaining the best possible (ie. clean) sound, and without thereby impeding the action. I asked him if he had needed to suggest an alteration to the action at any point, for example, and the Sound recordist replied:

I hope not - I try to create the maximum space for movement. For instance, when Geraldine ('Sandra') was doing that scene where she turned round and bumped the microphone, she said 'sorry' to me. Well really it is my responsibility to get out of the way. If I begin to inhibit her then she will give less. Obviously I sometimes have to tell the cameraman or the actors that I can't do certain things, and sometimes an action will be worked out in conjunction with the requirements of both camera and sound, like in one of the hospital scenes, where the dialogue was so quiet that we had to put the mike very close (Such that the camera had to keep very tight too).

In general terms, it was not the sound-recordist's job to prepare any special effects for the sound-track. He did not, for example, need to adjust the gain of a signal to signify people walking towards or away from the camera since all of this could be done in the Dub (where sound-tracks are mixed together after the editing). One of the areas of the work which the recordist particularly liked, and which he regarded as a little more creative than simply supplying a technically good dialogue track, was to collect effects tracks. These are to be distinguished from manipulative special effects, and are generally called 'wildtracks'. Wildtracks are continuous recordings of background sounds such as traffic noise, children playing, water running or distant factory hooters and so on which can be laid beneath another track to enhance the realism of a scene. They are often noticeable by their absence in many studio dramas, some of which can appear to be quite 'dead' as a result, and several of the recordist's wildtracks were used in DUSTY to add a greater depth of perspective to the film. A constant leitmotif of the backstreets of Bradford seemed, for instance, to be the sound of dogs barking in the distance, and the



sound recordist went to some trouble to get suitable wildtracks of these together with recordings of trains going by and even the sound of the wind through the grass at the graveyard. It is up to the editor whether any of these tracks are used, and he will as often as not use stock library effects, but authentic wildtracks can often play an important part in building up a total image.

An arguably more vital element which the sound-recordist has to prepare is 'roomtone'. An exterior location will obviously generate a certain amount of background noise of which tracks can be recorded to cover gaps in dialogue, or to play back over shots without dialogue, but even apparently silent interiors still have an ambient sound of their own, and the recordist will consequently make recordings of this 'roomtone' which can then be laid over 'silent' passages during the dub. While 'roomtone' is usually barely audible, it helps to make a sequence more continuous and convincing; if it was not there at the start of a scene where, for instance, the dialogue begins after a few seconds delay, the effect could easily be similar to suddenly placing a gramophone needle onto the lead-in groove of an LP, where you would hear the ambient sound attached, so to speak, to the music in the same way that you would hear the background sound attached to a dialogue track, but only so long as the dialogue track was running - for the period before that track came into operation a section of 'roomtone' would be required to fill the gap.

In terms of gathering 'clean' dialogue tracks and ancillary effects like wildtracks and roomtone, recording the sound for DUNEY was then regarded as relatively straight-forward by the sound recordist. The bulk of the film was in fact recorded by means of a sound crew's basic equipment - a Nagra tape-recorder, a range of omni - and uni-directional microphones and a hand-held boom (which was handled by the other member of the sound crew, a Boom Operator). In addition, some radio microphones were occasionally used for exterior scenes or for interior scenes which contained



a lot of movement. Radio mikes consist of tiny, concealed electret-condenser microphones attached to small transmitters which can be hidden within an actor's clothes, thus enabling the actors to move about freely without either having to trail cables about with them, or to contain their actions within the range of a fixed microphone. A radio mike was, for example, used to pick up the clergyman's speech during the funeral, since at least one of his shots would be a long one where it would have been difficult to place a conventional microphone close enough without getting in shot (given the problems of wind-noise in an exterior scene).

Two aspects of the filming did, however, require special attention by the sound-recordist, the first being a matter of technical provision, and the second being related to a particular way of working. In order to record the pop group for the beginning of part two of the film, the sound crew had to arrange for several additional items of equipment to be brought in just for the day. This included an extra Nagra, several extra microphones, a mixer and a foldback system, all of which was needed to ensure that sufficient separation was obtained between the different signals coming from the group's instruments and the dialogue. By using the mixer the recordist could then pre-mix the instruments onto one track to give a uniform, natural-sounding music track (which would have been impossible for the dubbing editor to balance after the event in the absence of a multi-track recording) and this track could then be played back through a monitor for the group to mix to in subsequent takes, thus giving a sound continuity across different visual shots. (The facility to play back a recording in this way being known as a 'Foldback' system). Since DUFFY was a dramatized documentary, using actors, a script and carefully chosen locations, the producer was able to manipulate the action in a different way than he could have manipulated and controlled the events in a straight documentary. But as director Bernardo Bertolucci has said, although everything is pre-arranged in filming, 'reality is always there, so you leave



a door open for it to come through'. In this case, the producer wanted to leave two doors open - the first to allow for an accurate reconstruction of Sandra's life, and the second to allow for the reality of the situation at hand, that is, the exegesis of real locations, unscripted dialogue and sometimes real people. Much of the filming was consequently extemporised, with filmed takes being used in place of 'Stagger throughs' or dress rehearsals such that spontaneous dialogue and action could be captured. This method of working meant that the sound crew, for example, had to work in a slightly different way too; as the recordist explained:

I'm not always sure what he (the producer) wants, partly because I don't think he always knows. So in any given situation you have to give him everything so that he can then make a choice. For example, on a three shot where you have got two people's backs to camera, you normally just mike the person who is facing the camera, but in this situation, where there is a lot of improvised dialogue, and where you don't know how long the scene is going to run, I also have to mike the people who are off camera, because any dialogue they may speak may not be repeated in the next take.

By no means was all of the filming conducted in extempore; the Hotel scene was for example, extensively choreographed by the producer and rehearsed back in the production offices in Portman Square (where the associated screams and shouts caused some consternation among the after-hours cleaners) and a total control was to be exercised during the editing process. The search for authenticity nevertheless led to a rejection of Formalism and a move towards Cinéma-vérité in many respects, one of the results of which was the neutralisation of formal working practices for those members of the unit who were more used to straight drama than documentary. This led to a range of adaptive strategies on their behalf, stretching from the provision of a choice (of costume, props etc.) in the absence of formal design, to the adoption of 'working-to-rule' tactics; one member of the crew, for example, volunteered that he had 'Absolutely no empathy with this way of filming' and he 'couldn't imagine why it is being made in the first place' so he had decided to regard it as 'Just another job, I'll be glad when it's over.'



Wardrobe preparations

One of the ways in which the wardrobe department could adapt to the variable conditions of the shoot was to provide a wide-ranging choice of costumes. Over a thousand articles of clothing were in fact brought up to Bradford from Elstree, some of which had been drawn from the wardrobe stockrooms there, and some of which had been bought specially. In addition, a great many clothes were bought from retail outlets in Bradford, and some were also borrowed from the local television company in Leeds (Yorkshire Television Ltd.).

Working as she normally did, in straight costume dramas set in the studio, the wardrobe supervisor customarily liaised with the director, designer and make-up people over lengthy periods in order to match clothes to artist's personal colouring, their fictional backgrounds and the requirements of the script, and when working with a period production, she would refer to standard reference works in order to pinpoint precise styles and accessories -

Historical dramas are relatively easy, because with period things you know exactly what the shape and the style is, and you cannot really argue with that. But nowadays fashion is so woolly and vague dressing people (correctly) is much more difficult, at least with a period thing you've got something; you can skip to and find right away because you know what the clothes should look like, you know what sort of accessories people used.

Having been rostered onto DUTY only four weeks before the beginning of the shoot, (as a result of some hold-ups associated with the panning dispute) the wardrobe supervisor did not have so much time to prepare costumes, on top of which the casting was incomplete at that point. The wardrobe department normally works to a number of different parameters; they have to know details of period and special requirements (such as uniforms, character parts and 'job descriptions' which indicate the need to obtain 'working men's' clothes, 'shopkeeper's' or 'professional's' costumes). Obviously, the wardrobe



supervisor would also need to know the sex of different characters, and whether they were to be adults or children. Individual artist's measurements would also need to be known such that the clothes would actually fit correctly, and the number of different costumes that any one character would need would also enter into the department's calculations within the overall limitations of the budget.

In the case of *DUSTY*, many of these parameters were not fixed; particularly the details of individual actors since many were cast after the initial decisions of design had been taken. Several of the actors had been asked to wear their own clothes in fact, but this is quite usual for modern-day productions, and some actors even keep their old clothes for use in period productions (providing the period is still relatively modern - the actor playing the part of the early fiction consultant wore his own twenty-year old suit. In such cases a certain amount of money can be saved for the production company by not having to supply clothes, but the actors will be paid a small allowance in recompense). The lack of information in respect of actor's measurements and requirements caused some concern to the wardrobe department, as the supervisor explained.

At the first meeting with the producer we were given a script and a basic outline but few details because of the casting. That's been our main problem really. I mean it's alright for make-up and set-design because they can sort of get on with it, but for us, not having measurements you can't really get on with anything until the last minute. We hadn't actually met half the people until we got here (Bradford) which is one of the reasons why we've bought so many clothes here. Normally, on a play, you have people there and you fit them up properly beforehand - if you have the sort of director which this one is, who likes to choose things, you normally have a lot of costume fittings before you start, but on this there just wasn't time.

The wardrobe nevertheless had to be carefully and accurately chosen if the



realism of the film was to be preserved, and apart from relying upon the wardrobe supervisor's intuition and experience, the producer also went through the whole script, describing what he wanted and referring to the photographs which he had collected in Bradford. The Wardrobe supervisor also accompanied the producer on one of the trips to Bradford before the shoot started for a fitting, and drew up her own version of the script breakdown in terms of costume changes for the principal characters, taking into account all those parameters mentioned above so far as they were known.

Some of the wardrobe decisions had to take account of a character's age (as opposed to an actor's actual age) for which consultation was undertaken with the make-up department. Both 'Mother' and 'Sandra' had to age through a number of years, the mother in particular playing a range of about twenty-seven years, so here clothes had to conform with both period and changing fashion in relation to apparent age. On location, the wardrobe and make-up departments in fact occupied intercommunicating rooms in the hotel so that they could work together more easily and co-ordinate the overall appearance of each actor. This process would start for the Wardrobe supervisor by making lists of requirements for each actor or actress, using any details which were available from the casting forms which the Casting director had prepared, the initial list for 'Mother' looked like this:



'DUNNY DOCUMENTARY'MOTHER

MEASUREMENTS: Height 5'5" Bust 38" Waist 27" Hip 39" Shoes 6-6½

<u>AGE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>		
1,10,17	HOSPITAL	1948	Same day	Coat
18		1950		Coat
19	INDOORS - COOKING	1950		
20		1950		Coat again
21	SURGERY	1950		Pregnant
24	INDOORS AGAIN	1950		
25,26	DEAF SCHOOL	1950		Coat, pregnant
27-32		1951		Different underneath; same top
32		1951		Breast feeding
33	INDOORS	1955		
	IRONING INDOORS	1957		
46	INDOORS, HAPPY	1959		
49	INDOORS, KITCHEN	1963		
53	SWIMMING BATHS	1963		Suit - dressed up
63	OUTDOORS	1964		
67	INDOORS	1964		
96	HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM	1966		
107	INDOORS	1967		Dressing gown
114	KITCHEN	1969		
121	HOSPITAL OFFICE	1969		
124	WEDDING	1971		Best dress and coat



Using this list of basic requirements, the Wardrobe supervisor then selected a number of different costumes for each scene from which the producer could choose as he wished. Since such decisions were often taken on the day of the shoot, however, there was often little time to make last-minute changes if the available choice of costumes clashed with other considerations. For example, for the 'Strip' scene, the Wardrobe supervisor had selected two light-coloured coats for 'Candra' and her friend, Cross-eyed Anne to wear inside the pub, the reasoning being that both characters should by that stage in the film appear to be flamboyant and promiscuous, with correspondingly ostentatious clothes. Since the Wardrobe department had not dressed the crowd in that scene (because they were real people) it was not fully realized that the two girls would stand out rather more than had been intended, since most of the other people in the pub were dressed in more sombre greys and browns; by the time the actresses arrived on set it was then too late to find some more coats since a lot of time had already been used up in setting up the complicated lighting for that scene.

The Wardrobe department consequently bore a lot of responsibility in making an initial selection of costumes, and even given the insurance of bringing a huge number of clothes with them, the department still had to rely upon intuitive judgements plus a little luck to arrive at the 'right' choice. Apart from discussing the final choice with the director during the shoot itself, the Wardrobe supervisor also had to consider a number of technical factors, like making sure that 'repeats' were available, that is, having a number of identical shirts for an actor to wear during different takes of a scene in which his shirt would be likely to be ripped or stained



in some way - as in the violence of the motel scene. Similarly, it is a general rule of television production to avoid having bold stripes in clothes, since these can cause interference patterns when the picture is scanned, and large areas of blue in clothes or backgrounds can appear to be unnaturally bright on a TV screen.

The actors themselves also played a part in the department's work. 'Feeling the part' has a lot to do with the costume one is wearing, so actors and actresses are quite likely to argue against having to wear particular outfits if they feel strongly about them. In the event, the cast of *DUTY* were quite happy about the costumes they wore, and as the main actress points out in the following quote, even the comparatively minor consideration of footwear can make a considerable difference to an actor's performance. (Lord Olivier, I should point out, has said that the whole secret of acting is to be aware of what one's feet are doing).

The problems for wardrobe are vast, simply because the film covers twenty-nine years. But whatever the problems have been the night before, there has not been one single scene that I've done where I have been unhappy about what I'm wearing. I've had sleepless nights thinking that the clothes are quite wrong, but when I've actually got there they have been fine. Costume can make a fantastic difference, and the choice for me is a matter of whether it feels right. I have a very strong image of (the original Sandra), but it is more difficult to get some aspects than others. For instance, if I am wearing the flat-heeled shoes I tend to walk with more confidence, but this is wrong. Because (Sandra) is a short-legged lady she takes little strides, and she sort of stumbles along, not because she is drunk; it's a sort of eagerness without any purpose, a confusion which goes through her feet into her whole body. The times when I've done that best are when I've had awkward, heeled shoes, or when there have been cobble stones to walk over, it made the actual landing of the feet sort of unequal.

Several of the actors, notably the main actress, had spent some time with the original family and could therefore help the wardrobe department by describing the kind of clothes and accessories which the original people used.



Since the choice of clothes was limited to those which the department had brought with them, and those which they could obtain locally, the actress could not necessarily ensure that her costumes were authentic in every detail, but she could certainly keep the wardrobe department informed as to types of clothing that the original Sandra would not have worn.

One more factor which the Wardrobe supervisor had to take into account when making her preparations was that of 'special effects' with regard to costumes. Strictly speaking, anything to do with an actor's clothes is the Wardrobe department's responsibility, which means, for instance, that any blood which has spilt from one of the make-up department's 'wounds' onto an article of clothing should in theory be applied by the Wardrobe people rather than the make-up lady. In practice, make-up would usually oblige with some strategically placed dabs of theatrical blood (known as 'Kensington Gore') but as I mentioned, it was certainly Wardrobe's responsibility to supply a number of alternative articles of clothing should repeats be needed. Similarly, Wardrobe had to prepare for such eventualities as pregnancies (by supplying a belted cushion for the actress to wear) or injuries (bandages), and the supervisor had to constantly ensure that clothes did not look too new. There were two Dressers attached to the unit, one for either sex, whose job it was to dress the actors and attend to running repairs, but they would also wear-in brand new clothes before dressing the actors to save them from looking too new. Men's shirts are a particular problem in this respect, since new ones will contain the packing creases; for the Hotel scene, where a number of 'repeats' were needed, the Male Dresser spent most of the day wearing three or four shirts at once in order to 'Do-new' them as he put it. There are also various artificial compounds with which clothes



can be dusted, spattered with grease or made to look generally grimy without permanently damaging them or creating a health hazard for their wearers, and such preparations are also the responsibility of the Wardrobe department along with the provision of articles such as piles of washing or the contents of suitcases (although these will actually be arranged on the set by the designer).

### Make-up preparations

Both of the make-up people working on DEATH - the Make-up Supervisor and her assistant heard about the programme a little earlier than the Wardrobe department. The Make-up supervisor was first contacted by her head of department at Elstree during the last week in February 1977:

She asked me if I would mind going away for five weeks, and told me a bit about the programme. I had, in fact, already heard about it because there had been various union problems about it which were obviously going round the building. Anyway, I said yes, because it's good to get away from the studio for a bit, and it seemed a challenge more than anything else. They were at that time asking for a minimum crew you see, and in fact all I heard at first was that there was only going to be one actress, with everyone else being taken off the streets in Bradford. In the end, of course, the cast-list was six pages long, but it was interesting to try and cope with that - every time the phone rang there was another person on the list... I first met the producer about a week later, and he gave me a basic run-down of the show, but didn't in fact go into any detail about the scar-tissue and so on. I was chiefly thinking about the change that the actress would have to go through, I mean she had to go through quite a change in age, from sixteen to twenty-seven, so I said that I'd like to meet her to discuss the various things which needed to be done.

The problem of altering the actress's (real) age became a major concern of the make-up department, and they faced similar difficulties with 'Mother'. In both cases the actresses were required to play younger characters than their actual ages, and in 'Mother's' case, the actress also had to play some scenes where the character was older than her real age. While ageing a character is relatively easy to accomplish (by adding shadow,



age-lines and different wigs), it is always more difficult to make an actor appear to be younger than he or she really is, since instead of adding to a face, you have to disguise what is already there. As the supervisor pointed out, the main actresses had a very strong face - a woman's face rather than a girl's - and there is very little that one can do about that beyond using very subtle, light make-up and paying particular attention to the hair (by making the hair loose and natural-looking, which can also help to frame the face and reduce the relative prominence of the features). Make-up is only one factor involved, of course, and careful use of lighting can help enormously in this respect; as can the choice of costume and acting ability. When the main actress had to play Sandra at about sixteen or seventeen in the fairground, for example, she discovered that by chewing a piece of gum she could more easily project a sense of youthful energy; a kind of inner tempo that she felt would be lacking in an older version of the girl. The personality of different actors was in fact of almost equal importance as basic face-shapes for the make-up people when they were preparing them for specific parts, as the supervisor explained:

You have to take both into consideration. 'Mother' is a good example - she is supposed to be quite young; twenty-five, at the beginning, and until we've seen the rushes I will not be sure that we have succeeded there, but towards the end of the programme she was marvellous to make older, and to look sick, because as soon as she walks into the make-up room she starts acting the part. From make-up's point of view, to actually see her starting to sag is a great help, you work on the character rather than the actress.

Making actors look older, younger, sick or healthy are all regarded as a matter of professional expertise by a make-up artist, and given a face to work upon and a good range of basic equipment and materials most things can be achieved ('Before' and 'After' photographs of well-known



acters being a staple diet of tabloids and the Sundays). Some of the parameters set by this particular programme were, however, far more specific. Like the Wardrobe department, Make-up had to take account of period by attending to changing hairstyles and details such as changing fashion in lipstick-colour, and it was the Make-up department's special responsibility to cope with the physical damage which 'Sandra' suffered at different points in the film.

The real Sandra had been severely beaten on several different occasions, and her face bore witness to this (which of course it does to this day). She had been slashed across her upper left cheekbone with a kitchen knife by her first boyfriend, and had never received proper plastic surgery for this, much the scar remained obvious and had to be masked with a heavy cosmetic base. The cheekbone itself appeared to be damaged too, and her nose had been broken and badly reset at least once. From a purely clinical point of view, the problems of reproducing such damage were consequently enormous, and the broken nose was never fully indicated in the finished film (since the actress would have to have coped with extensive prosthetic make-up throughout the whole of part three of the film). The scar, on the other hand, was reproduced with as much accuracy as possible, since the incident which caused it was considered to be a pivotal episode in the girl's life and the producer wanted to report it as authentically as he could.

The producer had collected a number of photographs which the make-up supervisor could refer to in planning Sandra's make-up, but he also arranged for the supervisor to visit the original girl in Bradford:



I came up to Bradford for a day in March and met the family and of course (Sandra). I asked to see all her scars and she went a bit shy and coy when I asked to see the ones on her body, but I reassured her that we were all women - since I went up on the same day that two of the actresses were there too - and she agreed. I'm actually not sure about this, and I think quite a few of us hope that the programme will not sensationalise it all... but from our point of view I suppose we are trying to make it more realistic; although how we are going to cope with the battering, the broken jaw and the broken nose - near murder in fact at the motel - I'm not sure. I'll just cope with it when the day comes; it really depends upon how much time we have...

Not a lot as it turned out; neither the make-up department nor the producer had fully realised just how long it would take to apply Sandra's make-up before each day's shooting, and several delays were caused here as well as during the course of some day's shooting where scenes were filmed achronologically (such that make-up had to be altered half-way through the day). There were several reasons for this; as a general rule the producer had wanted to maintain as low a profile as he could while filming in locations which involved working institutions like pubs or hospitals since not only could their normal business have been disrupted by the unit, but it was precisely this normal business that the producer wanted to capture on film. He therefore wanted to prepare such locations with the minimum of fuss (and with a minimum number of personnel) so most of the preparations which Wardrobe and Make-up had to make were carried out back at the hotel. The actors were often, therefore, the last people to arrive on set having been dressed and made-up elsewhere. Since the director was physically unable to supervise both the locations and the Make-up and Wardrobe at the same time (which he could have done had both operations been carried out in the same place) any alterations which he wanted had to be made to the finished job, so to speak, and sometimes



this would involve having to send an actor back to the hotel again, or to wait while a member of the appropriate department returned there to fetch the required material. While this sort of situation placed a heavy responsibility upon the Make-up department it was not necessarily the result of inadequate planning; the large number of varying factors that contribute to the making of a film simply do not always mesh together perfectly, and the overriding constraint of time will often mean that adaptive strategies have to be worked out on the spot - almost inevitably to the inconvenience of different members of the unit. For example, there were to be two scenes of Sandra working in a dry-cleaning factory, both before and after she had been scarred. The first scene was filmed (minus scar) during a morning when a related scene of Sandra being picked up from the factory by her boyfriend was also to have been shot. By lunchtime, the car in which the boyfriend was to have arrived had not turned up, so as per schedule, Sandra was made-up with the scar in order to shoot the chronologically later scene in the factory. After that scene had been completed the car eventually arrived, which meant that there was an unscheduled delay as the scar was removed again in order to shoot the chronologically earlier scene. The scar then had to be replaced for the next scene to be shot - in the hospital - which meant that the delay had by that time been compounded to about two hours. Not only are such delays expensive, especially if they mean going into overtime, but if one has arranged to be at a sensitive location like a working hospital at a particular time, and then arrive late, there is a distinct possibility that permission will be revoked.

The time factor was consequently a source of pressure for the Make-up department as indeed it was for all the other members of the unit. There is, however, an important defining variable in the Make-up department's case



which other departments do not necessarily share. This is the fact that Make-up has to apply on the day: while the supervisor may know exactly what effect she wishes to achieve in advance, she still has to actually produce that effect from scratch every time. The actors cannot sleep whilst wearing make-up that has been carefully worked out at the Make-up department's leisure, and make-up cannot be simply or quickly put on an actor in the same way that a costume can. Equally, an actor has to be handled with a certain amount of sensitivity if only for the pragmatic reason of allowing them to turn in a good performance, so it becomes counter-productive to schedule Make-up appointments too early in the morning. While a location can be lit and dressed well in advance of shooting - perhaps days before - the make-up necessarily has to be prepared virtually during potential shooting-time, so an unexpected delay is almost bound to put back everything else. As I mentioned, the producer often used takes in the place of rehearsals for reasons of gaining a spontaneity in the action, but this can also be seen as a way of extending his shooting-time given the fact that by the time the main actress arrived from Make-up most of the rest of the set was ready to go, so dispensing with rehearsals or 'stagger-throughs' could simply save time.

Most of the locations were only used once in the film as a whole, that is to say, they rarely appeared as the same location for different scenes. They therefore had to appear to be continuous across different shots within the same scene, but not across different scenes. Sandra herself, however, had to maintain a continuity across several different scenes, which meant that her make-up not only had to be applied afresh each day, but that it often had to be exactly the same each time. Again, this is rather different from the case of the Wardrobe, since continuity of costume



could be achieved simply by using the same clothes for different scenes. The scar which Sandra appears to have for the whole of parts two and three of the film is, by contrast, the result of perhaps twenty different re-creations of it by the Make-up department over a period of several weeks.

To ensure the continuity of the appearance of the scar (which would be checked by the PA and the director on set) the Make-up supervisor constantly referred to her collection of photographs and facecharts of both the original girl and the actress. The scar had to appear to be in the same position all the time, but it also had to appear to heal as time went by, and various 'tricks of the trade' could be used to ensure this. Various colledions (mixtures of alcohol and ether with either pyroxylin or a resin) have been used in the past to contract the skin to produce scar-like ridges, but DUFFY's Make-up department preferred to use more modern plastic solutions which look and behave a little like the proprietary glue Copydex, and which are less likely to affect sensitive skins. This sort of preparation was consequently used for the scenes immediately following the scarring in film-time, and then for later scenes the scar was simply indicated by drawing it onto the actress's face with a wax lining pencil. More complicated prosthetics were prepared as they were needed; some facial scabs were needed for some of the later scenes to indicate venereal disease (for Sandra) and these were prepared from small dabs of the plastic solution which were then sealed and coloured with standard greasepaint. Such additions can be easily removed simply by peeling them off (sometimes with the aid of a little surgical spirit) and the actress delighted in doing so after each session - sometimes distributing her 'scabs' as souvenirs to the ever-present local children.



The most extensive piece of make-up which had to be prepared was for the Hotel scene. As the Make-up supervisor indicated, the original girl had almost been killed here, having her nose and jaw broken as a result of being kneaded in the face and hit repeatedly with a steel radiator-shelf. (The scene was filmed in the actual hotel where the incident had originally happened, and the radiator-shelf from the original room was still bent and buckled at the time of the shoot). Most of the swelling and distortion of the actress's face was achieved by cramping her mouth full of pieces of foam rubber, and filling out the exterior with mortician's wax. A scaler and heavy calce-foundation was then applied, the scar drawn in, and liberal dabs of 'Kennington Gore' applied over the top. This theatrical blood tends to dry out fairly quickly, and most greasepaints and foundations will tend to become absorbed after a few hours, or dissipated through perspiration, so the supervisor or her assistant had to come out with the actors to the set in order to be on hand to touch up their work during the day, or to alter it as needed (e.g. increasing the flow of 'blood' during a scene). One of the most-often used preparations was an astringent liquid which, in acting like an after-shave, could be used to freshen-up an actor's make-up without having to completely re-touch it, and which, incidentally, was favoured by some members of the crew as a quick rejuvenator while filming in some of the hotter, smellier locations.

One or two aspects of the make-up could be prepared in advance; wigs, for example, had to be ordered and fitted before the shoot started, and several 'Wig checks' were arranged for different actresses in the weeks preceeding the move up to Bradford. A camera test was also arranged for the main actress at the end of March in order to check the proposed





The Make-up supervisor applies the finishing touches to SANDRA's 'injuries' after the attack in the motel.



modelling of the scar (to see that it looked credible, even though it was an unusual disfigurement) and several specific features which the producer wanted to include were added to the supervisor's checklists. There is a character in the film called 'Cross-eyed Anne', for example, and in order to give the actress the appropriate squint, a corneal contact lens with a displaced iris was specially made up by an optician (at a cost of £70; an expense which was actually wasted since the girl is never clearly-enough in shot to register the squint). Similarly, the Make-up supervisor had made notes about items such as tattoos which the producer wanted certain characters to wear. The original of the small-time criminal whom Sandra takes up with after her first boyfriend has left actually had 'Out here' tattooed above a dotted line around his throat, but the producer had decided to omit this in case it looked like an addition, even though it was actually authentic. This character was nevertheless given the 'tattoos' of 'Love' and 'Hate' on the knuckles of each hand, which are arguably more normal (and realistic; it is interesting to note here that the boy's father in one of the producer's earlier films, *HHH*, also had the same tattoos, which were in that case real). Sandra herself also had a small tattoo - 'Mother' - on her forearm, and all these markings were applied by the supervisor with a felt-tip pen. While such details were all part of the search for authenticity, they were also considered to be essential additions to the fabric of characterization since the producer felt that his audience would notice even tiny details like these, and would use them to build up a more complete picture of characters and their contexts (Tattoos, for example, can imply that a character has a 'history' beyond the immediate action in which he is seen to be involved). Correlatively, an inattention to detail could



perhaps wreck an audience's 'willing suspension of disbelief', so particular care had to be taken to ensure that details such as tattoos maintained a continuity. At one point, for example, it was noticed that the 'Love-hate' tattoos had changed colour - the make-up department had been using black felt tip, and inadvertantly changed to blue, so this was quickly rectified. Another little detail concerned a natural mole which the actress had upon her cheek; to save having to play all her scenes with the mole disguised under a cake-foundation, a make-up mole was added to the faces of the other three versions of 'Sandra'.

One last consideration which the Make-up department had to take into account was their personal relationship with actors. It is an unwritten function of the Make-up personnel to act a little like confessors; since they are very often the last people whom the actors talk to prior to playing their scenes, they consider that they have a responsibility to reassure artists, or to listen attentively to grouses, fears and problems. The same sensitivity has to apply on set too, as the supervisor explained:

The actors bear a heavy responsibility, and on a drama like this it has all got to come from the person; I mean, we can't go in there and break up the atmosphere - the actors are going through it until they get it right, and if the make-up artist then goes in and starts prinking and preening you are going to break their concentration. You have to very much choose your moment sometimes, and before they go you sometimes have to calm them down, or bring them up.

### Special effects preparations

Just as the areas in which the Wardrobe and Make-up operate are strictly demarcated according to custom and union rulings, so certain aspects of dressing or preparing a set or location are broken down into different functions. Thus it is the designer's job to organise, through his props buyer and props men, the arrangement of different pieces of furniture or



household articles on set, but if any of those articles need to be 'practical', that is, to work in some way, then they become the responsibility of other members of the unit. If an iron or a television set needs to actually function, it is therefore the electrician's job to make sure that they are wired up correctly. While this ensures that there is (theoretically) plenty of work for different people to do so that customary manning levels can be maintained, there is also the practical consideration of personal insurance; if one of the props men had connected up a television set, for example, and it subsequently exploded and hurts somebody, then the question of compensation becomes exceedingly complex.

'Special' effects beyond those of electrical practicals become, in turn, the responsibility of another member of the crew, the Special Effects supervisor. There were very few special effects on *BUTY*, but those which were required meant that a Special Effects supervisor had to be brought up from Miltree for each one. The main effect which he provided was smoke; for some of the period scenes in part one of the film the producer wanted to film in a slightly hazy atmosphere since this gives a certain texture to the image. By this I mean that the quality of the light can be changed in subtle but important ways - sunlight streaming into a room can be more strongly indicated if there is a haze to the atmosphere, since the light will pick out the tiny particles of which the smoke consists. Even though that 'sunlight' may be coming from an artificial light outside the window, and be reinforced by auxiliary interior lighting, the presence of smoke can help to give that light a direction in the same way that the rays of the sun enter a room at an oblique angle, and the realism of a particular scene can thereby be enhanced.



A light haziness in an image can also be used conventionally to signify 'the past' (in the same way that Alan Parker's Movie commercials are designed to convey a feeling of childhood memory by deliberately softening the images) as a kind of analogue of the slight distortion that memory can give to a scene in one's past - 'blue remembered hills' - the cameraman in fact said that he was trying to make the quality of the light in some of the early scenes 'almost dreamlike' by having his exterior lights set really high, shining through tissue paper and then through the hazy interior.

To get this effect, the producer was thwarted in his attempt to get all the crew to stand around chain-smoking by the arrival of the Special Effects supervisor and his smoke machine. This was known as a 'Bee-gun' and is a slightly adapted version of a proprietary device used for blowing smoke into beehives in order to make the occupants sufficiently docile to handle. Small cakes of an oil-based compound are slowly burnt within this device, and smoke can then be released in controlled bursts to linger at the required density within a room. A rather larger version was also used to fill the pub for the 'Strip' scene with smoke, but this time the producer actually wanted the pub to appear smokeey in order to help build up an image of a crowded, busy club.

The Special Effects supervisor also had to prepare a 'practical' fire in the grate of the period house's front room. In a studio, such a fire might be signified by hiding a gas burner beneath some asbestos 'coals' or by using a lycopodium pot (where flames are produced by controlling the flow of air through some lycopodium powder sprinkled around a burning wick), but in this case a real fire was produced since there was



no immediate danger of catching a set alight (and the actors and crew could also keep warm during some very cold day's shooting). The major effect which the film required was the scarring of Sandra's face at the beginning of part two, and for this the supervisor prepared a special knife which had a thin tube taped to one side leading up to the supervisor himself who would then stand on a chair to pour 'blood' down the tube and then out of its other end. The actor playing the boyfriend then drew the knife slowly across 'Sandra's' face, with the girl in close-up and the tube hidden beneath the knife. As the blade moved across her face, the blood would then come out (from the knife, in fact, though by inference from the wound) to signify that a cut had been made. By undercranking the camera, the whole action could then be speeded up for the finished film to produce the required effect. There were two main reasons for undercranking here; firstly, if the shot had been filmed in real-time there would have been some likelihood of hurting the actress because of the speed of the slash, and secondly, the cut had to be accurately placed on the actress's face in relation to the original (and in continuity with the make-up scar which had already been filmed achronologically). In fact, the whole shot is what is called a 'cheat', since such a wound would not start to bleed immediately, but since it would only be on screen for a very short time (about five frames) this method was felt to be valid.

The only other piece of special apparatus that had to be prepared beforehand was a small knife with a retractable blade that Sandra would use to stab the drunk at the end of the film. In the close-up which showed the knife apparently penetrating the man's chest, the blade of this knife would then - hopefully - retract into the handle. Two knives were actually prepared,





The moment at which Sandra is scarred by her boyfriend  
(Showing the Special Effects knife injecting theatrical  
blood onto the face).



one of which was to be used in another close-up where Sandra is shown picking the knife up and hiding it in her pocket. The two knives were identical except insofar as one of them was real, and this nearly caused the classic stage accident during the extremely limited time in which the stabbing scene was shot, since in the fading light there was some confusion over which knife was which.

### Action Vehicles

These are specially hired cars, lorries or 'character' vehicles such as buses, vintage or veteran automobiles and police cars or ambulances. Vehicles can be hired from local collections or dealers, or indeed from car-hire firms if the vehicle has to be a current model, although the latter are usually careful to ensure that new cars are not used for chase sequences or crashes (Merton films appear to have solved this problem by cornering the market in old Jaguars for crash sequences in *THE SWIFTHY*). A number of vehicles were needed for *DUFFY*, and again, these would be the responsibility of an Action Vehicles manager. Since action vehicles are not ordinarily used in a studio context, the manager in this case was a freelance, and it was his job to obtain the vehicles to the producer's instructions.

For the period scenes in the film an early fifties lorry was hired from a local collector (to be used as a coal lorry for a scene which was eventually rejected) plus a 1951 Leyland bus from the same collection. The bus was in fact a country version, with a lowered roof so that it could negotiate low country bridges, but old buses are few and far between, so this one was used as a 'town' bus and decorated with period advertisements for the part (on one side only, since the other side would never be in shot). Two cars were needed for the scenes in part one where Sandra is with the





The 1950's period bus used for scenes in part one.



first boyfriend; the first being the car which the boyfriend actually drove, and the second being one to stand in the drive at his parent's house. In the script, Ian's (i.e. the boyfriend's) car is a sports model, but the producer had decided that the contrast between Sandra and the middle-class boy was already going to be sufficiently indicated by the difference in accents, attitudes and homes, so the appearance of a sports-car might have had the effect of nudging the authenticity towards being a stereotype. Similarly, a sports-car might have appeared to be the boy's personal property, which would then have implied a greater wealth and independence on his behalf, and may also have given the impression that he was somewhat older than Sandra. None of this was intended, since Ian's interest in Sandra had to appear to be credible, and an overemphasis of the difference between the two youngsters could only stretch that credibility.

It was therefore decided to use a relatively impressive car, but one which could conceivably have been the family's second one rather than Ian's own car. In the shots in which the car appears at Sandra's house it was also the only car in the street, so the mere fact that the boy had access to a car could be used to signify the differences between his background and hers. The car chosen was a blue Wolseley, and the Action Vehicles manager also obtained a Rover 3 Litre to stand in the drive of Ian's house to indicate that the family had two (the Rover itself being a very 'classy' car).

The cars themselves had to fulfil a number of requirements. Obviously, Ian's car had to be functional since a number of scenes required it to be driven, and both cars had to be in period at about 1964. Both the particular models were in production at the time, but the number-plates had to be changed so that the year-letter ('B') was correct, and both cars



also had to appear to be relatively new; even though the vehicles were actually ten or twelve years old, they had to appear to be no more than perhaps one or two years old. The first Wolseley which the manager found was in fact in a sorry state and had to be changed, and the Rover was missing a rear bumper so was only shot from its 'good side'. For technical reasons, Ian's car also had to have a laminated windscreen, since none of the shots would be through the windscreen of the occupants, and a merely toughened screen would produce flares and distortions in the image. Similarly, any identifying items such as tax-discs had to be changed or moved out of shot, and all the bright-work of the cars had to be treated with a lanolin spray to minimise flares and reflections.

The Action Vehicles manager was also asked to supply two near-modern Ford Cortinas, one for the couple who nearly hit the stabbed man as he stumbles into the road towards the end of the film, and the other for the 'Heat Man' at the motel. This second Cortina was clearly specified to be gold in colour since the Heat Man was himself well-dressed, clean-cut and a little 'flash' in contrast to Sandra, who was by that stage going rapidly downhill, and again, the car had to have a laminated windscreen, since several shots would be taken from a Mo-kit Camera bracket attached to the front of the car (laminated side-windows for moving profile shots are unnecessary since the window can simply be wound down).

Several police cars and an ambulance were needed too; the ambulance was in fact a real one, but the police operate certain rules about portraying their vehicles on film. Since it is actually an offence to drive an exact replica of a police car on the road, especially one with the identifying marks of a particular force, the Action Vehicles manager obtained a plain white Cortina and a blue Morris to which side-flashes,

'Police' signs and flashing lights were added just for the shooting itself.



These markings were slightly different from standard police signs, and were only attached to the cars concerned at the last minute such that the manager did not have to drive through Bradford with the full markings displayed.

Any further alterations which had to be made to cars were then carried out, through the customary division of labour, by the appropriate personnel. The camera crew therefore rigged internal lights for the cars, which were then operated by the lighting crew, and the sound unit rigged them with mic. phones and radio-mikes. The West Man's Cortina was, for example, rigged for sound both internally and externally, with internal mikes for the dialogue and an external microphone taped at the rear of the car to pick up the sound of the exhaust (to separate this track from the dialogue track. In the event a library track was used for the car's engine noise during the dubbing, since the Cortina was an automatic, and its engine noise sounded somewhat disconnected from the visual image.) Similarly, the Citroen 2CV which was used as a tracking vehicle for the camera at the motel was the responsibility, not of the Action Vehicles manager, but of the camera crew, and the unit's own transport (minibuses, hired cars and vans) was handled by the transport manager at Elstree.

#### Lighting preparations

Since real locations were being used, and the filming was to some extent dependent upon existing natural light sources, much of the artificial lighting was not prepared in detail until the crew were actually 'on set'. As I pointed out in the section on locations, however, a member of the lighting crew had accompanied the cameraman and the producer on one of the 'location spotting' expeditions to Bradford in order to make a note



of any obvious requirements which they would need. Sometimes the physical location of a location would mean that special equipment had to be requisitioned from the studio, and where existing lights were to be boosted the lighting department had to check beforehand that the fittings could take the more powerful 5-lb. A scene was to be shot, for example, inside Phil's (The small-time criminal's) lodgings, where a 7Kw light was needed outside to provide 'sunlight'. Unfortunately, there was a sixteen-foot drop from the window to the ground at that particular location, so the lighting department had to make sure that they brought a suitable extension for the normal stand with them on that occasion. Similarly, it was known in advance that some scenes would have to be shot 'day-for-night', so plenty of blackout material was brought along. The interior scene in the kitchen of the 'middle-class house' where Sandra is scarred was, for example, a night scene, but was actually scheduled to be shot in the daytime for the convenience of the crew, to save on overtime and to reduce the imposition on the owners of the house. For this particular scene, as I mentioned, the lighting department also had to take the unusual step of wiring a number of fluorescent tubes together in parallel so they would fit flat onto the ceiling and avoid the intrusion of conventional lights into shot, given the close confinement of the available space.

The lighting department consisted of two people; the lighting gaffer and his electrician, both of whom normally worked within a studio context on such programmes as *THE SUPPER* or *THE CEDAR TREES*. They were both allocated to the programme towards the end of March (about three weeks before the beginning of the shoot) and the lighting gaffer received a copy of the script at that point so that he could gain an indication of the scale

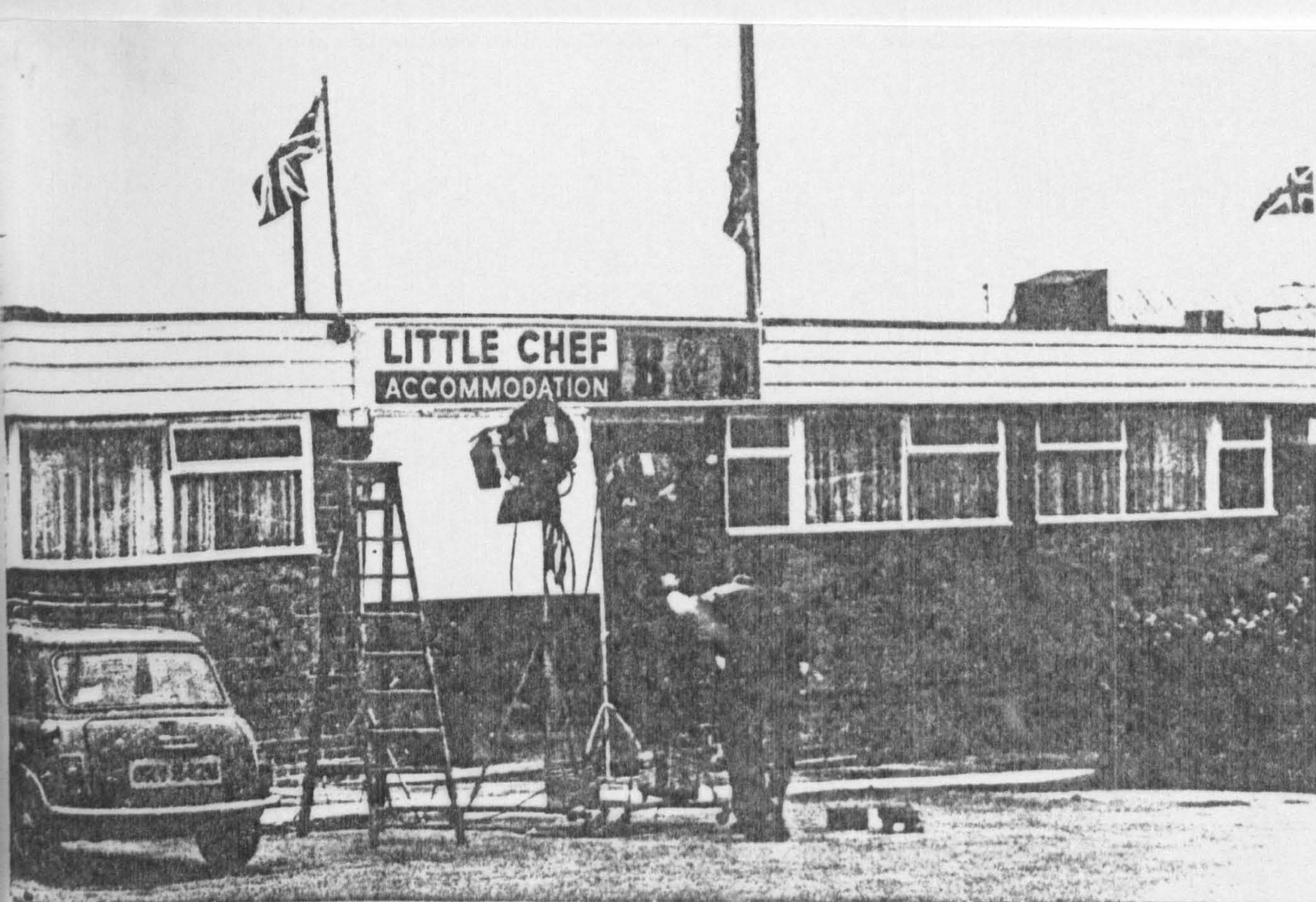


of the lighting needed. From the script he could, for instance, see that most of the interiors would not require any complicated, special lighting effects or stylistic devices, and indeed his discussion with the cameraman and the producer revealed their intention to keep the amount of artificial lighting down to a minimum. This was part of the pursuit of naturalism on their behalf, since like the artist J.M.W. Turner, the cameraman felt that the existing quality, quantity and direction of light in a location controlled everything to the extent that it dictated the way people lived within that given space. Hence the less one altered the natural light which flowed into a room, the greater would become the chance of capturing that reality - not only the natural quality of the light itself, but also the natural quality of the subject's relationship to that light. This theory would then apply equally well to existing artificial light sources, since people would continue to orientate themselves and their possessions with respect to the available light, be it a window or a table lamp.

Given the fact that the unit was using real locations, the producer and the cameraman therefore wanted the circumstances to dictate the 'feel' of the film as much as possible within the constraints of the process itself. One of these constraints was the camera's inability to register an image with the same degree of sensitivity as the human eye, so even using fast film and lenses, the existing light-sources - both natural and artificial - had to be boosted, but boosted only just enough to enable the camera to function.

This auxiliary lighting could be used not only to enhance the existing light's power, but also its quality. Thus to boost the natural daylight entering a room through a window, the lighting technician and the

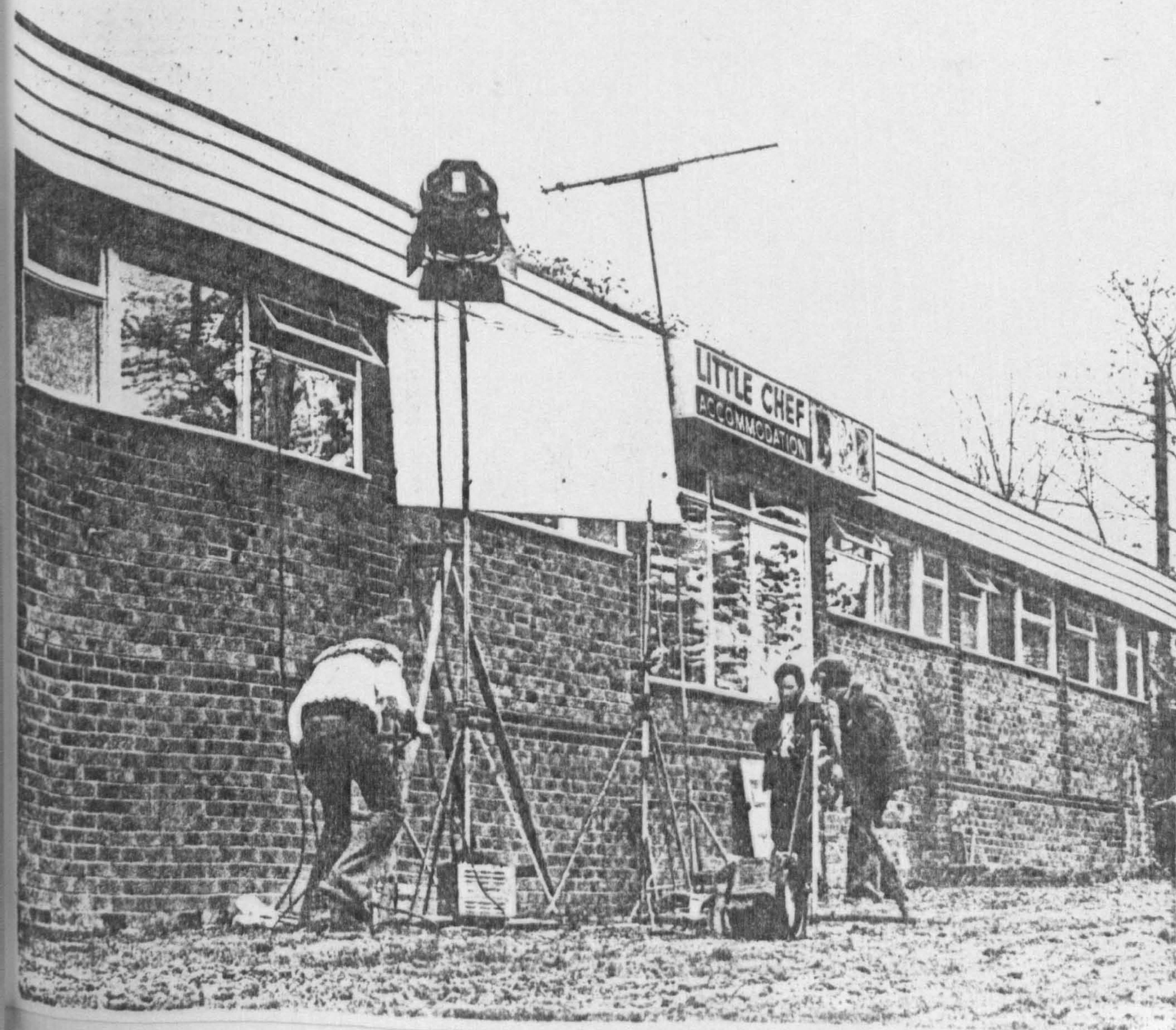




10

Above: Typical lighting set-up for interior shooting at the motel. Here two 2Kw HMI's shine through a tissue screen into the lobby.

Below: Similar set-up, this time at the rear of the motel for shooting the bedroom interior. The HMI is set high this time to simulate sunshine.



11



cameraman planned to use the relatively powerful Hkv lights called 'Hels' in order to provide a sufficient degree of illumination, but since these lights have a lower colour temperature than sunlight (ie. they are deficient at the blue end of the visible spectrum) they would then need to be corrected with a blue filter, and also have their light softened and diffused to mimic the quality of sunlight by allowing them to shine through tissue paper set in a frame outside the window concerned.

Much smaller lamps would then be used to provide enough light inside places like the young Sandra's house, and the lighting technician obtained a number of these and their associated equipment to take up to Bradford. The lights were colour-coded according to their rated power, and named after women's hair colouring, hence the department used two 'Blondes' (11kv portable lamps on telescopic stands) and smaller versions called 'Redheads' and there were also small hand-held lamps called 'Sun-guns' which could run off rechargeable batteries. The latter were especially useful for those situations where domestic power was unavailable, and were, for instance, used in conjunction with the 16-mm for filming moving vehicle scenes. Large sheets of expanded polystyrene were also added to the technicians list of equipment for use as reflectors. Being very light and easily cut or shaped, these sheets could then be attached to walls or ceilings to allow the light from a blonde to be bounced onto a subject in order to avoid an unnatural-looking sharpness, or indeed an unnatural direction to the light, since the uneven surface of the polystyrene also tended to diffuse it throughout the room concerned. Various 'flags', or matt-black painted boards were also collected together for use as masks which could be placed between a



light and a subject in order to block off those areas which needed to be less well lit, (if the boards were very large they would be called 'Cobos'). Some flags could be attached to the camera itself by means of articulated arms so that flares into the lens could be avoided. If these were very small they might be called 'Blades', and unlike the free-standing flags, were strictly the responsibility of the cameraman. Any of the lighting equipment was in fact strictly and solely handled by the lighting crew, partly because of the insurance factor, and partly because of the demarcation rulings (which are then supported by the insurance argument). Even the cameraman, who was functioning as Lighting Cameraman as well as Camera Operator, would at least ask before adjusting a lamp or flag, and mostly one of the lighting crew would have to be tracked down simply to have a light moved by an inch or so. Another reason for being so strict about who touches what is that in the case of adjusting a working light, great care has to be taken not to jar or vibrate the bulb, since single bulbs can cost upwards of a couple of hundred pounds to replace.

In some of the scenes where extensive preparations for the lighting had to be made, the technician had to arrange for extra equipment to be brought up for the day. For the scenes set in a pub or club where Ian's pop group is playing, and for the 'Strip' scene, for instance, the extensive use of coloured fresnel spotlights (ie. focussed-beam lights), rheostatic dimmers and ellipsoidal spotlights (ie. adjustable fresnel spotlights) was indicated, and indeed for the 'Strip' scene an extra member of the lighting crew was brought up from Kilstree to help reduce the time needed to set all the lights up (an operation which nevertheless took nearly three hours).



For most scenes, however, the lighting was far less complicated, and in one sense this made the lighting technician's job that much easier. The use of minimum lighting on location was nevertheless a significant departure from the technician's normal working practice. Several cameras are normally used for a studio production, so that while each camera is lit for its own particular angle and degree of travel, the working area of the studio can effectively be bathed in light. For intercuts (different shots within the same scene) the director can then simply switch from one camera to another by choosing his shots from the monitors in the gallery, without, that is, altering the lights, since all those required would have been set up in advance by the lighting technician. A television camera also needs rather more light than a film camera, so the technician had to make a two-fold adjustment; firstly he had to be more continuously involved in the shooting itself, since each intercut had to be lit separately (because only one camera was used), and secondly, he had to adjust all his calculations to suit a degree of 'minimum lighting' which would simply have failed to register an image on a television camera.

Because each shot represented different areas of decision-making for the lighting department, I would like to describe some of the details of these decisions and discussions in a later section, but for the moment, a note needs to be made of the technician's overall role in the process. The Lighting Gaffer himself described this in terms of giving a service to the cameraman:

Within two days of hearing about the show I was asked to drop everything and come along to Bradford to see the director and the cameraman. These were to be the two people I would work most closely with, and we spent just the one day going round the locations which they



had found - deciding what kinds of lights we would need, and looking at the power supply. On this show the cameraman is officially a lighting cameraman, which is the equivalent of my lighting director in the studio - inside it's a lighting director, outside it's a lighting cameraman - anyway, he would therefore give me the general impression of what he wanted and between the two of us we would work out the kind of equipment we would need, and on the day we would bring along roughly the equipment which we had agreed upon, and then the cameraman would decide exactly where he wanted it. On an average day we would then go out to a location early, have a look at the place and set the lights up in about the right spot. Then throughout the rest of the day we alter them as necessary. For each shot the lights are reset, so this keeps you continually involved for more or less the whole of a day's shooting as you move things about for the cameraman. In fact, we don't really deal with the director himself, we deal with him via the cameraman, and I suppose the satisfaction of the job comes from doing the job well for him, since we don't have a lot to do with the director in the ordinary course of events.

Like most of the crew beyond the core unit, and to paraphrase Philip Elliott (1972:128), the lighting crew were manning a production system rather than producing a product. They worked within a system in which their skills were valued in terms of the efficient handling of their equipment, and where the degree to which they could expand the creative space of the core team was the degree to which the job produced a personal satisfaction.

The Sound recordist made a similar point above in saying that his job was to provide a freedom of choice for a director by reducing the need to reject material for purely technical reasons, but this notion of providing a service to other members of the production unit sometimes leads to the complaint that 'technicians are treated like machines' (see DUFFY's cameraman's interview in BROADCAST magazine for 13-2-78 under that title). Indeed, the way television production is organised tends to promote a mechanistic approach. Firstly, the complicated division



of labour into rigorously defined occupational roles leads to a high level of specialisation, and secondly, the tendency to reduce the duplication of roles within these occupational divisions for any given production means that individual technicians rarely work with other technicians doing the same job. From the point of view of other members of the unit this means that the structural identification of an individual with his or her role is enhanced since an individual is likely to be the only representative of his craft on that particular production. Furthermore, that role is valued in terms of its relationship with other, different roles, so that an individual's professionalism is not so much valued for its own sake, but in proportion to the extent that a technician's contributions are predictable and unobstructive to other processes. It is a matter of professional pride, for example, that the mechanics of one's craft should be taken for granted by other members of the unit, and the occasions where lighting or the positioning of microphones start to constrain the camera or the movement of actors are kept to a minimum.

Since the process of producing a programme is analogous to 'unit production' rather than 'mass production' - at least in the present context of a one-off Drama-documentary - the production personnel have to adapt to the different demands which operate for different programmes. One adaptive strategy available to individual technicians is to work 'by the book', or in other words, to simply carry out the mechanical functions of their craft which would be common to any production. As the Sound recordist said,



There isn't very often the room to be creative. Mine is really an entirely mechanical job. Really it is. A lot of the jobs are quite mechanical. My job is perhaps more interesting than that of someone who assembles motor cars, but I don't think it is any less mechanical. It is less repetitive, but if you have been making movies for ten years you find that most of the scenes you have basically shot before anyway.

There are, then, several reasons why technicians should feel that they are sometimes treated like machines, and this does tend to shift their professional allegiance away from the product as a whole. In running a production system, individuals work to, and value the respect of, those people to whom a failure to act in a mechanical, predictable fashion would be most noticeable. Thus the sound recordist appreciated the criticism of the Editor more than anyone else and the lighting crew valued the approbation of the cameraman rather than the director. The unit as a whole was also ultimately subordinate to the director, not simply in the sense of the hierarchical structure, but in the sense of subjugating or limiting a personal creativity to that of the director himself.

But 'working by the book' certainly does not mean that technicians work to the minimum possible standards. Since they rarely work with other technicians of the same occupation, or have the opportunity to observe the processes and practices of those jobs, the attention tends to be shifted towards the results of their colleague's labours, which are then viewed in an extremely critical light. There is consequently an indirect, but highly developed competitive element operating across different productions which is exemplified by the oft-repeated phrase 'We are our own worst critics'. Indeed, the criticism of technical colleagues is generally valued far more than the criticism which may filter through from the audience, and since an individual's career is



dependent upon his reputation within an internal grapevine, the standard of work is maintained at as high a level as possible.

The majority of the crew backed up this argument, putting the appreciation of a lay audience fairly well down a list of peer-groups and sources of satisfaction. The lighting crew, for example, felt that the audience would not - indeed, should not - take note of their expertise, and the Make-up supervisor felt that her main source of satisfaction came from comments by other make-up people in the industry, and not from any audience feedback she received or, in fact, from comments made by individual directors. The Assistant cameraman commented:

The only question you can ask the audience is 'Did it work?', did the film achieve what it was supposed to achieve, did they watch it, did they get any satisfaction from it and did they learn anything from it. Purely technical questions are largely irrelevant, because in fact you can get away with an awful lot; the average guy won't notice mistakes, but we do. The business tends to be very incestuous since most of our critics are people in the business itself; my own professional satisfaction comes from them. Technicians tend to be very open about each other's work you see, although this doesn't seem to extend to directors, most of whom will say to each other, 'That was a good programme you did last night' even if they didn't think it was. They are a lot more sensitive about their work and it would actually have a large impact if people were as straight with directors about their work as they are to technicians.

Directors, it should be noted, and more especially producer-directors, have to maintain a creative and managerial authority on the floor of the set irrespective of whether their decisions are always 'right'; they are more continuously involved than most technicians and are more closely identified with the product itself, such that their personal investment is greater, and the risk factor more critical, so they are bound to be more sensitive to criticism, warranted or otherwise.



The Assistant cameraman's point about free discussion of other technician's work nevertheless holds, and much of the off-set conversation during the shoot was concerned with the technical details of other productions. The production personnel often pointed out that it is actually quite difficult for them to watch other films or programmes from a neutral position, since they had become hypersensitive to technical errors and the particular techniques which another production might have used. While the motel scene was being shot, for example, most of the crew had to wait in the motel's lobby since there was only room for the core unit in the bedroom itself, and they occupied their time by watching an afternoon television programme. Few of the remaining unit could remember what the programme had been about afterwards, and most of the conversation at the time had been about errors in the programme's construction, the 'terrible' editing, and the occurrence of classic gaffes like boom-shadows and lighting flares. The Sound recordist pointed out that:

If you are watching a film which is actually technically superb you can let your mind float with the story, but if you start to see technical errors, or errors of construction, it detracts from your concentration upon the programme itself. This is true for anyone, but something like the decrease in the quality of sound between a feature being shown on TV, and a (normal) TV programme is probably only noticeable to technicians, and that is because we are used to shooting for technical people - we are always shooting for the rushes.

(Rushes being the first run-through of printed film, where technical problems become evident).

Technicians, like anyone else, can let their minds 'float with a story' even if a film is flawed in some way. One member of the unit, for instance, cited the case of Jack Rosenthal's *BARBETTE VAN DOY* as a television film that had been technically less than perfect, but



which had such a superb script that it 'worked' even for the hardened professional viewer. The point nevertheless remains clear that a production unit will 'produce for themselves' or their technical peers to a large extent, having made the assumption that self-criticism from within the industry will pre-empt the criticism of a lay audience.

This does not necessarily mean that there is either an ignorance of, or a conspiracy against, the needs of an audience to any greater extent than in preparing particular tools and adopting particular methods, the technicians are simply sharing a craft knowledge which is not normally available to a lay audience. Just as a cabinet-maker does not expect his customers to be concerned about the type of chisels or planes that he uses, or the way he has jointed his furniture together, so the cinematographic technician separates his craft from the product in relation to the audience. But there is also a feeling that the technician's craft is more specifically their private and inviolate domain, perhaps because, as Victoria Sackville-West says in her poem 'The Land' -

All craftsmen share a knowledge. They have held  
Reality down fluttering to a bench.

Having been asked what questions he would like to put to an audience, one of the members of the unit replied:

Nothing. I don't see why the audience needs to be concerned about the technique. Perhaps they should have an unconscious appreciation of cinematographic technique, and I think that most people innately do, but if a thing works well they may not question what it is that is working, and I don't see why they should. Ultimately I don't think that the technique you use to make a movie is of any importance at all. I don't like all those films about film-making because



to me that is just like (masturbation). In one sense it is good to let people know how we make films just to demystify what we do - so that it is less glamorous - but really the only thing which is of any importance is the programme, and it is up to the professionals to improve the standards by which movies or television programmes are made.

These standards nevertheless combine to form a craft knowledge which is visible in the preparations carried out for the shoot, and in the roles occupied by different technicians. Through the provision of a predictable, mechanistic service to the creative core unit, for instance, the crew supplies a rubric by which a particular view of the world can be pinned to a particular framework, and through which technique that structure can be made to 'work' by precisely denying its own existence. While both a cabinet-maker and a cinematographic technician are involved in the production of 'Unit products', the latter's products are made for mass consumption, so it is particularly important where those products also seek to represent 'reality' to open up the nature of the craft knowledge employed to a wider examination than that of simply taking it for granted, or of relying upon a craftsman's 'self-criticism', since a craftsman's task is first and foremost to transform the material with which he works, and that material which he holds 'fluttering to a bench' in producing a realist form is theoretically a public property.

#### The actor's preparations

A part of that public reality was the actual reality of Sandra's life, and in order to capture this together with an understanding of the problems of deafness, the producer took the unusual step of providing



for a period of research in several of the actor's contracts. The actors who were to portray the immediate family ('Sandra', her mother and sister) all met the original people for varying periods before the shoot itself started, the main actress in particular spending much of her four-week research allocation in Bradford. She lived with the original girl for a time, going shopping with her and helping her to look for jobs, and arguably came to know the girl rather better than the producer had, which is what he had intended. By having the actress fully integrated with the part, or in this case, with an original subject, the producer felt that he could then afford to step back and observe the nuances of characterisation and hence manipulate the action as a whole. But in the same way that the use of real locations could sometimes begin to be disfunctional by constraining the freedom of the camera, or by generating administrative difficulties in terms of their availability, the actress found that her relationship with the original girl generated problems too. During an early interview, the actress explained:

I'd said at the start that I'd like to meet (Sandra) since it's a good idea if you are thinking of the technical problems of playing a deaf girl. Deaf people usually evolve their own methods - albeit channeled into one of the main ones (ie. lip reading; sign language etc.), but having met (Sandra) it was clear that she uses a mixture of all of them. We have yet to see whether I will actually be able to carry it off, but I don't want to be (Sandra), I can't, but I hope that I have absorbed enough of her; enough of her personality to be able to do it. The main problem is that I am emotionally involved with her, I care about her and the fact that I am bringing up the past all the time. At the moment I am very very confused about the net results of the film. If this film does anything at all to help hearing people understand even for a minute the extent of what being deaf means, then I think it is important - certainly that is something that I have learnt - slightly - the pressures and the strains that she is under.



Both the main actress and the actress playing Sandra's mother tried to form an idea of what being deaf is like by wearing ear-plugs while going about their normal day-to-day routines of shopping or asking for directions in the street. Both found that you can never totally exclude sound in this way however, and the main actress found that much of the detailed information actually came from simply observing the way the original girl reacted to different situations. For example, the real Sandra was obviously uncomfortable when she found herself in a group of more than two or three people simply because she couldn't then follow lip movements as easily as she could in a one-to-one situation, which further excluded her from a group which would already tend to talk about her rather than to her. Similarly, the actress found that she had to 'unlearn' a natural use of certain mannerisms and gestures, since deaf people tend to have an economy of movement where each gesture has a particular meaning (since non-verbal communication becomes that much more important), on top of which the actress had to learn from scratch some of the basics of the manual alphabet.

As part of her research for the part, the main actress had also met the original girl's social worker, and he was able to fill in many of the background details of 'Sandra's' life together with some specific information about deafness itself. The actress also took some of the tape-recordings that had been made of 'Sandra' to a professional speech-therapist who helped her with pronunciation and the delivery of the speech-sounds. One of the main difficulties that deaf people have, for example, is in monitoring the volume of their own speech such that sounds tend to be either too loud or too quiet, and lacking in tonal variation. Another difficulty is that a deaf



person has to be actually looking at someone in order to see that he or she is speaking, so the actress also had to 'unlearn' the natural tendency to react to a line delivered indirectly, or indeed directly to her if she happened to be looking in another direction.

Getting the technical details of deafness right was felt to be crucial if the portrayal of Sandra was to be credible to an audience (Sandra was, after all, profoundly deaf rather than just hard-of-hearing) and the actress also relied upon one or two 'tricks of the trade' in other respects. As I mentioned above, awkward shoes can help an actor to perfect a certain kind of walk, and chewing a piece of gum can help to give the impression of youth. But most of the preparations which the actress made were related to the overall building-up of the role rather than the technical aspects of its presentation. Most of the cast had been chosen on the basis that the less an actor actually had to 'act' or to fall back upon technical expertise then the more naturalistic would become the film as a whole. This stress upon the equation of an actor with the role; the pursuit of naturalism and the underplaying of technique are all part of that school which is known as The Method, an adaption of Konstantin Stanislavsky's ideas which originally concentrated upon the psychology of acting rather than formal technique. The Method has itself become a technique through the studied performances of film actors like Marlon Brando or Rod Steiger, but it still stresses a near-total absorption of character which the actress in this case had the opportunity to perfect as a result of her Method training and through the research period that had been made available.



During the period between Christmas 1977 and the beginning of the shoot in April, the producer had in fact started to revise the original script because it was felt to be 'too sociological'. The sheer compression of events was felt to have pushed the characters themselves into a peripheral position in relation to the episodicity of the story such that Sandra as a person was being swamped by those events. It was therefore becoming even more important that the actors could retrieve the 'psychological' component by 'filling in the gaps in the script' as one of them put it. The research into, and the portrayal of the minutiae of a character's essence by the actors was consequently of central importance to the project, and is particularly true of the main actresses. The division of the narrative into discrete episodes can be ameliorated to some extent by paying careful attention to the original and terminal points of each sequence. That is to say, the central action of a sequence can be locked into the context of the continuing 'world' of the narrative by starting that sequence apparently half-way through a piece of dialogue, or by providing a conceptual link with a preceding scene or sequence. The beginning of part three of the film, for example, starts with a conversation between Sandra's sister and her Aunt which seems to have been going on for some time before 'we' arrived, and the scene where Sandra argues with her husband in the street over his interest in 'Cross-eyed Anne' starts with a shot of Sandra in a cafe, where she is apparently pondering the death of her mother - the funeral having been represented in the previous scene. Such links or references to a 'world' that is continuing beyond those sections of it which are actually represented on screen depend not only upon the structure of the film, but on the actor's ability



to 'fill in the gaps' through a careful attention to the continuity as well as the development of character. A kind of logic can therefore be imputed to a series of incidents by allowing an audience to trace motivations back through cues and clues of character that have been flashed-out elsewhere in the film.

Some clues to the interior personality of the girl could be signified fairly easily; the fact that she was very sensitive about her facial scar could, for instance, be indicated by showing the girl carefully applying make-up to it, and her tenderness could be illustrated by having her draw some covers round her companion, Charlie, as he sleeps drunkenly in his room. Such clues all had to be given through expression or action, however, since 'Sandra' has no dialogue as such, and many of the clues therefore had to be quite subtle - as in the motel scene:

Playing Sandra is a bit of a bastado for me, it's very hard since the script is so unrelenting and we have to constantly make sure that people will believe that all those events did happen. In fact the script has missed out quite a lot of the horrific things which they couldn't possibly show, but we have still got to show the reason for the violent acts. (Sandra's sister) was saying yesterday that she didn't think people would really understand, but that is what we have got to try to do, to make people understand in the way it is filmed and the way it is acted. You shouldn't for instance simply show a man laying into a helpless girl in the motel, you should show that (a) the girl gives as good as she gets, and (b) there is a reason for the violence starting in the first place. In fact he fights her over a £5 note. (Sandra) told me that they hadn't actually slept together, and she had taken a £5 note off the table and said, in effect, 'This will be my money, won't it?' - they fight, and in the end she is as near death as anyone ever is, but afterwards she is still clutching the £5. If it had been me I would have said 'Sorry, take the money' and run. This is a great clue to her, the fact that she hung on to the money, and it's that sort of thing which will show people the other side of it. It mustn't be simply 'Oh poor girl, look what ghastly things have happened to her' - we've got to show that it is a girl with guts, a girl with personality and a girl who has the strength to go on. Every time she is beaten she comes back, and she is back now. She believes



her life will be a good life, even though - Christ  
alrighty - she has been through more than all of us  
put together.

The motivation of the motel scene had in fact to be quite carefully worked out in advance, since there was always a danger that it would appear to be dramatically unacceptable or gratuitously violent even though it was supposed to be an accurate reconstruction. The actresses and the actor playing the 'Heat man' therefore spent some time discussing their respective characters in relation to the scene, and sat up until past 1 o'clock on the night before, arguing out the implications of each action with the director. The actress was literally taking the real girl's part in this sort of planning, since she could often contribute ideas about the character which neither the other actors nor the director knew about, having spent a good deal of time with the real girl. In the particular case of the motel scene all this information was of special concern to the 'Heat man' since the actress's role was almost entirely reactive, that is, she would have to rely upon the actor for cues in the action. He consequently developed the theory that the 'Heat man' was probably a commercial traveller, and might therefore have a relatively large amount of cash on him to pay for overnight accommodation and meals - maybe thirty pounds or so. He would probably also have been to the motel before during a previous trip, and once in the bedroom, would have emptied his trouser pockets of keys and loose change (including the £30) as a natural move before taking them off. 'Sandra' would then make the natural mistake of thinking that one of the £5 notes was for her, although in a previous shot we would have seen her agreeing to three pounds as the going rate, which would then provide some



257

motivation for the 'Heat man's' anger. The degree of that reaction, or an audience's acceptance of it, would then have to be judged by the known information about the girl (ie. her tenacious personality) and the lack of information which an audience would have about the 'Heat man'. The fact that an audience would know very little about him could, in other words, lead them to draw their own conclusions about his mental state or his past history.

Having agreed upon the general plan of the scene, the director then choreographed the action itself with the actor playing the 'Heat man' rather than with the actress, since, as she explained,

I was completely in his hands for the action itself, in discussing the motivation of the scene I'd also decided that I could trust him. There are some actors with whom you have got to do a fight scene who you believe are going to be able to do it without actually breaking your jaw, and he was one of those people. So when it came to the fight, they actually told him what to do rather than telling me, and I just reacted to that. I didn't act; I reacted. He pushed me downstage left, so I went downstage left, not because I wanted to, but because I was being pushed. It got to a point where we stopped at some stage with me on the floor, and the director asked me where my head had been. I said 'Over here' and everyone else said 'No it wasn't - it was over there', and I sincerely didn't know where I'd ended up, which quite shocked me.

A good many of the remaining scenes were deliberately less well rehearsed in order to capture a spontaneity and naturalism in the action, but the method of setting up a location according to technical and aesthetic considerations in which an actor would then be asked to 'play it for real' shifted quite a heavy burden of responsibility onto the actors themselves. All the actors would receive directive notes before doing different scenes in which the director would outline details which he wanted the actors to bring up or take down, but once they were on the set it was very much the actor's job to generate



as great an empathy with the character as possible. In the absence of formal rehearsals it was often quite difficult for the actors to prepare themselves; surrounded as they were with technicians and equipment since being on location often meant that a private 'keying-up' room was not available. The main actress pointed out that...

258

Keying-up is an enormous problem. If I've worked up a feeling and someone from Make-up comes up and there are brushes and make-up all over the place it's fantastically hard to keep the mood you have achieved. I mean, that's her job (ie. Make-up), if she sees my mascara is running she has to repair it, but on this film I would say that a lot of the time I have lost the mood because of things like that. That is why I am pretty blunt with people sometimes - if the director wants to say something I want him to say it as quickly as possible before I lose what I'm thinking about, but powder puffs and hairbrushes just throw me. When we were doing the hospital scene last week, and I was just getting into that scene about sterilisation, someone came up and tickled my toes. I just thought 'Jesus Christ' because I had a good laugh at having my toes tickled, but - Blam! - you've lost half an hour's work just like that. People will naturally try to lighten a situation you see; if one of the crew thinks that you are upset the natural reaction is to cheer you up, whereas all you are doing is acting. On the other hand, when the director tells everyone to shut up as the actors are getting in the mood, I feel guilty - the (soundman) is capable of sorting out his equipment in the midst of everything, and I should be capable of keeping the mood going too.

The main actress also had to maintain an overall empathy with the character over the whole of the five-week shoot, to maintain a continuity of mannerisms and expression and to develop with the character through time (as opposed to developing a character through repeating the same scenes over and over in a five-week theatre run). She therefore had to be prepared to imagine how the original girl would have reacted given any situation that might occur, since by no



means all of the events that did occur are indicated in the script, from another early interview her feelings in this respect are clear:

God help me when we have to do the chabby man scene in the alley; (Sandra) didn't like having it off with him, and neither will I. It will be very distasteful. What I have had to do though, is find out what is distasteful to (Sandra) rather than to me, because we are so different that they would be two different things. Authenticity is a very dodgy thing when you are mixing drama and documentary - the director is doing a documentary, but he is doing it with actors. I heard, for example, that there is a scene which simply says 'Sandra is accosting men in the street', and that I was going to be stood in a street and go up to people and accost them\*. Now what, for instance would have happened if someone had said 'Yea'? - what would I say? That annoys people, and it's going to annoy people in that pub when I do the strip, because I'm not going to strip completely; I'm an actress not a stripper, the point being that if we do the street scene, I will have to do it as me, not as Sandra because we would be directly involved with (real) people.

(\* The scene was shot, but the actress merely hung around on a street corner, without accosting people. The point still holds, however, since someone could still have come up to her even though the crew were close at hand.)

The major preparation which the actress could make was consequently to become as thoroughly conversant with the character as possible; to let the real Sandra take over to the extent that the actress could (like the writer) fly on automatic pilot for any scenes that she might be asked to play, always providing that the actress herself could veto particular ideas or suggestions in the last instance. In her capacity as 'resident expert' on Sandra, for instance, the actress argued quite strongly that the original girl had remained fully clothed throughout the motel episode. She had been told as much by the girl herself, her sister and the motel manager - "When they found her, she was soaking wet, ripped up, covered in blood and fully clothed". The director, on the other hand, felt that for the purposes of the film



the girl should have as few clothes on as possible to signify that the decline into prostitution had by that stage become complete. In the event a compromise was reached, with Sandra being half-undressed as the central action starts, but as the actress explained,

The point is that in reality that girl went in there with her coat on, and kept it on all through. Now filmically, that is not so impressive as where you can actually see flesh being torn so we compromised; we took off half her clothes so that the audience can see that she is a prostitute and was prepared to take them all off, and yet, in the actual event, nothing came off; it's one of the things you come up against in the film versus reality argument.

Another factor in the process of filming which the actress felt she was less well prepared for was having to compensate for the camera or for the technical requirements of lighting and sound. She was primarily a theatre actress, and in theatre most of the action tends to be 'bigger' than that required for television. This does not mean that theatre action is necessarily larger than life, but an actor's focal area; the space in which he projects a character, is less confined than it is for television. This is especially true of a television programme that is striving for naturalism where actors have to be careful not to go 'over the top', both in the sense of not straining the audience's suspension of disbelief and in the physical sense of confining their action within the angle subtended by the camera. Having set up the conditions in which an action could take place, the director's main concern was often then to contain that action; to bring it down to a level which he accepted as being realistic rather than vice-versa. For the actress (and the other actors) this sometimes meant having to act in quite an unreal way, an example of



261

which can be found in her description of filming the scene where she goes to bed with her future husband after the 'Strip' scene:

The scene was difficult, partly because the light was beginning to go, and partly because of our positions on the bed. We had to express as much as possible in the shortest time; the fact that she was keen on him, and the fact that Sandra was once again at a possibly good pitch - you know, this could work out, the guy is nice and she's been to bed with him. It should have been quite straightforward, but was actually quite difficult. I had to be on one particular side of the bed so that the scar would show up for the camera, and then I had to turn in to him to show I was keen; to show affection. Really I should have buried my head in his shoulder, but then I couldn't have been seen by the camera, so I had instead to put my ear on his shoulder, which is less demonstrative as a gesture. Again, we had to get the right amount of movement without having our hands going out of frame which meant that some of the movement is unnatural. That is a thing that I have come up against more and more, the fact that we have to compensate for the camera; I tend to say 'Tough shit on the camera' but you can't do that, you have to re-create a mood, a sense or a feeling in sometimes unlikely poses or positions because that is how it suits the light, the camera or the set. I think that's a major problem of film.

As a partial result of these difficulties, the scene itself is cut right down in the finished film such that we simply see the couple lying together before he leans over to turn off the bedside light, the affection being implied rather than actually demonstrated.

The central concerns of the actress; to form an empathy with the character and to work out that character's motivations, formed the basis for the preparations made by the other actors. Indeed, the main actress's practical experience of the family and Sandra's story was of great help to the other actors who spent a lot of time discussing how their respective characters would react in different situations; how they would behave to each other and what events had preceded any given scene. The script itself was obviously of primary importance in this respect too, but the actors' personal experience and the 'homework' which they put in also contributed to their performances.



The problems surrounding Sandra's disability were, for example, important to the actress playing 'Mother' as well the main actress, since she would have to portray someone coping with the problem in a sympathetic and informed way. Perhaps the most important homework which 'Mother' did was to spend some time with the mother of one of the girls who was used for a younger version of Sandra in the film. That girl really was deaf, so her mother was ideally placed to help the actress with sign-language, and to help her understand the frustration as well as the sense of achievement in bringing up a deaf child (The real Sandra's mother having died some years earlier). In contrast, the actor playing Ian - Sandra's first boyfriend - specifically avoided doing any research into the question of deafness, as his character knew nothing about it and seems to have been relatively unconcerned anyway. This actor's major concern in preparing for the part was to practice playing with a pop group. A genuine local group had been found by the producer through an agent in Bradford (who also helped the producer find and hire some of the locations) and the actor joined them for a number of rehearsals prior to the shoot including a full-scale session in front of a real audience at a working-men's club. The actor was not a musician, so he had to rapidly learn some basic guitar chords and a couple of Beatles songs for the part, receiving some basic tips on stage performance from the agent and the other members of the group (the genuine drummer of which was the boy who played Ian's brother in the film).

Several of the actors who were to play the smaller parts in the film were booked into the hotel a day or two in advance of the time when they were needed on set so that they could accustom themselves to Bradford and their respective characters. The actor playing Sandra's



West Indian friend, for instance, spent some time wandering about the streets of the city wearing the clothes for the part, and behaving like the retiring, gentleman he was to portray - a 'poor black' as he put it, rather than the flamboyant, confident person he was in reality. This actor also sought out the original man he was to play, and spent some time finding out about the man's background and his genuine affection for the original girl. Similarly, the actor who played 'Phil' - the small-time criminal - came up to Bradford for two days before he was needed in order to prepare himself for the part. This preparation involved putting on a leather bomber jacket and old jeans, adopting the persona of an aggressive, rough thug, and taking myself with him on a tour of the toughest pubs and clubs in Bradford. Some time after this (needless to say) he explained...

I'm actually from Yorkshire, so can get the accent right, but it's the feeling you need. A rough Yorkshireman is different from someone from bloody Sussex, so I wanted to do all that in the pubs, with the moody gear and the drink. In fact I know these rough boozers, and was really lapping it up, but the character can take over, especially if you are dressed for it for Christ's sake. It was weird but it helped me get the character.

In taking this part I'm trying to throw away any experience that I have learned as an actor. The minute you try to 'act' in something like this it just screams at you. I am drawing on a desire to do it really, a desire to be involved through an excitement generated by the director and the story. I'm just working to put this job onto the screen, although ideally it should have been played - as they originally wanted it - by someone who is a brickie by day and who wants to be an actor occasionally. There would have been a rawness about that which I can never achieve because there has been too much pseudo-sophistication in my life for the last twenty-odd years.

A good many of the actors for the smaller parts had indeed been chosen



not only for their appearance and for having the correct accent, but because they were literally 'Brickies by day'. They had daytime jobs ranging from 'Concrete technician' to taxi driver which the producer considered to be a positive advantage since the actors could then draw upon genuine experience beyond that of professional acting. In fact the producer was rather disparaging of actors who did not have alternative careers, since their practical experience (and their ability to play different parts) might then be limited. While many of the actors felt that their craft was instinctive, the ease with which they could take on a role was often more than simply metonymic; they did not merely abstract the salient points of a character and then mimic those on the set, they tried to become the character - often by incorporating chunks of their own experience and backgrounds into that role. For example, the actresses who played Sandra's sister and aunt, both had some personal experience of working or living with handicapped people, the latter having learnt sign-language whilst being evacuated with some deaf children during the war. Similarly, the actor who played the hospital consultant had recently been hospitalized himself, and had formed the strong impression that people like consultants were often so busy that they were sometimes not in tune with their patient's personal problems; this being part of the attitude which the director wanted to bring out in the actor's performance.

By positively encouraging actors to trawl their own experience in this way, a sense of the indexical nature of the film could be increased (by bonding the object to the sign which represented it through having the actors 'play themselves') in the hope that:



The audience sees not actors playing roles, but real people acting out their lives, so that the player becomes inseparable from the part he plays.

(Roy Arnes, Film and Reality, 1974:80)

The preparations which the actors made can consequently be divided into those which demanded the purely technical considerations of simply learning the lines or of using a limited number of 'tricks of the trade', and those preparations which led to the 'active' or 'passive' motivation of characterization. Active motivation being the result of specific research that an actor had undertaken with respect to the character he or she was to play, and passive motivation being the incorporation of aspects of the actor's own personality into that part. An active motivation can, for example, be achieved by sorting out the relationship of a character with other characters within the film; within the story as a whole and according to the demands of individual scenes. Any relevant defining variables such as the character's age, health, attitudes, idiosyncrasies and disabilities can then be included within this framework in order to construct a theory by which the character can be described; a theory which is literally a theory of action based upon a given set of paradigms, institutions and roles through which the logical motivation of an action can be traced.

The producer nevertheless wanted to move beyond a purely conscious, rational, internally logical and self-sufficient model of action and verify his 'ethnographic aspiration' by interrogating the reality of the image being presented to the audience. As Dai Vaughan points out in Television and documentary usage 1976, the precepts of cinema verite



(where the truth of the whole is grounded in a demonstration of the truth of the parts) can be fused with the premises of 'Observational cinema' (where the parts participate in a truth accredited by the viewer to the whole) so that what Vaughan calls 'Para-documentary' film can be perceived as documentarily significant through making an appeal to a 'general putative reality of shared experience'. In translation, this means that the producer intended to lock the diegesis of the viewer (the viewer's reading of the film) both to the pro-filmic event (what the camera sees) and the putative event (the actual events of Sandra's life). Since, however, the actual events were historical and thus strictly beyond retrieval, a sense of their reality could theoretically be imputed by absorbing the putative events of the actors' own characters within the pro-filmic, the actors having been originally cast not only for their professional ability to work out their character's 'active motivation', but also as people in whom the producer had perceived qualities shared by the original subjects, and through whom a 'passive motivation' could be generated. Hence 'playing it for real' involved linking a system of representation (the iconic representation of an event through the explicit actions of a professional actor within a dramatic mode) with a system which an audience would take - or who were assumed to take - for granted (the indexical representation of an event through the implicit actions of actors-as-people within a documentary mode.) Having carefully chosen his actors for the motel scene, for example, the producer set out to achieve Realism by combining the (iconic) choreography of the 'neat man's' action with the (indexical) reaction of the girl (both of which being filmed within



a real location). The shots that were eventually used for the finished film thus include, so to speak, elements of drama and documentary, since the actress in particular is in part playing at being hurt, and was also being physically hurt. (Not seriously, I hasten to add, although the shot of her head cracking against the wall-panel is perfectly genuine).

Whether or not the audience can distinguish between the iconic and the indexical is of course another question; a question that has to be put to them. For Vaughan's part, he concludes that:

The reality which the viewer invests in the diegesis by attributing significance to the images will be, whether or not we assure him of it, in all reasonable senses congruent with the reality of the profilmic event; or at least, will probably be congruent in the same measure as the pro-filmic event is congruent with the putative.

#### Law and orders

A number of legal and institutional requirements had to be taken into account in preparing for the shoot which constitute a code of practice which Tracey (1977:105) calls the 'Ground rules' of production. Unlike the overtly political programmes of which Tracey was writing, a programme like DUTTY does not, however, have to register the same degree of commitment to 'Objectivity, impartiality and balance' since whatever stance the programme took, it would be published by the company as a dramatised reconstruction. Indeed, all the company's pre-publicity emphasised that DUTTY was a 'story' or a 'dramatisation' as can be seen from the original press release which began with the following paragraph:



DUNNY is ATV's dramatic reconstruction of the tragic real-life story of 'Sandra X', a deaf girl who turned to prostitution. This 90-minute film retells how Sandra was transformed from a happy, laughing child into a human derelict facing a manslaughter charge.

The major legal constraints that any publisher works within - those of libel and contempt - nevertheless had to be adhered to with respect to DUNNY, and the producer's intentions were duly checked over during a consultation with the company's legal adviser towards the end of February, 1977. The chief concern was to avoid using people's real names in order to avoid the possibility of committing a tort of defamation, since in cases of libel the person whose reputation has been attacked may sue for damages without proof of special damage. Even in cases of slander there are five cases in which proof is unnecessary, three of which could have specifically applied to a false representation of Sandra (ie imputing that a person has committed a crime punishable by imprisonment, imputing that a person is suffering from a contagious disease of 'a disgraceful kind' and especially a venereal disease, and imputing 'unchastity to a woman or girl'). For an action to succeed, either in libel or slander, the statement complained of has to be false, of course, and the producer had gone to considerable lengths to make sure that all his information was true, plus most of his information had been given to him by the family itself, from whom permission to use such information had been obtained at the outset. The use of fictional names was nevertheless to be maintained throughout the film as a safeguard to the company as well as to protect the people themselves.

Since a company is, in the eyes of the law, a legal person, a publisher also has to be careful about defamation in this respect. The name of



the chain which operated the motel is, for example, clearly visible in the film such that a case could conceivably have been brought against ATV had the film implied consent on the motel's behalf to its premises being used for immoral purposes. Permission to use such locations for specified purposes consequently had to be obtained in advance in order to protect the parties concerned. Apart from protecting the company as a publisher, the producer also had to take account of those aspects of the law which deal with the general principles of citizen's rights. In order to avoid actions relating to trespass of land, for example, permission had to be sought from the owners of different locations, and due payment and reparation made. Similarly, torts of negligence had to be avoided by taking due care not to obstruct public highways with vehicles or equipment, or, for example, failing in the legal duty of exercising proper care when using equipment like the 'Mo-kit' car mounts - the cars concerned were always festooned with signs saying 'Beware - wide load' to warn other motorists.

Several matters related to the Copyright Act (1956) also had to be taken into account since the film was to include a number of pieces of recorded music on which copyright would exist (and on which performing rights could be exacted). In the fairground, for example, the Sound-recordist tried to avoid picking up the music coming from the rides not only because of the technical need to obtain clean dialogue tracks, but also because of the need to avoid reproducing an unnecessary number of recorded songs, each one of which could theoretically attract a fee from the Performing Rights Society. Similarly, the records which were used



in the 'Party' scene immediately before Sandra stabs the man were deliberately those of ATV's subsidiary Pye Records Ltd., and even the television programme which was being shown on a television set in one of the scenes in the film was an ITV transmission rather than one from the BBC.

One potential problem which had to be cleared up from quite early stages concerned the title. 'DUMPTY' had also been used for the title of a book by Ernest Tidyman which had been published in America in 1974 by Little, Brown and Company. Oddly enough, this book (from the writer of the films *SHAFT*, *THE FRENCH CONNECTION* and *HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER*) had been about a closely similar subject: the true story of a deaf-mute American black called Donald Lang who had been accused of two murders. The book had not been widely available in this country, however, and the producer had not read it until after the preparations for the film had been set in motion so an accusation of plagiarism cannot be levelled. Furthermore, 'Sandra's' story was itself true, and the real girl's nickname had indeed been 'Dumpty' so it was felt to be perfectly legitimate to go ahead with both the film and that title. It nevertheless remains open to speculation as to what would have happened had Tidyman (as an established screenwriter) beaten the producer to the screen with a film of the same name.

A number of more minor points had to be taken into consideration in relation to general policy within the ITV companies. As Duscombe and Alvarado point out in their study of the making of *HAZELL* (1978:87), a company's advertising sales department has to make sure that the commercials do not clash with the programmes in order to avoid having



'a commercial for British Airways immediately after a programme featuring an air crash'. Similarly, care has to be taken with the actors who might appear in quite different roles within programmes or commercials; Buscombe and Alvarado give an example of a case to be avoided where an actor might be cast as a child-molester within a programme, and then appear again in the first commercial break: 'selling ice-creams to tiny tots'. The companies which were to place their own advertising around DUFFY consequently had to know in advance its content and cast in order to minimise such cross-referencing, even though a certain amount of this may occur over a period, (it was not very long after DUFFY's transmission, for example, that the drunken, down-and-out man whom Sandra stabs turned up again in a bread commercial as a wholesome-looking baker). HAZELL's researchers also mention the fact that it costs a great deal to advertise a product on the commercial channel, so a company like Thames or ATV is unlikely to give away free advertising by showing recognisable brand names within the context of a programme. The obligatory black tape which the BBC applies to proprietary packets of cornflakes or sauce bottles when they appear in the corporation's programmes is not as constitutionally necessary for ITV, but DUFFY's producer still ensured that trade-marks and labels on such items as cider-bottles were out of shot.

Of more central importance to the film as a whole was the institutionalised structure represented by the Independent Broadcasting Authority and based upon the IBA act of 1973. Within this act the authority has four main functions; to select and appoint programme companies, to supervise programme planning, to control advertising and to transmit the programmes.



It is also required by the act to:

... provide public broadcasting services of information, education and entertainment and to ensure that the programmes maintain a high standard and a proper balance and a wide range in their subject-matter. The Authority is required to satisfy itself that, so far as possible, nothing is included in the programmes which offends against good taste or decency or is likely to encourage or incite to crime or to lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling.

With regard to the content of any particular programme, the Authority can then exercise its powers in the following way:

If the staff of the Authority have any doubts or questions about a proposed programme, these are normally put to the company orally at an appropriate level. More often than not they are resolved simply by the supply of further information. Where this is not so, there will usually be discussion with the company, which may lead to agreement to take no further action, or agreement that the company will itself take certain action; or else to a request for a full script or for a preview of the programme, or both. In the last resort the Authority may issue an instruction to withdraw the programme or an instruction to present it only after changes have been made, but final directions of this kind are seldom necessary.

(see the ITV Guide to independent television, published annually by the Independent Broadcasting Authority).

DREHY was a potential subject of IBA concern since it was to include all three of the 'unholy trinity' of sex, violence and bad language, with some reference to drug abuse to boot. Taking on the programme in the first place was therefore a calculated risk for ATV with respect to the IBA, since it had been clear from the outset that the story was one of prostitution, violence and social deprivation in which it would have been improbable for there not to have been a certain amount of representation by the 'unholy trinity'.



The IBA's concern is not, however, to exclude such content altogether, but to police the degree of its representation within a given context. What is considered to be 'offensive' is not formally set down as a matter of codified law (except, of course, where existing legal constraint operates in terms of libel, contempt or the Official Secrets Act) and the Authority is merely empowered to maintain 'Good taste and decency' by 'Satisfying itself' in this respect and in relation to shifting contexts of orientation which it perceives to be operating in society.

There is consequently a certain amount of flexibility built into the system by virtue of the IBA's brief to satisfy itself within the spirit of the law rather than to satisfy a rigid and codified prescription. Individual producers can also be seen to possess a relative autonomy from institutionalized control by means of countervailing sources of power such as the unions and professional associations, a producer's personal track-record and sometimes his sheer dominance of creativity (since a producer can, and sometimes does succeed in winning back points from IBA Liaison Officers or his executives in arguments over programme content - if there was no room to manoeuvre most programmes would never get off the ground). Arguments about institutional control should not ignore the possibility of a relative autonomy being exercised in the making of individual programmes or, indeed, devalue the potential power of veto which resides in bodies like the IBA or the BBC board of governors. Individual producers are neither completely autonomous nor helpless victims of control: Tracey (1977:15), for example, suggests that this dichotomy is too bold since:



... the operation of influences from above in the form of policy statements, the creation of standards and norms, instructions as to what to cover and not to cover and so on, and the operation of the individual motivations of programme-makers should be seen as interlocked processes, differentially important historically and institutionally, whose interaction forms a central feature of production.

The Annan Report (HMSO Cmd. 6753, 1977:3.23), on the other hand, seems to conflate the two sides of the dichotomy in its statement that:

... the contention that the over-weening power of the broadcasters who 'set the agenda' and 'define reality' for the public and 'structure the view between governors and governed' must be curbed, while at the same time the individual producer is to be granted far greater freedom, seems to us a mysterious paradox.

Against which Garnham (1973:50) argues that this paradox only operates if:

... one fails to differentiate within the category 'broadcaster' between broadcasting management and the interests and function of the broadcasting institution on the one hand, and the individual broadcaster on the other, with the two in a complex dialectical, structured relationship.

One axis along which this differentiation can be drawn, and which is particularly relevant to the making of DUTY, is in the interpretation of 'Good taste and decency' and the definition of what is, or is not gratuitous in a realist form.

The immediate responsibility for an individual producer is his film, whereas the responsibility of an independent production company (in the person of an executive producer, head of department or programme controller) is to the film in relation to the company and its franchise as it is controlled by the IBA, which in turn seeks to act as trustee to the public.

On the first level of the film itself, and even when dealing with a reconstruction of fact, the producer's responsibility is to make the



film 'work'. This means that whatever the factual basis might be for including sex, violence and bad language, such content has to be balanced within the precepts of 'film reality' as opposed to 'real reality' since the gratuitous use of four-letter words or sexual or violent acts may simply defamiliarise their meaning within the given context. In other words, the straight importation of fact into a film like *DUMEDY* may actually have served to devalue its realism, since, for example, the use of certain very strong expletives (which the original people would have naturally used in common speech) might have been decoded by an audience as humorous or shocking instead of conversational and normal. So just as the actual quantity of violence in Sandra's life had to be reduced to some qualitative examples in order to save the audience from becoming punch-drunk through the sheer compression of events, so the use of bad language had to be controlled and balanced within the context of the film in order for it to work as a representation of reality for an audience. In filmic terms, then, what was regarded as gratuitous was limited by the producer's understanding of what would constitute a realistic portrayal of factual events.

Since a producer, or in this case a producer/director, is continuously involved in the making of his film, is working with continuous reference to his professional colleagues, is often drawing directly upon the grass-roots activity of 'society as source' and his own experience as a member of an audience, it could be argued that, as a creative artist, he is well-placed to explore the boundaries of realism. Certainly the more radical programme-makers would wish to move away from the provision of static placebos for a passive audience, and move



instead towards generating a more dynamic kind of nourishment which an audience can actively use.

On the second level, of the film in relation to a broadcasting institution, the gratuitousness or otherwise of elements within the film, or indeed the acceptability of the entire project, is judged according to policy. That is to say, according to the Authority's current view of the meaning of 'Good taste and decency'. The IBA is legally required to make such judgements, and may well be enlightened and flexible in their approach, but whatever their approach, it is prior to the opportunity given to an audience to make their own judgement. Thus in contrast to the notion that social reality is necessarily dynamic and active since it is what human beings make common, through 'work or language' as Williams says (1961:314-5), the reconstruction of that reality through a public form like television is limited within the more static confines of a code of practice which dictates the limits of 'Taste and decency'. The 'contract of realism' with an audience which an individual producer may feel that he is working within as a drama-documentarist, is thus pre-empted by a 'contract of taste' with the institution for whom he is working as an employee, such that the latter can be seen, not to 'define reality', but to define realism.

In practice, a producer does not 'carry responsibility for his own decisions' as the IBA says that he should in their Code on violence, since he works either directly or indirectly within the auspices of a structurally-based notion of 'Public service' broadcasting. The fact that DUCKY was made at all is evidence of a certain amount of plasticity in the system, and the IBA is evidently amenable to taking risks



(it was the BBC which banned Potter's *BREASTSTONE AND TREACLE*, *SCUM* and the repeat of *LAW AND ORDER*), but the existence of such authority can equally well drive a wedge between a creative producer and his audience at the same time as it seeks to provide a buffer of 'taste or decency', in which situation an audience would have no case for claiming that it had been misrepresented by that authority since they only see the results of its action rather than the process.

If, then, the realist portrayal of events depends upon a conventionally coded premise of belief in a correspondence between, say, a documentary reconstruction and that which it seeks to reconstruct, this potentially dynamic relationship between a creative producer and his audience can be seen to be constrained within his primary relationship with the institutionalised prerequisites of 'Taste' as laid down by a body like the IBA, which mediates between a producer and the public as a trustee (although not a trustee appointed by those it represents). The point being that realism, and social reality, is subject to change, and as much it needs to be broadly socio-structurally dependent, and institutiono-structurally independent, for otherwise there is a danger of homeostasis creeping into a system, which - as a system of communication - needs to be dynamic, self-reflexive and open to criticism. Theoretically, the IBA is open to all of these aspects of change since it is not operating within a rigidly codified system; even in its introduction to the ITV Code on violence it admits:

Ideally, a Code should give a clear guide to behaviour based on reliable knowledge of the consequences of different decisions. Unfortunately, no code of this kind can be provided. There are few relevant facts and few reliable findings derived from generally accepted research studies.



278

So decisions that it makes are essentially, and in a non-accusatory sense, arbitrary. In fact, the IBA rarely has cause to intervene directly in the making or transmission of individual programmes precisely because, in the absence of rigid and visible rules, individual producers work in anticipation of the possibility of IBA intervention rather than under its immediate control. The relationship is consequently, as Carnham points out above, a complex, dialectical and structured one, which, in practice, can perpetuate formulae which are known to be acceptable by virtue of precedent. Again, producers or their company executives may seek to protect the frequently heavy financial investment in individual programmes (or their franchise as a whole) by insuring against intervention by over-anticipating the level at which it might occur. Correlatively, where the mechanisms of control are more overt, the 'internal' risk is reduced, such that producers can work right up to a known 'cut-off' point with less fear of encroaching upon the minefield of potential intervention.

One of these 'cut-off points' is the Family viewing policy, which decrees that nothing which is deemed to be unsuitable for children should be shown before 9 p.m. While the producer of *DUEBY* was therefore constrained in his use of violence or bad language for part one of the film (given the programme's position in the schedule), by the same token, he had considerably more licence to use it in parts two and three. Similarly, the use of a warning caption at the front of the programme served the dual function of acting as a disclaimer to protect the company as well as being a psychological 'hook' for an audience; it read as follows:

IN THE DRAMATISED DOCUMENTARY WHICH FOLLOWS SOME VIEWERS  
MAY FIND CERTAIN SCENES DISTURBING.



This caption was then further reinforced by keeping the square warning symbol on screen throughout the programme. This symbol is intended to indicate the programme to which it is attached may contain disturbing material as a warning to viewers, but again, it can also protect the broadcasters' freedom to include that material (even though, incidentally, very few of the people with whom I discussed the programme for the audience study actually knew what the symbol meant).

Although the programme was a dramatised documentary, its essential truth was regarded as a valid defence against possible opposition by the Authority to some of the violence contained (or, more accurately, represented) within the film. The Code on violence states that:

Para. (f.) Dramatic truth may occasionally demand the portrayal of a sadistic character, but there can be no defence of violence shown solely for its own sake, or of the gratuitous exploitation of sadistic or other perverted practices.

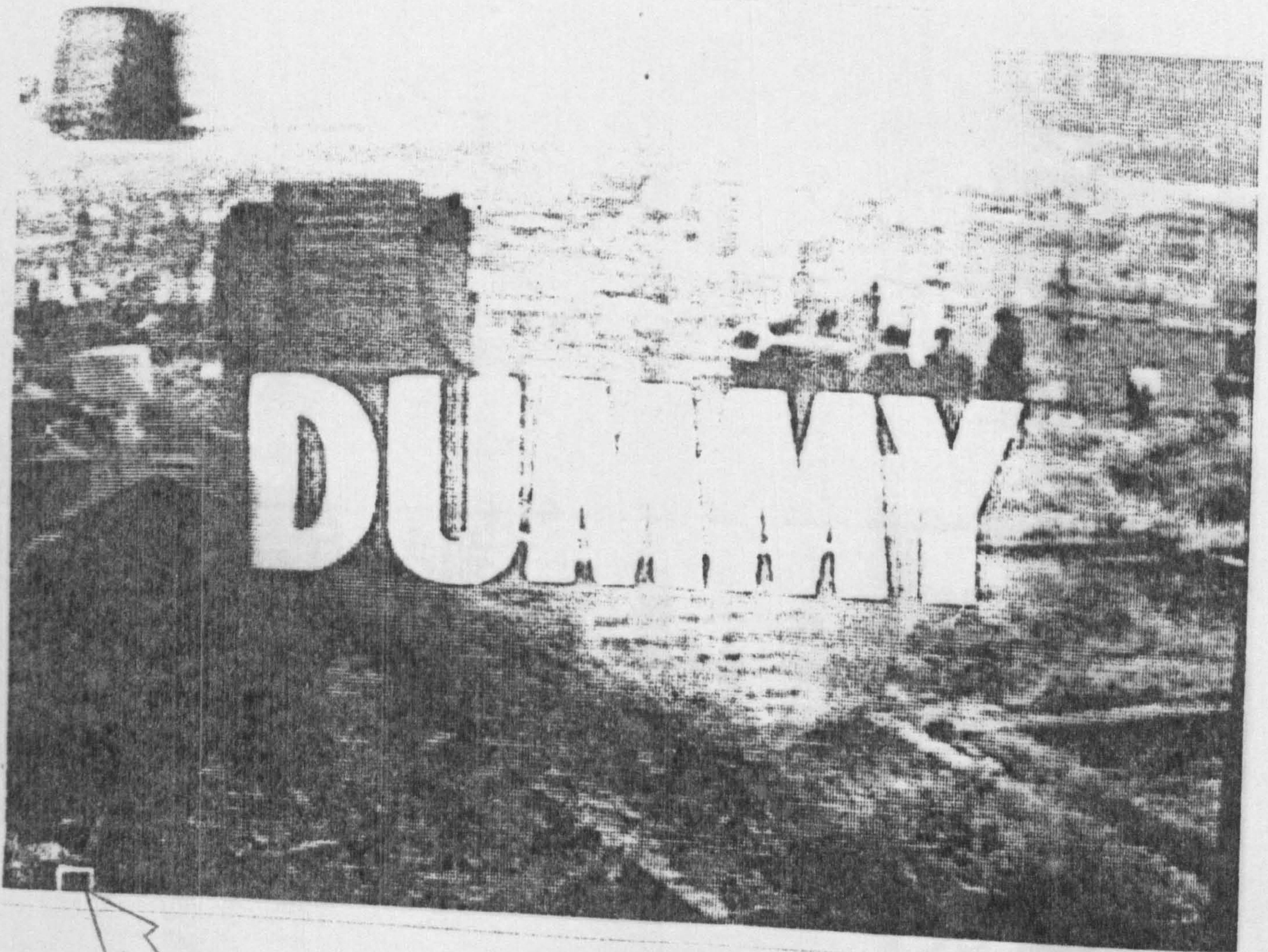
Para. (h.) Violence has always been and still is widespread throughout the world, so violent scenes in news and current affairs programmes are inevitable. But the editor or producer must be sure that the degree of violence shown is essential to the integrity and completeness of his programme.

So by making due reference to these two paragraphs, the programme-makers could mitigate a charge of gratuitousness by stating that their reference was not only dramatic truth, but actual truth. Hence two captions to this effect were used in the programme, one at the front after the 'disclaimer' which read:

THIS IS A TRUE STORY. THE EVENTS TOOK PLACE  
BETWEEN 1950 AND 1975.

and another at the end of the programme which informed the audience that:





DUMMY - Title caption showing the square symbol at extreme bottom right indicating that the programme may contain material of a disturbing nature.



AFTER A TERM OF IMPRISONMENT SANDRA RETURNED HOME.  
 SHE IS AT PRESENT UNEMPLOYED.

This last caption also served to remind the audience that what they had been watching was indeed a true story, and that, furthermore, little had been done to alleviate the girl's plight despite all that had happened to her. All these elements of the programme's presentation can also, however, be seen as devices by which the production company was acknowledging institutional control by preempting its actual use.

Another way in which this control operates in practice, despite its open, flexible approach in theory, can be traced through the complex, dialectical interaction of the programme-makers themselves. Within the production process the producer's 'responsibility for his own decisions' is sometimes mediated through a kind of folklore understanding of what will, or will not 'get past the IBA' since the latter's views are not strictly codified. This was particularly evident in the editing process, for instance, and as the section on that part of the production illustrates, a good deal of bargaining was carried out between the producer and the editor over what would be acceptable to the deliquescent, almost esoteric authority of the IBA as opposed to the ostensibly manifest dominion of 'the facts' and the audience's understanding of these. When cutting together the motel scene, for example, the editor felt that the entire scene would have to be cut out if the programme was going to be sold to an American market, but that for British audiences the IBA would probably insist on the removal of the latter part of the action (where Sandra is being hit with a radiator cover). Hitting the girl once was considered to be alright, but hitting her repeatedly was considered, by the editor, to be



'over the top' as far as the IBA was likely to be concerned. That action might in itself have offended against section 'g' of the Code on violence:

Ingenious and unfamiliar methods of inflicting pain or injury - particularly if capable of easy imitation - should not be shown without the most careful consideration.

- but its contextual position within the scene and the film as a whole also had to be taken into consideration. In fact, the overall context was a vital axiom in making judgements of this kind, and the acceptability of different sections and sequences was often measured against a 'balance of acceptability' as well as being measured against the prerequisites of dramatic balance and a basis in fact. Hence bargains were struck between the editor and the producer over the relative value of certain expletives against certain violent actions such that one aspect would sometimes be retained at the expense of another in order to maintain an overall legitimacy which could pass muster with the Authority.

During the shoot itself, the producer had already allowed for such manoeuvring by making 'insurance shots' wherever the actors spontaneously or otherwise used very bad language. During the editing, he therefore often had alternative versions of the same shot - some with the potentially offensive words, and some without - which enabled him to adjust the 'balance of acceptability' in consultation with the editor, and latterly, the head of department. (Serious swearing could also be disguised by overdubbing the dialogue with roomtone or other sections of alternative tracks such as clinking glasses or background conversation).



Any possible intervention by the Authority could thus be held at arm's length by the producer through his anticipation of that control by means of his own experience and the editor's direct knowledge of previous IBA decisions (the editor being a staff employee). Such anticipation is nevertheless a recognition and reinforcement of the Authority's power, which would probably be less potent if it was more manifest; even the far more direct exercise of censorial power which came in the form of an order to make various cuts in the film, came from the head of department through his anticipation of that power, rather than from the Authority itself.

The three main cuts which were ordered illustrate the difference between the demands of the film and the demands of the institution. There is no reason to suspect that the negotiations between the producer and the head of department (who was by that time Controller of programmes) were anything other than amicable, but the producer's control over the content of his film was at that point being decisively removed. As he explained,

The film is trying to follow a line of narrative which is seeking to make the intention and the story clear without making things too glaringly obvious. The straightness of this line is also to do with an emotional balance in the film and also with the style and pace of it. Up 'til now the parameters within which I have been working are enclosed within the structure of the film, whereas (the cuts) are to do with external criteria of censorship in one way or another which have nothing to do with the film.

The producer had outlined his arguments for maintaining a series of balanced scenes within the film in a number of memos to the Controller during August 1977, but after a viewing on the 18th of that month,



the latter decided to order the three cuts. These were:

1. To cut completely a scene showing Sandra attempting to telephone her sister in the lobby of the motel, directly after the attack. The scene clearly showed the extent of Sandra's injuries.
2. To cut the close-up shot of the stabbed man as he is dying in the street, and his accompanying dialogue 'Christ, I'm pissed' (But to retain the rest of the sequence).
3. To cut the long-shot of this man as he lies dead on a mortuary slab; a shot which clearly showed the man's genitals.

The telephone scene had in fact been a bone of contention at the time of its filming, partly for technical reasons, and partly because it was generally unpopular with the crew - several of whom took the unusual step of voicing their disapproval of its inclusion then and there. With respect to its cutting from the film as a whole, however, the Controller felt that it was indeed gratuitous, since it followed the extreme violence of the attack itself (which was already pushing hard against the limits of 'taste and decency', even given the film's overall context) and could be safely cut without ruining the flow of the narrative. As he explained:

He (the producer) wanted both the radiator sequence\* and the 'phone scene. I therefore felt the latter to be gratuitous, and also that the make-up was over the top - both technically and dramatically.

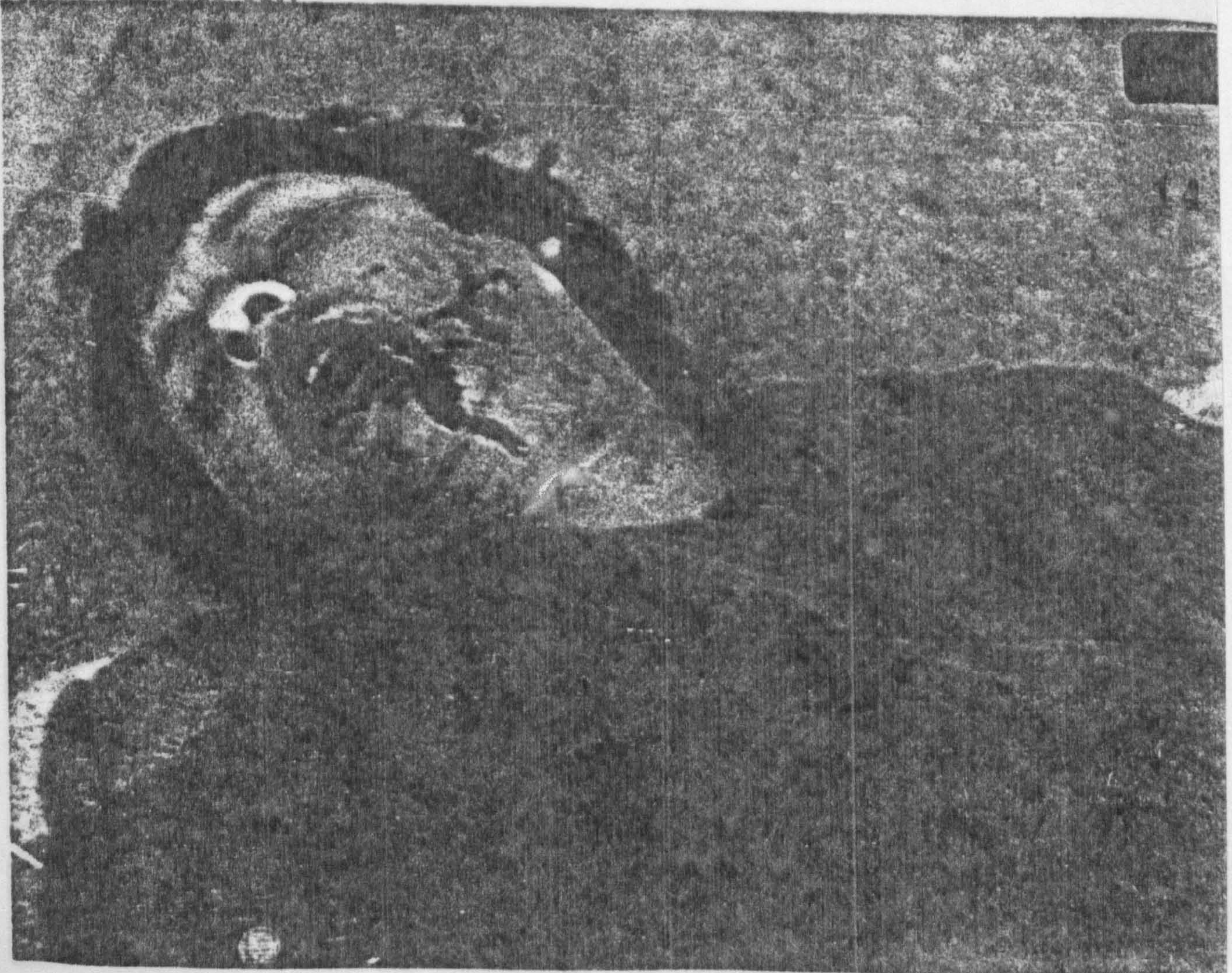
\*The radiator sequence was the second part of the action in the motel bedroom, where Sandra is hit repeatedly with a radiator-cover.

Similarly, the Controller felt that the close-up of the stabbed man in the street was gratuitous in the context; again because of the extent of the make-up blood. The accompanying dialogue was, however, retained for the finished film in a wider shot.





Two of the cut scenes: Above is a close-up of Sandra's appearance after the attack in the motel bedroom as she would have appeared in the Lobby scene, the whole of which was cut. Below is a close-up of the stabbed man as he lies in the street prior to being removed by an ambulance. A similar closeup in the film itself was also cut.





The third cut, of the man on the mortuary slab, caused more dismay to the producer than the other two cuts, because the original scene had been included in order to indicate that the man was indeed dead (rather than simply injured), plus it was felt to provide a point of balance in the fabric of the film. As a quiet, brightly-lit sequence it was in direct contrast to the busy, night-time stabbing sequence which had immediately preceded it, and this juxtaposition was felt to have enhanced both. Furthermore, the following scene was to be of Sandra being arrested at her friend's flat some time after the stabbing, so the mortuary sequence was also intended to act as a passage-of-time indicator. Lastly, the longshot of the man on the slab was a direct reconstruction of the police photographs of the original man, and the whole sequence had been shot inside a real hospital mortuary such that the real starkness of the interior could have lent another small clue to the veracity of the film as a whole. From the Controller's point of view, there were at least two other considerations:

The reason for making the cut of the longshot of the man on the mortuary slab was not because of the genitals being shown, although certain people might have objected to that; it was because the wife of the man is still around in reality, and I felt that it would be unnecessary to show a reconstruction of her husband lying dead on a slab in this way. It was argued that this shot provided a punctuative pause in the film such that the audience would realise that this is serious - that the man is dead - so I argued that an artificially extended version of the mid-shot of just the man's head would provide this punctuation without the problems of the longshot, which is what was done, and without it being as gratuitous. You see I also have to consider the programme in context - in the context of an evening's viewing, in a mid-week slot; mid-evening.

Apart from retaining the dying man's dialogue, all three of the cuts were duly made in the finished film with the producer's somewhat grudging acceptance; the vitally important motel bedroom scene had,



after all, been retained intact even though it was a moot point whether it would be accepted by the IBA, and having made the cuts, the Controller was then prepared to back the film to the hilt and to support his own decision to provide a particular slot in the schedule for it. In this respect he was, for instance, taking account of the Family viewing policy as well as section 'a' of the Code on violence, which points out that:

People seldom view just one programme. An acceptable minimum of violence in each individual programme may add up to an intolerable level over a period.

Whether the fact that DUFFY was to be followed by a Conservative party political broadcast and NEWS AT TEN would have reduced its contextual acceptability is another moot point. But had the programme been shown on the same night as, say, an episode of THE STANLEY, care would need to have been taken in making that juxtaposition in the first place, and had it proved to be unavoidable, the violent content of either may have had to have been reduced.

As far as the programme itself was concerned, however, the Controller had effectively supervised the producer's self-regulation in forestalling direct intervention by the IBA by combining his personal interest in the project (as the person who had originally commissioned the programme) with his professional interest in its structure (as an experienced film-maker) and his organisational interest in the programme as a product (as a primary representative of the company). The net result of which was the eventual transmission of the programme by the IBA in the form agreed between the Controller and the producer. The Authority, in other words, accepted that form intact, and without having exercised



any direct, visible control. This is not, however, to deny the existence of that control. While direct intervention is rare, one of the reasons for this is that the Authority's effective control operates by proxy - as the ITV Guide says,

The Authority has always required that the initial responsibility for observing the provisions of the Act and for observing the Authority's policies should be taken by the companies themselves as part of their contractual obligations.

This, it seems, is contrary to the Authority's conclusion to the Code on violence if the individual producer is distinguished from the company, for it says:

This Code cannot provide universal rules. The programme maker must carry responsibility for his own decisions. In so sensitive an area risks require special justification. If in doubt, cut.

Even though this last statement is careful not to say 'the responsibility for his own decision', the previous quotation clearly implies that the programme-maker's responsibility is to justify his decisions not to himself or his understanding of the current needs of an audience, but to the Authority and its current understanding of 'custom and morality' through his company's contractual obligation to do so. The reality of control, and the potential dualism of responsibility (which Lord Windlesham has referred to as 'The most common, and profound, source of friction in television' (1969:139)) cannot be resolved by positing a natural overlapping of that responsibility, since a producer's autonomy is relative in the last instance to what Pilkington called 'The proper exercise of responsibility by public authorities duly constituted as trustees for the public interest'. Rightly so, one may argue, except



for the fact that a creative producer (and those to whom he wishes to communicate) has no definitive way of knowing what it is he is autonomous from until he starts to find that work is not being offered, or that work which has been completed is being altered by executives who may be working, in turn, within economic and institutional constraints which have little to do with the programme itself.

There is a reason, then, why many independently-minded producers and directors use television as a training ground prior to a move into feature films (money excepted) and for attempts to restructure the industry through the now defunct OBI. It remains to be seen what will happen with the advent of ITV2, but whatever happens, structural constraint in some form will clearly exist because of the nature of the industry - as Garnham points out: (1973:50)

... to be against bureaucracy is merely silly. Bureaucracy is a necessary and creative part of our social process. TV broadcasting is carried out by organisations of a necessary minimum financial, administrative and technical complexity. These institutions employ individual broadcasters to make individual programmes. But these programmes are part of series and schedules, which are in turn part of budgeted financial plans. Far from being a brake on the creative process, the bureaucracy which organises and controls the cash flow, the capital investment, the technical development and purchasing, the staff hiring and training, not to mention the long term programming policies, are the indispensable foundation for any creative practice within television.

All that I (and Garnham) argue for is that individual programme-makers really should 'carry the responsibility for their own decisions', not by removing constraint, but by making it explicit. As Garnham said in his early version of Structures of Television (1973), a new structure should:



... open out and make explicit the State's area of control and methods of control, so that they can be scrutinised by parliament and public alike. It should allow all those who work in the industry a proper say in how it is run but finally, in order to guard against the arrogance of both State and broadcaster it must build in public representation and power at all levels, not just on top, as at present, through the parliamentary process.

In other words, individual programme-makers and the public have a right to know the nature of constraints which are operating, whereas at present they do not always know what they have a right to know about. While Garnham concedes that broadcasting can never be completely free, in the conclusion to his 1973 postscript to the original monograph he adds:

The choice lies between constraints openly planned and consciously accepted and constraints imposed and unconsciously accepted.

Constraints imposed at the level of individual programme-making are certainly not always 'unconsciously accepted' of course. Dennis Potter's reaction to the BBC's banning of his play *BRIMSTONE AND TREACLE* can hardly be described as such, even though the playwright felt that there were no parameters in which a meaningful dialogue could take place. At the 1977 Edinburgh festival he argued that there did not seem to be a concept of who the offended viewer might be, and concluded that the viewer must be thought of as a 'chapel-going hill farmer' by the powers that be. On LWT's *LEFT BANK SHOW* he later told Melvyn Bragg:

The enormous condescension of the people who run television is unbelievable; the more you see them and the more you move among them the more you know that they think their fellow citizens are dumbheads.



Because you, and lots of writers, don't think like that, you are going to get into trouble. If the price of writing what you think to be the truth about your experience... is that they are going to say 'you are riding the conventions' or 'you can't say that', then what I say is bugger them. I really do, hell upon them, because they are getting in the way of what the medium could be and sometimes is; an emancipator, an entertainer and an instructor - something which illuminates, not by showing something unobtainable, or something alien and distant, but actually showing the structure, the shape, the response of, if not entirely their own lives, then some part of their lives with which they can engage and to which they can address themselves, and when I say 'They' I mean me and you. We should never lose the sense that the people watching are us. If we do we might just as well write Crossroads, we might just as well shut on them because that is what we would be doing.

By contrast, the cuts imposed upon DWMY were consciously accepted by the producer (even though they came as something of a surprise). As the Controller said,

If they (the producer and the writer) had been absolutely adamant about keeping these cut bits I would have thought more about it, but in the event, the three cuts were more or less agreed upon rather than forced through.

But he added:

(the producer) has editorial control in the making of his programme, but I, of course, have editorial control in the last resort.

### Shooting the film

#### Introduction

A drama-documentary producer's desire for autonomy or editorial control in the making of his programme is in part the desire of the artist to be free of institutional constraint, and in part it is the desire of the 'objective observer' to be allowed to report the facts as he sees them. Unlike the traditional notion of the individual artist,



however, a programme-maker works within the conditions of a 'consensus medium' in the sense that he works with a production team. This team is then expected to work together in a generally predictable and routinized fashion under the 'project leader' in order to produce a coherent, unitary product.

The desire for autonomy is also, then, part of the programme-maker's need to exercise authority on the floor of the set, which is particularly - and literally - true when one is talking of the programme-maker as Director. As Director, DUFFY's producer took the almost Hobbesian view that all the personnel and actors working on the film should therefore function instrumentally in relation to him and the film:

Any opposition on varying levels from, say, the cameraman, the editor or even yourself is logically counterproductive from the point of view of the film. It is difficult enough to get the film onto the stock without the further problem of illegitimate opposition.

Fair warning to the researcher, but the point the Director is making is that any reduction in his autonomy with regard to the production unit is likely to be dysfunctional to the film. Indeed, any differences of opinion or misgivings about the film which the members of the unit had were almost always expressed in private and mitigated by statements like "... well, after all, it is his film".

This is not to say that the Director was deaf to constructive suggestions, since these could often be positively useful as well as providing a mechanism through which potential conflict could be managed. Just as many of the technicians felt that their job was to provide a range of choice in terms of technical facility, so



suggestions could be made, and advice given, on which the Director could then act as he saw fit. The crew were nonetheless relatively autonomous from the Director in a similar way to which he was relatively autonomous from the production company (in the first instance) and the prescriptions of the State via the IBA (in the last instance).

One way in which the crew could come to terms with this relationship was to emphasise their professional autonomy as craftsmen. An individual producer may well be more likely to have access to the reality which he is trying to reconstruct than those who control his access to the means of that production, but, again, the desire for autonomy can also lead to a retreat into professionalism and an emphasis upon personal integrity and experience. Thus a programme-maker bears relations to both 'society as source' and the professional values of the medium itself, which is not to forget the third factor of a programme-maker's relationship to 'society as audience'. As Kirdock (1977:6) has pointed out in the context of drama production, and as many others have pointed out more generally:

The importance of the creative personnel's own views and experiences in shaping dramatic output is further reinforced by their general uncertainty about the audience. Studies to date clearly show that beyond the raw ratings figures, most writers and producers pay comparatively little attention to audience research, with the result that they often have only a very hazy and incomplete idea of who watches their programmes and how they respond. Faced with this vacuum, they tend to fall back on the opinions of their professional colleagues and on their own tastes and judgements of what is good and worthwhile.

As a brief example of this one does not have to look far beyond the experiences of people working on DUMY itself. The writer, for instance,



felt that it was actually impossible to take the audience into account to any practical degree, and while the BBC had prepared a thirty-page Audience Research Report on the documentary series *THE FAMILY* in 1975 (a series on which *DEITY*'s producer was co-director), the producer had never seen it. Even if he had seen this report, the producer may not have found its contents particularly useful for reducing his 'uncertainty about the audience', not least of all because it was after the fact. As McQuail has noted (1969:82):

... there are some grounds for believing that audience research, despite its ingenuity and high technical competence, may not remove the need for adjustments of a structural kind. The volume of broadcasting output makes elaborate pre-planning studies the exception rather than the rule, and the regular type of information fed back to the communicators has certain limitations. There are frequently problems of interpretation and evaluation which make information about audience size and reaction ambiguous even to an expert. The results inevitably appear some time after the event, and it may be difficult to regard the research findings as an active link in the communication chain. The very regularity and predictability of findings about the audience may lessen their significance for the communicator. Audience research, as it is typically carried out by the survey method may also fail to indicate what for the communicator are the salient features of an audience. He will tend to be most interested in the response of significant individuals - those he knows he wants to contact, or whose opinions he respects. Where programmes draw small audiences there is an inevitable reluctance to accept the views of a handful of individuals in a sample as representing those of many thousands. Not surprisingly, broadcasters appear at times to attach more importance to the view of colleagues, or those of friends, neighbours, or chance acquaintances than to audience research statistics.

What many broadcasters see as the absence of usable data on their audiences is not, however, regarded as necessarily problematic.

Generalisable discoveries about viewer's reactions to past programmes can be incorporated in the planning of future productions in the way that a demonstrable difference between people's verbal and visual



competency has been enshrined in the adage 'Don't tell me - show me'. But broadcasters tend to work within the more general maxim that 'We are our own worst critics' which can be seen as an ideological translation of an implicit realisation that 'Mass communication' is - as Elliott (1972) suggests - a contradiction in terms. Since any producer knows that he or she will get a range of reactions to any one programme, a 'true' judgement is sought from those people who are considered to be best qualified to make that judgement such that a theory is formed which states that if a programme 'works' for one's professional colleagues, then it must also 'work' for any audience, and if it doesn't, then it's a fault of an audience rather than the programme.

The notion of a programme 'working' nevertheless encapsulates at least two stages of analysis for a professional communicator. Firstly he is looking at the technical aspects of the programme, and more particularly the technical faults that it might contain, and secondly he is looking at it as any other viewer does, as a 'sign vehicle, or rather sign-vehicles of a specific kind organised, like any other form of communication or language, through the operation of codes, within the syntagmatic chains of a discourse.' (Hall, 1973:2). In other words, whether or not a producer retreats into professionalism, a part of that ethos demands that, as Hall continues, 'The apparatus and structures of production issue, at a certain moment, in the form of a symbolic vehicle constituted within the rules of 'language''.

As a professional producer competing in a market with other professionals, the broadcaster can look to the negative feedback of post factum audience



research for information about audience size, and maybe its composition and reaction to a programme as a whole. But as a professional communicator, what he really wants to know is whether his programme has 'worked' as a discourse. He wants to know whether the rules of the language he is using are the same rules that his audience will use, whether that decoding is symmetrical with his encoding and, in short, whether people have understood what he was trying to say, which is precisely the kind of information which he rarely receives.

Within the circumscriptions and structured conditions of production, an individual producer therefore falls back upon his access to 'society as source'. In the case of a drama-documentary producer this access can take the form of a chain of contact back to a source of putative fact in addition to the producer's own experience of living in society and of engaging with a range of different forms of communication both privately and professionally. But in working within a structure which excludes any positive feedback during the making of a programme a producer has to rely upon his own tastes and judgements, not only, as Hardock pointed out, to determine what is 'good and worthwhile', but in order to determine what the 'rules of language' are.

Making a film can thus be seen as a process in which a producer, and more particularly a director, operationalises a set of hypotheses which he has formed with respect to the way he expects an audience to understand that film. These hypotheses can then be supported as a theory by making reference to professional colleagues and a producer's own common sense; literally his sense of what is common. Such a theory ultimately falls down in the face of evidence that differential decoding



takes place, although in a sense this is fortunate, since if messages were always decoded in the same form in which they had been encoded, nothing new could ever be said. A director's intention is nevertheless to literally make sense of his material, to surround experience with context such that it ceases to be simply sensation and to map out co-ordinates of meaning which will foreclose the range of interpretations that an audience could make.

It is this culturally constructed symbolic activity which I would like to trace in the actual making of the film through the following study of the shoot and the ensuing section on the editing. The study will show that in no sense can the making of a film like *DUMBY* be described as an 'unstructured copy of events' but that at each stage of its production the director works out a semiotic; a theory of signification. The degree to which this is a personal semiotic can then be tested against the decoding by the audience of the encoding of a set of signs by the director.

In using the term 'semiotic' it is important to make my intentions clear. Semiotics, as it is usually preached, is a useful way of legitimating an individual's personal reading of a text (or a film), or as Golding (1978) has remarked, it is 'window dressing for frequently gifted but entirely random perspicacity'. More sympathetically, semiotics provides a way of analysing a text by allowing it to be read as a structured, encoded message-vehicle - as Eco (1965) says, 'Semiology (sic) shows us the universe of ideologies arranged in codes and sub-codes within the universe of signs'. Hence the central concerns of semiotics are the relationship between a sign and its meaning and the way a sign is combined with other signs to form a code. So far, so good, except for



Eco's use of the definite article. In studying an object (a text) without a subject (the producers and receivers of that text) a semiotician cannot presume to have discovered the 'universe of ideologies' even if, and unless, they also happen to be sociologists, since as Mannheim wrote in 1936, the detection of patterns of value, myth or belief systems in cultural artifacts requires the further process of 'imputation' by 'actual research in the historical sociological realm'. A semiotician may well argue that it doesn't matter what a producer's intentions were in making a programme, and he doesn't ask what reactions were engendered by that programme for different audiences. Fiske and Hartley, for instance, kick off chapter two of Reading television (1978:21) with: 'The starting point of any study of television must be with what is actually there on the screen.' Even though they modify this view with the prescription that the reading of television must progress from the manifest to the latent content, they are still concerned with 'content' - whatever that term may mean in the absence of producers or receivers. My point is that for textual analysts to be able to say anything about social or cultural reproduction they must take into account the means of that reproduction on both sides of the artifact itself. Whether and how a producer's intentions in making a programme are modified by a process, or his understanding of a process, cannot be determined solely through a scrutiny of the text. It may be true that 'every text in some sense internalises its social relations of production' (Eagleton, 1978:48) but it is unlikely that a text will internalise all of these relations, and an analyst would in any case need to know a good deal about the world beyond the text in question before he could begin to disinter



these relations as opposed to those which have simply been read into the text.

As a form of structural linguistics, semiotics can therefore cover the connection between social and cultural processes by approaching a text synchronically, or by regarding a film - as Jean Cocteau did - as a 'petrified fountain of thought'. The meaning of a film derives from more than a fixed relation between its encoded signs and 'objects in reality' because it is perceived by people, or 'interpretants' in C.S. Pierce's terms, and people are never totally conditioned or constrained by their structural situation, for if they were, all historical change would be an illusion. To paraphrase Sartre, people can always make something out of what is made of them - including their understanding of the apparently fixed meaning of a text - so a structural analysis of a film or its production and reception needs the further 'imputation' of phenomenological data in order to allow for the exploration of 'the complex and multi-layered interplay between intentional social actions and their conditioning contexts' (Murdoch, 1974:218). Structural accounts on their own erect beautiful and complex *Vanadus* with no inhabitants. Phenomenological accounts on their own describe people in a wasteland. You need a combination of both, which is why I want to trace the actual absences and presences in the making of *LUMPY* as well as the potential ones; to look at the twenty-three hours of film which were shot but never used, and to examine how a producer - not a text - seeks and reifies relationships between signs and their meanings and encodes them as a message-vehicle.



Instead of producing a semiotic analysis myself, then, one point of entry is to examine the producer's semiotic; to examine his categories and manipulation of the orders of signification in making a film as a feat of engineering as well as a feat of architecture. For like a structuralist, a film-maker (and especially a realist film-maker) seeks to describe and fix his subject within the confines of a model - a working model of his intentions. Thus he must introduce and specify the variables to be used in characterising the subject within the model, story or narrative, (the characters and the sets or locations), and then start to draw connections and relationships between these variables through dialogue, action and montage. The producer must also allow for error in the decoding of the 'message' and must consequently build a certain amount of redundancy into the system (by, for instance, including several different cues concerning Sandra's deafness) but not so much redundancy that completely oppositional decodings become possible in response to 'red herrings'. In order to judge this balance the producer must also estimate the degree of correspondence between his model, that which it seeks to represent and the diegesis of an audience - the re-mapping or decoding which they will carry out in viewing the film.

As opposed to writing a book or painting a picture, the process of making a film is relatively open to such analysis since it is carried out in public, where many different people are involved who have to be organised and instructed in situ. The following account can not, however, presume to have covered all the minutiae of personal predilection, but I do hope to show that the operationalisation of the producer's intentions involved the use of categories ranging from



the purely technical considerations dictated by the equipment, through the less rigid codes of professional practice to the more 'purely' idiosyncratic categories of the producer's personal aesthetic.

#### Five weeks in Bradford

DUNEY was shot in Bradford between 12th April and 14th May 1977 and just as the producer had to interpret the twenty-nine years of Sandra's life within the confines of a seventy-eight minute film, so it is my task to distil within a few pages the salient features of a five-week shoot which involved upwards of thirty crew-members and over seventy actors. Since a full-scale analysis would take about five weeks to read, the following day-to-day account has been confined to answering the question 'how were the producer's intentions translated into a film through the organisation of production'. How, in other words, were the building-blocks of the film hewn and quarried during the shoot before being cut, dressed and assembled during the editing - for as Peter Laurie wrote in New Scientist (vol.77:1095):

What the storyteller has to do is build a house for his audience's imagination. It is an invisible house and, if he is successful, they will come in and take their ease and then leave without knowing they were in a building, but he must know. He must take care to give it an entrance and an exit, to roof it, to make the floors level so his guests do not stumble and wake up - for half his task is to lull them into a half-sleep during their stay with him. He must take care the house is solidly built and does not creak in the wind of eternity and chaos that blows outside; it must be consistent and surprising only where surprises are intended - no bedrooms in the cellar, or staircases up the chimney.

#### Day One

DUNEY's crew were booked into a four-star hotel in the centre of Bradford



for the duration of the shoot from 12th April, although the production assistant, associate producer and the producer himself had been officially installed a few days earlier. The first item on the agenda was to be an introductory production meeting for the entire crew, an event which subsequently proved to be unique since the producer did not call a similar meeting for the whole of the rest of the shoot.

#### The production meeting

This was called for 4.00 p.m. to allow for travelling time up from London, and by about 4.15 p.m. most of the crew were in attendance - numbering twenty-three in all. It was the first time that the bulk of the team had been brought together in one place, although most of the Elstree crew already knew one another. The freelance camera and sound crew nevertheless arrived a little late and sat apart from the others as the producer outlined the following points:

1. The story they were to film was true, and many of the protagonists were still very much around, so the crew were warned not to speak to the press in order to avoid adverse publicity for these people and to maintain a 'low profile' for the unit itself.
2. The hotel was to be used as a base, with as much of the preparation as possible being carried out there. The locations should, in other words, be used solely as a studio and not as preparation areas. The producer explained that he wanted to 'creep around Bradford with the minimum of fuss', and that vehicles should therefore be kept out of sight, with make-up and wardrobe personnel working from the hotel and not, for instance, from mobile dressing rooms, (none of the props or lighting vans had any identifying signs such as the ATV logo, and the freelance camera van only had 'AKA' written upon it).



3. The producer indicated that they would be making use of the town itself, using real pubs, houses and streets, so there might be some problems in dealing with 'real' people. He therefore stressed the need for flexibility and patience in this respect, pointing out that 'you cannot pin real people down'. Similarly, the crew would be working with genuinely deaf people at times, and the producer explained that one has to speak very clearly and calmly with them, without shouting or trying to make elaborate signals.

4. Many of the scenes would require a minimum crew, and the schedule as a whole was very tight, but the producer assured the crew that 'it will be alright providing we move it along pretty quickly'. The producer finished what he had to say very rapidly with the whole meeting lasting less than twenty minutes, but before it broke up the associate producer outlined the arrangements for catering on location (which were the responsibility of the programme co-ordinator) and suggested that these arrangements and the general need to help out with such tasks as carrying other people's equipment could be worked out on an informal basis. In view of the nature of the shoot and the tightness of the schedule this was no idle request, since union agreements on equipment handling and meal-times are quite specific. The A.P.'s request for informality can consequently be read as an appeal to the crew not to work to rule in the light of the manning problems which everyone in the room knew about, but which nobody mentioned.

There was one question from the floor, and this was about crew-member's personal safety. The questioner asked if any direct hostility was to be



expected from the general public, and the producer admitted that this was a possibility since 'the cameraman and myself have worked out a few ideas for making the film more real, and this may have the result of antagonising people', at which point the questioner sat down and tried to light the wrong end of his cigarette.

The first evening in the hotel was very much a time for people to get acquainted, with individuals exchanging stories about productions they had been on, bemoaning the state of the industry and discovering the hotel's watering holes. Any discussion of the film itself was noticeable by its absence - the bulk of the conversation being about expenses or the physical arrangements for days off and accommodation. Some of the actors, for instance, had deliberately arrived without any money so that they could put all their incidental expenses down to the company as part of the \$9/day allowance which had been agreed with the casting department, and some of the Elstree crew were at pains to point out that - as staff - they were getting the same rates as they would in the studio, and that this was rather unfair given the extra inconvenience which location work entailed.

The separation between staff and freelance was indeed already evident on this occasion and in the crew's social relationships. With one or two exceptions, the staff people tended to eat and drink together, mirroring their work-groups, with the degree of socializing occurring in inverse proportion to an individual's position in the unit's hierarchy. In concert with Elliott's observations, (1972:131) the members of the central production team (the producer, P.A., K.F. and cameraman) tended, for example, to take their meals separately, and only occasionally joined the others for a drink. Far from being due to reticence



on their behalf (The P.A. and the producer both expressed regret for not being able to be more sociable) this can be seen as a direct function of what Elliott called the organic style of organisation for the central production team as opposed to the more mechanistic organisation of the rest of the unit. The central team were continuously involved with the organisation of the film itself as well as the administration of the unit, and since their jobs were far less structured, and more organically linked to the changing needs of the film, they often simply lacked the time to relax with the more mechanistically-organized staff (whose practical concern with the film did not need to extend beyond the working day). It was only as the film began to acquire a dynamic of its own that this separation began to break down, and even then, neither the producer nor the cameraman found that they had much time to socialise. The sound-recorderist implied that this was a result of the core teams' need to consider everyone else's function on the film as well as their own:

One of the problems with a feature film is that someone like the lighting cameraman can become so immersed in his cinematography that he will just look at the exposure and what's in the frame. He doesn't necessarily have to look at the context, or to consider what everyone else is doing. This is where (DUFFY's cameraman) is so terrific, because he is thinking all the time, about the role of the prop man, sound; everything. He thinks very broadly, which is also why he doesn't have much time to get involved in social situations like some of the rest of us do. He and the producer are preoccupied the whole time. On the set, for instance, someone like myself can sit and have a cup of coffee while they are setting up a shot. I don't really start work until they have lined up a shot and begun rehearsals. It's a bit like the electricians. They don't really have to work during a take, or in the evenings; their work is just before a take is set up. The only two people who bear a continuous responsibility are the producer, and in this case the director, and the cameraman.



As a result of not having directly chosen some of the crew-members, the producer had not in fact met some of them before, so his time during the first evening was divided between meeting these people and explaining his plans for the shoot, and checking on costumes and make-up for the following day. Correlatively, there was some confusion among the crew over who was who. The fact that the producer was also to be the director had, for example, been misunderstood by several of the crew who had assumed that the associate producer was the producer, and the producer was simply the director. A simple enough confusion, but one which was to be compounded later on in the shoot as people discovered that both straight directorial queries and general production questions had to be funnelled through the same person. Similarly, the lack of production meetings between a producer and a director (which other members of the unit might have attended) can obviously be explained by the fact that the two roles were combined.

Another feature of the first evening before shooting was a general concern over the size of the crew. Most of the staff crew-members, several of whom had past experience of feature films and all of whom were used to studio working levels, expressed surprise at the relatively small size of the unit. One person, for instance, took the view that 'It is grossly undermanned, I don't think that they have fully understood our point of view; that you need a certain minimum of people just to carry all the stuff around'. The freelance people, on the other hand, who were used to small-scale documentary filming, expressed the exact opposite point of view, with one of them volunteering: 'I don't think I'm going to enjoy it very much because it's such a large unit. Most of the films I do have had a maximum of probably six people, which



enables you to work very closely together'.

Potential tension within the production unit in this respect intermingled with the actor's pre-shoot nerves. Although the main actress was not too worried about the technical difficulty of playing Sandra, she had become increasingly worried about the project as a whole, and had seriously considered backing out a week before the shoot began. At that point she was under a number of misapprehensions, some warranted and some not, about the producer's intentions for the film in relation to the original girl and the actress's role. Having lived with the girl for some weeks, the main actress felt, for example, that the original girl thought that she would appear in the film since the producer had originally explained what he wanted to do by pointing at the girl while making a camera sign. The actress felt that the original girl had interpreted this as 'I want to make a film with you' rather than 'of you'. This later transpired to have been a misunderstanding between the original girl and her sister, (via a new social worker) and the former was in fact aware of the producer's actual intention, but the idea of including the original girl in the film was nevertheless a genuine source of concern for the actress at that point. So too was the question of actually playing some of the scenes - I've already mentioned that the actress was concerned about having to do the 'Shabby man' scene (where she would take a disreputable client out into an alleyway behind a pub) and the 'Strip' scene (where the intention was for the actress to do an 'impromptu' strip in a pub) and on the eve of the first day's shooting the actress was still not entirely sure how those scenes were to be handled.



None of the actors were particularly happy about the script, since all but one of those who had arrived for the first day's shooting had relatively little experience of screenplays, or experience of a very sparsely written piece such as this, so there was a certain amount of apprehension about the way the script was going to be interpreted on the set. Vincent Tilsley, writing in *SCRIPT* (Spring 1967) has nevertheless described a script as a 'blueprint for a film which is directed into existence' and almost all of the actors clearly believed that the producer-as-director could do just that. While it could be argued that actors ought to trust their director's judgement, they by no means always do, so it is a great help if the cast already has a solid foundation of trust upon which to build the necessarily collaborative relationship with the director. For the most part this trust was never seriously questioned since the producer's personal identity with the film and his genuine concern for the original family (apart from his personal and economic investment in the programme) had already surfaced through his particularistic approach to the casting and the preparations for the shoot. The main actress was voicing the opinion of several people when she said:

He (the producer) has an alarmingly good eye for casting people, I mean really weird. Other actors, apart from me, have been worried about how a scene is going to be played after seeing the script, but he has actually chosen people for something that he has seen in them, so you don't really have to act, you are there because you are you. One or two people haven't trusted that and have tried to put something on, which is a pity, because if they had just sat there and been themselves it would have been fine.



Day two

The first day's shooting was to be at the Bradford Royal Infirmary, an ageing municipal institution with long, tiled corridors which was to be used as found for some of the very early period scenes where Sandra's mother visits the hospital consultant with her deaf baby. I will describe what happened in some detail in order to introduce some of the parameters within which the production took place, and then progressively reduce that detail throughout the rest of the account of the shoot. It should be noted, however, that in the first few days of a shoot a production team may not be working together as smoothly as they might towards the end, and unrepresentative mistakes can easily occur. The camera, for example, was brand new and had a particularly large field of view beyond the picture frame which may have contributed to the rather critical framing of some of the first few days' shots, and the producer had not accustomed himself to the problems of having a large crew on the set which, for example, aggravated the problems of filming with a very small (and cantankerous) deaf child.

In consultation with the producer, the associate producer had drawn up the 'Call sheet' for the day, detailing all the requirements for the props department, catering, the route to the hospital and the times when various actors were required on set. The hospital interiors were considered to be alright as they stood in terms of the period (1950), so there had been no need for extensive design work there, but the producer had already discussed the question of special props that were needed with the designer, and he had acquired these in advance.



The producer had also already discussed his basic shooting plan with the cameraman some time in advance, so that both men had a reasonable idea of how the shots might look, although such preliminary ideas would almost inevitably be changed once the actual conditions of any particular location had been examined on the day. The producer had also spent some time the previous evening checking over different costumes for 'Mother', eventually choosing a fairly drab coat for her to wear as she waits in the hospital corridor so that she could melt into the background as an 'anonymous woman in an anonymous hospital'. 'Mother' also had to be pregnant, so a strapped cushion had been prepared for the actress to wear under her dress.

The day started for 'Mother' at about 8 a.m. with her make-up call. Strictly speaking, forty-five minutes had been allowed on the call-sheet for make-up and the same for wardrobe, but since these two departments shared interconnecting rooms in the hotel, the times tended to overlap. The wardrobe and make-up people also had to prepare four other actors in this period before the 'time on set' call at 9.30 a.m., so the schedule was pretty tight, especially since 'Mother' had to appear to be in her early twenties; that is, a good few years younger than the actress's real age.

Meanwhile, the lighting and camera vans had been loaded outside the hotel, and the drivers had collected a mini-bus ready to transport the actors and remaining crew out to the hospital. By 9.30 the crew and actors were all in attendance at the hospital, and the camera was being set up for the first shot, of 'Mother' waiting in the lobby



prior to visiting the consultant. Among the equipment and the twenty-two crew members, real hospital staff were inevitably passing to and fro, with real nurses giggling at the actress nurses in their period costumes, and real patients being wheeled, bemused, through it all. One (real) nurse even asked the actress when the baby was due as she sat waiting for the first take, which was to be of two nurses walking down the corridor and past 'Mother'. Since the shot was to be up to sixty feet away from the action, which was in turn taking place in a narrow corridor, it would have been impossible to use interior lighting to cover the two nurses as they walked down towards the camera (because the lights would be in shot), and impractical to light each one of the many windows in the corridor from the outside. Since the natural light was in any case adequate, no artificial lights were therefore used for this shot.

Before making the shot, the director advised the two 'nurses' that nurses have a 'certain pace', and after a couple of trial runs, he suggested that they slow down the pace of their walk to achieve this. The first take proved to be NG (i.e. 'No good') because a real lady in non-period clothes walked across the background of the shot, so various members of the crew were dispatched to guard the entrances to the corridor and lobby to stop people coming through during the takes.

'Baby Sandra' had meanwhile started to get restless, and began oscillating between 'Mother' and the child's real mother who was sitting out of shot to the camera's left. Since the child was only two years old, and genuinely deaf, it was extremely difficult to avoid this, but it was important to either demonstrate what the child was



looking at out of shot, or reject such a shot altogether, otherwise it was felt that the audience would itself be distracted. Take two was also NG because some real doctors had slipped through the defences and into shot, plus 'Mother' was felt to be looking too sad. Although she was supposed to suspect that the baby was deaf at that point, the disability had yet to be confirmed by the consultant, so it was important not to pre-empt the distress which the mother may have felt after the consultant scene. 'Mother' subsequently looked rather bored, and take three was judged to be 'OK'. A further two takes were nevertheless made as insurances, but again, in take four, a genuine patient in a wheelchair got into the shot - 'reality keeps getting in the way' commented the director. The fifth and last take was again considered to be a possible, but this time the two nurses stopped walking just before the end of the take and the director instructed them not to stop, or indeed start an action unless he said 'Action' or 'cut'.

Throughout these takes the production assistant had been doing what a 'continuity girl' would do in a feature production - noting down the circumstances of each take, with their timings, the stop and lens which the camera had used and its distance from the action. All this information would later be transferred to a 'Daily continuity report' which the P.A. would type up each evening, and on which she would also include details of the scene number (according to the original script) and the slate number (the serial number of any series of takes made from the same angle), plus the camera loading, (the serial number of each 400' film magazine) film stock type and size, and any relevant details such as the kind of filters which the cameraman might have used.



All this information is vital to the editor, who uses it in conjunction with the slate information contained on the clapperboard which is photographed at the beginning (or end) of each take, to identify each section of the film. The information on the film type and filters is also vital to the film processor, since if he knows that particular filters have been used to achieve a specific effect, the processor will not then try to artificially balance the colour with unfiltered sections.

The P.A.'s notes can also be used to warn or guide the editor in the cutting itself. The fact that she had noted that the two nurses had stopped short in take five, for instance, would warn the editor that the take would have to be cut short itself, and often the P.A. would note that a take was visually acceptable, but that the associated soundtrack was weak in some way. The editor might then decide to use that section of film, but attach a soundtrack from another take, a take which might not itself have been printed, but from which the appropriate soundtrack could be identified by referring to the continuity notes. These notes could also function as pure continuity diaries for use on the set itself, since the P.A. would keep notes about the direction from which actors entered or exited the frame, where they placed props such as beer glasses, and where they were looking, such that in intercut shots the action would appear to be continuous. (It is a basic rule of grammar that if, say, an actor enters the frame left-to-right in one shot, then any associated shots from different angles of the continuation of that action have to maintain the direction relative to the camera. A failure to observe this is called 'crossing the line' where the camera crosses an imaginary



Fig. Continuity report for scene 22

**Synch = Sound synchronised with vision**

Mute = Vision only' .

Wildtrack = Sound only

**ATV Network Ltd.**

PRODUCTION "DUTY" P.3649

DIRECTOR PAUL ROBERTS

**DAILY CONTINUITY REPORT**

DATE 12th April 1977

CAMERAMAN G. J. JONES

1  
FILE COPY

SET OR PROPOSED RYAL INFIRMARY

LOCATION Hospital Corridor

DAY

DAY

NIGHT

SCENE No.

22

INT. EXT.

Lens

DISTANCE

STOP

SYNCH

MUTE

WILD TRACK

CUTTING NOTES

SLATE No.

1 1 2

TAKE No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TIME	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	5:00	5:30	6:00
FILM FOOTAGE										
TIMING	20"	25"	30"	35"	40"	45"	50"	55"	60"	65"

NOTES: SCENE 22 - 1st TAKE - 1st TAKE - 1st TAKE

IN HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - 1st TAKE - 1st TAKE

2nd TAKE - 1st TAKE - 1st TAKE

FILM STOCK

7217

SCENE DESCRIPTION

SCENE 22 - 1st TAKE - 1st TAKE

SCENE 22 - 1st TAKE - 1st TAKE

MAGAZINE No.

1011

REJECTED TAKE

Printed take

Continuity notes



line between its original position and the action such that the direction of the action appears reversed. A recent example of a failure to observe this has been a TV commercial where a man is seen swinging across a street from a rope, from left to right, to crash through a window, right to left. The camera has therefore 'crossed the line' which tends, psychologically, to make the two halves of the action seem to be discontinuous).

Two more takes were shot in the hospital lobby area and given a different slate number as the action and the angle had been changed. These takes were of 'Mother' and 'baby Sandra' walking towards the camera along the corridor in order to signify that they were going off to see the consultant. Before the takes were made, the director told 'Mother' to 'Think pregnant', and she practiced walking about as if she was carrying the weight of a foetus for a while. Neither take was considered to be good enough in the event since people were getting into shot again, and their modern clothes might have been noticeable even though they were in the extreme background.

That scene took just over an hour to film, after which the crew moved on to a room in the hospital known as the Old Library - a relatively small, dark room filled with Edwardian glass-fronted bookcases. This was to be used as the consultant's office, and again, it could be used more or less as it stood considering the period. The design department had nevertheless supplied the consultant's desk and chairs plus some small props like an instrument case and a number of 'patients' records', and this time artificial lighting was required because of the insufficient natural light in the room. Two 2kW HMI lights were therefore erected



outside the windows to shine through some tissue which had been taped to the window frames in order to diffuse the light. A smaller light - a 'blonde' - was also used inside the room, with its 1kW of light bounced off the ceiling to support the light coming through the windows. This light was also 'blued', which means that a blue filter had been attached in order to correct the colour temperature to something approaching that of natural light.

This scene was to be that between the consultant and 'Mother' where he explains that Sandra is profoundly deaf. The director described it as a 'composition scene' insofar as it was carefully planned to favour the consultant visually, with varying angles being used to connote 'authority' on his behalf (by having the camera on a low tripod looking up at him) and 'concern' on the mother's behalf by having the camera do the opposite. While this sort of shooting is once again an example of basic film grammar, the director certainly did not want to make it a point of style, since this would possibly damage the naturalistic intent. Hence the effect was to be achieved by obeying the 'natural' law of eyelines. If you are shooting a conversation between two people, a normal method is to establish that there are two people there with a wide shot which shows both of them (a 'two-shot'). Then you might go to a close-up of one of the people from a different angle, in which case the speaker would have to appear to be directing his speech towards the second person. His or her 'eyeline' therefore has to be consistent with the direction of the actor's gaze as shown in the establishing shot, even though the other actor may have actually disappeared; the other actor might, for instance, have had to be



moved out of the way to allow the camera to move in for the close-up. In order to obtain the first actor's 'point of view' to the second actor's reply, (a P.O.V.), the camera will then take a 'reverse' shot of the second actor from a position which is consonant with that of the first. The camera will very rarely attempt to take up an actor's exact position, since the speaking actor would then have, logically to look straight at camera, but in obtaining that P.O.V., the camera has to comply with the original eyeline. If, therefore, 'Mother' is shown to be sitting, with the baby on her lap, looking up to the consultant who is perched on the edge of his desk, then a following close-up of any of her replies to him would 'naturally' take his P.O.V., which would be down to her and vice-versa for her P.O.V.'s.

The reasons why direct speeches to camera are avoided are manifold. First of all, direct eye-contact in normal conversations is rarely held for long periods, and there is a vast literature in psychology concerned with the use of eye-contact in territory-maintenance, aggression and sexual activity, the upshot of which is that eye-contact is often a very strong symbol, used sparingly, and above all meaningfully (unless you are day-dreaming, of course). In television there are also conventionalised usages of eye-contact for newsreading, or reports-to-camera by correspondents, which have been explored by Baggaley and Duck in their Dynamics of television (1976). In a dramatic form, however, and particularly in a form which is striving towards naturalism, deliberate or accidental eye-contact is minimised simply because it is such a strong symbol - even a face in a crowd tends to jump out at you if it is looking straight at camera, and given the fact that the TV screen



projects a two-dimensional image, those eyes will - like Lord Kitchener - make direct contact with any viewer wherever they are. Hence the psychological impact of apparently direct eye-contact from someone in a crowd on the screen can divert a viewer's attention away from the central action, and if an actor in the main action makes any sort of sustained eye-contact 'with' the viewer, that action may acquire an entirely different meaning from that intended. If the camera, for instance, had taken the consultant's exact P.O.V., 'Mother' would have appeared to be addressing the viewer directly, which would have severely ruptured the convention that the viewer is observing rather than participating, and more importantly, it would have ruptured the convention of realism as it is defined as a premise of belief in a correspondence between 'art' and 'reality'. The actual reality of a direct contact would fail to correspond with the realistic reconstruction of a past event. Eye-contact is sometimes used quite deliberately, of course. Peter Finch's epilogue at the end of the otherwise conventional film NETWORK is straight to camera, and was presumably meant to signify that some kind of transcendental truth was being imparted. More subtly, Colin Welland, as the schoolteacher in KES, looks momentarily to camera as he is explaining about the difference between 'fact and fiction' on the blackboard, so while the convention is thereby momentarily suspended, it is that disjuncture which was perhaps intended to be the point. (One would have to ask Kenneth Loach). More often than not, eye-contact is an unavoidable hazard of working with untrained extras, real people or children, since non-professionals sometimes find it difficult not to look at the camera. The much-praised child in the early sequences of Spielberg's



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND nevertheless catches the camera's eye once or twice, and several of the takes made of 'Baby Sandra' had to be rejected on this basis. Similarly, a number of takes had to be rejected from the fairground shooting, since the filming was carried out in a working fair where interested onlookers were staring at the camera. On the other hand, the fact that people were looking towards the camera during the shooting of the stabbing and its aftermath (for part three of DUMMY) could have been an advantage, since the style of the film had become very documentary-like by then, so having people look at camera could have enhanced the analogue with a straight documentary report.

The props and lights had all been set up in the Old Library while the main unit was involved with filming the preceeding scene, and the actor who was to play the consultant had been preparing himself. As a veteran 'freelance character actor' he explained that he had often played small character parts like this on television in between doing readings for radio, but was nevertheless unemployed 'seventy percent of the time'. He had remembered his lines exactly, but was prepared to ad lib if necessary, and was wearing his own 1950's style suit: 'I've always kept all my old clothes just in case I need them for a part like this'. He wore very little make-up, just a little anti-shine powder to counteract the glare of the lights, and explained that he had recently been in hospital himself so that he felt he understood how busy a consultant would be. Although the director had not asked him to read for the part, he had instructed him not to be 'too sympathetic' and explained that his character would have many other cases to deal with such that the interview with 'Mother' would be a commonplace event for him.



Once the unit had arrived in the room, the 'consultant' and 'Mother' were sat in chairs on opposite sides of the desk so that the camera could be set up for the establishing 'two-shot'. The camera was placed so that 'mother' was more in profile than the 'consultant' such that he would be visually the more dominant of the two, (so that his role as interviewer and first speaker could be established) and having fixed a position for the camera, the actors and the props were then adjusted relative to the frame in the viewfinder. Fine adjustments of this kind are mostly achieved by moving the actors or the furniture rather than the camera since any movement of the latter will move everything in relation to the frame, so it is easier to move the parts rather than the whole, and this also saves having to readjust the lighting or the position of microphones. 'Mother's' chair in fact had to be raised up on some wooden blocks in order that her head was at an acceptable height relative to the desk (which was rather high), and some of the small props on the desk were moved to its far side so as not to obscure the camera's view.

'Baby Sandra' was not brought into the room until the shot had been composed and rehearsals completed to save her from becoming bored or distracted, and the crew were warned to keep particularly quiet between takes to avoid alarming the child. The two actors consequently ran through the scene and the director asked the 'consultant' to be more 'inward thinking' and suggested that 'Mother' should 'project more ego'. He felt that the whole interchange should be more quickfire, but not so much that the lines started to overlap. As the sound-recordist pointed out, the scene would be cut together as a series of wide and close-up shots, so if either actor cut into the other's lines



it would make editing very difficult. At first, both actors were sitting in their chairs, which the director imply felt was aesthetically too symmetrical, so he suggested that the 'consultant' should stand up just before the end of the scene, partly to break up the visual symmetry, and partly to signal that the interview was over. Then he decided that the 'consultant' looked too detached and 'throne-like' sitting in the high-backed chair, so the director asked him to perch on the edge of the desk as suggested in the original script. (It should be noted that in the original script the consultant is described as a 'pleasant-looking youngish' man, which had been changed in order to signify the relative detachment of the consultant from the mother's problem).

The ending of the interview with the 'consultant's' line 'She cannot hear at all' was also felt to be too abrupt, and the director started to think of ways to 'soften' this. One of the accepted pointers towards naturalism is to leave the original and terminal parts of a scene open so that instead of having a scene as a discrete entity with a clearly defined start and finish, the audience is given the impression that they have 'eavesdropped' on a conversation which has been continuing on either side of the actual scene. Hence this scene originally started with the 'Consultant's' line: 'There are different degrees of deafness, you see ...' which appears to be an answer to an unheard question, whereas the terminal line, 'She cannot hear at all' was felt to be a definite conclusion to the interview rather than the scene.



The 'consultant' had also been taking his glasses on and off a little nervously during the scene, and the director told him that he could play with them once they were off, but should not keep putting them on and taking them off, since this might imply uncertainty on his behalf, which was not consonant with his role as an 'expert'. The action was also felt to look generally 'too dramatic'; like a stage device. The director was, in addition, concerned about the dialogue itself, and began to alter the lines a little. The 'consultant' was instructed to pause at the end of his last line and add 'well now ...' to soften the ending and imply that he was going to say something else (perhaps to arrange another interview, or take down some details of the 'Mother's' address).

Having made these fine adjustments, 'Baby Sandra' was brought in with her real mother and immediately began to scream at the top of her voice. Her real mother was given a chair to sit on out of shot, but in the child's line of sight, so that the child could look to her for reassurance. The P.A. administered smarties to the child as the crew waited for the screams to subside, but this took a very long time. Eventually the first take was made during a respite in the screaming, but was rejected as the 'consultant' faltered in the middle of a line as the child started to cry again. The idea of having the child facing the camera was therefore rejected, and there was another long pause as the director waited for the child to calm down. He explained that having her crying would put an entirely different complexion on the scene, since the scene was supposed to be a discussion about her, whereas the audience's attention would be focussed directly



upon her if she was obviously upset. They tried another take, but this time 'Mother' dried as the child screamed again, but a third take followed quickly to take advantage of a quiet period. For all these takes the director had taken the precaution of using an 'end board' which means that the clapperboard had been photographed at the end of each take rather than at the beginning, so that the noise of the clapper would not start the child off again. On the fourth take they tried not using the clapper at all (a 'mute board', therefore) even though this might have made synchronisation a little difficult for the editor, but this take proved to be relatively successful, 'Getting there, getting there' commented the director.

By 11.30 a fifth, sixth and seventh take had been made, by which time the 'consultant' was beginning to lose his concentration, breaking down completely in the middle of the last take. The director thanked them for their patience, and reassured the actor that he was alright (even though he was not). 'Mother' was advised not to forget the character, and the director told her to remember what the original sister was like - similarly, the 'consultant' was advised not to get 'too sweet' and to appear to be less involved with this particular case. As a different strategy, the next take was allowed to start in its own time, when the actors were ready, and the result was judged to be noticeably better, with the P.A. writing 'GOOD ONE' in capitals on her continuity sheet. The line 'specialist help' had nevertheless begun to bother the director since he was not sure what the connotations of that might be; the 'consultant' is advising 'Mother' that she should seek 'specialist help' with her baby because she is profoundly deaf,



but in the context this had struck the director as an odd turn of phrase.

A ninth take was nevertheless attempted with the original dialogue, and was again considered to be printable as far as the action was concerned, but one of the barn-doors on the 'blonde' light collapsed with a loud bang during this take which would have been picked up by the sound-recordist's microphones. The director then took advantage of an enforced delay as the light was being readjusted to re-rehearse the scene and alter some of the emphasis in the dialogue. The line 'There is nothing much you can do' from the consultant was, for example, changed to 'There is nothing much one can do' in order to transfer the emphasis away from the mother, making the consultant more distant and the mother more isolated. The 'Consultant' was also told not to forget to use his props; the pencils and the paper on the desk, and was asked to look at the baby much more, rather than the mother, for otherwise the director felt that there was a danger of him looking too patronising. Two more takes were then tried, the first being abandoned because of more crying from the child, and the second being scored as 'good-ish' by the P.A.

The camera was then moved round for a 'cutaway' shot of the mother and baby on their own, which gave the make-up lady a chance to deal with perspiration shines which had developed on the actress's face, and an opportunity to touch-up the artificial mole which had been applied to the child's cheek. (The main actress had a natural mole in that position, and so all the other versions of 'Sandra' had been given a make-up mole in order to adhere to the rules of continuity). The first



take of this slate was made by mid-day, by which time the child had settled down, but she had taken to pointing off camera towards her real mother, which might again have distracted an audience away from the mother's dialogue, since in relation to the establishing shot, the child would not be looking towards the 'consultant'. One of the wardrobe dressers was therefore asked to sit where the 'consultant' had been and hold one of the child's dolls so that the child's eyeline would be held in the right direction.

The second take was NG for sound since the recordist had encountered a minor technical problem with the hand-held boom mike, and he recommended that they make another take. The director had also decided that 'Mother' was becoming a little too grave, and was worried that the tear-stains on the child's cheek would show up on the film. These were therefore sponged away by make-up which inevitably started the child crying again throughout take three. Takes four and five were considered to be better for the child's eyeline towards the consultant, but in take six the 'Mother's' handbag began to slip from her grasp, and she grabbed for that instead of the baby, who began to slip onto the floor. By this time the camera's film magazine needed to be changed, and as that was being done, the director decided to add another line of dialogue for 'Mother' to soften the scene's ending which had been bothering him. The extra line was an extension of the 'consultant's' line 'She cannot hear at all' by 'Mother', who was now to say 'You mean nothing? - She can't hear anything at all?'. Hence the scene now ended on a question rather than a statement such that an audience could infer that the 'reality' of the scene had



continued on beyond the physical cut (since the 'consultant' would presumably have answered that question).

The cameraman had meanwhile been monitoring the light for each of these takes, since if one is cutting between different shots within the same scene, the light has to be constant. Despite the exterior artificial lights, the natural daylight would still be providing a good deal of the overall light, and unlike the artificial light, the daylight would vary as, for example, clouds passed over the sun. The cameraman would therefore keep an eye on any clouds which looked as if they might obscure the sun during a take by monitoring their passage through a very dark-filtered eyepiece, and he would also provide estimates on how long any particular cloud might be expected to take to pass over the sun. One such cloud appeared just before they were going to shoot take seven which caused another short delay in which the director decided to change the other line which had been worrying him; the 'consultant's' reference to 'specialist help' was changed to 'professional help'. 'Mother' was also advised to combine a mixture of 'curiosity and horror' in her delivery of the new last line, and take eight was generally agreed to have been the most successful so far. One last take was nevertheless made, although the child started to cry again at the beginning. This time the director told the camera to keep running and 'Mother' started again in her own time which produced another satisfactory take.

'Mother' had been told to look down towards the child several times during her dialogue, and at about 12.45 p.m. the camera was moved in to take a close-up of the child as a cutaway from 'Mother's' eyeline.



All the crew were told to keep particularly quiet for this shot, which was hand-held by the cameraman as the baby's attention was attracted away from the camera with one of her dolls. No discrete takes were noted down here by the P.A., since the cameraman was simply shooting off film in order to provide plenty of choice for the editing. The child actually smiled on a couple of occasions to the director's relief, since he wanted these shots to contrast with the general seriousness of the dialogue and as a lead-in to the next scene in the finished film (where the child would next be seen playing happily at home).

The next shot was to be a cutaway of 'Mother' in close-up as a P.O.V. for the 'consultant'. This was accomplished by 'cheating' the desk out of the way to allow the camera in, and by having the actor speak the appropriate lines off camera in order to give 'Mother' her cues. One take was made before the unit broke for lunch at precisely one o'clock - a move which was privately considered to be a politic decision by some members of the crew, since meal-time breaks had been the source of some concern before the shoot got under way.

After lunch in the hospital canteen some more takes of 'Mother's' cutaway were made. In the first one she had looked rather too serious for the director's liking, so in the second take she was asked to look more concerned and questioning, and this time the director was much happier. Unfortunately there was another 'offstage' noise during this take, so a third take was made as an insurance. Here, however, the actress fluffed the lines and another one had to be made as well. It ought to be said that the actress had by that time delivered her



said 'go!' and they rushed into the next take. The actor was far more aggressive this time, but the film ran out of the camera's magazine half-way through the take and it had to be abandoned. The actor had reverted to saying 'specialist help' instead of 'professional help' in these two takes, and the director was still not sure what was wrong with this, but felt that the use of the term 'specialist' implied that the girl's disability was extraordinary, which it certainly was from the mother's point of view, but not from the consultant's, and since it was his line, the director decided that 'professional help' was a little more matter-of-fact. The whole speech was also beginning to sound like a soliloquy to the director, whereas it was supposed to be a fragment from a much longer conversation. He therefore suggested that the actor should start from halfway through the speech and continue straight through into a repeat of the whole things so that the actual beginning of his dialogue would not sound as if he'd started afresh. The actor practiced this as the cameraman waited for the clouds to go by, and as soon as the light was at the correct level again they started take three.

This time the pace was judged to be correct, but the actor transposed part of his dialogue so that he said 'But because she can't speak, she can't learn to hear' so in take four the director decided to go back to the original plan of having the actor run through the dialogue normally (without starting halfway through), and this take proved to be more satisfactory. Another five takes were nevertheless made to try to get the pace exactly right, with the director employing the technique of delivering a short instruction to the actor at the last minute so that this would be uppermost in the actor's mind. Hence the director



twice told the actor to 'Be businesslike' immediately before a take as well as issuing more general instructions between the takes. On one or two of these last five takes care had to be taken with 'profiling', which is that condition in which an actor turns his head away from camera such that one cannot see his eyeline, and one of the takes had to be scrapped because there was a change in the light halfway through caused by an errant cloud. After nine takes the director called it a day and asked the cameraman to 'Check the gate' - this phrase is virtually a figure of speech which is used to signify that all the takes for a particular scene have been completed but it is also a specific instruction to literally check the opening in the camera through which each frame of the film is briefly exposed to the light. Bits of dust, hairs or even fragments of the film's emulsion can easily collect here, and will therefore throw an image onto the film unless the gate is regularly checked, so if a hair is found to be lodged in the opening at the end of a series of takes, they will all have to be shot again.

The 'consultant' scene had been completed by three o'clock in the afternoon of the first day's shooting, and all the crew then moved off to another room in the hospital to film a scene where the child was having her hearing tested by a lady doctor. This scene had been intended as a definitive signifier of the girl's deafness following the mother's suspicion that 'There's summat wrong with that child' in an earlier scene. It was in fact to have immediately preceded the 'consultant' scene but was eventually scrapped altogether since the director later decided that the fact of the girl's deafness had already



been sufficiently registered earlier in the film. Another reason for throwing out this scene was due to a pressing need to reduce the film's overall length during the latter stages of editing, since the film was running about twenty percent overlength for much of that process. A third reason was that the scene simply did not work. The main reason for this was the sheer impossibility of satisfactorily directing a handicapped two-year-old who had already been wholly unnerved by the morning's shooting, and in the two hours which the unit spent trying to film the scene, forty-five takes were made on more than a thousand feet of film of which very little was usable.

In order to demonstrate some of the difficulties which arose I will simply run through the takes one by one like an extended continuity report. It should be noted that the main point of the scene had been to 'prove' that the girl was indeed deaf, so that in carrying out the hearing-tests, the main requirement was that the girl should not react to those tests. Although the little girl was genuinely deaf, there were so many other distractions in the room that she tended to react to everything, thus evacuating the scene of its central intended meaning.

#### The hearing-test scene

The protagonists were 'Mother', 'Baby Sandra' and a female 'Doctor', and the room in the hospital had been provided with period hearing-test equipment as researched by the producer and supplied by the design department. Having arrived in the room the director made one or two alterations to the designer's arrangements by, for instance, putting a



picture on the background wall to save it from looking 'too blank' and by removing a stethoscope from the desk because it was 'too obvious'. The room itself was only about twelve feet square, so there was little room for extensive artificial lighting and only one 'blonde' was used - similarly, the room was on the first floor of the building, so exterior lights were impractical and in order to allow as much natural light into the room as possible the curtains were removed from the single window.

The script did not give any dialogue for the scene, but described it as follows:

MOTHER, now visibly pregnant, is sitting on a chair by the doctor's desk. The middle-aged FEMALE DOCTOR is testing BABY SANDRA's hearing, clicking her fingers on either side of the baby's head.

Before any takes were made, the director consequently told everyone that he wanted the baby to be totally static and oblivious to the 'doctor', and suggested that the child be given something to play with in order to distract her attention away from the 'doctor's' movements. He warned the cameraman to watch the baby's eyes, since being genuinely deaf, she would tend to scan around the room rather more than normal in order to compensate for the lack of information reaching her ears, and might therefore become distracted by movements from the crew.



The first take was made at 3.55 p.m.:

<u>Slate</u> & <u>Take</u>	<u>Time</u> in <u>secs.</u>
----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

8:1	35	DOCTOR tests BABY by banging a spoon in a cup, then with a bell. BABY does not react, but she turns round as the DOCTOR says 'BA BA BA' since she catches sight of the movement.
8:2	35	DOCTOR is asked to slow down her action, and to watch for any reaction from BABY, who is remarkably quiescent - so much so that the director asks if she looks as if she'd been drugged 'by the wicked film crew'.
8:3	60	Retake of just the cup & bell (no 'BA BA BA') - still no reaction from BABY, which is as required, but she now appears to be falling asleep.
8:4	55	BABY really does look as if she's falling asleep - director suggests black coffee.
8:5	50	Slightly different shot tried - with BABY on her own in the chair (she was on MOTHER's lap).
8:6	25	Take cut short because BABY reacts.
8:7	60	BABY reacts again - mostly to her real mother who is sat out of shot.
8:8	20	BABY reacts a lot to the DOCTOR's movements.
8:9	20	" "
8:10	20	" "
8:11	15	" " and gets off the chair.
8:12	9	" " and gets off the chair again.
8:13	50	BABY does not react to cup & spoon, but gets off the chair towards the end of the take.
8:14	50	BABY is attracted back to the chair with chocolate and does not react to the tests, but her face is generally too animated. P.A. nevertheless marks this down as 'O.K.'.
8:15	40	Start of take is judged to be good, but BABY gets off chair once again.
8:16	60+	BABY does not react to cup & spoon, but appears to for the bell. Gets off chair again, but film is kept rolling as he is helped back into it. Some of the crew's hands (waiting to catch CHILD) are in shot.
8:17	18	BABY does not react, but points to her real mother off camera.
8:18	70	BABY is given a handbag to play with, and is therefore distracted away from the hearing tests. She opens the bag and fishes out a bracelet which is possibly not in period. Baby catches her finger in the bag and screams loudly.
8:19	60+	Clapperboard is now put at the end of the take in order not to distract BABY. Take is judged to be fair.



8:20 10 BABY reacts.  
 8:21 60+ BABY does not react at first, but the handbag slips from her grasp and 'MOTHER' moves to catch it, obscuring BABY.

It was five o'clock by the end of that series of takes, and the sound-recordist took advantage of a short break to take some 'roomtone' - the sound of the room itself - which would be used by the editor to cover any gaps in the soundtrack caused by cutting together the best sections of the above takes. The camera had meanwhile been moved to take a close-up of 'Mother' to show her eyeline to the baby for those shots where 'Mother' had been standing behind the child, and the lens had been changed from a wide 12mm to a 25mm close-up:

9:1 The director tells 'Mother' to look concerned rather than penetrating.  
 9:2 This was considered to be a good take; 'Mother' has a particular look of interest which the director liked.  
 9:3 Slight difficulty with 'Mother's' eyeline - she was having trouble in deciding exactly where to look, and the cameraman instructs her to look to a point just to the left of camera.  
 9:4 Good again. The director had asked 'Mother' not to put her hands on her hips as 'This makes you look a bit too stern'.

Next a close-up was made of the 'Doctor' doing the hearing tests:

10:1 The camera pans left to right as 'Doctor' goes through her routine; the director instructs 'Doctor' during the take, since he already has the master soundtrack for this section and his voice can therefore be removed. 'Doctor' was instructed to listen attentively.  
 10:2 The director reminds the actress that she should be looking for any movement from the baby, and tells her to keep her head up as it is likely to move into a shadow where it will therefore be lost.  
 10:3 The cameraman suggests that the 'Doctor's' 'BA BA BA's' are a little too quiet.



Then a series of takes was made of the test instruments themselves, keeping the camera still:

- 11:1 NG - the cup (in which the spoon was banged) lingers too long in the frame.
- 11:2 This time the cup is removed from the frame and the director decides to print that take.
- 11:3 'Doctor' removes the cup from the frame right to left, which is wrong for continuity with the wider shot.
- 11:4 'Doctor' does the same thing.
- 11:5 The action is therefore repeated, this time removing the cup from frame left to right.

An even bigger close-up was then made of the cup and spoon as an alternative cutaway:

- 12:1 'Doctor' removes the cup and spoon left to right as required.
- 12:2 'Doctor' removes the cup and spoon left to right as required.

Two more big close-ups were then filmed of the instruments as cutaways for slate 8:

- 13:1 Big close-up of the bell, with it being rung and then removed left to right.
- 13:2 Similar.
- 13:3 Similar.
- 14:1 Big close-up of the cup and the bell, using either of 'Doctor's' hands to correspond with the establishing shot.
- 14:2 Similar.
- 14:3 Similar.

Slate 15 was then a shot of 'Baby Sandra' in Big close-up, made as an analogue of the baby's P.O.V. with the camera set very low on the 'baby legs'. This time the child cooperated and all four takes were printed. The sound-recordist meanwhile took some 'wildtracks' of the sound of the bell and the cup and spoon, and the gate was eventually checked at six o'clock.



Neither the cameraman nor the director were happy about the afternoon's shooting, with the former initially dismissing it as 'a waste of time', and the latter attributing much of the difficulty to the presence of a large crew who inevitably distracted the little girl. Weeks later, at the beginning of the editing cycle, the director pinpointed the scene as one of the most difficult of the whole shoot:

If you can get spontaneous reactions, and the reactions that you want, then that is marvellous, but it is a costly process because you have to wait for it to happen... it's very hard to direct a two-year-old deaf girl - to get her there in the first place is difficult enough, but to try to get her to do specific things in a particular way is very hard. It took a lot of time and a lot of footage, and I still think now what I thought at the time, that one of the main problems (of the film) is going to be with her. She wears me out.

It was also unfortunate that this difficulty occurred on the first day's shooting, since both the crew and the director were to some extent on trial, with all sides learning how to work together. Some of the unit confided that they had effectively 'turned off' after the first day, and had simply decided to do the job and then return home as soon as possible, and this tended to undermine the director's desire to generate a 'creative common sense' within the unit. The problems were compounded by the enforced necessity of having to film another of the more difficult scenes on that same day. Because of the earlier problems with manning the units, the shoot had been put back some weeks, and this meant that the shooting of the fairground scenes had had to be brought forward in relation



to the internal schedule of the shoot (because the dates when the fair was to be in Bradford had already been fixed). Apart from the practical difficulty of having to film this scene achronologically, the producer had originally wanted to shoot it after the main actress had had time to really understand the part, since the fairground episode marked a pivotal point in the original girl's life. It is here that she meets the 'middle-class boyfriend', whose character had to be well-established from the fairground onwards in order that the subsequent events would appear to be credible. The social difference between the two young people also had to be signified and yet subordinated to the boy's genuine interest in Sandra as an attractive young woman - her handicap notwithstanding - and the girl's capacity for simply having fun needed to be indicated too. The director consequently wanted the scene to generate a great deal of 'natural warmth' as he put it, and he also pointed out that the original girl had really been over the moon about meeting this boy and that they had eventually become engaged to be married:

The main objective for (the fairground scene) is to try to establish the beginning of this fantastic relationship which was to last for two whole years. Even though he later made her pregnant, scarred her and was going out with another girl before that, it was nevertheless very good for a long while, so we have to get the beginning spot on.

In order to prepare for the scene, the director had taken the main actress and the 'boyfriend' out to the fairground on the evening before the main unit had arrived in Bradford so that they could get to know each other and form a good impression of the fairground



itself before they actually came to shoot it during the evening of the first day's shooting. The scene was to be a 'night' shoot, so the unit had come back to the hotel after doing the hospital scenes to have some tea and wait for it to get dark. Providing they used some very fast film known as 'Chemtone', the cameraman had decided that artificial lights would not be needed in addition to the fairground's own lighting, so strictly speaking there was no need for the lighting crew to come out to the fair. Similarly, there was no need for props or any additional design work, special effects or action vehicles, and the director had, indeed, requested that only a minimum crew should go out to the fair. In the event another four members of the unit appeared there in addition to the basic unit (Cameraman + assistant, Soundman + assistant, Director and P.A.) but as it turned out, these additional people proved to be invaluable in helping with 'crowd control'.

One of the reasons for requesting a minimum crew was that the fair was a working, public event, and the director did not want to attract too much attention upon the unit or the actors - partly because of the problem of eye-contact from people in the crowd which I mentioned above, and partly because the director wanted the crowd to look and behave normally. People almost inevitably did start staring at the camera during the very first shot, however, and two of the first five takes were marked down as 'NG' for this reason.



Another minor problem concerned the sound department. Both the actors had been equipped with radio microphones so that the action could be freely followed by the hand-held camera without the fear of finding a boomed microphone creeping into shot. The radio mikes also allowed the actors to wander about incognito whilst being filmed from some distance away, without, that is, having the soundman follow them about, since he could monitor their speech from the camera's position. The main problem, however, was that these microphones were also picking up the music coming from the fairground rides, which occasionally drowned the actor's dialogue, so after some persuasion the owner of the noisiest roundabout agreed to turn the volume of the music down a little.

Problems of this nature are to be expected and can be easily resolved, but the chief problem with the fairground scene was neither fully expected nor easily rectified. This was the action and the dialogue itself, and particularly that of the 'boyfriend'. Of the sixteen takes made for two different plates in which the 'boyfriend' appeared all were rejected; first of all the actor anticipated the action by walking straight up to the girl as she was shooting targets in a rifle-stall, looking as if he knew what he was going to do in advance. This may have led an audience to make the connotation that the couple already knew one another, and the director felt that the approach should in any case be more gentle and casual. Similarly, the 'boyfriend' had to appear to be fairly surprised by the girl's deafness while remaining more interested in the girl herself, and the director felt that the actor was altogether too serious about it all;



lacking the 'flipness' which had come across during the casting sessions. There were also some problems with the dialogue; much of this had to be ad libbed in the context of the noise and bustle of the fair, and some of the ad libs had to be changed. The 'boyfriend' at one point, for instance, said 'Oh good shot' in response to 'Sandra's' shooting which was felt to be far too middle-classish, and changed to 'That's a great shot'.

Filming at the fairground did not finish until about 10.30 that evening, and the remaining unit were understandably tired and not a little displeased with the day. The actor playing the 'boyfriend' was particularly unhappy, but later explained what he thought had happened at the fair:

When we came to do the actual shooting we came up against all the people having to be held back - people staring at us and so on, which hadn't happened when we went to the fair on our own of course. Also it was a lot colder than the previous evening, and there were a lot of things happening which we didn't expect. Because I couldn't get the takes right at the beginning I thought Jesus, it's all my fault, so I started to get really uptight about the whole thing. I was overconfident when we went in, but then I got hit by the cold\* and people getting in the way and the pressure from the stallholders who kept saying 'Get it right this time'. You can't tell an actor that, and the director was saying 'Smile' - and I couldn't smile - so I started to think 'What the F's wrong - why can't I smile?' and we later realised that it was the dialogue. We went back to the director's room afterwards and worked it out that night. The problem was that it was a very naturalistic scene, but the dialogue wasn't. It was like trying to do Shakespeare in hippy gear. I thought it was the physical movement which was wrong, but actually it was the dialogue. I had been feeling very guilty about it, but it was also the script that was wrong too.

(NB it was indeed extremely cold in the fairground, and everyone was tending to tense themselves against it this)



Whether or not the actor's conclusions were entirely accurate, the fairground scene was extensively revamped and re-shot over the following few evenings as described in the next section. Day one of the shoot nevertheless continued for the director into the small hours of the morning as he worked on that scene and dealt with the plans for the next day's shooting in 'Mother's' house.



Re-shooting the fairground scene

After the abortive first attempt to shoot part of the fairground sequence towards the end of the first day, the director returned to that location for each of the following three evenings to re-shoot it and complete those shots which had not yet been attempted - four evenings were therefore spent on this sequence instead of the two which had originally been allocated. In order to show how the sequence was eventually made I will consequently describe what happened before returning to the day-time shooting.

Having stayed up until 1.15 in the morning, going over the 'rifle-stall' shots with the main actress and the actor playing her 'boyfriend', the director first returned to the fairground with a minimum crew to do a retake of that scene. This time the main shot was accomplished in four takes, only one of which was H.G., and this was because too many people were staring at the camera. Instead of coming straight up to the girl, the 'boyfriend' now ambled into shot from camera left behind the girl (The camera was inside the rifle-stall - looking out past the girl as she fires at the targets). He then walked past her, to stop, turn round and observe her shooting. The director now felt that an audience would have time to pick out the boyfriend in their own time, since there is no real indication that he is anything other than another onlooker until he starts to speak to the girl. More importantly, since he has approached the girl from behind the 'boyfriend' is introduced even more casually because - been deaf - 'Sandra' does not immediately react to his dialogue. The 'boyfriend' is therefore forced to repeat his dialogue which could imply more than a passing interest on his behalf, and an interest which is prior to his realising that she is deaf. The director and the actors were far happier with this version of the scene, and the former went on to take a number of close-ups of the targets being knocked over (as intercuts for 'Sandra's' P.O.V.) before returning to the hotel. Only the rifle-stall



owner was becoming a little perturbed by the end of the evening as he was losing custom during the filming, but the associate producer had assured him that the company would 'see him alright' before the unit left.

On the following evening the unit returned again to retake what would become the closing shot of the sequence, where the couple are setting off home together through the fair. They had tried to film this the first night, but again the dialogue had proved to be unsatisfactory and too many people had been looking at the camera. This time the shot was taken from further away so that it was not so easy for bystanders to identify exactly who was being filmed, so at least half of the six takes were judged to be alright. The main instruction which the director gave here was to tell the actors to walk evenly, since they were tending to move in spurts, and there was a technical fault on take two since the camera's battery was (avoidably) going flat.

A completely new section was tried next, and this was to be some shots of 'Sandra' and the 'boyfriend' enjoying themselves on some of the fair's rides. In order to portray the speed and excitement of this, the director decided to sit the couple in one of the cars of a 'Waltzer' - a ride in which individual cars rotate about their own axis at some speed while being in turn rotated around a common axis on which several of these cars are attached. The combined effect of this dual motion can exert a considerable force upon the occupants, but to film the action the cameraman joined the actors in one of the cars. This particular ride employed a number of teenage boys to enhance the already heart-stopping effects by whipping the cars round by hand even faster than they naturally went, and several of these boys indulged themselves in the current predilection for wearing the drap coats and D.A.'s of the teddy-boy era. Since this section of the film was set in 1964, the director co-opted one of these boys to whirl the actors' car around, and after a little modification from make-up, he started to whip the car up to speed, forcing the cameraman to film one-



handed as he hung on to the side of the car with his spare hand. Another shot was then tried here, this time with the camera in a separate car anchored solidly in one position by three of the neo-teddy boys, which would give the actors' car a much greater relative impression of speed; the soundman being (as in the earlier shot) in a separate car again, from which a Sennheisser directional rifle mike was being aimed at the actors.

By 9.15pm the actors had been installed in a 'Skydiver', an even more awesome machine in which pivoted cars rotate around a central arm which starts out in a horizontal plane, and gradually moves up into a near-vertical plane, which has the effect of throwing the cars out in a wide arc fifty feet or so above the ground. Here the actors were once again placed in one car, with the camera in the next one down, followed by the soundman in a third car. After several minutes on this ride the soundman detached himself from his car and bought a hot-dog at a nearby stall, explaining: 'I've got to eat something so that I can throw up'. After a short break to allow more sensitive stomachs to return to normal, one last shot was set up to show the actors buying themselves hot-dogs, and having obtained two acceptable takes the gate was checked for the evening.

The last evening at the fair was necessary since some shots had to be made to provide punctuation for the previous shots. In order to establish the fact that Sandra had gone to the fair on her own, for instance, the director wanted to get some shots of her walking by herself through the fairground for possible insertion before the rifle-stall shots. Two takes were therefore made of the actress wandering through the stalls, and another three of her playing some fruit machines by herself. Several more takes also made of both actors on different rides, and some extra pieces of ad libbed dialogue were filmed so that the director would have plenty of choice in the cutting rooms. As the actor playing the 'boyfriend' explained later, he felt that this extra dialogue was far more 'natural'



than the previous, scripted lines:

When we were doing the speedway and the dodgems (on the fourth evening) the director told me to explain to 'Sandra' what I did for a living, and we'd decided that I would be an estate agent. She of course wouldn't really understand that, but then she wasn't really supposed to care; she was simply having a good time. I was trying to explain about plots of land and houses, making gestures to say 'house' but she was just interested in the situation, which was good. That was the best moment in the fair-ground really, and that was because the director had made me do that, whereas before I hadn't really known what to do. Mind you the actual words are important. I was going to say one of those things I say a lot - 'There you go' - when we bought the hot-dog, but then they didn't say that in 1964; you have to be very careful, 'Fabulous' was the word then. Another thing was the actress's use of 'thumbs-up' sign to mean she'd understood something, which she'd got from the original girl. I repeated that in one instance, and funnily enough that sign was also very popular in that era, people did it all the time. It's a nice touch if you can remember things like that which people used to do, because people will say 'Oh yes, I used to do that, that's good - he's got that.'

In fact the director had felt that the use of the 'thumbs-up' sign was possibly a bit of a cliché, but one of the points which the actor was making was related to the notion of 'major stimulus', where an actor reacts directly to an unexpected event. As he continued:

In the walking sequences at the fair, people were bumping into me on purpose. One guy in particular did it and it annoyed me, and I think it came over that I was annoyed as I said 'Excuse me!' or something like that. That sort of thing is not something which you could have easily scripted, and in fact the further you get away from the script the better to some extent, if you want it to be realistic.

One technique which the director tried out which the actress did not particularly approve of was also used at the fairground. Since she and the 'boyfriend' would later have to do some fairly intimate scenes together, at one point during the fairground shooting the director asked the two actors to improvise a kiss and cuddle together, which they did, under the impression that it was a genuine take. In fact it was a genuine take and appears in the continuity notes as such, but at the time the director had told the actors that he'd used it to get them used to one another prior to shooting the scenes in question, and not as part of the fairground sequence. The actress and the actor concerned disagreed over the legitimacy of this ploy and the judgement has to be left to them.



But what this illustrates is the attention to detail which is deemed to be necessary in reifying one's intentions in a film. It is a fairly obvious point of detail that the actors' clothes for the fairground sequence should have been correct for the period, for example, ('Sandra' wore a shortish skirt and a shiny plastic maroon jacket, and the 'boyfriend' had a battle-tunic type jacket a propos the mid sixties) but the director had also taken care to check the 'boyfriend's' watch and the fact that the actor normally wore glasses. The actor's own watch was considered to be a little too modern, so he borrowed the floor-manager's older-looking model instead - as regards the glasses, the actor had been warned not to wear them at all during the time he was in Bradford, not to enable him to get used to not wearing them on set, but to allow the bridge-marks on his nose to disappear.

### Day three

The director had hired an entire house for most of the shoot to be used for interior and exterior shots of Sandra's first home. It was a genuine back-to-back in a cobbled back street of Bradford, and both it and its immediate surroundings had been extensively altered by the design department. As I mentioned above, a house opposite had been restored so that it matched the other houses in the street, a modern lamp-post had been changed, and the backyard of 'Sandra's house' had been cleared of several tons of rubbish and soil. Immediately before the shoot started, the interior had also been stripped and wallpapered by an Elstree painter halfway to the director's instructions, bearing in mind considerations of period and the family's economic situation. I say 'halfway' since on viewing the house, the director had decided that the overall decor was far too dark, and the whole of the parlour had had to be re-wallpapered before shooting could begin. Although the wallpaper was new, it had been 'dirtied' by spraying dark paint around the edges of the room in the same way that a studio set would be 'distressed' in order to achieve the desired degree of age or use.



The entire contents of the house, chiefly centred upon the parlour, had been supplied by the design department - from tables and chairs down to sauce bottles and cutlery. All the props had been chosen to be in period (the first scenes to be shot in the house would be set in the early fifties) and a good many of them had come from ATV's stock back at Elstree. Some props, like period 'OXO' tins, were worth quite a large sum, and had probably appeared in more programmes than most actors. On examining the parlour at the start of the second day's shooting, the director nevertheless felt that it was a little overdressed, and asked the designer to remove some of the props. Although he admitted that he found it quite difficult to visualise the degree of poverty in which the family would have been living in the early fifties, he quickly rejected some saucers which had been placed on the table - 'They are poor people - they wouldn't have saucers' and a Spanish-looking vase on the mantelpiece - 'They didn't go to Spain for their holidays in those days'. A small jug made in the shape of a cottage was simply rejected as 'Too naff', but for the most part the director just moved things around, basing his judgements, as he said, on his own experience of being brought up in a working area in Stockton. The attention to detail was really very complete; even the electrical sockets had been changed to 'fifties-style round holed ones, and the photographs on the mantelpiece were a mixture of genuine pictures of the family and stills of the actors who were to play their parts.

Two technical problems had arisen (apart from having to re-wallpaper the room), firstly a modern television aerial was still visible in the street outside, and a rigger had to be called in at the last moment to temporarily remove it, and secondly the electricity board had been asked to provide a 100 amp electrical supply on a temporary basis, instead of the normal 13 amp supply, which they had failed to do. This was theoretically required to power the large lights which would be used at this location, but in the event the unit's electricians managed to keep them going through the



judicious use of several feet of fuse-wire.

Lighting the house in fact required some ingenuity, since in the limited space available there was no question of having very many lights inside.

The first scene to be made here was to be of 'Mother' scrubbing some clothes at the sink in the tiny kitchen, so in order to light this a large sheet of polystyrene was pinned onto a wall in the alleyway opposite the kitchen window from which the light from 'blondes' would be bounced through the window as 'sunlight'. Since the alley was only about five or six feet wide, the more powerful HM lights could not be used as they might have melted the polystyrene from such a short distance. (these lights being thirty to forty times more powerful than an average light-bulb)

The position of the camera itself for getting a shot of 'Mother' was also determined by the dimensions of the house, and the scrubbing-board had to be artificially raised on some wooden blocks from the sink such that 'Mother' could be clearly seen in the frame. The first rehearsal of this scene was started by about 10.30 am, and 'Mother' was told to look engrossed in her solitary, domestic task - 'All you are concerned about is the washing' the director instructed, the immediate presence of fourteen crew-members notwithstanding. For the first take of the day, however 'Mother' scrubbed a bit too intensely for the director's liking, and he advised her to 'think of something nice' while she is doing it. The third take was considered to be the best one, and the camera's lens was in any case getting steamed up by then, so the shot was taken as complete. Six more takes were nevertheless made as intercut close-ups of 'Mother's' face and hands, most of which were printed with the exception of one where the microphone slipped into shot.

As the writer had explained, it was important to let the audience know that Sandra was deaf from fairly early on in the film without introducing this piece of information too obviously. This was partly due to the fact that



the writer felt an audience needed to be attracted to watch in the first place, and by involving them in a discovery of the deafness it was felt that they would then be more inclined to continue watching. It is also quite difficult to tell whether a young child is deaf, and until comparatively recently it has been extremely difficult to measure the degree of deafness which a young child is suffering, so Sandra's family had themselves only slowly realised that something was amiss. Hence the introduction of the fact of the deafness was to be made gradually as both a dramatic ploy and as a point of authenticity.

Following the dictum 'Don't tell me - show me' it had therefore been decided to connote the deafness through the child's non-reaction to a stimulus, rather than to denote it through dialogue, so an early scene was to show 'Mother' knocking something off the kitchen table, to the sound of which the child would then fail to react.

This scene was filmed on the second full day of shooting immediately after the 'scrubbing' scene described above. The director had initially decided that 'Mother' should knock a tin from the table, as a cup or plate would be 'too dramatic', but the cameraman argued that since the style of the shooting throughout part one of the film was going to be very simple (with very little movement from the camera) the action itself needed to be fairly dramatic to save the audience from becoming bored. After some discussion the director concurred, and agreed to return to the original idea of having 'Mother' knock a ceramic jug onto the floor, which would then smash spectacularly near the child.

The shot was consequently set up with 'Mother' laying the table and 'Baby Sandra' sitting camera left on the floor, playing with some toys and facing away from the table so that she couldn't see what 'Mother' was doing. The cameraman suggested setting the camera up on a tripod at a height of about 4'6" such that 'Mother's' action of laying the table would be in the centre of the frame and the articles on the table would



be clearly visible. At first the cameraman tried using quite a narrow lens so that he could pan the camera and follow the action of the jug falling to the floor, but the limited space available in the room meant that he could not get the camera far enough away from the subject to include both the jug and 'Mother' in the frame. A wider lens was therefore tried, and even then the camera had to be placed hard up against the opposite wall of the room. Using the wide (12mm) lens would, however, make the room appear to be relatively large, whereas the point of filming in a genuine back-to-back house was in part intended to denote its limited space, and therefore to connote a particular socio-economic status for its occupants.

This worried the director at the time, and remained a problem when he came to edit the film:

One of the main problems was the size of the rooms. I'm not very happy about some of the scenes in Mum's house because there simply wasn't the space to get the shots. In the studio you can have a floating wall so that you can pull the camera back and still get the scene in its right size. Here I think I found the size of the rooms very limiting because you find that you are sometimes too close to the action, and it is therefore very hard to get the information across - to actually see the child on the floor for instance.

In order to get the camera far enough away from the subject one of the doors into the room was removed and the table 'cheated' right over to the far side of the room ('Cheating' means rearranging a subject in between takes made from different angles, or placing actors or objects in unnatural positions to give the camera room to manoeuvre without damaging the apparent logic of a shot from the camera's point of view). Since more of the room would then be in shot, the lighting also had to be altered, and another sheet of polystyrene was pinned onto the wall opposite the window to reflect the incoming light from two HMI's standing out in the yard.

Once again, it was vital that 'Baby Sandra' should not be distracted by



any extraneous movement in the room since she might then appear to be reacting to the jug, so the director asked everyone who was not directly involved to leave the room. The only people left were the cameraman, director, assistant cameraman, P.A., Sound recordist and his assistant, the latter's job being to hide under the kitchen table to catch the jugs (or 'repeats') that had to be used. This precaution proved to be worthwhile, since seventeen takes were subsequently made with eleven or twelve of them being unusable because the child looked round or reacted in some way to the movement. Five takes were then made in close-up of the jug itself hitting the floor, since in three of the takes the jug failed to break, and the cameraman also took a number of shots of the child in big close-up to serve as a reverse for the main shot.

The next scene to be shot was set in the same room, but this time the period was four years later; 1955, where 'Mother' is seen teaching an older version of 'Sandra' some speech exercises. Again, the little girl playing 'Sandra' was genuinely deaf and actually six years old at the time. She wore a modern double hearing aid which had to be replaced and had been provided with period clothes by wardrobe and the continuity facial mole by make-up. Each of the three girls who played the younger versions of Sandra had been chosen for their broad similarity in appearance with each other and with the main actress, but the difficulty in finding three such girls who were also deaf meant that there had to be some compromises, and one of these was the continuity of eye-colouring. All four of the 'Sandras' had slightly differently coloured eyes, but this anomaly was very unlikely to be visible given the relatively low definition of a television picture so no attempt was made to obtain the matched contact lenses which might have been necessary had the film been destined for the cinema.

In addition to considering such technical points of continuity, the



PLATE - 15



Three versions of 'Sandra'. To the left is 'Sandra' as a young teenager; to the right is the girl as a child, and in the centre is the main actress.

(Photo. courtesy of ATV Network Ltd.)





First photograph taken -  
6-17-37 (1937) - 2nd photo - 7-1-37 (1937)

Filming the children playing outside 'Mother's' house.  
'Sandra' is the little girl on the extreme left.



director also had to attend to the parameters of changing period. In four years the room's wallpaper may not have been changed, but the tablecloth was, for instance swapped for a different one and some of the small props were rearranged to help signify that time had passed.

'Mother's' hair had been altered, her clothes changed, for this scene the make-up department had given her some lipstick. They had made sure that the colour of this lipstick was one which was fashionable at the time, but the director felt that it was rather too strong for a 'working-class mum' and asked for it to be toned down a little. 'Mother's' cardigan was also judged to be too colourful, but the wardrobe department had only brought the one example with them from the hotel so the director tried out his own cardigan on the actress. Everyone agreed that this looked far too modern, so one of the dressers was dispatched to obtain a selection of cardigans in muted greys and browns.

The director next turned his attention to the aesthetics of the shot.

'Mother' was to be camera left with 'Child Sandra' camera right, with the camera favouring 'Mother' and the kitchen door visible in the background. With this angle there was, however, a tendency for the child to turn her head too far away from the camera, so it was moved round anticlockwise such that both people were more in profile. This in turn meant that the door was no longer in shot and the background had then become a blank wall. If you are shooting against such a background there is a danger of losing perspective or depth in a shot, since the audience is deprived of contextual clues, so a treadle sewing-machine was moved such that it was just in shot and a number of pictures were pinned onto the wall itself. The director then started to wonder whether the pictures looked as if they had been specially placed, and he removed one, substituted a calendar for another 'because it looks softer' and moved a third so that only its edge was in shot.



be a little over-enthusiastic, resulting in the abandonment of one take in a cloud of smoke. The scene was, however, finished by 5.30 in the afternoon which enabled the crew to take an extended break before filming the 'night' scene in the fish and chip shop.

The fish and chip shop scene was intended to demonstrate one of the difficulties which a young deaf girl might encounter away from the the environment of the special school or the home. A third version of Sandra was played here by the oldest of the three deaf children whom the director had found at the special school, and this thirteen-year old was directed to buy a fish supper in a real shop manned by three actors. She had been given a note asking for haddock, but the fish-fryer was to explain that they only had cod, so in the resulting confusion - caused by her failure to understand - a waiting customer became impatient and had the line 'Come on Dummy!' Following the pattern of previous scenes, this one was accomplished through an establishing shot and a series of Close-ups and reverses in thirteen takes for four different shots. Two additional observations can nevertheless be made; firstly the audience needed to know that the location was a fish shop, and some sort of connective was felt to be needed in order to get 'Sandra' into the shop. In the original script an extra scene had been inserted showing 'Sandra' hurrying along a street such that an audience would be prompted to ask 'Where from?' or 'Where to?' - answer: 'To the fish and chip shop'. In the event the director decided to save a scene by establishing both the shop and the girl's approach by shooting the establishing shot from inside the shop, looking out through the window at 'Sandra' coming down the street. The second point concerns the way in which the scene was to be cut together; having established the participants in a conversation through a wide shot, the ensuing close-ups are then usually cut together according to appropriate cues in the dialogue. Since the dialogue in the fish and chip scene was basically one-sided and discontinuous a 'natural' cutting point may have been difficult to find, so



one was provided in having the fish-fryer walk out, and then back into shot as he prepared the supper. Having exited the frame, he thus provided the opportunity for the editor to cut to a shot of 'Sandra' as she waits on the other side of the counter, and the cut back to him could then be made as he comes back into the frame.

The last scene shot this day was the second attempt at the fairground described above.

#### Day Four

The first scene to be filmed this day was to be one of the very early ones showing the as yet unidentified 'Father' drinking in a pub. The scene was set in 1948, so the props men had been out to the location early to remove any modern signs or articles in the real pub, which was being used, and to add a number of period props. Some of these had had to be hired from a commercial property company (at a rate of 10% of their value per week) and the designer explained that one had to be very careful in choosing such objects for a comparatively recent period, that is to say a period which could fall within an audience's lifetime, since people could remember what things were like. Considerable care was therefore taken in obtaining period cigarette packets, newspapers and money, and modern items which could not be removed (like the beer-pumps) were disguised or hidden behind other objects. All the existing beer bottles were also turned around so that the audience would not be able to see the labels, but the existing decor and furniture was used as found.

One problem had arisen insofar as the props department had been told that shooting would only take place in one corner of the bar, so they had only brought along a limited supply of period props, and since it had subsequently been decided to use the whole of the pub interior, these objects had to be spread rather thinly throughout. This scene was also the first one of the shoot in which 'real people' were co-opted into the film (apart,



that is, from the three deaf children). The barman, for example, was the pub's tenant, and a couple of regulars had been asked to sit at either end of the bar having had their clothes adapted by the wardrobe department. Several rehearsals were conducted, with the director instructing the real customers not to take any notice of the unit itself in order to avoid having them stare at the camera, and several tiny points of detail were corrected (such as allowing the frothy tankard beer to go flat to more like proper ale) before making some fifteen takes.

In the event the whole scene was never used in the film itself, and its removal indirectly led to a total re-ordering of the first few minutes of *DUMM*. This, as I mentioned above, was due to the fact that the pub was currently being used as the real Sandra's local, and the sister had felt that the producer's search for authenticity was getting too close for comfort at that point since a direct identification of the real girl was then possible. The fact that the unit had been filming in this pub certainly got back to the sister very quickly, and she had been in some distress at the time which caused a number of repercussions within the unit itself. The original social worker had, for example, arrived on the scene at this point and had explained to the main actress (in her role as intermediary between the producer and the real girl) that while the girl was fully aware that she would not physically appear in the film, the family as a whole was rather less clear about the specificity of the reconstruction. In other words, the sister clearly realised that the film was going to be based upon the real Sandra's life, but she may not have fully understood the implications of the producer's intention to reconstruct that life, so filming in that particular pub precipitated a temporary panic. As a result the scene was dropped from the finished film, and at the time a number of those members of the unit who knew about the incident felt that there was a distinct possibility of the whole production being stopped prematurely. From the producer's point



of view, the incident represented a 'shift of emphasis' on the family's behalf, and he felt relieved that such a crisis had occurred at the beginning of the shoot rather than half-way through. Several people felt that filming in the pub was distinctly ill-advised, but for the most part the producer had been particularly careful not to involve the original family; names had been changed, the crew had been told not to speak to the press and the producer had at least intended that the size of the unit should be kept to a minimum in order to enable the whole operation to be carried out in 'low profile'. Unfortunately, Bradford is not an especially big city, and the real Sandra was well-known in the districts in which the filming was carried out, so many people knew exactly who she was and what the film was about. On at least one occasion the actress was, for example, mistaken for the real girl whilst filming in another working pub, and a taxi-operator who took myself and an actor out to one of the locations turned out to be a friend of the original girl and knew where the unit had been working all week and who the subject of the film was (so it's a good bet that most other taxi-operators knew too.)

The very existence of the film could thus have depended upon an order from the production company to cease operations had, for instance, the family decided to go into litigation, and the film was in any case changed insofar as the pub scene was removed. As a result of removing this scene, several other scenes were later to be reorganised or lost altogether. One of these was the next one filmed on this third full shooting day, a scene which had originally been intended to carry the film's title caption in which the man seen in the pub was identified as 'Father'.

This scene was shot in the back yard of 'Mother's' house and was therefore the first day-time exterior scene. As such, a number of points can be made; firstly the camera was more at the mercy of fluctuating light conditions, for while artificial lighting was used, the amount of available natural



light was proportionately greater. Since the light was to remain constant across different shots in the same scene, an unavoidable change in the light can therefore lead to the rejection of individual takes even if the action and dialogue is right. This happened on one of the takes for this scene, where probably the best take had to be scrapped because the sun went behind a cloud. Similarly, a take might have to be rejected for some other 'natural' occurrence - there is an apocryphal story that an aeroplane's vapour-trail is clearly visible during one scene in a John Wayne western, and during one take in 'Mother's' yard the sound of a jet 'plane was picked up by the sound recordist (which would have been an anachronism in 1948).

Other 'natural' events were, however, deliberately used by the director in order to enhance the authenticity of a scene. For this particular scene one of Bradford's ubiquitous dogs was encouraged to appear in shot, and a member of the unit was sent off to track down a rag-and-bone man who could be heard calling out in the distance so that he could be recorded on wildtrack.

The third scene of the day was intended to be used directly after the 'consultant' scene described above to demonstrate the immediate effect of the news (that Sandra was, indeed, deaf) upon the family unit, and in particular to illustrate 'Father's' reaction through his dialogue: 'Bloody hell. Where's it come from? Where's it come from?' The scene was eventually rejected in the editing because the director decided that it was superfluous given the fact that the family's immediate reaction could probably be taken as read, and the father's irritation and failure to understand would in any case be illustrated elsewhere. Furthermore, the problem over the consultant's reference to 'professional help' could be clarified by cutting straight to the source of that reference - the special school - without breaking the cognitive flow by inserting the 'Family



The fourth scene shot at the 'Mother's' house this day would in fact be the one in which 'Father's' ne'er-do-well character and his rejection of the problem would be reinforced, with the main intention of the scene being to highlight the domestic upheaval which having a deaf child can cause and to illustrate the futile but natural attempt to apportion blame for the misfortune. 'Mother's' dialogue, for example, includes the line: "Well it's got to be somebody's fault; these things just don't happen."

The main shot was set up with the camera as far away from the action as possible, using a 12mm lens in order to cover the wide angle of play.

'Father' was sat in an armchair camera left; trying to listen to the football results on the radio, 'Mother' was sat in another chair on the other side of the fireplace with a child on her lap, and the six year old version of Sandra was sat in the centre foreground at the table, drawing some pictures and singing. All this was emphasised by having the camera on a high tripod - about six feet - looking down at the girl from approximately the same angle that she would have looked down to her father from the table.

Since 'Father' was having some difficulty listening to the football results because of his daughter's singing, he was instructed to turn up the volume on the radio, and to irritately shout at the girl - "For christ's sake shut up". She of course, could neither hear nor see him, so eventually he was instructed to leap up and swing the girl around to face him, thus causing 'Mother' to defend her daughter which precipitated an argument about the source of the deafness:

MOTHER

There's no one deaf in my family

FATHER



FATHER

Don't start that again

MOTHER

Don't start what?

FATHER

Look, it's not my bloody fault

MOTHER

What about your Auntie?

Shooting the scene proved to be an emotional experience since the little girl's reaction to being grabbed by 'Father' was perfectly genuine. Since she really could not hear the dialogue she was genuinely startled when he swung her round to face him, and started to cry. This reaction was consistent with the demands of the scene, but it also threw the actors' concentration, and on the first take there were several 'fluffs' in the ensuing dialogue. Two more takes were made on this slate, and another four from the same angle - but only up to the point where 'Father' moved to grab the girl so that she had time to recover. If, for instance, the little girl was still visibly upset as a result of previous takes this would have anticipated the action, so care had to be taken to make sure that she was relatively happy up to the point at which 'Father' grabbed her. Six further takes were then made to provide cutaway close-ups of 'Mother' and 'Father' and the sound recordist made two wildtracks. The first of these was of 'Sandra' singing 'Happy birthday' to cover that part of the action where she had stopped singing as a result of the first take, and the second wildtrack was of 'Mother' delivering an extra line of dialogue, "Don't do that, poor mite, she can't hear you." which could be inserted over one of the cutaways to cover the fluffs.

The actress playing 'Mother' found the whole experience quite draining, but both 'Father' and the director argued that there was no other way in which



the scene could have been filmed. It would have been practically impossible to ask the little girl to cry on cue, and her real mother had been consulted beforehand about the director's intentions for the scene. The finished scene as it appears in the film is nevertheless qualitatively different from most of the other scenes insofar as it records a perfectly genuine reaction rather than a reconstructed one.

The third session at the fairground was carried out during the evening of this same day and it is important to note that the core unit had thus been clocking up a twelve to fourteen hour day for each of the first three days' shooting, with the director himself putting in considerably more hours than that in planning each day's work. He had in fact been getting only about five or six hours sleep, since at that stage he was also having to travel to Leeds in the early morning in order to view the rushes on equipment provided by Yorkshire TV, and confessed to being extremely tired towards the end of the first week. The personal pressures of bearing the responsibility as director and producer for more than twenty-five crew-members, seventy actors, the concerns of the original family and the film itself should not be undervalued, and the producer himself was privately concerned about being able to maintain a high level of concentration throughout the remaining four weeks. 'You have to remember' he confided, 'that this may be the last film I ever make.'

#### Day five

In the original script two successive scenes had been planned to introduce the fact of Sandra's deafness. The second of these had been the one where 'Mother' knocks the jug onto the floor, and this was to have been preceded by a scene outside a greengrocer's shop where a noisy van was to have driven past, provoking a reaction from 'Mother' and the greengrocer but not from 'Baby Sandra' as she sits in her pushchair.

The director had decided to change this by setting essentially the same



action outside 'Mother's house. Here 'mother' would be seen talking to 'Auntie Amie' as they walk up the cobbled alleyway through to the back yard, with 'Sandra' in her pushchair. The two women would then be seen reacting to the sound of a coalman delivering coal down a chute into the cellar, to which the baby would, again, fail to react. In locating the action outside the house, its exterior could thus be related to its interior, and the director felt that this would help an audience to form a more complete picture of the immediate environment.

A period (1949/50) 'coal-lorry' had thus been hired for the day, and the props men had prepared a number of sacks of coal to be used as repeats. Unfortunately pushing the pushchair over the cobblestones proved to be very awkward, in addition to which 'Baby Sandra' seemed to have developed a vigorous dislike for the actress playing 'Mother'. Even having taken the precaution of placing the child's real mother at the end of the alleyway as bait failed to stop the child crying, so many of the thirteen takes which were made were unusable (since the child's crying could have been taken as a reaction to the sound of the coal being delivered.) In the end this scene was rejected altogether, partly because the action was ultimately felt to be unsatisfactory, and partly because, as the director pointed out, it repeated the information which was contained in the 'jug-breaking' scene. There was a strong feeling during the editing that there was no need to keep hammering home the fact of the little girl's deafness, so by Occam's razor, the 'jug-breaking' scene was retained at the expense of the 'coalman' one.

The next scene filmed this day was used in the finished film, and was eventually to be inserted after the 'football pools' scene in which Sandra had been made to cry by her father. It was to show the child playing in the street with a group of other young children, and was intended to make the point that the little girl was perfectly normal in all respects other than being deaf. In terms of the overall pace of the film, this scene could



also provide a punctuative pause in the narrative by allowing an audience to simply observe the children without having to follow dialogue.

Two factors could help to mark off this scene from those on either side.

Firstly the action itself was free and spontaneous, and secondly this was enhanced by filming it with a hand-held camera. Since the shots were hand-held, or shot in 'Wobblyscope' as the camera crew called it, the cameraman was less able to control his field of view, so anything which could potentially get into the shot had to be authentic and correct for the period.

Hence all the cars in the street had to be cleared, and all the onlookers had to be kept out of the way. Similarly, the sound-recordist and the

director himself had to make sure that they were always behind the camera as it followed the children's action. Unfortunately, the owner of one of the cars which was parked in the street could not be found, so the car was covered up with a tarpaulin, which then made it look rather odd - 'like

the rock of gibraltar' the director thought. Eventually a period van was parked in front of this car to hide it from the camera and eighteen

different takes were then made of the children playing. The other children involved were local kids who had been provided with period clothes by the wardrobe department, and the director instructed them where he wanted them to go while the camera was running for several of the takes, since his voice could be removed by using sound takes from other shots. The main problem for the cameraman was that this scene was filmed entirely in natural daylight, so as the camera moved about the light would change. The focus-puller consequently had to adjust the camera's aperture during each take, and the children had to be warned not to dive into the shadows caused by the houses to save them from becoming completely lost.

One of the problems which a deaf child has to learn to cope with is other

people's comments about his or her gesticulations or half-formed speech-sounds. To illustrate this a scene had been included where child Sandra

is travelling with her Auntie on a bus. The original script outlined this scene as follows:





16.4.77 Manda Ngyor (S.2) sits on equipment box between takes.

'Child Sandra' takes a coffee break prior to filming the scene on the bus.



CHILD SANDRA is sitting with AUNTIE AMIE. Something in the street attracts CHILD SANDRA'S attention and she turns to AUNTIE AMIE pointing excitedly and speaking strange, half-formed words.

A WOMAN PASSENGER on the next seat stares at CHILD SANDRA, startled and disturbed by the jumbled speech sounds.

CHILD SANDRA sees the glance, and is immediately silent. AUNTIE AMIE tries to restore the child's confidence.

This was the next scene to be filmed, and a period bus had been hired for the purpose. Several extras had also been hired to be passengers on the bus, and more of the local children had been found to ride in it too. They all had to have their hair cut or tied up beneath hats by the make-up department, and wardrobe had supplied a number of junior period costumes. This particular scene had in fact caused the wardrobe supervisor a number of headaches, since the fact that she would have to supply so many costumes had not, she considered, been made sufficiently clear to her. Everyone was nevertheless kitted out by improvising a number of themes with scarves and handkerchiefs, and the bus set off with the camera up on the top deck, looking back down the length of the bus.

It had been the intention to do the bus scene in the immediate neighbourhood of 'Mother's' house, but being jubilee year, a street party had started up in a nearby street which might have caused some problems for the sound recordist, so the bus was taken off to another part of the city. The director found a 'nice hill' for the bus to go down near the fair-ground and the first take was made here as the driver let the vehicle travel slowly downhill in first gear. The noise of the engine nevertheless completely drowned 'Auntie Amie's' dialogue, so the bus was taken back up to the top of the hill again with the intention of having it coast down with the engine switched off. Unfortunately the bus had hydraulic brakes which would therefore not operate if the engine was not running, so the engine was kept idling while the driver kept the speed down with the brakes. The combination of an idling engine and use of brakes then



produced so much vibration that the cameraman could not hold the camera steadily enough to obtain a clear picture. By take three the little girl was also beginning to be fretful, so her real mother was called in to comfort her. After several takes with 'Auntie Amie' sat camera right of 'Sandra', none of which were particularly acceptable because of the camera shake and the child's action, the girl's real mother was substituted for the actress and the camera angle altered so that only her shoulder was in shot. Thus comforted by the presence of her real mother, the child's action was judged to be much better, and 'Auntie's' dialogue was achieved by having the actress speak off camera.

On seeing the rushes for this scene the director nevertheless felt that none of the takes had really worked, and there had also been a number of instances where modern-day traffic, advertising signs and shops had appeared in shot through the bus's windows. (The P.A. had been taking note of such anachronisms. On take nine, for example, she had written down on her continuity sheet 'Two good ones, but Shell garage in background.') The whole scene was consequently rejected during the editing, which again led to a considerable reorganisation of the sequencing of that part of the film. While such decisions were made solely on the basis of the director's understanding of the film as a coherent, meaningful whole, the individual risks should not be undervalued.

Shooting the 'bus' scene, for instance, used up three hours of valuable shooting time, not to mention the cost of hiring the bus in the first place (£50+) and paying the extras (about £20 each) plus film costs. The Eastman Colour Neg II was costing about £60/roll inclusive of printing at that time, and just about a roll had been used up on the bus. (At that point on only the fourth day of shooting, twenty-six rolls had been used, so the total cost of filmstock alone had been more than £1500)



Two more short scenes were filmed this afternoon prior to completing the fairground shooting in the evening. The first of these showed 'Auntie Amie' waiting at a bus stop with 'Baby Sandra', and the second showed the Auntie returning from the bus with 'Child Sandra'. Neither scene raised any particular problems, except certain that this scene would follow the bus scene in the finished film, so to allow for that possibility the costumes and make-up were kept the same.

Day five had been a Saturday, and the Sunday had been set aside as the unit's first rest day during which several members of the crew took the opportunity to travel home to London. The director and cameraman nevertheless spent much of the day checking out locations for the following week's shooting, and the P.A. used the break to catch up on her continuity reports and to sort out a number of expenses claims which she had received from the actors and crew. Day-to-day expenses, facility fees and contracts were chiefly the responsibility of the Associate producer, however, and he took advantage of the rest day to review these in the light of the overall budget and with respect to the director's overall responsibility as producer. The budget had evolved from a very early preliminary estimate of about £20,000 which had been made at the time when the producer was planning to use a very small crew. This estimate had then stabilised at around £48,000 after the scope of the production had been determined by the script, and was running at about £120,000 by the time the final size of the unit was known. This figure, however, represents the 'above-the-line' costs of the production, and would not include the salaries of permanent studio staff or the capital cost of individual pieces of equipment (certain expenses such as replacement lamps - which could be up to £300 for an HMI - might be added to the budget, however.) The budget certainly would cover all the other expenses, including the director's and freelancer's fees, actor's and writer's remuneration, film costs, location payments, insurances, travel and accommodation. A



substantial percentage of the budget had, for example, to be earmarked: for the hotel bill (up to £20,000) and film stock/processing costs (around £10,000), and rather less substantial amounts allocated for actor's fees. Someone like the 'Middleclass boyfriend' would receive about £250, for instance, and the main actress about £750 - less 15% to the agent. Individual location fees would average between £25 and £50, and the actors had been granted £9/day expenses in addition to their accommodation costs, all of which would be worked out by the P.A. and the A.P. in consultation with the producer and in liaison with respective agents and the production office back in London.

#### Day Seven

The entire day had been scheduled for shooting seven different scenes inside 'Mother's house' for various periods between '1957' and '1971'. The parlour had therefore been extensively altered by the design department to signify a time-change from the early fifties. It had been re-wallpapered and painted, the fireplace had been changed to a more modern glazed-tile one and most of the props had been changed or rearranged. The room had therefore undergone a complete transformation, so much so that it could have been a completely different room and the director had felt that some kind of a bridge or continuity-connective was therefore needed in order that the audience would realise that it was the same house. An extra scene had consequently been written to show the third, teenage version of Sandra walking home from school. Since she would be walking up the street which had already been established as her street, and the house's exterior had been unchanged, it was hoped that an audience would then realise that the new interior in fact belonged to the original exterior. This new scene also provided a narrative connective, since the preceeding scene would show 'Sandra' being smacked by a teacher at the school, and the following scene would show her storming into the house, angry and confused. The new scene would thus get the girl from the school to the house.



That scene was accomplished in four takes before the unit moved indoors for the rest of the scenes, the first of which would show the other half of the same action, as 'Sandra' comes into the house. 'Mother' would be doing some ironing here, so the electricians had rigged up a 'practical' iron (ie a working one) in addition to a practical centre light which had been given an uprated bulb and cheated into shot on an extended flex. All the prop furniture looked rather new (much of it had been bought locally by the props buyer) but with minimum lighting it was felt that this would not be noticed. One of the technical problems which the shot involved was related to the cameraman's bete noir - a mirror. A cameraman not only has to follow the action within the frame of his viewfinder, but he has to continually scan that frame for anomalies such as boom-shadows (the shadows caused by the sound-recordist's microphone boom) or reflections in mirrors. In setting up this shot, for instance, it was noticed that some of the crew could be seen reflected in a mirror which hung over the fireplace, and since the camera would have to pan around the room to follow the action, there was also a danger that it too could be reflected, so the mirror was tilted forward with a wedge of paper, thus giving it an unnatural position, but one which would not interfere with the shot.

Two or three rehearsals were made for the scene, with the director asking 'Mother' to be engrossed in her ironing as 'Sandra' comes in the door. She was then told to begin to follow the girl up the stairs, rather than stop at their foot, since otherwise she would 'freeze the scene' as the director put it - stopping at the foot of the stairs being regarded as an unnatural end to the action, whereas having 'Mother' continue up the stairs would provide a natural cutting point. Using the girl's real mother as an interpreter, the director then explained what he wanted her to do. He outlined the motivation of her bad temper - the fact that she had just been reprimanded at school - and suggested that she should try to think of a teacher whom she really hated. As a result the girl worked up a creditably bad mood and the scene was completed in four takes, 'I wonder



which teacher she was thinking of' the sound-recordist mused.

The most difficult transition which the film had to cover was that between the teenage girl and the main actresses. Having introduced the main actress as the fourth and last version of 'Sandra', the film would thereafter focus upon that character so the introduction had to be very carefully handled. In view of this I will examine the scene's construction in some detail.

#### Introducing Sandra 4

In introducing the final version of Sandra the finished film closely followed the structure of the original script. The last time the audience sees 'Sandra 3' - the teenage girl - is in a scene set at the deaf school, where she is being interviewed by the senior mistress. Here the general connotation that the girl is slowly growing up is specifically denoted in the senior mistress's dialogue:

SENIOR MISTRESS

Now that you are getting older, you will soon have your first period. Have you had one yet?

CHILD SANDRA frowns, puzzled.

SENIOR MISTRESS

(Gesturing to the lower abdomen)

Pain - here. Have you had a pain here?

CHILD SANDRA understands. She shakes her head.

SENIOR MISTRESS

Its nothing to be frightened of, nothing bad. It shows you are growing up. Do you understand?

CHILD SANDRA nods her head.



This scene was intended to nudge an audience towards making the connotation that the girl was quite normal, apart from her deafness, and could also help to demonstrate that she was quite bright, since she understands what the senior mistress has to say in a relatively short space of time. More importantly, the scene indicates that the child is approaching sexual maturity; a transition, in other words, from childhood to young-womanhood. The actual transition from one actress to another could therefore be eased by juxtaposing this scene with the next one, which is where the main actress appears for the first time.

The following scene dealt with a visit to 'Mother's house' by a lady social worker some time after the previous scene (three years afterwards, in fact, although there is no precise clue to the time-gap in the film itself). The ostensive purpose of the scene being to illustrate the paradox between the deaf school's method of teaching speech rather than sign language and Sandra's inability to learn speech because of her profound deafness. As the social worker pointed out in her dialogue:

Most deaf children have some hearing; they can learn speech. Sandra's a special case, that's the trouble. She's got far less hearing than most deaf children.

The underlying purpose of the scene is nevertheless to introduce the main actress as 'Sandra', and this transition was eased by means of several different methods. First of all, 'Sandra' is not in shot for the first part of the scene, although she is the subject of 'Mother's' and the 'Social worker's' conversation. Secondly, the dialogue references to the girl are backed up by the 'Social worker's' indication of a photograph of 'Sandra' on the mantelpiece. This photograph is of the third version of the girl dressed in a girl-guide's uniform, which 'Mother' picks up and shows to the 'Social worker'. The audience is then given a big close-up of this photograph from the 'Social worker's' P.O.V. in which 'Sandra 3' is clearly recognisable. The fact that there has been no other reference to



Sandra being a girl-guide could, incidentally, help to make the character more three-dimensional, but it could also aid the transition since the girl is shown in a different guise than the audience has seen before.

The third factor in the transition is then introduced through 'Mother's' dialogue as she turns away from the 'Social worker' to say:

She says it's a good photo. Good - photo - of - you.

'Sandra', in other words, must be in the same room, although the audience has still not had a clear shot of her. In fact, as 'Mother' delivers this line of dialogue, 'Sandra 4' is merely glimpsed through a reflection in the mirror over the fireplace and furthermore, she is only momentarily in focus since the cameraman had to refocus on 'Mother' during the shot in order to cover the rest of her dialogue. 'Sandra 4' is thus identified with 'Sandra 3' through the production of the photograph and the corresponding dialogue (Good photo of you) at the same time as her physical identity is being mediated by the mirror shot and the changing focus. In being so 'mean' with the information, as the director put it, it was consequently felt that the audience would have time to work out for themselves that a transition had occurred without rupturing an overall gestalt. Had, for instance, 'Sandra 4' been introduced by having her suddenly walk into the room where the two women were talking, the audience would have had no idea of who she was.

Although this transition was very carefully planned, it ought to be said the change in focus during the mirror shot was more due to a technical constraint than a conscious decision. If you are shooting a subject which is reflected in a mirror the focus has to be adjusted in relation to the perceived image rather than the mirror's surface. At the start of this particular shot 'Mother' was standing near the mirror about nine feet from the camera, but as she started to move away from the mirror towards 'Sandra' - and physically closer to the camera - her image in the mirror was moving



further away from the camera (see fig. 4). Hence as long as 'Mother' and 'Sandra' were both being reflected in the mirror, they could both be held in focus, but as soon as 'Mother' returned to her original position within the camera's direct line of sight to replace the photograph, (see fig. 5) a choice had to be made between keeping either her or 'Sandra' in focus. In other words, unless the cameraman had used a lens with a huge depth of field, it would have been impossible not to have let 'Sandra' get out of focus.

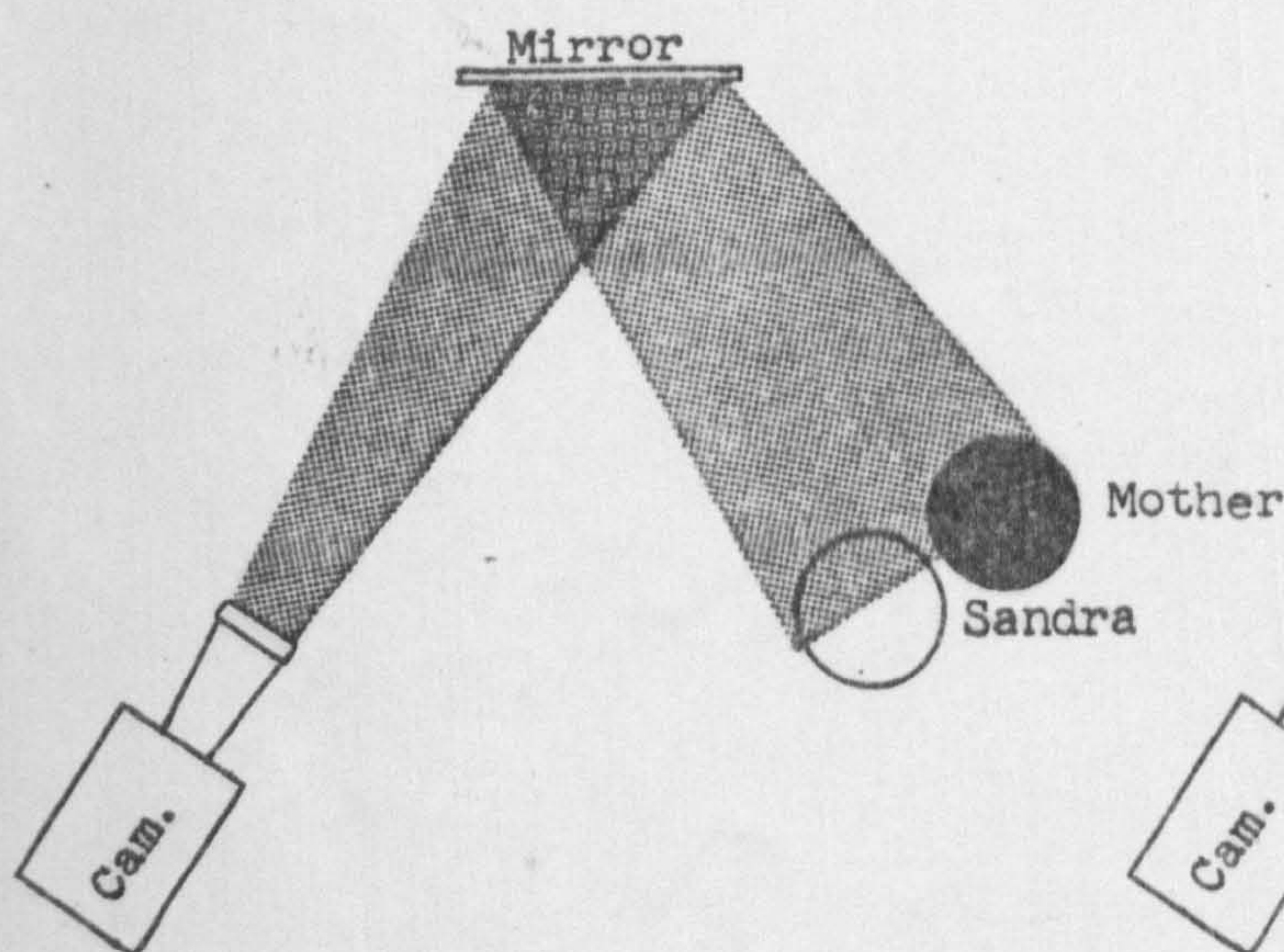


Fig.

Camera 9ft from mirror  
Focus set at 15ft  
Mother and Sandra in focus

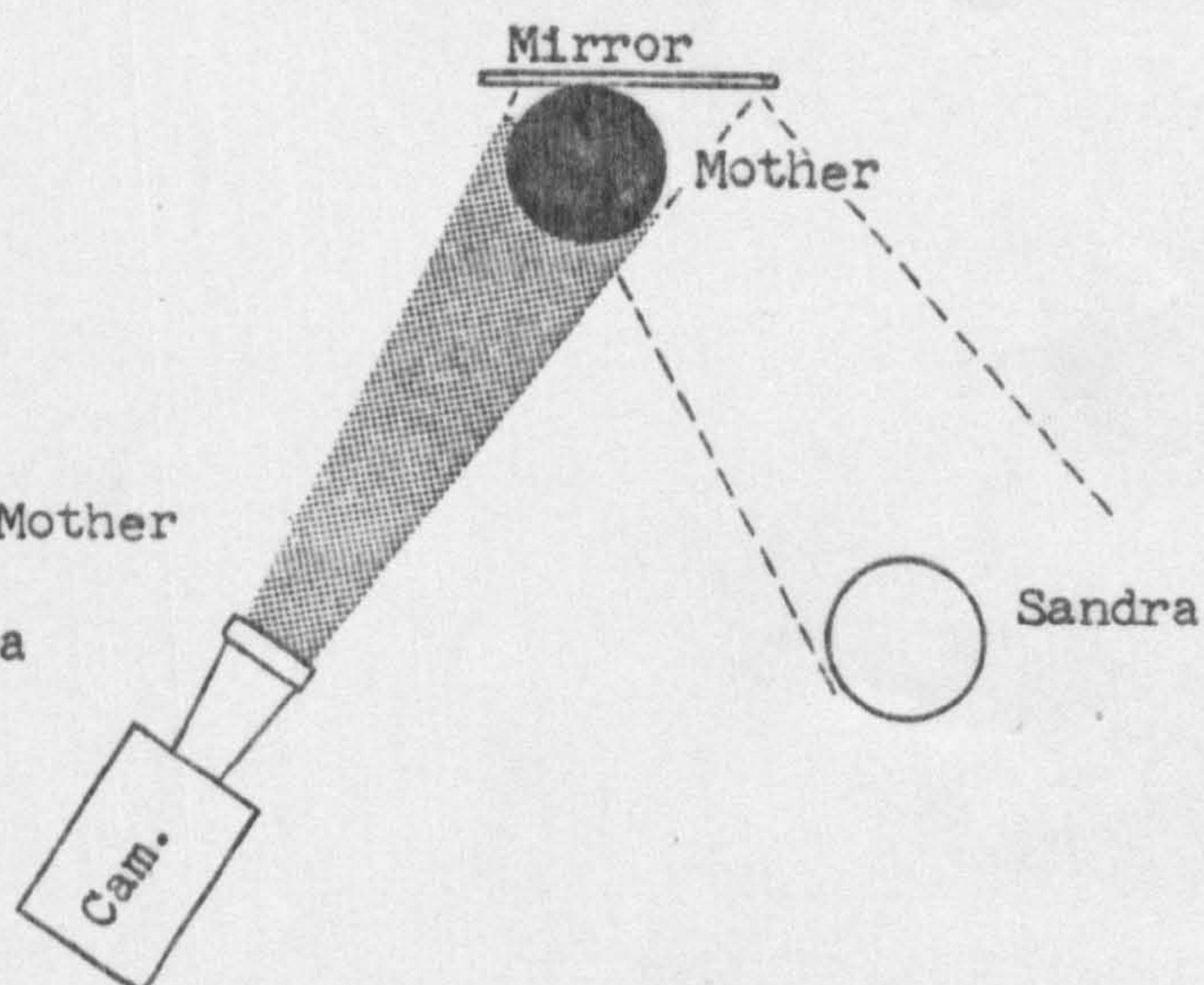


Fig.

Camera 9ft from mirror  
Focus set at 9ft  
Mother only in focus.

There was a basic resemblance between 'Sandra 3' and 'Sandra 4', but the transition was further aided through the judicious use of some very light make-up on the main actress. As I mentioned above, it is difficult to make someone look very much younger than their real age (in this case the difference was about ten years), but the main actress's hair had been arranged so as to soften her features and this was aided by the use of soft, diffused lighting. Similarly, the first clear shot which the audience is given of 'Sandra', after the mirror shot, is taken from 'Mother's P.O.V. - since 'Mother' is standing above the girl as she sits on the settee, the



equivalent P.O.V. is also taken from a high angle, and such an angle is generally considered to impute a certain diminution of character (or in this context 'youth' - see Millerson 1974: 264)

The scene itself was set some five years later than the previous scene which had just been shot (of 'Sandra 3' coming back home in a rage) so a number of period changes were made to the parlour. The curtains were changed, and the director had decided that the family would probably have had a television set by then (1963) so one was installed by the electrician. Several pieces of furniture had been replaced too, but other items were left in their original positions in order to provide a continuity link with previous scenes. It was the P.A.'s job to keep notes on the positions of various items for continuity, and to assist in this a number of polaroids were usually taken before a set was changed. One aspect of continuity of which the director was uncertain at this point was the use of a cumbersome double-hearing aid which 'Sandra' had to wear - a more lightweight version had started to appear in the mid sixties, so the authenticity of the existing apparatus was checked with a contact at the deaf school.

The lighting was particularly important in this scene. Firstly the director did not want any direct light to fall on 'Sandra's' face as this would tend to create sharply-defined shadows which would emphasise her features and make her look older (she was supposed to be about fifteen). Secondly the field of the action was quite extensive such that there would be a certain amount of camera movement, and a good deal of the room would come into shot at various points. The whole room therefore had to be lit, and this meant that (a) it was difficult to have artificial lights inside the room, since their supports would get in shot, and (b) the kitchen window had to be lit in addition to the parlour window for reasons of continuity as well as being a way of introducing more light (see fig 6). Thirdly, the scene was set in the late afternoon after 'Sandra' had come home from school, and a clock which would be in shot had been set at '4.30' to signify





The mirror shot - 'Mother' shows photograph of 'Sandra 3' to 'Sandra 4' with dialogue, "She says its a good photo, good photo of you".



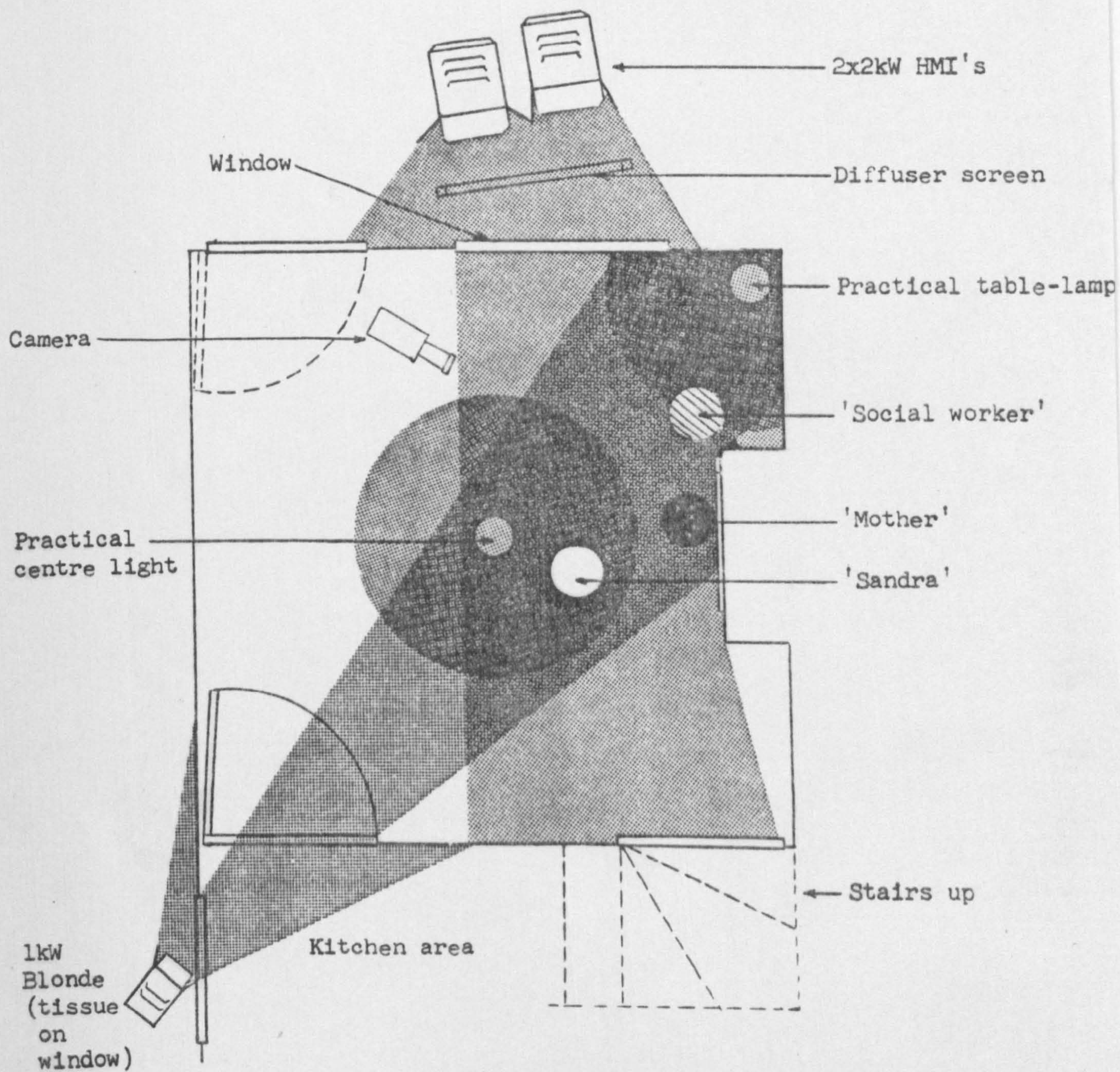


Fig. .  
Lighting diagram for 'Social worker' scene

Approx. scale in feet

0 1 2 3 4 5 6



this. Since the scene was actually being set up at mid-day the cameraman spent some time arranging the large exterior lights until they reproduced 'a nice afternoon light', and in order to achieve this the tissue which would normally be taped onto the outside of the window frames was stretched within free-standing frames between the window and the light-source 'to make it almost dream-like' as the cameraman said.

The two large IMI lights outside the main parlour window had been set up on very high stands so that their light would stream downwards into the room like sunlight, but to counteract their direct glare upon the subject an opaque mask had been fixed to the top section of the window in addition to the use of the tissue diffuser. Similarly, a small 'flag' had been set up to the camera's immediate left to ensure that the powerful lights did not produce a flare off the front elements of the lens. Two practical interior lights were also used, one being the room's central ceiling light, and the other a small table-lamp - both of these had been covered with some blue transparent foil known as 'half-blue' in order to correct the colour-temperature of the standard filament bulbs.

In considering the action itself, the director explained that he wanted the actors to be 'calm and matter-of-fact' in the delivery of their dialogue, and 'contained and relaxed' in their movements. In terms of the story itself 'mother' would be used to having visits from people like the social worker, and 'Sandra' was asked to appear 'Bored and disinterested'. One way in which this kind of mood can be connoted is to reduce the amount of camera-movement and/or cuts in a scene, both of which can be reduced by keeping the shots as wide as possible. The wider the lens, the less the camera has to move to contain an action within the frame, and this also reduces the necessity of cutting between different shots since the essential information can all be contained within the wide shot; building a scene from one or two wide-shots instead of a series of close-ups can, in other words, reduce the pace of that scene.



The potential width of the shots for this scene was nevertheless predetermined by the size of the room. Since the camera could only get about nine or ten feet back from the action, an alternative way in which that action could be contained within the frame was to physically limit the action itself, and this is what was done. 'Mother' was to stand by the fireplace at the beginning of the scene, with 'Sandra' out of shot to her left, and the 'Social worker' sat in a chair to the camera's left. In order to get both 'Mother' and 'Social worker' within the frame the latter's chair was then cheated in towards the fireplace; unnaturally close in fact, since one of the chair's legs was practically in the hearth. On checking this through the viewfinder, however, the director decided that the chair's position appeared to be normal in relation to the room given the angle of the shot, and that this position also determined the required horizontal relationship between the two actresses within the limits of the width of frame. Unfortunately, this arrangement meant that the vertical alignment of the two subjects was very awkward since there was a considerable difference in height between the 'Social worker's' head as she sat in the chair, and 'Mother's' head as she stood by the fire. The 'Social worker' was therefore given a cushion to sit upon, but this made her sit rather oddly so the whole chair was eventually raised on some wooden blocks.

Apart from these technical considerations, the director was also concerned about the aesthetic composition of the shot. As in the 'Speech exercises' scene described above, he made a number of changes to props which would be seen in the background of any particular shot. The composition of the first shot, for example, was felt to be a little unbalanced insofar as there was nothing behind or to the left of the 'Social worker' to balance her relatively low position in the frame with respect to 'Mother'. The table-lamp and a vase were therefore moved into shot on a table behind her right shoulder, the former being tried both with and without some flowers.



Similarly, a sideboard was moved into frame for one of the following shots to provide a point of reference in the background which would otherwise have been a blank wall.

The unit was ready for a full rehearsal by 12.30 p.m. and the director reminded 'Mother' that she should be 'chirpy and matter-of-fact; don't be too morose about it all - you are used to the deafness by now'.

Similarly, the 'Social worker' was told not to look too concerned, Sandra was after all only one of several people she would be visiting that day; 'Try thinking about sausages' the director suggested.

The first take was then made at 12.40, and I will briefly run through each one in order to demonstrate how the director's intention for the scene was worked out in practice.

Slate 72: 'Mother' and 'Social worker' two-shot

- 72:1 This first take was NG because (a) both actresses had tended to move towards the camera during their dialogue which wrecked the critical framing of the shot, and (b) the boom operator had found it to be impossible to cover both actresses' dialogue for sound without hitting the centre practical light with the microphone boom. This light was consequently raised out of the way.
- 72:2 The 'Social worker' had been told to be relatively casual in her approach, but as a result she had delivered her dialogue a little too quietly here, and the director told her that she could be 'more argumentative'.
- 72:3 Despite the fact that the director thought the action and dialogue had reached the correct pitch here, 'Mother' had not been fully within the frame as far as the camera was concerned, and the 'Social worker' was felt to have become 'a bit too grave' by the end of the scene. Also it was 1 O'Clock and time for lunch according to the schedule. After some consultation it was decided to continue, however...
- 72:4 Both actresses were felt to have become too dejected by the end of this take, but the main part of the action was judged to have worked well.
- 72:5 'Social worker' fluffed her lines - but the director reassured her that it was good otherwise in order to maintain her confidence.
- 72:6 This take was considered to be the best one, having achieved the required degree of cheerfulness mixed with seriousness.

Slate 73: as 72 but closer shot.

- 73:1-3 All three takes were judged to be suitable, with the exception of the last few seconds of take 2, where the microphone entered the frame.



Slate 74: Cutaway medium close-up of 'Mother', with 'Sandra' becoming visible in the mirror

- 74:1 As 'Mother' moved to show the photograph to 'Sandra' the camera had to pan rapidly right, so in order to reduce this movement as much as possible the settee was cheated closer to the 'Social worker'. 'Sandra' was instructed to look 'bored' and 'disinterested'. The first take was, however abandoned because of a fault in the framing; 'Mother' moved too far right. 'Sandra' had nevertheless assumed an air of 'defiance' which the director liked.
- 74:2 NG: fluffed lines.
- 74:3 NG: 'Mother's' dialogue had become too abrupt at the start, and the actress had started to perspire which caused a shine from the lights. Make-up consequently applied some powder. 'Sandra' was also felt to have become 'too forlorn', and the director instructed her not to look away from the others; 'I don't want you to look like a dummy.'
- 74:4 'Mother', picked up the photograph with the wrong hand continuity-wise. NG
- 74:5 'Sandra' was still considered to be too forlorn, although the actress herself argued that she should be fed-up and a bit miserable -
- 74:6 'Sandra' looked simply bored this time and the director felt it to be a good take. The girl was not, however, so clearly visible in the mirror here, so 'Mother' was told to move round towards her more to enable the camera to get a clear shot of the reflection.
- 74:7 Here the action and dialogue was judged to be right, but here was still a slight problem with the framing, so the camera's position was altered a little:
- 74:8 NG. A new magazine of film had been put on the camera and caused a fault in the claw mechanism, so the take was cut short.
- 74:9 The director thought the action was suitably restrained, but 'Mother' exited the frame too early at the end.
- 74:10 'Mother' stays within the frame this time - OK.

Slate 75: Overshoulder shot from 'Social worker's' P.O.V. close-up of photo

- 75:1-4 These takes were made as inserts for slate 72, and simply show the 'Social worker' 'revealing' each photograph to the camera. (Shot mute)

76: Cutaway of 'Social worker'

- 76:1 These takes were intended to provide cutaway shots for slate 72, showing the 'Social worker' looking at the photograph from a medium close-up. Take 1 was NG because she looked straight at the camera instead of taking her eyeline to 'Mother' slightly to the right of camera.
- 76:2 NG-- 'Social worker's' eyeline again, caused by 'Mother' being in a different position from her original one - 'Mother' was therefore moved to that original position.
- 76:3 Eyeline correct. A dog was barking in the background which might have caused a continuity problem for sound, but in such instances the dialogue can sometimes be lifted from the master track.



375

Slate 77: Reverse shot of 'Sandra' as she looks at the photograph

- 77:1 This was the first clear shot of 'Sandra 4', so her makeup was carefully attended to. The director asked for her hair to be arranged loosely 'to bring out her girlishness' and repeated his instruction that she should look fairly disinterested in the exchange between 'Mother' and the 'Social worker'. The shot was made as a reverse from the 'Social worker's' P.O.V. so 'Sandra' was told to look towards the former's position (although the 'Social worker' had actually been sent back to the hotel by that time). This take was judged to be satisfactory for action, but there was a slight problem with lighting, since the angle had been changed, so a small flag was used to mask the light coming from the kitchen which had otherwise been shining directly at the camera.
- 77:2 NG action. 'Sandra's' eyeline to 'Social worker' was inaccurate.
- 77:3 OK

Slate 78: Reverse shot of 'Sandra' - this time from 'Mother's' P.O.V.

- 78:1 Although 'Sandra' had been asked to look disinterested, the director explained that she should show some expression: 'This is the first time we have seen you' he instructed the actress, 'and we have to be able to see that you are deaf, so we need some expression from you.'
- 78:2 The director thought that 'Sandra's' eyes looked 'transfixed and hostile' this time, so...
- 78:3 She assumed a quizzical expression as if to ask what the photograph was, which the director liked.
- 78:4 Similar. OK.

In the original script this scene started with the 'Social worker' already inside the house. Since there was already a break in continuity in terms of the narrative (because of a time-jump) the director had decided that an extra shot was needed to show the lady arriving at the house. Such a shot could also help an audience to identify the social worker as such, and the actress was subsequently asked to walk up the alley leading to the back door, looking as if she was searching for the right house. It would therefore be possible to make the connotation that the lady was a stranger, and possibly on official business since her neat outfit set her apart from the 'working-class' district which she was visiting. Once inside the house, her officialdom would then be confirmed through the dialogue.

Having retrieved the actress from the hotel (to where she had inadvertently been sent back earlier in the day) the shot itself was filmed in three takes. The first of these was NG because 'Mother's' back door had been left open such



such that the 'Social worker' had nothing to knock upon, and the second was also NG because some shadows caused by the crew had crept into the frame. The last take proved to be useable, but the soundtrack was marred by one of the local children, who - mimicking the director - called out 'Action!!' half way through. In a situation like that, where there was no dialogue to cover, the sound of the 'Social worker's' footsteps could be added from a library tape during the dub.

---

The 'Social worker' scene had been finished by 4.30 in the afternoon, and had thus taken about four hours to film. Partly as a result of this only two more scenes were shot during this seventh day instead of the five which had originally been scheduled. One of these was to have been of 'Sandra' opening her first pay-packet at home, but to save time both in the shoot and in the film itself this scene was later incorporated within the 'Dry-cleaning works' sequence.

The real Sandra's mother had died a few years before the girl's imprisonment, and the director wanted to include a scene of the funeral in part two of the film as part of the reconstruction and as a point of structural punctuation. The original lady had been ill for some time before her death from cancer, so in one sense it was necessary to indicate her failing health at different points in the reconstruction. It was also necessary on a dramatic level to provide an explanation for 'Mother's' death without hammering home the point too strongly, and the next scene shot this day was designed to introduce a clue to 'Mother's' health in this way. This scene was to immediately precede that of 'Sandra's' wedding, and showed 'Mother' and Sandra's sister 'Joan' getting ready at home - it therefore served the dual purpose of preparing the way for the wedding itself, and by showing 'Mother' in a poor state of health it also reinforced the connotation that she had continuing illness (in the finished film there would already have been a clue given in a previous scene where 'Mother' had been warned by 'Joan' not to tire herself out by looking



after 'Sandra's' baby - 'You know what the doctor said' the sister warns.) The director also intended to use this scene as a passage-of-time indicator; the last time the audience would have seen 'Mother' was several months earlier in film time where she was discussing her daughter's sterilization with a consultant. A visible change in 'Mother's' appearance would therefore indicate that a fairly extensive time-change had occurred.

Part of this change was the responsibility of the make-up department.

'Mother' was given a badly-died wig to wear which was intended to give the impression of increasing age and bad health (since 'Mother' would perhaps have found it difficult to die her hair properly), and she had also been made up with a fairly heavy cake foundation followed by greasepaint shadowing in order to impart the required effect; an effect described in the script as: 'Heavy make-up serves only to accentuate the deathly pallor of her 'face'.

Most of the responsibility for the change on 'Mother's' appearance was, however, born by the actress herself. Such a scene is really a gift to an actor, and especially a theatre actress as 'Mother' was, so the director had to work quite hard to contain the action within bounds. He suggested that she should only hint at the illness, and explained that the audience should only realise that something was seriously wrong towards the end of the scene as 'Mother' reaches for the window-ledge for support (the scene itself basically shows 'Joan' helping 'Mother' to put on her shoes prior to leaving for the registry office.) In the first six of the eight takes which were made for this scene the director was therefore chiefly concerned with holding the actress back; trying, in other words to stop 'Mother' from looking unbelievably ill. The last two takes of these six were felt to be right, but the first four were NG - there was one fluffed line and 'Mother' referred to 'Joan' by the real sister's name at one point, but the two remaining rejects were caused by the sound department. The sound recordist will have a good idea of the reach of any particular lens so that he knows in advance how



closely he can place his microphones to the subject without getting them in shot. During rehearsals he will also take note (as does the cameraman) of any movements which the actors make which might affect the mikes or their position relative to the frame. If, however, a shot is very tight, movements are unpredictable or the immediate environment is particularly restrictive, the sound recordist, or more accurately, the boom operator, cannot always guarantee that the mike will not get into shot. Since all three of these factors were operating during the shooting of the 'Pre-wedding' scene, the microphone did in fact creep into the frame in two of the eight takes.

In the last two takes the director decided to give the actress her rein, and asked her to play the scene as if she really was about to die in order to see what it looked like. She consequently became far more shaky and played the scene more slowly than she had been doing - so much so that the cameraman did not realise that she was going to take quite as long as she did to get out of the chair and he therefore tilted the camera up a little too far in advance of the action. The last take proved to be more satisfactory for the director and in terms of such technical considerations, and that scene was wrapped at a quarter to seven.

The last scene of the day proved to be awkward in terms of scheduling, since it was to show 'Sandra 3' dancing with 'Mother' and 'Joan' in the parlour back in 1959 again (the previous scene had been set in 1971). This meant that there would have to be at least a twenty-minute break while 'Mother' was re-made-up to be young and healthy again, and similarly, 'Joan' had to be given a different wig and make-up to be made to appear as a teenager. The scene was to show the three of them dancing to a record, and was intended to be one of the indicators that 'Sandra' was growing up for part one of the film. It would also show that the girl was becoming more attractive and that she could join in with a piece of impromptu fun like having a dance with her sister, even though she could not actually hear the music. (The real girl had herself explained to me that she liked dancing



because she could feel the vibrations; especially in a loud disco).

The scene involved a number of technical problems. Firstly, the dancing would necessarily extend the area of the room which would be in shot, so in order to light it adequately a large sheet of reflective polystyrene had to be pinned onto the ceiling from which the light from two blondes could be bounced down onto the actors. (The scene was designated as a night shoot, so the exterior HMI's could not be used). Secondly, the girl playing 'Sandra 3' was actually taller than 'Joan' who was supposed to be some years older, so the former was asked to dance without her shoes. Thirdly, the record which was being used for the girls to dance to would attract a copyright fee, but more importantly it could cause enormous problems of synchronisation. It is normal practice to record a continuous sound-source such as music or machinery-noise on a master-track, which can then be mixed with dialogue tracks across different cuts in a scene such that the music remains continuous even though a scene may be made up of many different pieces of film. It is far more difficult to do this, however, if the continuous sound-source has to appear to be synchronised with the action, as it would if people were dancing to a record, so some of the takes for this scene were made without the record player operating so that the dialogue tracks could be recorded separately.

#### Day eight

Sandra's first boyfriend had stopped seeing her after he had slashed her face with the kitchen knife, and in order to denote this fact a scene had been added to the script to show the sister telephoning him to find out what he was up to:

JOAN  
(On telephone)

Is that you, Ian?... It's Joan, Sandra's sister.  
Now look, what's going on?... You know what I  
mean... She waited in all day... When?... You  
could've come by bus, couldn't you?... What about  
last Thursday, then? Look, don't give me that.  
She may be deaf but she's not daft...



This scene was the first one to be filmed on this eighth day of the shoot. The script had indicated that 'Joan' should ring up from a telephone box, since being relatively poor the family would not have their own 'phone; so the props department had supplied a telephone in a call-box near 'Mother's' house. A genuine telephone could not have been used since the scene was set in 1966, and was therefore in a pre-decimalisation period. Theoretically, a modern post-decimalisation payphone could have been used providing, that is, that the coinbox itself did not appear in the shot, but there were three reasons why the director wanted to include a shot of 'Joan' inserting her money. Firstly the scene would not be following on directly from the previous scene as part of a smooth narrative since the latter would be the immediate aftermath of the scarring where 'Sandra' had been taken to hospital. The telephone scene was therefore going to be used as another connective bridge between the 'scarring sequence' and Sandra's recovery, so the director wanted to punctuate the scene itself by allowing an audience a little bit of space with which to transfer their attention from one situation to another and this space could be provided through the action of inserting the coins. Secondly, the action itself could also serve as a reminder of period, since the money which 'Joan' was inserting was old pennies, and thirdly the fact that she was in a telephone box could be bolstered by that action. One small but important point of detail had to be remembered as a consequence, however, and the director pointed this out to the actress: 'Don't forget to put the pennies in first before you dial' - its the other way round for a modern 'phone.

The next scene to be filmed was set two years earlier, and showed 'Sandra' getting ready to go out with the first boyfriend. The intended connotation of the scene was that it was very shortly after the fairground meeting since 'Joan' shows considerable surprise at 'Ian's' car (he had not come round to the house before, in other words) and both girls are excited and almost



panicking over 'Sandra's' make-up. 'Sandra's' deafness is also reinforced once more by the fact that she does not hear 'Ian's' car arriving in the street outside, and 'Joan' has to tell her after looking out of the window. During the filming of this scene the actress playing 'Joan' was not in fact looking at 'Ian's' car through the window for the simple reason that it had not at that point arrived on the set. It had been the original plan to shoot this scene as the first one of the day, but on his arrival at the location the director had found that the car which had been supplied by the action vehicles supervisor was unsuitable. It had been the right age (1964 or earlier) but was in a very rough condition and the director reasoned that (a) the car would not have looked so bad then, and (b) the whole point of having the car was to help delineate the difference between 'Sandra' and her boyfriend in terms of wealth and family background, so the car should have looked respectable. Furthermore, the car did not have a laminated windscreen, which meant that the ordinary toughened glass would produce blobs in the camera's line of sight when it came to doing the 'Mo-kit' travelling shots. Another car therefore had to be found, and to save time in the crowded schedule the 'Telephone box' scene had been moved up to be the first scene of the day whereas it had originally been planned as the last. This also meant that the 'Telephone box' scene was filmed in broad daylight instead of being an evening shot as planned in the script.

The 'make-up' scene had been completed by mid-day, by which time the replacement car had still not arrived so the director dispatched a member of the unit to find out what had happened. 'It does not really matter about the laminated windscreen' he instructed, 'or the colour; just as long as it's not black' - a remark which drew a look of feigned admonishment from the (Jamaican) boom-operator.

By 2.15 the car had still not appeared so the schedule was further re-



382

arranged to allow the unit to film a later scene - that of 'Sandra' standing by her bedroom window from which she would turn away to reveal the full extent of her scar after her return from hospital (this would eventually be intercut with the 'Telephone box' scene). Here the script had suggested that 'Sandra' should appear to be waiting to go out, with her coat lying ready on the bed, but the patterned dress she was wearing was rather similar to the room's wallpaper such that she appeared to melt into the background. The director therefore instructed the actress to keep her coat on - a move which was also felt to help the actress look younger.

The car eventually arrived, and was given a false number-plate and a modified tax-disc a propos the period. All the car's bright-work was also sprayed with a lanolin aerosol to counteract any reflections or flares which might have occurred, and the first takes were made from the bedroom window as 'Joan's' P.O.V. for the 'Make-up' scene. The next few takes were to show 'Sandra' rushing out of the house to join 'Ian' in the car, but because of the rescheduling, the actress had to have all the 'scar tissue' removed and be re-made up in continuity with the 'Make-up' scene; a process which further delayed the shooting this day.

By 3.30 the unit was ready to move back indoors to shoot one of the two scenes which had been transferred from the previous day. The first of these was set three years on again, and described an interchange between 'Mother' and 'Joan' where the former's illness would first be mentioned. The scene took place in 'Mother's' parlour and would immediately follow some shots of 'Sandra' in a maternity ward, so the central action - of 'Mother' feeding a young baby - was intended to indicate that the baby was 'Sandra's'. This relatively simple scene took an inordinately long time to film - over three hours - which caused a certain amount of exasperation since the day was already running over the schedule. Sometimes delays are caused by the extreme demarcation which operates on a set; strictly speaking only a props



man is supposed to move things about on a set in the same way that only a lighting technician is strictly allowed to alter lights. There are good reasons for this which I refer to above, including considerations of personal insurance and the historical problem of manning, but given the strictures of time it does seem faintly ridiculous to have to wait five or ten minutes which the appropriate person is found to move an item perhaps two inches. Another problem which arose was rooted in the fact that the script had used the original protagonist's real names throughout, since false names had not been allocated at the time the script was written. The actors had therefore learned these names when they appeared in the dialogue, and often found it difficult to substitute the alternatives while under the stress of making a take. At least three of the takes made for this scene had to be remade as a result of this kind of mistake. There are also more unavoidable difficulties which can cause delays; here, for example, the main shot of 'Mother' included the sound of the baby crying on her dialogue track, so for the reverse shot (which would actually show the baby) the baby would have to be still crying for continuity. None of the reverses were felt to have worked, however, since the baby had fallen asleep, and on removing its dummy the baby simply started to cry too much. Such are the problems of working with juveniles.

The second of the two scenes transferred from the previous day, and the last to be shot this day, was again set in the parlour, but this time it was supposed to be night-time and two years earlier. The action involved 'Sandra' coming home drunk with 'Phil' who was the first of the rather rougher men who the girl had taken up with after 'Ian' had left the scene. The director wanted the scene to indicate a change in 'Sandra's' personality following her scarring and subsequent abandonment by her first love, but he also wanted it to illustrate the girl's communicative problems, since she was to be discovered with this man by 'Mother' who then flies into a rage as 'Sandra' tries to explain what had happened. Since the girl cannot



put her point of view across, she finally loses her temper and rushes out with the man into the night, kicking in the front of the radiogram on the way.

The actor playing 'Phil' was the only member of the cast who had had extensive experience of feature films in which he had quite often been either a scheming criminal or a military man. He had particularly wanted this part, however, because 'Phil' was just and ordinary backstreet thug and the actor had felt that this would give him the opportunity to try a far more naturalistic character. In order to prepare for this he had spent all of the previous night and a good deal of the early morning in a selection of the seediest pubs and clubs in Bradford, developing the character of an uncaring, violent layabout which he intended to put into practice in this scene.

The main problem for the director was to contain and control the scene, however, since he did not want to make it too violent in the context of the rest of the film. Throughout the making of this scene then, the director's concern was to hold the natural tension of the action within bounds while at the same time allowing it to be generated in the first place.

The lighting was quite different for this scene. At the beginning of the action the couple were to enter the room from the yard in darkness, having returned from the pub in a semi-drunken state. Some exterior light was nevertheless required so that the audience would be able to see that they had come into a room, and the two HMI's had been positioned outside for this purpose. One of them was set up to shine through the window, and the other's light had been set to bounce off a horizontal tissue-frame placed above the outside of the door such that when it was opened a diffused light would fall into the room itself. Both lights had been heavily boxed, (i.e. their 'barndoors' or moveable flaps around the edge of the light had been closed up to reduce the power of the light) and the overall effect



was intended to be that of an exterior street-light, 'It doesn't really matter what sort of a light it is' the cameraman explained, 'It's just "a light" outside somewhere.' When 'Mother' comes downstairs to find the couple kissing and cuddling, she would put the interior light on, so to cope with that the practical centre light in the room was given an uprated photoflood bulb. No other interior lights could easily be used since the action would be relatively unpredictable, and the camera hand-held, so the whole scene would have to be shot with the aperture wide open. Having seen a couple of rehearsals, the Sound recordist also decided that a number of changes would need to be made to his normal methods of working, and instead of using the sometimes unwieldy boom mike, he decided to use a directional Sennheisser instead - placing a 10dB pad over the business end to counteract the volume of the actor's shouting.

Before the first rehearsal the floor manager shooed away the children who were permanently gathered outside the house both to make sure that they didn't make a noise during a take and to save them from witnessing the rather explicit argument which would ensue. The crew themselves were much more interested in this scene than they had been in some of the others, and the general atmosphere was electric and charged with a good deal of fun and anticipation. Even though the burden of responsibility was squarely upon the director's shoulders to ensure that the actors' movements were credible, the first rehearsal sparked off a fit of giggles as the couple lurched through the door and proceeded to grope each other to the accompaniment of much grunting and groaning. The action nevertheless had to be believable, and given the limited light the audience also had to be able to see what was happening, so the director suggested that the couple stand slightly separated in front of the window such that they were not huddled together in an indistinguishable mass.

'I want to intrigue the audience visually' he explained, 'so that the



realisation that the two of them are acting sexually in the audience's realisation rather than mine.'

That section of the scene where 'Mother' enters, switches on the light and tries to throw 'Phil' out was rehearsed next and got completely out of hand. It was very difficult to tell where - or if - the actors had stopped acting and were simply being carried along by the tension of the action. The actress playing 'Sandra' was asked if she was alright, and said 'Of course I am - I'm acting', but 'Phil' volunteered 'Christ, I really wanted to put one on her then.' There were certainly a number of exchanged glances among the crew members too, with a number of tension-releasing comments like 'It's never like this on the Muppets.' It ought to be said that one of the actors had caused a considerable fracas at the hotel the night before of which most of the crew and the other actors were aware, so some of the tension, and the reaction to that tension, may have been a direct result of this. The fact nevertheless remained that the scene was in danger of generating more anger than it or its context warranted, so the director worked hard to bring this down. He explained that the anger should be generated from 'Sandra's' frustration at not being able to explain the situation to 'Mother' rather than being generated from the mere appearance of 'Mother' in the room, and both the cameraman and the director agreed that the loss of control had happened far too quickly - without, that is, sufficient motivation.

In the general confusion of the action 'Sandra' had also found it awkward and unnatural to kick the front of the radiogram in properly, and the director advised her to lunge for it if she felt that she could, but not do so if it felt wrong given her position at any one point. Kicking in the radiogram's speaker had been intended as a symbolic gesture (since 'Sandra' couldn't hear records being played, so the radiogram was a symbol of something which 'Mother' had which 'Sandra' did not) but to include that action at the expense of making it look unnatural was



considered to be wrong.

The cameraman suggested two points which were broadly accepted by the director, firstly that the shot in the comparative darkness before 'Mother' makes her entrance should be held for a longer period of time - 'To make it more erotic and to give the audience time to realise what's happening' - and secondly that in the finishing shot of the couple rushing out the door, 'Mother' should also rush towards the door, but not out of it. If 'Mother' followed the other two out through the door the finishing shot would just be of the door itself, and this would predetermine the length of time for which that shot could be held before cutting to the next scene since the visual interest of the shot ('Mother') would have been diminished.

After the second rehearsal the cameraman informed the director that it looked 'like London Zoo' through the viewfinder because of the combination of using a tight lens to film too much action in an enclosed space, so the director suggested that the actors should reduce their movements still further. 'Let the lack of communication build the situation up more gradually' he instructed, 'The important thing is the lack of communication.'

By 9 pm the unit was ready for a take and the first one was played at a more restricted tempo, although 'Mother' followed the couple out of the door at the end. She argued that it was unnatural for her not to do so, even though she only had a nightie and dressing-gown on, so in a later take the director asked her to begin to go outside and then turn and come back in again which would make the action more continuous and natural-looking without prematurely 'freezing the scene'. Nine takes were made in all, about five of which were considered to be useable, but the director wanted this many versions so that he had a wide choice when it came to the editing - given that he might have to artificially reduce the scene's tempo. One take had to be scrapped because a hair had become



lodged in the camera's gate, and all nine were played through in the comparatively short time of forty-five minutes since it had started to rain outside, if the exterior lights had become wet there was a very real danger of their bulbs exploding.



Day Nine

After six clear days of shooting, at least one of the studio staff had decided that DUMMYY involved the most crowded schedule that he had ever known, and one of the freelance people had said that the take-rate was the highest which he had experienced in ten years of filming. Bearing in mind the fact that any group of people working closely together on a single project have to spend both time and material in discovering each other's working methods and practices, and not forgetting the particular problems of working with very young deaf children on location, some of the data from the first six days' work are revealing.

After nearly a quarter of the shooting schedule had been used up, twenty-six main scenes had been shot, of which eight were subsequently to be rejected altogether - mostly because of the problems with the youngest deaf child and the need to lose time during the editing. The total cut length of the scenes which were eventually used amounted to just over thirteen minutes, and this material had been cut from six-and-a-half hours of film which had been shot in these first six days. The overall wastage for this period was thus about 30:1 compared with 18:1 for the whole film. Ninety-eight different slates, or changes in the camera's position, had been employed with about four hundred separate takes being made in all which gives a take-rate of 4:1 for each slate, and about 15:1 for each scene, and from the sixty-odd hours which had been spent on location at this point just under two minutes per day of the film shot was to be used in the final product.

The hundred-and-one takes which had been made on the first day were, however, more than double the number made on the sixth, and the take-rate for those days where the youngest deaf child was being used was sixty percent higher than for the other days. In fact, as the shoot progressed, both in



terms of its schedule and in terms of 'Sandra's' increasing age, it became more 'efficient'. Just under thirty percent of the total film stock had been used up in the first six days, which accounted for only just over twenty percent of the shooting schedule and yielded only sixteen percent of the final film.

Perhaps as a result of the crowded schedule and the long hours which were being worked, some of the crew were a little late in arriving for the start of the ninth day, and after having made the necessary preparations, the first take of the day was not taken until after eleven o'clock. The whole day's shooting had been scheduled to take place in and around the 'substantial detached house' - as the script put it - which was 'Sandra's' first boyfriend's home. The house itself had been hired for the day in the rather up-market district of Bradford known as Nab Wood and had been deliberately chosen to be in direct contrast to the cobbled backstreet which had provided the location for 'Sandra's' own house.

The first shots of the day were to show 'Ian' arriving home in his car having picked up 'Sandra' shortly after their first meeting at the fair, and this was the first time that the 'Mo-kit' had been used. This camera-mount had been specially hired for the day and enabled the camera to be mounted on the driver's door so that the occupants could be filmed whilst driving along. The camera itself had been equipped with a tight 25mm lens so that 'Ian' would be in the immediate foreground and 'Sandra' in the background sitting next to him, with the sound-recordist hidden behind them on the back seat. Since there was no room for the cameraman in the car, he then set the camera going before each of the two takes and had his assistant leap out of some bushes at the end of the take to turn the camera off again.

Several associated shots were then taken of the car pulling up in the drive, showing the couple getting out of the car and meeting 'Ian's father'





Ian's House - the 'Middle-class' residence.



in the front garden. The intention throughout these shots was to reinforce the differences between 'Sandra' and 'Ian' - he was considerably better off than her, with either his own car or at least having the use of one of his family's cars. Not only was 'Ian's' car the only one in the street when he picked 'Sandra' up at her house, but on their return to his home the connotation is that his family had two, for a large Rover 3-Litre was also parked in the drive. The house itself was, of course, vastly more expensive and grandiose than 'Sandra's' back-to-back, and had a garden as opposed to 'Sandra's' little back yard. Furthermore, 'Ian's' father was representative of a stable, respectable family life as compared to 'Sandra's' background (the audience would already have seen 'mother' telling the 'social worker' that her husband had "buggered off years ago"). An extra piece of dialogue had also been given to 'Ian's father' where he invites the couple to tea at a friend's house which connotes a wholly different set of social relationships, and this dialogue also enabled the director to insert the extra piece of information that 'Sandra' did not like associating with groups of people - she demurs from the invitation because there would be 'too many people' from which the connotation could be drawn that she found it difficult to communicate in a group situation.

For reasons of period, all the modern cars had had to be removed from the street, and even a passing policeman in a panda car had to be politely asked to move; several modern television aerials on the surrounding houses had, however, to be left in situ because there simply was not time to remove them. The Rover car which had been supplied by the action vehicles supervisor had originally been parked with its back to the camera, but was turned around because the rear bumper was missing, and this would have devalued the car's purpose as a signifier of wealth and property.



Most of the day's shooting was to be taken up with the 'scarring' scene, where 'Sandra' is slashed across the face by her boyfriend. Since this was to be a night scene, the props and lighting departments had pinned light-tight black material over the windows of the house's kitchen where the scene was to be filmed, and had taped the seven fluorescent tubes to the ceiling such that the floor area would be completely clear for the action. The scene was to follow a sequence in which the boyfriend had been playing with his group at a club - a group which included his brother as drummer - and both boys were to arrive home drunk with 'Sandra' in tow. While she was making some coffee in the kitchen, the younger brother would then come in and playfully start to kiss and cuddle the girl; indicating in the dialogue that 'Ian' was upstairs being sick. 'Ian' would then stagger into the kitchen to discover the other two rather innocently engaged in the cuddle, and this then precipitates his anger, which then rapidly gets out of control as the boyfriend picks up a kitchen knife, stabs his brother and inadvertently slashes 'Sandra'. All this is rather different from the script, where the younger brother is described as being more forceful towards the girl, who then tries to fend him off, such that 'Ian's' subsequent action is more protective towards the girl than specifically aggressive towards his brother:

SANDRA goes to the cupboard and takes out a packet of sugar. YOUNGER BROTHER walks towards her, keeping out of her line of vision. The kettle begins to boil. SANDRA sees the steam. She walks to the kettle. YOUNGER BROTHER advances. SANDRA sees him; she gasps, startled. YOUNGER BROTHER grabs her, pulling at her skirt. SANDRA tries to push him away. He forces her back against a cupboard. His hands reach for her breasts.

In the film itself, the connotation was intended to be that the younger brother's action with 'Sandra' had simply catalysed 'Ian's' reaction since



there was already a good deal of tension between the two brothers. The ferocity of the attack could therefore be perhaps a little more credible insofar as the audience would be referred back to earlier events such as 'Ian's' loss of temper during the 'rehearsal' scene. As the actress had pointed out, stabbing one's brother, disfiguring one's girlfriend and slashing one's own wrists is hardly a normal thing for a young man to do, so some sort of explanation for such behaviour had to be given beyond the action itself. Moreover, as a reconstruction, the film was constrained to deal with these pivotal events since they had actually happened, even though as a drama they may have seemed unlikely. The people from whom the house had been hired actually knew the original boys concerned, and could vouch for at least some of the events which had occurred, but that did not help an audience, so the director was concerned to provide clues and cues to the boyfriend's character before he described the scarring itself.

Filming the scene proved to be quite difficult given the restricted size of the kitchen itself. Only the director, cameraman, focus-puller and soundman were involved for the greater part, with the director spending most of the time sitting in the sink to keep out of the way of the action. The action itself was filmed with a hand-held camera, with each move having been worked out in advance - the original brother had, for instance, been stabbed in the back and had received a punctured lung, so the director wanted the actor to indicate this by falling backwards while holding his hand against the appropriate position for such a wound (even though it would probably have been more natural for the boy to defend his face). Similarly, the slash towards 'Sandra's' face had to be precisely aimed, since the position of the scar had already been established in scenes which had been previously filmed.



The scene was accomplished in eighteen takes for five different slates, all but one of which were shot with the Anton camera. The remaining slate was shot with a variable speed Eclair, this being the close-up of 'Sandra' actually receiving the slash. The Eclair was used so that the action could be slowed down for 'Ian' to accurately bring the knife across the actress's face as the special effects supervisor pumped theatrical blood down a tube and out onto her cheek through the specially prepared knife. In the film itself this shot would then be run at normal speed to give the effect of a fast slash since the whole action only used up eighteen frames of film (i.e. less than a second).

Several difficulties had arisen during and as a result of this scene; firstly, the theatrical blood being used had a tendency to dry out quite quickly, so there were a number of short delays as various wounds were refurbished. Secondly, the number of retakes which included 'Ian's' brother in shot had been limited because no repeat jumpers had been provided for him, which meant that once 'blood' had been applied to his jumper no further takes could be made of the actor for those sections of the scene which were supposed to have occurred before he received his wound. Thirdly, this scene and the whole day's schedule had gradually been put back as a result of the late start such that it had been completed by seven o'clock in the evening. The original agreement with the house's owners had indicated that the unit would be finished by six, and since the owner wanted to get out the unit had to leave too, and this in turn meant that an additional scene in the hallway (in which 'Ian's' disappearance upstairs to the bathroom would have been established) had to be postponed.

#### Day ten

It had been planned to film in three different locations this day, all three of which would have provided the setting for scenes with 'Ian' and 'Sandra' in which their relationship prior to the scarring would have been signified.



The first of these was to have been set in the fashion-wear department of a 'smart middle-class store', where 'Ian' was to have been shown buying a coat for 'Sandra', thus further reinforcing his affection for her, his comparative wealth and her delight in his company. The whole scene was never filmed, however, since the director was becoming increasingly aware of the need to cut down the likely length of the film and the need to cut down the amount of material which he was trying to get through in the shoot itself. The scene was also one which could be safely deleted since it would have been part of a sequence of disconnected shots, or shots which did not have to directly interrelate, so the same message could theoretically be put across with less scenes. The question of film-stock had also arisen the day before since the editor had paid a visit to Bradford to discuss the rushes, and had also pointed out that after a quarter of the shoot had gone by more than half the allocated stock had been used up. The editor was of the opinion that a good many more scenes would have to be lost as a direct result of this, and that the overall take-rate would certainly have to be drastically reduced. The director, on the other hand, argued that the film-stock allocation was the least of his problems, and that the charge that he used takes as rehearsals was unfounded. 'Besides,' he argued, 'it would be foolish not to get it right at the time and then have to come back again after the rushes, which, with the size of the crew, would be prohibitively expensive.'

This particular scene was nevertheless lost, and the whole day was then devoted to shooting two different scenes involving 'Ian' and his pop group. Originally, the first of these was intended as a full-blown performance by the group in front of a clubful of dancing couples, but the director had rewritten the scene as a rehearsal, and for two reasons.



Firstly, he did not want to go straight into a full-scale performance in which 'Ian' would have been shown as an established pop-singer since 'I don't want him to look too great; his interest in the girl has to seem possible.' Secondly, 'Ian's temper and his streak of aggression needed to be demonstrated in order to give an audience some explanation for his behaviour in the 'scarring' scene. A rehearsal scene could thus devalue the apparent glamour and accomplishment of an ensuing public performance by the pop group, and some bad-tempered dialogue between 'Ian' and his brother could provide a clue to 'Ian's' darker side.

The director had found a suitable hall which could be used as a rehearsal room some distance from the centre of the city, but some of the fleet of minibuses and private cars became variously lost on the way there from the hotel, so not all of the unit arrived on time. When the director arrived he discovered that the area of the hall around the small stage which he had intended to use had been re-wallpapered since his last visit, and the decoration was of a distinctly modern kind. Since the scene was set at about 1966, the shooting plan had to be rapidly reorganised and it was decided to have 'Ian's' group practising in the body of the hall instead of on the stage. Unfortunately for the sound crew, they had already set up their equipment in accordance with the original plan, so a further delay was introduced as they reset all their equipment to face in the opposite direction.

Usually a sound recordist can travel very lightly - for most purposes he simply needs a tape-recorder and a selection of microphones - but for recording a complicated source such as a pop group a lot more equipment is required and this is why there was a certain amount of grumbling at having to reorganise everything. For this scene and for



the afternoon's recording of a full-scale performance, the sound department had hired an extra Nagra recorder, a mixer, several extra mikes and a playback system. The pop group itself was a genuine local band made up of three young musicians (one of whom also played 'Ian's' brother) plus the actor playing 'Ian', and all their real amplification equipment had been gathered out of shot around the soundman's microphones with non-functioning period AC30 amplifiers actually in shot. Each of the musician's vocals mikes were also dummies, but tiny electret-condenser microphones had been attached out of sight to their stands so that the sound recordist could mix the vocals with the instruments independently.

Since the scene was unscripted, the director carefully explained to the actors his intentions. The atmosphere had to be generally casual, since this was only a rehearsal, so one of the group was asked to face away from camera and several odd tables and chairs were moved into shot to emphasize the fact that they were not performing in front of an audience. Similarly, another member of the group was asked to perch on the edge of a table, and several glasses of beer were placed around the tables - some of which the boys were encouraged to drink in the hope that they would become more relaxed. Two main points had to be made with this scene, firstly 'Sandra's' affection for 'Ian' needed to be reinforced, so the actress was instructed to sit at a table in the foreground looking proudly towards him. Secondly, 'Ian's' aggressive streak needed to be illustrated, but 'without making it look as if it has all been specially staged for us' as the director pointed out. The younger brother was therefore asked to 'accidentally' mess up his drum-playing in the middle of a song, which would then precipitate 'Ian's' anger which he would signify through some impromptu dialogue:



IAN

What're you playing at?

YOUNGER BROTHER

You're singin' like an 'orco, we may as well pack it up.

IAN

Listen you! (Shouts) Get some drinks in Sandra. Sandra! Get some ....

(YOUNGER BROTHER starts playing the drums again, SANDRA looks quizzically towards him)

YOUNGER BROTHER

Oh, he's mad .....

IAN

Listen you!! (Shouts again) Piss off you! ... etc.

(They turn back to camera and continue playing)

Seven takes were made for the main shot, the two major technical problems being the framing for the camera and the balancing of all the instruments for the sound department. 'Sandra' had eventually been moved behind 'Ian' instead of being in the immediate foreground, but the framing was still difficult since 'Ian' was standing whereas most of the others were either sitting down or far enough away for them to be in the middle of the frame - 'Ian' was therefore asked to remove his shoes and to stoop down a little so that he would fit in the frame in relation to the others. This also meant that he could not move towards the camera at all, so on those occasions where he did the takes had to be scrapped. The sound department's main problem was that which most recording studios face; the problem of coping with the uncontrollable volume of a drum-set. Even though the sound recordist could turn down the gain for the drum's



mike through his mixer, all the other microphones tended to pick up the drums in addition to their own particular source, so the drummer was asked to play as quietly as he could, which was still louder than the sound recordist would have liked. The other problem with which the sound department had to cope was similar to that encountered in the in the 'dancing' scene filmed earlier; that of synchronizing a continuous music track with the visual source of that music. This is why a playback or 'foldback' system had been organized, such that the group could mime to a master track of themselves into which the cutaways could be inserted without losing the music continuity.

The limitations of time had again meant that this scene had to be hurried along, since the hall had only been booked until 1 p.m., and despite distraction such as birds flying into the hall the scene was wrapped just a few minutes after one o'clock. The crew then took a quick lunch break before setting up in another location at 2 p.m.

This location was the large club room of a big suburban pub, and was to be the setting for a public engagement for the pop group from which 'Ian', 'Sandra' and the younger brother return prior to the 'scarring' scene. The director had already arranged for a number of youngsters to come along to make up the audience and dancing couples, having found these people through the group itself and a number of visits to other clubs in the area. The wardrobe department checked all the people's clothes so that they would be more or less correct for period (no punk rockers, in other words) and the group itself had been given some collarless jackets similar to those which the Beatles wore in the mid-sixties. The club room itself was basically used as found, but the special effects supervisor had brought along a giant bee-gun to provide a smokey atmosphere, and the props men had dressed the stage with some



chrome-plated plastic material to enhance the effect of a professional stage performance.

This scene involved a particularly complicated lighting set-up, since several coloured spots, big fresnel spotlights and LMI's were used in addition to the smaller blondes and redheads in order to make the room look like a proper club, and the use of all these lights caused considerable difficulties with the mains supply. Similarly, the sound department was using all the equipment which had been used for the 'rehearsal' scene so the technical back-up for the scene took nearly three hours to get ready.

The first takes were made at about five o'clock, with the sound-recordist trying to exclude the ambient noise from his Beyer headphone monitor by wrapping a scarf over his head (he was then referred to as 'Old Mother Hubbard' for the rest of the day). The camera had been set up towards the back of the room on a very high tripod, looking across the heads of the dancers towards the stage, and some of the members of the crew started dancing with the audience to generate as much movement and excitement as possible. The director was worried about losing this atmosphere by making too many repeat takes, and instructed the group to 'Give it hell; you've been playing all night don't forget'. Several different shots were taken from various positions in the room, with the camera being hand-held for some of the time to enhance the action.

Cutaways were also made of close-ups of 'Ian' and 'Sandra' to show her handing him a beer and to give the audience a close-up of her sitting alone, watching her boyfriend with a mixture of pride, affection and a hint of sexuality.

Twelve takes were made in all before the pressures of time once again caught up with the director. A rather ugly scene had developed between one member of the unit and a lady who had booked the club-room for seven



o'clock, so the proceedings had to be wound up very quickly. In fact, the last take was finished at five past seven and all the lights, recording equipment and props were removed in the record time of ten minutes.

#### Day eleven

The whole of this day was once again spent at 'Ian's' house, partially to film those scenes which had been missed before, and partially to shoot some chronologically earlier scenes where the couple were just beginning to get to know one another. The first scene of the day was consequently a follow-on from the one filmed two days previously where the couple had just met 'Ian's' father in the garden, and showed them coming into the hallway and going upstairs to 'Ian's' room. The actress was told to look impressed at the (wealthy) surroundings which 'Ian' was enthusiastically showing her, and he was asked to project a sense of pride and anticipation mixed with a certain 'flipness' as he showed the girl into various rooms in the house. Since this was a 'pick-up' of a previously shot sequence, one of the main concerns was that of continuity - both actors' wardrobe and make-up had to be exactly the same as before, as did the exposure reading for the camera's aperture and any part of the location which would appear in both shots.

The next scene to be shot also continued the action of the couple coming into the house, but this time they had arrived in 'Ian's' bedroom, and here his brother would be introduced for the first time. The room closely followed the description given in the script:

#### INT. IAN'S HOUSE: PLAYROOM. DAY. (1964)

A large room at the top of the house. The walls are covered with photographs of the Beatles. Amplifying equipment, drums and a guitar are strewn across the floor.  
IAN and SANDRA enter. IAN picks up the guitar.



So 'Ian's' musical aspirations could be connoted in preparation for the 'rehearsal' scene, and then in the ensuing dialogue the seeds of aggression could be planted through his interchange with his younger brother; an interchange which at the time could simply be understood as normal banter between two brothers. The dialogue, however, had been subtly altered from the original script in order to provide another little clue to the boyfriend's character. 'Ian' had been showing off his prowess on the drums to Sandra when his brother enters the room, followed by the succeeding dialogue:

Original dialogue

'IAN is playing the drums, YOUNGER BROTHER enters:)

YOUNGER BROTHER

Pack it up, Ian!

IAN

Piss off.

YOUNGER BROTHER

They're my bloody drums,  
not yours!

(YOUNGER BROTHER tried to grab the drum-sticks, but IAN seizes him by the arm, twisting his wrist behind his back. YOUNGER BROTHER yells with pain.)

IAN

This is Sandra, you little turd.  
Say hello nicely.

YOUNGER BROTHER (wincing)

H'lo. Ow!

(IAN releases YOUNGER BROTHER, who stumbles back against the wall.  
IAN grins at SANDRA.

IAN

Coming to see us play then?

Final dialogue

YOUNGER BROTHER

Get off those drums!

IAN

Piss off.

SANDRA

(Speech sounds asking if this  
is Ian's brother)

YOUNGER BROTHER

What's wrong with her ...

IAN

What do you mean, what's wrong  
with her? ... Piss off ...  
Go on, piss off.

(IAN gets hold of SANDRA, they  
kiss, YOUNGER BROTHER exits.)



In the original dialogue, then, the interchange between 'Ian' and his brother is much more of a demonstration of the former's machismo for 'Sandra's' benefit, whereas in the final version the audience has the option of making the connotation that 'Ian' has a suppressed sensitivity of his association with a handicapped girl. The brother's identification of the handicap, or at least his reference to it, could then be used as evidence for 'Ian's' subsequent, and otherwise inexplicable violence towards him, in which 'Sandra' herself becomes entangled.

The next scene to be shot could have been used either as a direct follow on from the previously shot scene, or as a signifier of 'Sandra' and 'Ian's' potential, if not actual, sexual involvement. In fact it was used right at the end of part one of the film, and shows the couple in an intimate embrace on his bed.

Originally, the scene which would finish part one had been planned as an exterior one, showing the couple having just made love out on a deserted stretch of moorland near Bradford. Both the cameraman and the director had been out to look at various likely locations, but neither had been particularly happy about the idea, plus it meant using an extra location in an already crowded schedule, so 'Scene 84. Ext. Moorland. Day. (1965)' was never shot. Similarly, the director had tried an experiment during this ninth shooting day with an alternative version of the scene set this time in 'Ian's' greenhouse, but again it was felt not to have worked too well because of the possible distraction of the location itself, and time was pressing on to complete other scenes at the house (it had only been hired until the end of this day, at a cost, incidentally of £150, so the opportunity to come back for further pick-ups was unlikely).



Three further scenes or sections of scenes had to be filmed at this location. The first of these was a pick-up of 'Ian's' father's dialogue as the couple arrive from 'Sandra's' house - where he invites the couple to a friend's house for tea. The second and third scenes were extra sections of the sequence where the couple and 'younger brother' return home drunkenly from the club before the 'scarring' scene. Both of these were night scenes, and were therefore filmed during the evening, and both were intended to be continuity bridges between the 'club' scene and the 'scarring' scene. The first would show the three youngsters arriving home in 'Ian's' car, and the second would show them coming into the hallway of the house. In fact the second action would eventually be cut during the editing to save time, but the first was retained because it demonstrated that 'Ian' was very drunk and this could provide another source of explanation for his subsequent behaviour.

Day twelve was the second rest day of the shoot, and the director took the opportunity to discuss some of the following week's scenes with the main actress. She had, for example, been particularly worried about the 'strip' scene, in which she had been under the impression that she would be asked to do a complete strip in front of 'real' people, but the director had reassured her that this had not been his intention. He had also used this day to review some of the rushes. To save the time-consuming journey to Leeds in order to view rushes on one of Yorkshire Television's machines, a Steenbeck four-plate editor had been installed in the production office at the hotel. The director was generally pleased with the material which had been shot so far, and felt that 'Sandra' was coming through as a properly three-dimensional character. It had always been his concern that the film was going to be 'too sociological', which for the director meant that the central



character's underlying psychological drives might have become submerged beneath the documentary observation of what was being done to her. The danger of the film becoming a purely structuralistic account of events was, in other words, felt to have been avoided by the more phenomenological portrayal of the character itself, and this was largely due to the main actress's absorption of that character. The danger of distancing an audience from the girl's interior life was also felt to have been ameliorated by some of the scenes which showed the younger versions of 'Sandra' - the scene which was considered to have been the most successful at this point was the one where the child 'Sandra' ('Sandra 2') was made to cry by her father as he tried to do his football pools. The director remarked, tongue in cheek, that this scene would make his own father feel guilty, since as a young boy the director had always been made to leave the room when the results were on the radio every Saturday afternoon, but the scene itself was felt to have worked on a technical level as a piece of almost pure naturalism. The child's distress had, of course, been perfectly genuine, but the actors' response had also appeared to be spontaneous such that the net result was almost exactly that which the director had intended.

One other matter which the director attended to during this break was to pay a visit to the wife of the man whom the real Sandra had originally stabbed. In a sense, there was no legal need to obtain her permission to make or show the film, but it would have been politic to forestall any embarrassing complaints from that direction, and as the director pointed out, there was no need for the transmission of the film to come as a sudden shock to the lady. In the event, neither she nor her son raised any objections, and both had actually felt rather sorry for the girl - remarking upon her brightness and vivacity during the court proceedings.



Not all of the original protagonists had been sought out by the director, however, and for obvious reasons - the man who had attacked the original girl in the motel had never been traced by the police or anyone else, and the original 'Ian' was hardly likely to have been sympathetic towards the making of the film. While it is doubtful that he could have obtained an injunction to stop it (since he was never specifically identified) he might well have tried to do so, so this and other 'grey areas' were left well alone.

#### Day thirteen

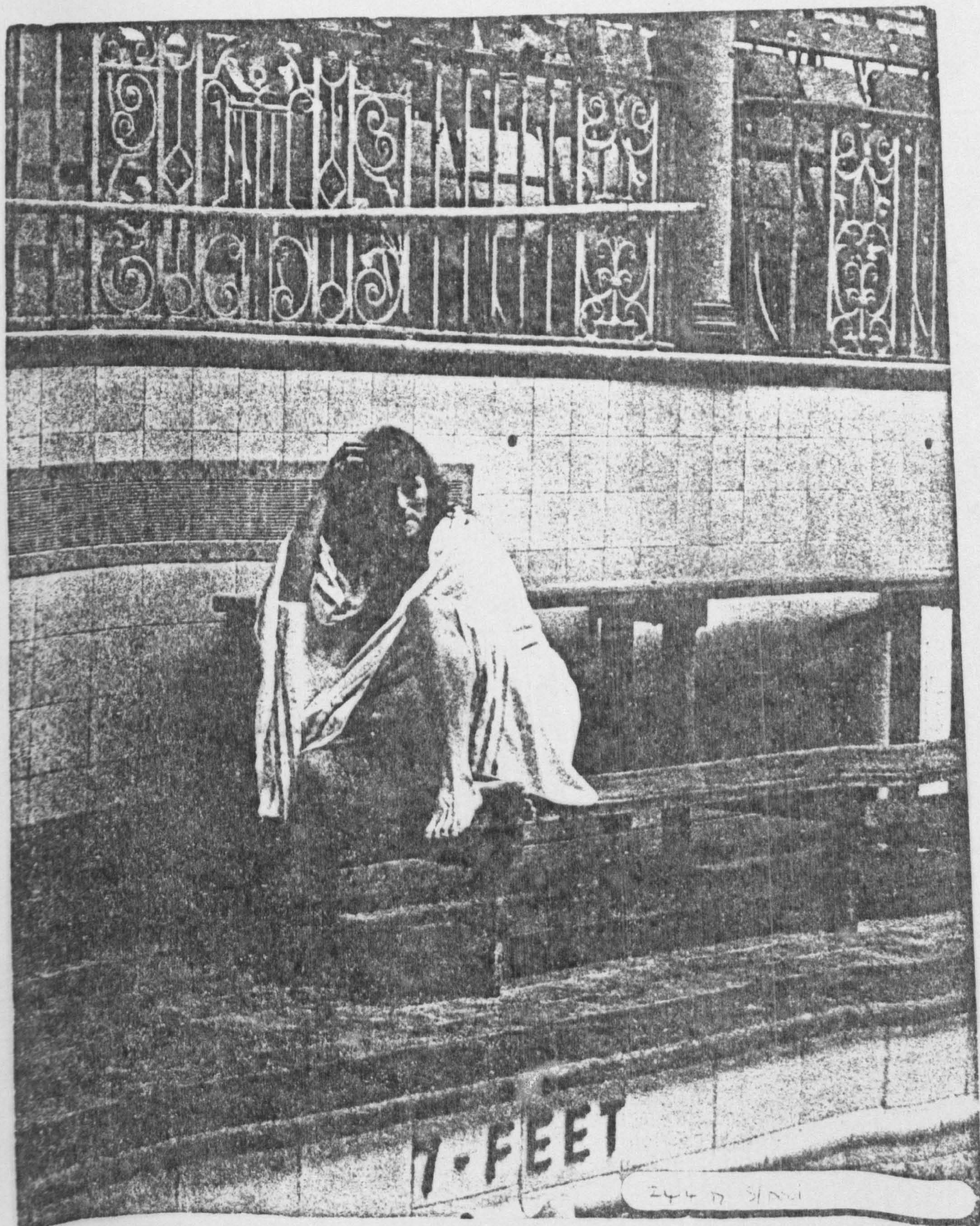
One of the points the film was trying to make was that 'Sandra' was in most respects a perfectly normal girl. She was bright, basically attractive, had a good sense of humour and had excelled at those things in which she was able to excel. Indeed, had it not been for her inability to communicate in a hard, largely uncaring world, her life may have been very different. One of those aspects in which she had excelled was sports. At school she had won prizes for athletics and swimming, and it was 'Sandra's' success at a swimming gala which was the subject of this day's filming. The Windsor Swimming Baths in the middle of Bradford had been taken over for the day, and the audience and 'Sandra's' fellow swimmers had been invited from the Deaf School and Bradford Amateur Swimming Association. One of the director's main concerns in filming this sequence was that 'Sandra' should appear to win her race prior to receiving her prize, but that she should do so convincingly. The actress was a proficient swimmer, and she admitted afterwards that she had really wanted to win her race legitimately, but the other girls were mostly better swimmers so the director choreographed the race such that 'Sandra' appeared to just forge ahead at the last minute.



A good deal of 'cheating' was therefore used; for some of the takes the swimmers started off from half-way up the baths to be followed along by the cameraman who was pushed along by his assistant in a wheelchair to provide a tracking shot. The variable-speed Eclair camera was also used to undercrank some takes to make the swimmers appear to be going faster than they actually were. Similarly, for some of the cutaways (of 'Sandra's' family cheering her on, or the starter firing his pistol at the beginning) the swimmers were not actually in the baths, and the family's eyelines were therefore directed towards the floor manager, who walked slowly up the side of the baths at the same speed at which the swimmers would have been moving. The starting official was a genuine member of the Bradford Amateur Swimming Association, and had some difficulty understanding the principle of eyelines - for his close-up as he started the race he had been instructed to fire the pistol and then follow the swimmers' progress with his eyes. Unfortunately he had a tendency to whip his head round having fired the gun which would have given the impression that the swimmers had been doing about a hundred knots, so a single volunteer swimmer was asked to swim up the baths out of shot to provide the eyeline. Another minor 'cheat' which was used was to move the audience around for each different shot so that the spectator's stands always appeared to be packed full, and for the technical reason of framing the family were asked not to stand up to cheer 'Sandra' as they naturally had been doing, since otherwise the cameraman was in danger of losing their heads out of the top of the frame.

By about four o'clock in the afternoon, after some eighteen takes of 'Sandra' swimming and the various cutaways, everyone was getting a little tired (not least of all the actress) with even the floor manager suggesting





The swimming pool scene. After several hours' swimming the main actress takes a welcome break.



that the director cut one take short. The actress had in fact refused to do one of the takes, since, as she explained afterwards, she was extremely tired and had felt very involved in the race itself. The deaf children in the audience had also made her feel very emotional; 'Even though their parents knew that I was an actress,' she explained, 'they still kept coming up to me to talk in sign-language. I sometimes think the character is taking me over, you know all the problems which this girl had to face. It just gets you sometimes.'

The cameraman had meanwhile disappeared up to the far end of the spectator's stands to film an establishing wide-shot of the whole baths. For such a shot, taken from perhaps a hundred feet from the main subject (the family at the other end of the building), he would use a motorised spotmeter to find the correct aperture setting, since this device could give a remote reading for a distant subject whereas an ordinary light-meter can only tell you the stop for the immediate surroundings. Having taken this shot, one of the last series of takes for the day was then set up, this being the presentation of the prizes for the gala. Here the design department had supplied all the cups and medals, but the officials and judge were all genuine - once again, the audience was manoeuvred into shot and the scene was then accomplished within two takes.

The day's shooting was wrapped at five o'clock and the exhausted actress staggered back to the hotel which was just around the corner. One small but important point which I have not mentioned concerned the clapperboard. Usually this has the take and slate number chalked upon it together with the name of the production so that the editor can identify each section of film in the editing suite. On this occasion, however, the name 'DUMBY' had been removed such that the (real) audience could not identify the title, which may have offended some of the deaf people if taken out of context of the film as a whole.



Day fourteen

'Sandra's' first job was at a dry-cleaning works, and following the script, the director wanted to insert a sequence of the girl starting work here after the 'swimming baths' scene to signify that time was moving on and that 'Sandra' had left school to start life in the big wide world beyond. That world was, however, limited to the repetitive drudgery of operating a steam pressing machine, and part of the connotation which the director wanted the audience to draw was that the job was, indeed, staggeringly boring. Conversely, learning the new job involved mastering quite a complicated procedure, and the speed and eagerness with which the girl grasped the basic principles was also intended as a demonstration of her intelligence - her deafness notwithstanding.

Both 'Sandra' and the audience needed to be ushered into the factory, 'Sandra' because it was her first day, and the audience because the sequence represented a completely new set of information. Hence the first scene to be filmed showed the girl arriving at the works with her mother, who asks where they might find the foreman. Having found him, several tracking shots were then made of the foreman as he shows the girl around various parts of the factory. The main section of the sequence then showed 'Sandra' being taught how to operate her steam-press; a scene which was difficult to film because of the noise and the cramped conditions. Most of the shots were consequently taken from less than five feet away from the subject, and the actors' dialogue through radio mikes as well as the boom microphone such that the dialogue track could be separated from the background.

The filming of this scene is a good example of the use of both real locations and real people in the quest for naturalism. The factory was a fully



operational, working environment, the foreman was genuine and would have been the actual man who would train new workers, and some of the people in the background of the shots were genuine machine operators. Furthermore, the scene was unscripted, and the actress genuinely did not know how to operate the steam-press, so in telling her how to work the machinery the foreman was simply doing his job. The unedited recording of these events was consequently very close to being a purely naturalistic account, since even the presence of the camera was having very little effect upon the action because of all the other distractions of noise and movement in the factory, plus the fact that the actress was assuming the role of a deaf person made the foreman concentrate particularly closely upon relaying his instructions to her (there was a very real danger of the actress scalding herself if these instructions were not clear). As can be seen from the account of the editing, however, this extreme naturalism would still have to be manipulated into shape before it could be incorporated within the context of the film as a whole.

Two other actresses had been cast as 'working girls' for this scene, and they had been told to stand in the background for the above shots along with a genuine girl who was hanging up clothes on an overhead conveyor. Their presence in this scene could thus serve to introduce and identify them as 'Sandra's' colleagues since they were to reappear in later sections of the film, but they were also used to signify a potential problem which a handicapped person might encounter in a working environment - that of being an oddity. In one of the cutaways made for this scene, for example, one of these girls was asked to look across to the new girl and remark: 'I think she's a bit funny'.

Working in the dry-cleaning works nevertheless had its compensations.

For one thing, it gave the girl the opportunity to strike out on her own



a little more by giving her an independent source of income. It had originally been the intention to show 'Sandra' opening her first wage packet at home, but the director had decided to modify that scene and set it in the factory canteen instead. By doing this a number of things could be achieved: firstly, the denotation of the wage-packet itself could be bolstered by the place-of-work surroundings; secondly, by having the girl open the packet in the company of the two 'working girls', the connotation could be made that she had been broadly accepted by them and, if this was her first wages, that acceptance had been won quite quickly. Thirdly, the scene could act as a connective to the following scene through the addition of some extra dialogue. The following scene was going to be the one at the fairground, and to provide an explanation of why 'Sandra' had gone there the director had now included this dialogue in the 'wage packet' scene:

WORKING GIRL

(Watching SANDRA looking proudly at her wages)

What'yer gonna do with that then?

SANDRA

(She thinks for a moment, then exclaims ....)

D'vair!

WORKING GIRL

You what? ... Oh, the fair, she's going to the fair!

Three separate scenes had been planned to be shot of 'Sandra' working at the steam-press, the first being that described above. The second was to be set about a year later, showing the girl looking out of the window at 'Ian' arriving to pick her up from work, and the third scene was to show the girl a further year later - this time with the ugly scar sometime after 'Ian' had left her. In fact the latter scene would then involve some dramatic-documentary licence, since by that time the real Sandra had



changed jobs, but as far as the day's scheduling was concerned the director was being faced with more pressing problems. 'Ian' was to have been shown arriving in his car for the second of these three scenes, but once again the car had failed to arrive by the time the director was ready to film that scene. Given the enormous cost of each minute of shooting time, a sum not unadjacent to £2 in direct costs alone, the director could not afford to wait for the car to arrive, so he decided to shoot the third scene of the series and then come back to the second one later. This then meant that the actress would have to spend some time in having the make-up scar tissue applied, so another delay was introduced before the scene was shot.

'Ian's' car had eventually arrived three or four hours late, but the second scene was then able to be filmed. Another unscheduled delay had of course been interjected as a result of this since 'Sandra' had had to have the scar removed once more to comply with the continuity of the chronologically earlier scene. This scene also generated another problem; part of its action involved 'Sandra' running out of the factory to greet her boyfriend, who then drives them both off down the road and out of shot. Driving out of the camera's vision is in fact an important aspect of this kind of shot, since the vehicle's disappearance then provides a natural point at which a cut can be made to the next scene. Unless a film-maker wants to make a specific point, he is usually loath to artificially cut short an action before its 'natural' completion since this can make sequences look very jerky and discontinuous. Hence in filming the action of, say, someone replacing a glass of beer on a table, a director will either show the whole action or will allow the glass to exit the frame at some point such that an audience will assume that it has indeed been replaced. The problem with 'Ian's' car was that he had to drive it quite a long way down the road before he exited the frame by going off round a corner, and the length of that departure was therefore felt to have unnecessarily slowed



down the scene's pace. Several different strategies could be employed for dealing with this kind of situation, the scene could be cut before the car had in fact left the shot and the cut then smoothed out by making it into a lap dissolve or a fade, but then one would be in danger of introducing an unintended connotation. Different types of cut have theoretically different meanings - a lap dissolve, for example, might have enabled the director to pull out of the 'car' shot early, but it might also have led to the connotation that the next scene was showing a simultaneous rather than a successive event. The length of the shot could alternatively be reduced by limiting the duration of the action itself, and the director in fact tried to do this by having the actor drive the car off very rapidly. One last way of dealing with the problem was the solution which was eventually used, and that was to consign the whole scene to the cutting room floor.

A second main sequence had been planned for this day, and this was to be filmed at the Bradford Royal Infirmary once again. This time the hospital was to be used as the location for the aftermath of the 'scarring' scene where 'Ian' and 'Candra's' respective families are seen waiting in a corridor as the young couple are being attended to in the emergency department.

Francis Truffaut has said that a film is like a boat which is always on the point of sinking, and this is often true of the actual process of making a film. By the time the unit had arrived at the hospital, the day's schedule was considerably behind as a result of the problem with the car and the associated delay with make-up, and the director's original contact at the infirmary had consequently gone home. The difficulty of filming a reconstruction of a highly-charged emotional event in a location in which quite genuine traumatic events were happening all around was thus compounded by the confusion of the hospital staff, with whom the director then had to renegotiate permission to film in the areas he wanted.



Several takes were nonetheless made in a corridor leading off the emergency area of members of 'Sandra's' family and of 'Ian's' father trying to persuade a 'police inspector' that charges would not be necessary. Genuine stretcher cases were getting into shot for these takes which may have generated continuity problems for the editor when he came to cut different takes together, and there were also problems with people looking at the camera - during one shot, for example, the P.A. wrote down 'Take 4 - NG stretcher - attendant looks at camera'.

The next scene to be filmed was of 'Sandra' and 'Ian' in an examination room; both actors had been left to themselves for a short period whilst the 'corridor' scenes were being filmed so that they could prepare themselves; 'Sandra' had been instructed to look as if she was in a state of shock and in considerable pain, and 'Ian' had been concentrating on working up a state of remorse and anguish. He had also been asked to cry, and the actor explained that this was achieved by taking very deep breaths and then producing what were strictly coughing noises with the throat. Neither actor felt, however, that they had really been given enough time to generate the required mood for this difficult scene, since the technicians had soon returned to set up the lights and props in the examination room. More importantly, the general mood within the unit was full of tension by the late afternoon as a result of the various reshuffles and the inescapable reality of the working casualty area.

The juxtaposition of different levels of reality during the process of making this drama-documentary was, in other words, beginning to catalyse a certain sense of unease or strain within the unit. 'Filming in the hospital like that is getting near the borders of legitimacy,' the actress commented afterwards. 'You see, I'm having to play at being hurt among all those people who really are hurt.' The actress had in fact



been very upset after filming the last scene, partly because of the nature of the scene itself, and partly because she had had to return to the hotel afterwards to have all the make-up blood and scar tissue removed, which meant that she had to walk out through the hospital's lobby still fully made-up with false wounds as people were coming in with real ones. 'Quite bizarre,' she commented.

Other people were reacting in different ways; several of the crew had become either more subdued than normal, or considerably more flippant. Some tried to relieve the sense of tension in the examination room by joking with the actors (which was precisely what the actors did not need insofar as they were trying to retain a mood of despair and anguish) and others had just become 'difficult' as the director said. The lack of regular production meetings and the combination of the roles of both producer and director in the one person had also begun to be identified by some crew-members with what they saw as a lack of downward communication within the unit. Certainly the forces of circumstance which had dictated the day's reorganisation were misread as mismanagement by those people who did not have access to the appropriate information, and at least one member of the design department stated that he felt absolutely no empathy with what the director was trying to do, 'I can't imagine why he is making this.' One member of the unit gave up altogether and returned home that evening, even though he came back later, and another had decided to simply turn in a professional job 'and that's all'.

Normal channels of communication within the unit were in other words beginning to break down. Filming in the hospital had brought a number of people's underlying doubts about the ethics of the situation to the surface, and the director's potential isolation as the project had begun to drive an actual wedge between himself and the means of operationalisation of



that idea, the crew. The growing lack of intercommunication on this level had also begun to be manifested in a corresponding increase of intracommunicative conjecturing or gossip within the unit, a lot of which, it must be said, was bounced off myself as the 'objective observer'.

Against this a number of further observations can be made. First of all the crew were now two weeks into the shoot, and for the studio crew at least this meant that they had also - and unusually - been away from homes and families for that period. Secondly, the shooting schedule had been unremittingly intensive, and it is important to remember that the crew were not only working together all day, but were also living together back at the hotel. Thirdly, the general unease concerning the manning of the unit had this day materialised in the shape of a Union shop steward who had visited the unit as an observer, as a result of which visit an assistant floor manager was attached to the unit in addition to the floor manager himself (the latter was felt, on paper at least, to need more support when functioning as 'crown controller' in situations like the swimming baths or the fairground.)

From the director's point of view in his capacity as producer, he was also bearing the responsibility for many other factors besides the immediate organisation of the set itself. The tightness of the schedule had begun to form serious constraints for both the form and content of the film itself insofar as the director was now searching for ways to reduce the amount of material which he had planned to shoot. To this end the writer had also come up to Bradford this day to discuss which parts of the script could be cut down or rejected altogether. He in fact thought that the audience 'could be made to work much harder' and that one of the ways in which the film could be pruned was to remove some of the narrative 'signposts' (his term) which had been carefully worked into



the script or improvised by the director on the set. The writer was not sure, for example, that the insertion of the 'rehearsal' scene was entirely necessary as a signpost towards 'Ian's' aggression, and felt that several scenes which had been designed as indicators of 'Sandra's' exploitation by different men could be compressed into fewer separate incidents. He was quite amenable to having his script changed around in this way, seeing it himself as a guide rather than a piece of immutable literature, but the point I am making is that apart from the day-to-day problems of organizing large numbers of crew, actors and locations, the director was also having to take a much broader view of the film as a whole than other individuals, and part of this view included the possibility of making enforced changes in the structure of the film itself; changes which at that time could have easily led to the overall failure of the enterprise.

The possibility of failure was precisely the idea that could not be relayed to the crew, since this would most likely have precipitated an actual curcense of the director's authority, and hence the unity of the project as a whole. This was one reason for restricting his discussions to a limited number of people; another reason was the sheer lack of time for organizing formal production meetings, and a third related reason was rooted in the constant need to deal with the vagaries of 'external' problems thrown up by the attempt to reconstruct a real life within real situations. On this same day, for example, the director had learned that he would not be able to film a scene showing 'Phil' being arrested in his flat during the following day's shooting because a genuine murder had just occurred there, and the whole area would therefore be swarming with real policemen.



Day fifteen

Seven scenes had been planned for this day, all of which would deal with 'Sandra's' relationship with 'Phil'; the petty criminal whom she had taken up with after 'Ian' had left, and the man with whom the girl had been discovered by 'Mother' in her front parlour. After that fight with her mother, the original Sandra had left home to live with 'Phil', by whom she had become pregnant, and it was the director's intention to illustrate through this relationship the girl's downhill progress in contrast to the optimism of part one of the film.

The first scene of the day was to have been set in a labour exchange, and would have been inserted immediately after the 'Fight-with-Mother' scene as a bridge between that and a scene showing 'Sandra' and 'Phil' living in his flat. 'Sandra' would at first have been shown by herself, and 'Phil' would then have been re-introduced in order to imply that the couple were now together - an implication which would then be reinforced by the subsequent scenes. Official permission to film inside the labour exchange had, however, been refused, so the scene had been temporarily abandoned. Two alternative strategies had nevertheless been considered, the first of which was to return to the building at a later date to film the scene with a concealed camera, and the second was to use the exterior of some other municipal-looking building as a connotative sign of 'Labour Exchange'. Apart from the legal problem which the first alternative might have generated, it is always risky on a technical level to film 'in the bag' in this way since the cameraman cannot, therefore, monitor his shots through the viewfinder. The director argued against the second alternative because the 'Labour Exchange' scene was to have been part of a series of disconnected scenes - part of a montage rather than



a sequence - so each individual piece of information had to be that much less ambiguous. The labour exchange had, in other words, to be readily identifiable as such; perhaps by including a shot of its nameboard, and if another building was used the strength of this denotation would therefore be reduced.

Because they had lost this location the director then decided to shoot an unscheduled scene instead, and this was one showing 'Sandra' and 'Phil' staggering drunkenly across a stretch of waste ground which would be used later in the film as a symbol of their degradation. Both this and the 'Labour Exchange' scene had been planned as 'low profile' operations in which only a minimum crew would have been used, and the bulk of the crew had indeed travelled out to a different location to prepare it for the next scene as the director and the core unit had been filming the previous one. This next location was to be used as 'Phil's' lodgings, and it had had to be found at the last minute because of the real murder which had taken place in the original location. The house was one of several used in the film which all belonged to one landlord, and the particular flat concerned was described by one of the props men as 'The worst place I've ever had to work in'. (In preparing this room several French letters had had to be unstuck from the bed, various articles of discarded clothing removed and the whole place dusted with flea-power before some of the crew would go in.)

The first scene shot in this room was eventually placed directly after the 'Fight-with-mother' scene, and was intended to indicate that 'Sandra' had moved in with 'Phil' on a permanent basis. She was therefore shown cooking some bacon for 'Phil' as he languished on the bed (some water having been added to the bacon fat to make it crackle convincingly) and



had been supplied with some padding by the wardrobe department to make her look pregnant such that the connotation could be drawn that the girl was pregnant by this man, and that this scene was set some appreciable time later.

The next scene showed the couple in bed, being woken up by a police siren outside prior to 'Phil' being arrested. It was never used in the finished film, partly because of the need to reduce the film's length again, and partly because the director had felt that this sudden awakening had actually looked rather humorous, whereas it was supposed to represent one of a long line of misfortunes which had happened to 'Sandra' at this point. The scene filmed next, after lunch, was however used, and this was to demonstrate that 'Sandra' had returned to live with 'Phil' after he had come out of prison. The scene was intended to illustrate the petty criminal's continuing uselessness, and his uncaring attitude towards 'Sandra', for it revolved around his demand for money from the girl to go down to the pub. Another clue to 'Sandra's' interior world was also to be introduced in this scene by showing her trying to hide the scar beneath some make-up before going out; her private sensitivity of the disfigurement would thus be evident despite the increasing degradation of her situation.

Working with different actors in different locations and situations requires a range of different directorial techniques. In this case there was a tendency for the scene to be overplayed, so the director was concerned to contain the action and to slow down the delivery of the dialogue. Again, most of the actors used so far had complied with the director's instructions almost to the letter, even when they disagreed with the motivation or intention of an action, but in this scene the actor had felt the need to discuss each movement far more so the director had adopted a different, and ostensibly more flexible approach. The



actors were, for example, allowed to work out their own manual sign for 'money' and more than the usual number of run-throughs were practised before making the first take. Similarly, the takes themselves were made in quick succession for the actor's benefit rather than strictly at the director's behest - which is not to say that the director gave the actors the complete freedom to play the scene as they wished. The actor playing 'Phil', for example, had argued that he shouldn't look as if he had forgotten the fact of 'Sandra's' deafness because by that stage in the film the deafness would already have been amply registered for an audience, but the director argued that he found himself forgetting the girl's disability when talking to the real Sandra and that the audience would need to be reminded at various junctures too.

Two main technical problems had arisen in the filming of this scene. Firstly, it was divided into two actions; that of 'Sandra' applying her make-up, and that of 'Phil' demanding money before they both leave through the front door. The original dialogue, however, was linked to the second action, so in view of 'Phil's' impatience an extra piece of dialogue was added to cover the first action such that 'Phil' was not left without anything to say as 'Sandra' gets ready (this was simply an irritable 'Come on, love!'). Secondly, the front door had to be seen to close after the couple had left, and several of the takes were rendered NG because of the physical difficulty of closing the door over a mass of lighting cables which had been run in from outside.

The next scene was again rejected from the finished film because of the strictures of time, but it had originally been intended to demonstrate that 'Phil' had quickly returned to a life of crime after his release from prison, for it showed him and some mates unpacking and distributing some stolen cigarettes. Apart from the need to lose time in the editing,



the director had also felt that this scene may have simply been repeating the information that 'Phil' was just a small-time thug, and as such was superfluous. Furthermore, the scene was not thought to have been particularly satisfactory at the time, since the action of stowing away the cigarettes had either tended to be too orderly and 'balletic' as the director said, or too confused and haphazard. Filming the scene did, however, produce an interesting example of the director insuring himself against potential censorship, for one of the intended purposes of the scene was to reintroduce 'Sandra's' nickname 'Dummy' through 'Phil's' line: 'Get off ... Get off, you stupid fucking dummy!'

In case an objection was raised to the expletive here, the director also had a wildtrack made of 'Phil' saying '... piss off you stupid dummy!' which could then be inserted over the original dialogue if necessary.

One further scene was filmed this day; an exterior shot showing 'Phil' being bundled into a police car after his arrest. Two small points concerning the necessary manipulation of 'real reality' into 'film reality' can be made; firstly the police insist that when using police uniforms or vehicles their identifying insignia must not be those of real officers or divisions, so for scenes like this these details are required to be non-authentic in some way. Secondly, the scene was not filmed outside the same house in which the associated interiors had been shot, since there were still a great many real policemen outside dealing with the aftermath of the murder.

#### Day sixteen

The 'mid-shoot depression' which had begun to overshadow the previous two days' shooting had been to some extent ameliorated by a birthday party which had been held for one of the crew-members on the night of the fifteenth day. This sixteenth day - a Wednesday - proved, however, to



be the start of three very difficult days for all concerned until the welcome two-day break at the weekend. For one thing, this sixteenth day proved to be exceedingly long; the main unit had been rostered to start at 9 a.m. (with make-up and wardrobe starting an hour earlier) and finish at 8.30 p.m. with an hour for lunch. In fact, the day was not eventually wrapped until 10.30 p.m., making it nearly a thirteen-hour day for most of the crew, and more like sixteen hours for the director and his immediate aids. Apart from the fact that the hotel had had to be persuaded to keep its restaurant open after hours so that the then ravenous crew could eat at the end of this day, the general theory was that every member of the crew would be on time + 2½ for the following day as a result of overtime agreements. This would then make the next day's shooting even more expensive than usual, and was one reason why it was wrapped at the comparatively early time of six o'clock.

The day was considered to have started rather badly with a second attempt to film the 'Labour Exchange' scene. The idea of using a concealed camera had eventually been rejected - mainly because of the associated uncertainty of not being able to monitor the shots - and the scene had consequently been shot with a hand-held camera as an exterior, showing 'Sandra' waiting outside the building for 'Phil' to come out with his money. The action was never considered to be quite right, however, and the scene was not included in the film.

The minimum crew which had been occupied with this scene then returned to join the rest of the unit at a city-centre pub; one of three which the director had organised in the middle of Bradford to provide the backdrops for a large proportion of the film. The first scene here was to show 'Phil' planning a break-in with a West Indian as 'Sandra' goes to the bar for some drinks, and this would be placed immediately before



the 'Arrest' scene which had been shot the previous day. Using a West Indian in this scene had simply been intended as a reflection of Bradford's cosmopolitan nature; one of the more sympathetic characters in the film who would appear later was also a West Indian, and a Scotswoman would be playing a major role too (in addition to which the director had gone to some lengths to find Pakistani and Indian people as 'passers-by' for different scenes).

Another scene of 'Sandra' and 'Phil' drinking in the pub was shot next, this time with slight changes in make-up and wardrobe to enable the scene to be inserted at a chronologically different point in the film. This second scene in particular was intended to be used as one of several disconnected scenes indicating 'Sandra's' general decline into aimless drinking through her association with this man, but it is the circumstances in which these two scenes were shot which is especially interesting. On both occasions the pub was open, so there were genuine customers drinking in the bars as well as the actors, and the director had tried to capture the existing atmosphere by keeping the technical equipment to a minimum - he did not, in other words, want to focus too much attention on the actors by surrounding them with lights and microphones. Many of the customers had had quite a bit to drink, and the actor playing 'Phil' had himself drunk six pints, so the drunken atmosphere was perfectly genuine. Furthermore, the reconstruction was apparently becoming more and more indistinguishable from real life, since one of the (real) customers who knew the original Sandra had come up to the actress during a break in the shooting to ask her how her brother was getting along (i.e. he had actually mistaken the actress for the original girl). Admittedly the man was drunk, but he took me aside and informed me that 'I've known this lass for years, she's a great laugh - changed a bit since I last saw her though.'



The main actress was then remade-up and dressed for the next scene of the day, which this time was to be set in a cafe and the associated exterior street. This scene was set about two years later than the previous one and would follow 'mother's' funeral in the film itself.

Sandra had been married for about a year by that time, but the marriage had proved to be most unsatisfactory, not least because the husband had formed a relationship with one of Sandra's erstwhile friends - a lady known as 'Cross-eyed Anne'. The 'cafe' scene was intended to provide a reinforcement of the idea that the husband and this girl were in collusion (an idea which would already have been hinted at in a previous scene) and, given its juxtaposition to the funeral scene, the overall connotation was intended to be that 'Sandra' was becoming more and more isolated.

The director had found a cafe which was considered to be just right, 'it really looked like a cafe' as he put it, but the director was unable to obtain permission to film there, so another one had to be found.

Eventually a suitable cafe was located and the scene completed in twelve takes; 'Sandra' was shown sitting inside the cafe on her own with a cup of coffee - perhaps contemplating the death of her mother - but then she looks up and out of the window at 'husband' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' walking arm-in-arm down the street. The camera took 'Sandra's' P.O.V. for this shot, looking through the window at the couple in order to relate the interior with the ensuing exterior shot of 'Sandra' bursting out through the door to angrily face the other two. The exterior shot then continued the action by showing the girl's frustrating attempt to find out what was happening, after which the husband leaves her in the doorway of a tobacconists looking confused, angry and resigned.

The difficulty of finding a location for the 'Cafe' scene was only one of



the problems which the director had encountered during this sixteenth day. He had also taken a minimum crew out to try to film some shots of 'Sandra' standing on a street corner, ostensibly soliciting for custom as a prostitute. This had not worked because it had been attempted in the late afternoon when there were a lot of schoolchildren about, walking home from local schools in the area, and they had tended to stand about watching the unit and the actress herself which made it impossible to obtain a realistic shot.

By about seven o'clock the core unit had returned to the pub to film the scene where 'Sandra' originally meets 'Phil' during an evening out with her friends from the dry-cleaning factory. The scene was actually filmed in the basement dance-room of the same pub, but a disco had been hired such that it could have been taken to be a club, or at least a different pub. A great deal of time had been spent in setting up the lighting for this scene, which mostly involved uprating all the existing lights in the room, and the lighting technicians had been continually beset with problems of supply since the existing wiring was very old and could not stand the additional load. 'Sandra' had also had to be remade-up and dressed once again so it was not until past nine o'clock in the evening that the first takes of this scene were made.

The scene itself would be placed immediately after the one where the sister telephones 'Ian' to find out why he had not come round to see 'Sandra', and before the 'Fight with Mother' scene in which 'Sandra' had brought 'Phil' home. It was therefore the intention that a passage of time should be understood to have separated the 'Telephone' scene from the 'Meeting Phil' episode, but that the meeting and subsequent arrival home was sequential. To this end 'Sandra' had been made up to look older and harder than she had in the period immediately following the scarring incident, and one of the points of the scene was to



demonstrate the girl's tenacity in being able to bounce back again after that trauma, so the actress had been told to look confident and assured. The action itself ('Sandra's' successful seduction of the stranger) was of course a demonstration of her ability to come back fighting, but it was also a preparatory clue towards an explanation of her future behaviour as a prostitute, since she was shown to be capable of attracting men despite her disability and disfigurement (neither of which particularly mattered in the context of a noisy, oddly-lit disco).

Much of the dialogue between the girls was ad-libbed and was in any case difficult for the sound recordist to separate from the background noise, but one of the director's chief concerns was, again, to contain the action within the bounds of credibility. He explained at the time that there was a danger of the scene looking like a parody, and impressed upon the actors that this was 'just an ordinary situation'. 'Phil', for example, was told not to look too confident and flamboyant, and was instructed not to come straight over to 'Sandra' after she had given him a 'come hither' look. In order to deflate the total surprise of 'Phil's' appearance, a reverse shot was also made of him standing in the crowd which could then be cut into the scene before he sees the girls, thus giving the audience the chance to identify him as simply one of several men picked at random rather than as a particular individual picked out and framed for the audience's benefit. 'Phil' had, however, been originally cast to be in direct contrast to the girl's first boyfriend, and his natural tough-looking appearance had been enhanced with a leather jacket and a D.A. hairstyle plus the 'LOVE' and 'HATE' tattoos on his knuckles (which could connote 'a past'). Whatever degree of interest 'Sandra' had had in him at the time was, however, secondary to the fact that she had some interest, which was also intended as a sign of a loss of



innocence on her part in contrast to the idyllic affair which she had had with 'Ian'.

Many of the real people who had come along to make up the crowd for this last scene had begun to leave by about half-past nine since the preparations had taken so long, and the director observed that 'They've realised that film-making isn't a glamorous art any more'. Indeed, the problems and changes of tack which had occurred throughout the day had not endeared the process to some of the members of the crew. The difficulty of working within the inflexible reality of genuine locations with real people and against the backdrop of real human problems had tended to force individual members of the unit to work solely within their formally defined roles as professional technicians. Some of the crew, for example, felt that the chances of the film being stopped were increasing all the time because of the potential incursion into the original family's privacy; real people in the pub were certainly aware of whom the film was about (one person, giving the girl's real name, told me, 'Dummy Sandra will be famous now, won't she?') and a Sunday newspaper reporter had appeared on the scene to try (unsuccessfully) to obtain a story. In view of this and the fact that the film was regarded very much as the director's property, some of the unit had decided to limit their involvement to their own particular duties at this time. 'Film technicians,' one person volunteered, 'have this funny sort of code that you take the money and run, and this has been very strong today.' One result of this was that the director had had to spend proportionately more time in issuing instructions to build up the 'creative common sense' which he needed in a situation in which time was already severely limited. In fact, the situation was perilously close to invoking Catch 22, for if people had effectively adopted the strategy of working to rule as a



means of coping with the inherent uncertainties of each day's shooting then this would increase the director's overall responsibility as producer of the enterprise. But the greater that responsibility became, the less likely was it to be delegated back downwards, so the more likely was it that the crew would then work according to the strict definition of their respective jobs.

One way out of this situation would have been to insert a buffer between the director/producer and the rest of the unit in the form of a first assistant, one 'with a loud voice' as the director put it. He had in fact his associate producer with this in mind, but since making that appointment the structure and size of the unit had been considerably altered such that the associate producer rarely found that he had the time to stay on the floor of the set to function as a first assistant.

As the latter explained:

In feature films, when you have a director who is also the producer, you also tend to have an executive producer, an associate producer, a production manager and a production supervisor, all of whom are there to help carry the weight of responsibility.. In this case this hasn't really happened. Apart from (the producer) it really needed someone with the personality and the force of experience to just lock it all together. It would have been difficult to do this even if I had worked on the floor as first assistant all the time, but then (the producer) could have gone to his first assistant and said, 'This is what I want' and then walked away and rehearsed with his artists, which, God help him, he hasn't had a lot of chance to do, unhindered or uninterrupted. He would then have been able to come back after forty-five minutes with the whole set lit, with all the crew standing by quietly for a rehearsal. I am used to working in a situation where you have an area to work in, a script, and a plan of the actions and moves; the set would not be lit yet, but the director would then go through the actions and the moves and the dialogue for the crew and then take the artists off to work privately with them, while I, as first assistant, work with the lighting cameraman and the art director to get it all there. Then the artists and director come back, do the



rehearsal - make-up and wardrobe do final checks - and then bang; you shoot it. That is the system, which is inflexible in its own way because it has been worked out through forty years of English feature productions, but it works. There is no way that that sort of thing has happened here because the sets are real locations, one day we've had to use one system, another day we've used another.

#### Day seventeen

In contrast to the nine scenes which had been planned for the previous day, just three were planned for this day, one of which would deal with the birth of 'Sandra's' first child, with the other two covering the girl's sterilization following the birth of a second child. Both of these episodes would appear in part two of the film, and both are examples of a complicated series of events which the director was hoping to be able to cover in that part of the film. In fact, the director was well aware of the potential problem of compression which could arise in part two, and he was particularly concerned to avoid the production of a montage, rather than a sequence of events. Having viewed all the rushes to date, the film was, however, looking more like a series of disconnected events than a sequentially organised story, even though it was felt that the main actress was successfully maintaining the continuity of the central character. This was another of the problems which the director was having to cope with independently of the day-to-day organization of the unit, and in addition to the other problems which the previous day had generated, he had also had to find time to discuss the montage vs sequence question with the editor, who had travelled up to Bradford on that same day.

The fact that the film was in danger of becoming a montage was attributed to three main factors; firstly the use of real locations meant that the unit had often had to move into a new location, set up and film the scenes



and then move off again fairly quickly. Filming had, in other words, to conform to the strictures imposed not only by the limited size of some locations, but also to their availability - the pubs only had limited opening hours, and there was a limit to the amount of disruption which could be caused within a working hospital. Secondly, the director was having to work within the correlative constraints of time imposed by the schedule itself, which meant, for example, that there was a limited amount of available time to film establishing shots of different locations which could link them to other locations. Thirdly, the director felt that the script was to some extent at fault in this respect insofar as there were few verbal cross-references. In a conventional drama new characters can, for example, be identified and linked to the narrative through the dialogue. So a new character as far as the audience is concerned could be identified as an old friend of 'Sandra's' by having her say something like 'Oh, hello Sid, I haven't seen you since the wedding.' This was of course impossible since the girl had no dialogue as such, so one of the alternatives was to have a new character identify his or herself. The script had, for instance, used this ploy to introduce the girl's social worker, since a nurse at the V.D. clinic asks him if he is a relative of 'Sandra's', to which he replies, 'No, no. I'm the social worker. I made the appointment.' In less official circumstances, however, it would be unnatural to have characters identifying themselves in this way, so the director had discussed with the editor the possibility of compensating for the lack of verbal continuity through the types of cut which could be made. (The use of fades instead of straight cuts could, for example, give a smoother indication of 'time passing', and the use of the technique of cross-cutting to and fro between different scenes could help an audience to identify referents.)



The concern that the film was not conforming to the convention of a sequential narrative has, however, to be set against the idea that DUNN was not intended to be a conventional drama. As a drama-documentary it was tending at this point to bear the imprint of the form of its source; Sandra's life had been relayed to the producer as a series of events rather than as a neat, conclusive story, and that was how it was being filmed. Having finished the film, the producer was later to rationalise this further by saying that the difference between conventional drama, real life and its reconstruction laid precisely in the fact that conventional drama is conclusive whereas real life is not. Furthermore, much of the point of DUNN was to show how someone who could not fully interrelate with surrounding events or their perpetrators could therefore become their victims. If the film was to some extent taking Sandra's point of view, or was at least allowing for the possibility of her having a point of view, then part of its job as a drama documentary was to reveal the inconclusiveness of real life, and part of its job as a reconstruction of Sandra's life was to reflect her additional and diathetical difficulty in even making sense of events. For Sandra, life was a montage, rather than a sequence.

A good example of this is that having had two (illegitimate) children, Sandra was sterilised without her direct permission. A decision which would directly affect her life had, in other words, been imposed upon her without preparation or explanation, and lacking this information the girl had been left to draw her own conclusions. The suggestion of sterilisation had actually come from a hospital consultant, and his discussion of the idea with Sandra's mother was the subject of the first scene to be shot on this seventeenth day.

The location for all of the day's shooting was another hospital in Bradford called St. Lukes, and the first scene was shot in its ante-natal



clinic. There was no particular need to establish the fact that this was a hospital by showing name-boards or by having nurses walk by, since the area chosen for the action was completely finished in clean white tilework, and a number of washbasins with hospital-style elbow operated taps would be in shot. The consultant also wore a white coat and was referred to as 'Doctor' in the dialogue, so the director felt that all this would provide the audience with sufficient information to be able to draw the appropriate connotation. For a welcome change, shooting this scene proved to be a smooth, unproblematic and very rapid operation, with the 'Consultant's' performance in particular being judged as 'excellent'. The dialogue was almost exactly that given in the script, and it indicated that the 'Consultant' was strongly advising 'Mother' that the sterilisation should go ahead, even though the latter rather grudgingly accepts the idea. ('Mother' was one of the few sympathetic characters, and her death was intended to be understood as a major blow to the girl, so it was important that she should not be directly blamed for the decision to sterilise her daughter.) 'Mother's' uncertainty was indicated in the last few lines of dialogue:

MOTHER

You're right, I know you're right;  
it's just ....

CONSULTANT

I know, I know. Nobody likes doing  
this, least of all me. But sometimes  
there's no alternative.

The setting for this scene had, however, been slightly changed from that suggested by the script, for it had originally been set in the consultant's office. By setting the scene in the working environment of what was possibly an examination room, and by directing the 'Consultant' to be washing his hands, the additional connotation could be drawn that



The setting for this scene had, however, been slightly changed from that suggested by the script, for it had originally been set in the consultant's office. By setting the scene in the working environment of what was possibly an examination room, and by directing the 'Consultant' to be washing his hands, the additional connotation could be drawn that he had just examined 'Sandra' and this could further objectify the girl as the passive recipient of the consultant's opinion (rather than an active participant in the decision-making).

One minor technical problem had arisen here, and that was a problem with the sound. Both the actors had been fitted with radio-mikes because of the physical difficulty of using conventional microphones in the restricted space, but as the actors disappeared around a corner at the end of the shot, so the radio signal weakened as it was masked by the fabric of the building. This was not, however, considered to be too vital and the scene was wrapped in record time by 10.30 in the morning.

The next scene was to be set in a maternity ward at the hospital, showing 'Sandra' being visited by her sister having just had 'Phil's' baby. Unfortunately, the rapidity with which the previous scene had been completed aggravated a mistake which had been made over the time at which the unit was supposed to arrive at this second location, and the bed which 'Sandra' was going to use was still occupied by a genuine patient. An enforced break of one and a half hours consequently followed as the maternity ward completed its normal morning routine, and the unit was not able to start filming until just before lunch.

This scene would remain within the structure outlined in the script for the finished film, coming immediately after 'Phil's' arrest, and immediately before the scene showing 'Mother' looking after the baby at home. It therefore had several purposes; firstly to confirm the fact



that 'Phil' had been sent to prison (indicated in the dialogue), secondly that the girl's life was becoming more and more unsatisfactory (her relative isolation and unhappiness could be inferred in comparison with other women in the maternity ward, who were being visited by their husbands), and thirdly the scene served as a connective with the following scene insofar as it explained whose baby it was that 'Mother' was to look after. Filming the scene raised a number of small problems of detail; the director wanted the main shot to be fairly tight to indicate that the conversation between the two women was subdued and intimate, but this had at least two technical implications. Firstly, the framing was therefore quite critical which meant that the actresses had to contain their movements, and especially the movements of their hands. Apart from the fact that this constrained 'Sandra's' gesticulations (which in a deaf person tend to be more expansive), it also meant that an audience may not have been able to see 'Joan' nudging 'Sandra' to attract her attention when she was looking away from her sister. If 'Sandra' had then turned around to follow her sister's conversation without the audience having seen the nudge, it would have been possible to draw the connotation that 'Sandra' had heard her sister, which would obviously have been an error. Secondly, the actresses had been told to talk quietly in order to emphasise the intimacy of the situation, and this meant that the sound recordist had to place his microphone relatively close to the subjects, or at least as close as he could given the camera's field of view. This in turn meant that his microphones were also picking up any other local sounds at a disproportionate volume - particularly the rustling of the bed-sheets. Since this rustling was a relatively high-frequency sound, it would also tend to be reproduced by an average domestic television receiver with rather more clarity and volume than any other local sounds. In order to get round



this, 'Joan' was therefore given a small condenser microphone to wear very close to her throat and was instructed to whisper more loudly, though not so loud that it sounded like a stage whisper. Similarly, another condenser mike was pinned to 'Sandra's' pillow and masked from the camera by having 'Joan' sit a little more forward than she had been doing.

A number of short delays were also introduced by having to wait for clouds to go by outside, since the lighting set-up here was similar to that for the original 'Consultant' scene described above. Otherwise the shooting of this scene followed the normal pattern of establishing shot, reverses where necessary the cutaways in relation to eyelines. (Here 'Sandra' looks past 'Joan' at one point so that the audience can be given a cutaway of another lady in the ward who is being visited by her husband.) The last scene of the day would again be used in the finished film in the same way that it had been planned in the script, and this would show 'Sandra' in a hospital bed again, but this time about a year later, when 'Joan' is explaining about the sterilisation.

This episode also serves as an example of the director's edition of 'real reality' into 'film reality'. Just as he had felt that telling the audience that Sandra had actually been engaged to Ian at the time of the scarring incident would result in an 'information overload', so with this scene the audience is not told that the real Sandra had clashed her wrists after an argument with Phil prior to the sterilisation. The director had nevertheless told the actresses about this, and there was some suggestion that the scene should involve some ambiguity over exactly what 'Sandra' was to be upset about (i.e. whether she should be upset about the sterilisation or the wrist-clashing). Since the audience



would have no way of knowing about the girl's attempted suicide, any ambiguity in the way the scene was played would have, therefore, to be attributed to 'Candra's' failure to understand her sister's explanation. It would be possible, for example, to infer that 'Candra' had thought her baby was to be aborted, that she thought she was, indeed, to be sterilised, or that she had failed to understand anything at all.

The scene itself was shot with an establishing two-shot and two cutaway close-ups of either woman after some delay as the unit waited for genuine visitors to leave the other ladies in the working post-natal ward. There were, indeed, five genuine ladies in this ward throughout the filming of this and the previous scene, all of whom had given their permission for the unit to work there, and all of whom - with the exception of an Indian lady - found the experience enjoyable and faintly amusing. The imposition of the film upon 'real people' like this, and the vagaries associated with the use of real locations were still, however, causing a certain amount of dissension among the crew, even though the director was simply carrying through his resolution to be true to his subject. As far as the main actress was concerned, she had felt that the last two or three days had really enabled her to become the part, and was taking the internal problems with a pinch of salt, even though 'We're getting pretty close to the knuckle at times.' It must be reiterated, however, that the director's responsibility was more widespread, and he admitted that his relationship with the crew had been rather less than perfect over the last few days and that a mutual confidence needed to be restored.

#### Day eighteen

'Phil' had disappeared around about the time of 'Sandra's' sterilisation, but within a year she had met the man whom she was later to marry. Her first encounter with this man was the main subject of this day's filming,



and the episode would eventually be placed immediately after the 'sterilisation' scene which had been filmed at the end of the previous day.

Apart from introducing the new character of 'Ray', one of the main purposes of the scene was to illustrate Sandra's powers of survival and her ability to bounce back after the troubles associated with living with 'Phil', for the central action of the scene involves the girl joining in with a stripper's act at a local pub; an action which at the time was only intended as a piece of adventurous abandonment. In the wider context of the film as a whole, of course, the girl's impromptu action could be taken as a clue towards her future career as a prostitute, and the director was later to include the inscribed and prophetic line which 'Cross-eyed Anne' had delivered on 'Sandra's' return from the pub's stage: 'You could do that for a living!'

Another city-centre pub was used as the location for this scene, and since it regularly staged a strip-tease show it already had a small stage and various signs outside to advertise this attraction. Very few props were therefore necessary as the pub could be used practically as found, but it did require a complicated lighting set-up. An extra lighting technician had in fact been imported from Elstree for the day, and even then the lights took a good two hours to prepare since at least five extra spots were used in addition to the standard blondes and redheads, and some large polystyrene reflectors had to be suspended from the ceiling.

The main actress had always been distinctly uncertain about this scene, since she was ostensibly being asked to do a strip in a real pub in front of a real audience, but in the event a number of different methods were employed to help her. In the original script, the professional stripper was described as a 'thin, whey-faced girl, with no sense of rhythm and little sex-appeal' and the main directions were as follows:



The STRIPPER finishes her act, and runs from the stage/platform to the accompaniment of boos and shouts of disapproval. SANDRA stands up, and pushes her way through to the stage/platform. She starts to perform an impromptu striptease. Despite her deafness, she has a natural sense of rhythm, and she strips with flamboyant sensuality. The audience cheers.

The actress would, therefore, have had to go up to the stage on her own and perform an appreciably more satisfying strip than her predecessor; she would, in other words, have been expected to make a more 'professional' job of it than the real professional. All this was, however, subtly changed for the shooting itself, partly in order to help the actress, and partly in order to make the scene more credible. The stripper was actually a highly professional drag artiste who was an accomplished handler of hecklers, so he was able to generate a bawdy response from the (real) crowd in the pub without invoking the rather more ill-tempered response that the crowd might have had to a bad female stripper. Insofar as his act involved a parody of female sexuality, almost anything which the actress might then do would theoretically be more interesting, so it was no longer dramatically necessary for the actress to remove very much clothing. Furthermore, 'Sandra' was shown to have been goaded into going up to the stage by 'Cross-eyed Anne' more or less as a dare, and she then joins in with the drag artiste who plays along with the girl such that the event as a whole becomes more of a good-natured joke than the more serious demonstration of 'I'll show them how it's really done' which could have been connoted by the original script. The fact that the drag artiste had stayed on the stage with the actress was at first felt to be 'too much like a double-act' by the director, but it had actually seemed to work better like that so the action was retained for the takes themselves. In the event the actress only stayed on the stage for a very short time, and only stripped as far as her bra and skirt, so many of her previous fears turned out to be groundless. The main intention of the action



was nevertheless felt to have been retained insofar as it demonstrated that 'Sandra' had the spirit to get up and do the impromptu strip in the first place; the extent of that strip having become relatively immaterial. On 'Sandra's' return to join 'Cross-eyed Anne' at the bar amidst the applause of the crowd, a stranger comes up and congratulates her, asking her if she wants a drink. This is 'Ray', and his interest in the girl has evidently been aroused by her strip (indicated in the dialogue) to be consummated later back at his flat (the next scene shows the couple in bed). Since 'Ray' was to become 'Sandra's' husband, the director had wanted to foreground him without losing the connotation that 'Sandra' had never met him before, so in addition to the shot of him talking to the girl at the bar, a shot had also been taken of him entering the pub on his own. This shot would actually become the opening shot of the complete scene, so its immediate purpose would simply be to establish the location of the pub, using the unidentified man as a means of entry. Having later established the man himself as a participating character, the theory was that the audience could then refer back to this first shot for further clues (i.e. that he was alone when he came in, and was possibly already looking for a girl to pick up before he saw 'Sandra'). The shot itself was technically 'almost impossible', as the cameraman said, since it started outside in the street from where the hand-held camera was tracked backwards, into the pub, downstairs, and then panned and tracked backwards through the crowd as 'Ray' walks to the bar. All this was taken in one continuous shot, with the cameraman having to open up the aperture a full eight stops on the way as he moved from daylight into the relatively dark interior. Although this shot would become the first one of the complete scene, it was actually filmed as the last shot of the day, and by that time the pub was full of regular customers and onlookers, so the shot was made even more difficult



for the cameraman as people inevitably bumped into him during the takes.

The fact that most of the people in the pub were 'real' raised another side-effect of filming in real locations. Since 'Sandra' was supposed to have regained her confidence after the sterilisation episode, was becoming more adventurous and perhaps more promiscuous, and was certainly frequenting rather seedy pubs, the wardrobe department had decided to give both her and 'Cross-eyed Anne' some rather flashy white coats. These were correct for the period (1971) and were not identical, but because the wardrobe supervisor had not had time to check or alter the clothes which the real customers in the pub were wearing, she had not realised that their clothes were predominantly greys and browns. The two actresses therefore tended to stand out in contrast to all the real people, and the director had felt that this would impute a slightly different meaning to the scene than that which had been intended. The relative flashiness of the two girls could, for example, have anticipated 'Sandra's' role as a prostitute with rather more force than was intended at that point. Given the amount of time available for this scene, the director nevertheless decided to press on without getting the coats changed, although he did ask 'Sandra' to remove hers before walking across the floor to the stage.

Three more scenes had originally been planned for this day, but the entire unit had had to vacate the hotel for the weekend because of an unavoidable clash of bookings, so the afternoon of this eighteenth day had been reallocated as a 'travel home' period, which meant that the extra three scenes had to be postponed until the following week.

#### Days nineteen and twenty

This was the first full weekend's break, and marked a welcome respite for all concerned after a difficult week. Most of the London-based crew



returned home but the director and some of the other members of the unit stayed on in Bradford. One of the director's continuing concerns was the relationship with the original family, and he went to see the sister several times over the weekend to keep her up to date with events. She was reported to be far happier with the proceedings by this stage, having recovered from the initial shock of receiving reports from friends about the various locations in which the unit had been filming. Sandra herself had been seen several times during the last weeks near the different locations, and her sister had found it difficult to believe the girl's reports about all the people and equipment which seemed to be necessary to film her life. (The real Sandra had actually come up to the unit while they were filming at the Labour Exchange, and had good-naturedly checked over the actress's make-up and clothes.)

Much of the rest of the director's weekend had been taken up with checking the following week's locations, including a third city-centre pub which would be used for a fight scene and for the 'Shabby man' scene where 'Sandra' had become a full-scale prostitute. He had also reviewed some of the rushes, and had decided that some scenes might have to be re-shot if there was time. The original 'Consultant' scene was not considered, for example, to be particularly satisfactory because of the dialogue and some technical problems with the framing of the actors' faces, and the 'Coalman' scene (where 'Baby Sandra' was supposed to be oblivious to the sound of some coal being delivered) had simply not worked at all because of the baby's reaction.

#### Day twenty-one

After a weekend's break the director and crew had returned to start another day's shooting considerably refreshed, and many people had decided to rationalise the difficulties of the previous week in terms of



the problem of simply finding out how different people liked to work. Many of the internal stresses and strains which had been generated within the unit were also further alleviated by this day's shooting, which turned out to be far more straightforward than some of the other days had been.

Three main scenes were to be filmed, plus a pick-up of the 'Coalman' scene which had failed to work before. The first of these was to be a reconstruction of Sandra's wedding, and as the script had suggested, this scene would form part of an extremely compressed segment of the finished film in which 'Sandra' would first be shown meeting 'Ray' after her strip in the pub. She would then be shown in bed with this man, and this would be immediately followed by the 'Pre-wedding' scene showing 'Mother' and 'Joan' getting ready and then the wedding itself. Since this series of events was so compressed, it was felt to be important to signify the wedding as clearly as possible, and to make sure that 'Ray' was identified as the man from the strip scene. The wedding was consequently handled in a very conventional manner, showing relatives, friends and people taking photographs and throwing confetti outside a registry office (which was itself identified from a sign-board outside).

There was some delay in starting the filming, since the make-up and wardrobe departments had needed some extra time to prepare the relatively large number of actors involved, and one actor had been involved in a car accident on the way to the hotel which had delayed his arrival on the set. Once the scene had got under way, however, the cameraman took some establishing shots of the registry office's exterior with the wedding party outside, and some close-up hand-held shots of the individuals concerned, making sure that 'Ray' in particular could be positively identified.

'Mother's' illness, which had been denoted in the 'pre-wedding' scene and reinforced through some dialogue at the wedding itself, had finally led to



her death during that same year (1971), and this was to be signified in the film with a scene of her funeral.

The funeral had been scheduled for the same day as the wedding since both scenes required much the same cast. The director had found a cemetery high up on one of the hills on the outskirts of Bradford to serve as the location, and this particular location was one of the very few which had been chosen as much for their aesthetic impact as their strict authenticity. It was in fact a physically stunning place, with a forest of almost satanic Victorian monuments looking down over the city of Bradford, lying in its hollow below. In the establishing wide shots of the funeral, it was therefore possible to relate 'Sandra' to the city in which she had spent all her life since the greater part of the city would be visible in the frame behind and below the girl as she stood by the graveside, providing, that is, that the distant city would be resolved by the average domestic television set. Some care had to be taken in obtaining such a shot, since the cameraman had to avoid filming the new Dunn Sports Centre which was just visible on the opposite flank of the Bradford basin - since the scene was set in 1971, that building would have been an anachronism.

A number of special preparations had to be made for this scene by the design department, which included supplying flowers and wreaths, and simulated grass for the edges of the freshly dug grave. Two of the props men had been out to the cemetery earlier in the day to dig this grave, but only to a depth of about eighteen inches, since the camera would not be looking down into it at any point.

As far as the make-up and wardrobe departments were concerned, several of the actors could wear the same suits for the funeral which they had worn to the wedding, although the three main actresses ('Sandra', 'Joan'



and 'Auntie Amie') had to be remade up and dressed for the part. A minor panic had nevertheless occurred within the wardrobe department because it had been discovered that there was no surplice for the clergyman to wear, and an urgent request had to be made to Yorkshire Television to supply one. The surplice which subsequently arrived turned out to be a Catholic one, so the director then had to check that the service which the actor was to read was also Catholic. In the end the Church of England service was the one which was actually read, because, as the director explained, 'it's shorter.'

Like the wedding, shooting this scene proved to be relatively straightforward. Neither of the scenes had required any artificial lighting since they were both exteriors, and for the funeral there was virtually no dialogue except for the clergyman's service - for this the actor was equipped with a radio mike so that the sound recordist could keep well out of the way for the wideshots.

The director nevertheless had to ensure that a number of points were made within the scene. Firstly the audience had to be told whose funeral it was, even though this might have appeared to be fairly obvious, so a big close-up was made of a card on one of the wreathes to confirm that it was 'Mother's'. This shot would also be used to cover a jump in continuity, since in the finished film the picture dissolves from the card to the last shot of the scene, which shows the family walking out of the cemetery, thus linking that shot with a previous one of the family still standing by the graveside. Secondly, 'Mother' had been presented as one of 'Sandra's' very few allies, so her death could only vastly increase the girl's isolation. The director had consequently concentrated upon extracting this sense of grief and isolation from the main actress's performance during her close-ups, and he had spent some time quietly





The clergyman is fitted with his radio-mike  
for the funeral scene.



telling her how he had felt on first realising the full impact of the original girl's enforced exclusion from the normal world of hearing people in order to help the actress to feel her way into the required mood.

One last point to make about the funeral scene is that 'Candra's' husband was noticeable by his absence, or at least that was the intention. On a dramatic level, 'Ray's' presence here would have undermined 'Sandra's' isolation, but in fact he would not have attended anyway since the marriage had already begun to turn sour. An explanation for 'Ray's' absence could therefore be sought from the information given in the 'Shabby man' scene (described below) which would precede the funeral, or from the ensuing scenes in which 'Ray's' relationship with 'Cross-eyed Anne' is reinforced.

The pick-up of the 'Coalman' scene was shot next, only this time without the coalman. The problem with the first version of this scene had been that the baby had kept reacting, or had appeared to react to the coalman, which totally destroyed the point of the scene. The director was unwilling to scrap the scene altogether because that would have affected the pace of the film at that point, so another seven takes were made back at the original house in an attempt to make the scene work. 'Baby Sandra' was wheeled up the alley in her pushchair as before by 'Mother' and 'Auntie Annie', but this time the women's concern about the child's possible deafness was denoted through some ad-libbed dialogue referring to the 'Jug break' scene. The child was no longer, in other words, having to fail to react to the sound of the coal being delivered since the information had been transferred to the dialogue. Neither the actress nor the director were convinced that the ad-libbing sounded sufficiently natural, however, and given the pressures of the day's schedule the scene was eventually abandoned, and neither this nor the original version were ever used.



The third main scene of the day was the 'Shabby man' scene, which would provide the first clear indication in the film of 'Sandra's' prostitution. It would be placed after a scene showing 'Sandra' at home with her new (and already recalcitrant) husband, and immediately before the funeral, so the main implication was that the prostitution was linked to the marriage. One of the major points which the director wished to make here was that not only had the marriage itself turned rapidly sour, but that it was 'Sandra's' new husband who had pushed her into prostitution before the marriage, even though it could be argued that the seeds had been sown beforehand, and the 'Shabby man' scene clearly shows 'Ray' acting as her pimp. In fact, the implication is that this had become normal practice, since the business of negotiating with the punter (the Shabby man) is carried out in a bored, businesslike manner by 'Ray', and 'Sandra' herself shows no particular surprise at this. Furthermore, the girl concludes the business with 'Shabby man' quickly, efficiently and without emotion, which was intended to imply that she had become used to such encounters.

The scene itself was set in a seedy city-centre pub again, and 'Sandra', 'Ray' and the 'Shabby man' would be shown carrying out their business while having a drink there with 'Cross-eyed Anne'. The latter's presence was important for two reasons. Firstly 'Ray' could then be shown as having a relationship with this girl which would prepare the audience for a later scene where 'Sandra' discovers them together (the 'Cafe' scene). The fact that 'Ray' involves 'Cross-eyed Anne' in an intimate conversation while his wife is round the back of the pub with the punter also serves to reinforce 'Ray's' rottenness and 'Sandra's' isolation. Secondly, it would probably have been gratuitous to show all of the action between 'Sandra' and the 'Shabby man' behind the pub, so one method of dealing



with this was to intercut between that action and a simultaneous action within the pub. If that interior action had simply shown 'Ray' drinking by himself at the bar it may have been easier to infer that he was thinking about 'Sandra', whereas by having him talking to 'Cross-eyed Anne' while 'Sandra' was outside, it is easier to draw the conclusion that he could not care less about his wife.

The director had specially requested that this scene should be treated as a low profile operation since the content itself was likely to attract the attention of onlookers, and the presence of large numbers of crew-members would only aggravate this. He did not, in other words, want the pub to be full of people since it would then be very difficult to stop them staring at the camera or the actors. This problem had not arisen to the same extent while filming the 'strip' scene, since 'Sandra' was supposed to be the centre of attention there, whereas part of the intention in the 'Shabby man' scene was to imply that the action was not particularly extraordinary for either the protagonists or the other people in the pub.

In order to maintain this low profile several further precautions were also taken on a technical level. As an interior night scene the pub had to be lit, but to avoid the obvious intrusion of the normal lighting gear, all the pub's existing lights had simply been uprated with some more powerful bulbs. Similarly, instead of miking the actors with a boom microphone, the sound recordist had taped a directional microphone out of sight beneath a table and was also using two radio-mikes. One of these had been taped beneath the table at which 'Ray' and the 'Shabby man' would be sitting, and the other had been attached out of sight beneath 'Cross-eyed Anne's' clothing. The sound recordist himself then sat at a table on the other side of the pub with the Nagra hidden beside him such that it was not immediately obvious that he was anything to do with the actors.

The camera itself could not, however, be so easily disguised, so during



the takes themselves those customers who were in the pub were discreetly engaged in conversation by various members of the crew in order to stop them staring towards the action.

In the event, the real customers were fairly disinterested in the proceedings, and at least one group concluded that the unit was recording a piece for a radio programme about famous public houses. Another group realised what the content of the scene was immediately, however, and offered a number of suggestions such as that the 'Shabby man' ought to have had nicotine stains on his fingers; one old lady commented on how 'smart and pretty' the main actress looked, which was a little unnerving considering that 'Sandra' was supposed to be looking particularly hard and unglamorous at the time.

Three main shots were made inside the pub, one of 'Ray' negotiating with the punter with the improvised dialogue, 'Three poun' - you pay her, right?', one of him talking with 'Cross-eyed Anne' at the bar, and the last one of 'Sandra' returning from outside with 'Shabby man'. The unit then moved out into the alley behind the pub's toilets to shoot the subject of 'Ray's' negotiations, and here artificial lights were needed, so a blonde had been set up on the roof of the toilets, and two hand-held 'Sun-guns' used to boost the light coming from the toilet windows. The actresses had had some difficulty in stumbling over the uneven ground behind the pub with her client, but the director had been particularly impressed with this since the real girl tended to walk rather unevenly. The 'action' itself was also felt to have been suitably convincing, although it was accomplished between a few fits of giggles, and the scene was eventually wrapped by about half-past eight in the evening - within, that is, the scheduled rostering for the day.



The fact that the day had finished on time is significant, since the shooting had generally been carried out according to plan in several different respects this day (in contrast to the previous week) which helped to further improve the atmosphere within the unit after the weekend's break. Some of the more rigid lines of demarcation had also been relaxed, which can be taken as a sign of increasing organic unity or teamwork among the crew. Even in his capacity as lighting cameraman, the cameraman would, for example, always at least ask for the lighting supervisor's permission before moving a light, but in filming the action behind the pub, the lighting technicians had taken the unprecedented step of suggesting that someone other than a member of the lighting department should operate one of the 'Sun-guns', a gesture which was considered to have dissipated some of the latent tension within the unit.

#### Day Twenty-two

'Sandra's' marriage had eventually ended in divorce, although she had continued to support herself afterwards as a prostitute. During this period the girl had contracted both Syphilis and Gonorrhoea to add to her misfortunes, and it was this information which the director wished to include in the first scene to be filmed this day, which was about a meeting between 'Sandra' and her social worker at a Venereal Disease Clinic. Most of this information was to be given in the dialogue as the social worker talks to the girl as she waits in the clinic's waiting room. First of all a nurse stops the social worker on his way to see the girl, and he introduces himself to her (and the audience), and then the nurse volunteers the information that the girl had been to the clinic before:



NURSE

She's been here before, you know.

SOCIAL WORKER

Yes, she told me.

NURSE

She's been here several times, Syphilis and Gonorrhoea.

SOCIAL WORKER

Yes, I know.

•  
•  
•

(The NURSE goes. SOCIAL WORKER sits beside SANDRA. He offers her a cigarette; she takes it with a nod of thanks. Pause. SOCIAL WORKER turns to SANDRA, speaking slowly and with great clarity.)

SOCIAL WORKER

Does your husband know you're coming here?

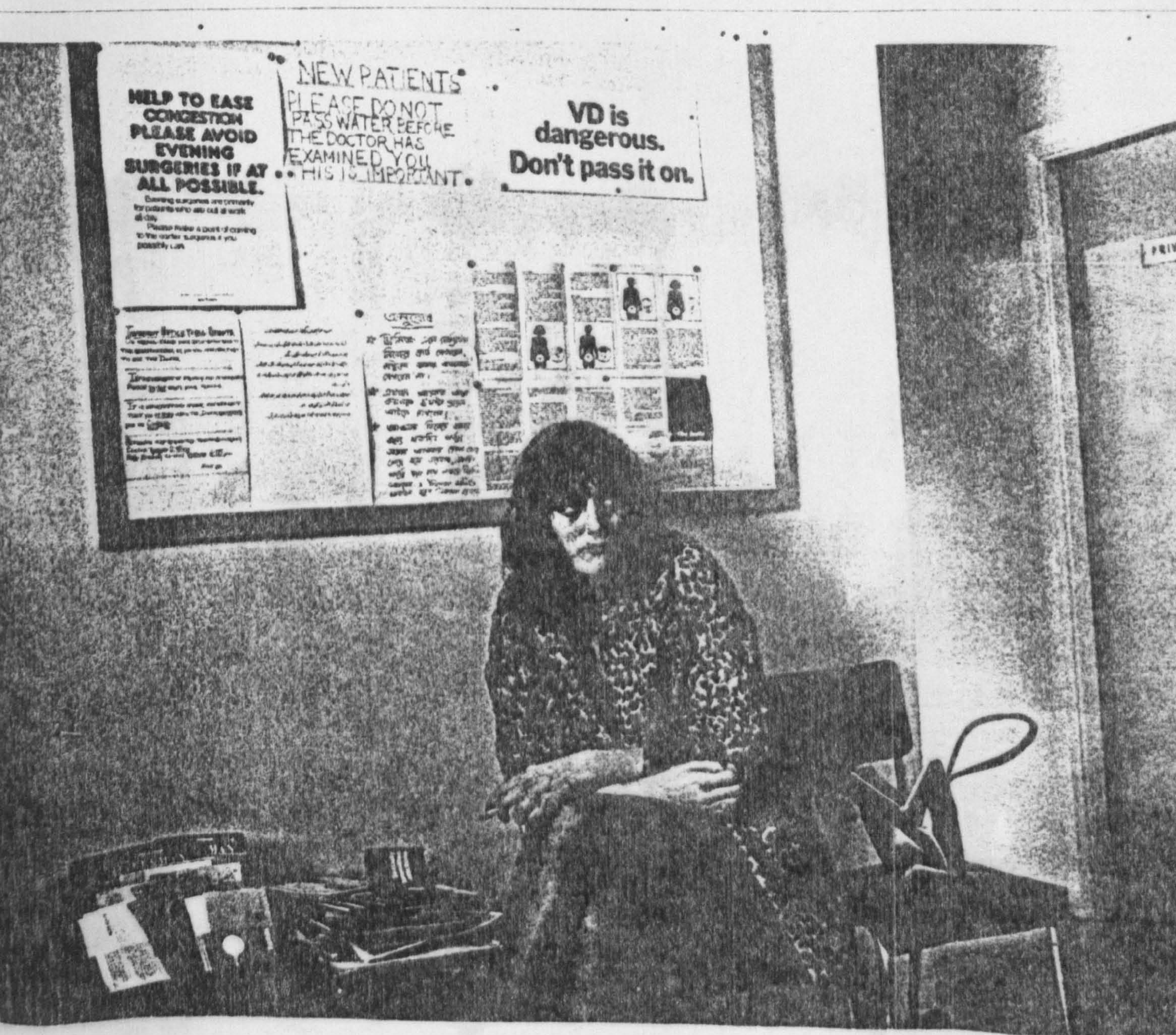
(SANDRA's speech has deteriorated badly; scarcely anything she says is immediately comprehensible.)

SANDRA

No husband. Divorce.

Apart from the information about the divorce and the girl's illness, the imputation was also intended that the social worker has been involved in Sandra's case for some time, but had perhaps lost track of her recently since he did not know about the divorce. The third major piece of information which the director wished to put across was a further clue to the girl's interior character, the idea that as a deaf person she felt that 'hearing people are best'. The fact that she did not want to associate with other deaf people was also, therefore, included in this explanatory interlude, which itself represents the longest piece of sustained dialogue in part two of the film, and which was eventually to run for nearly twice as long as the average scene for that section.





'Sandra' waiting in the V.D. clinic.

(Photo. courtesy of ATV Network Ltd.)



The location was a genuine V.D. clinic, albeit a male one, so the design department had only had to alter any signs which were specifically male, and put up enough extra posters to enable the appropriate denotation to be made (see photograph). The clinic itself had, however, had an unexpected influx of patients this day, so the start of filming was delayed until mid-day. The main actress had meanwhile been made-up to look especially tired and ill, and she had been given some rubber-solution scabs for her face (the actress had also been told not to wash her hair from now on, since most of the remaining scenes would show her in a dilapidated state). Although the 'social worker' was supposed to be genuinely concerned about the girl, and the character had been modelled upon the original man from whom the director had obtained much of his source material, the 'social worker's' concern was also a professional concern, and the director was at pains to impress this upon the actor. When talking to the nurse at the beginning of the scene, for example, the director instructed the actor not to be 'too holy and precious; you are most interested in chatting-up the nurse at this present moment', and before he started the conversation with 'Sandra', the actor was told that this sort of situation would be relatively commonplace for him as a professional social worker; 'Don't lay it on too much,' he was instructed, 'or it will sound like acting.'

To get as far away from 'acting' as possible was a constant aim. The main actress, having lived with the original girl before the shoot had started, would occasionally experiment with a sound or a movement which she had picked up from Sandra herself, and the director would often incorporate these into a scene. Here, for example, the actress had started to use a 'Do do do' sound which the original girl would use when considering an equivocal question, and this was repeated for one of the takes. Similarly, a slightly fluffed line was often considered to be more natural than a



perfectly delivered one, and genuine confusions or spontaneous occurrences would often be incorporated too. In filming one of the takes for this scene, for example, an accidental change in the dialogue seemed to produce the connotation that the 'Social worker' was inviting 'Sandra' to sleep with him, to which the actress spontaneously reacted, while still in character, in a slightly teasing, jokey manner. This sort of event was actively encouraged by the director, and he explained to the 'Social worker' that 'It's good to get away from the formality of the script - try to actually understand what she is saying.'

One small technical problem had arisen during this scene, which was that a reflection of the lights could sometimes be seen in the 'social worker's' glasses, so the actor was asked not to move into the area where the reflection would occur. A potentially much greater technical problem had also threatened the scene, since a full-scale thunder-storm had blown up outside which could have affected the sound, and the electrical supply was in fact lost for a few minutes which shut down the lights.

Three more scenes were to be filmed before the end of the day, and these would cover most of the remaining sections of the film which dealt with 'Ray's' relationship with 'Sandra'.

The first of these showed the couple together at home after the marriage, with 'Ray' seated at a table reading, and 'Sandra' cleaning up the kitchen table. The purpose of the scene was to show the girl taking a pride in her home, and indeed her husband (she pats him affectionately on the head).

'Ray', on the other hand, was instructed to ignore his wife and her efforts to keep the place tidy, and he is shown to continue dropping cigarette-ash on the floor even though 'Sandra' has provided him with an ashtray. 'Sandra' nevertheless appears to be relatively happy, and was told to look blissfully



unaware of her husband's irritation (she could not, of course, hear that he had told her to 'piss off'). This scene had originally been intended to follow the 'funeral' to remind an audience that all was not well with the marriage as preparation for the 'Cafe' scene. The script had also originally placed the 'Shabby man' scene immediately after the wedding, such that an audience would be asked to accept the fact of 'Sandra's' prostitution at the hands of her husband having just witnessed the ostensibly happy event of the marriage. As a matter of historical fact, the husband had started to use Sandra as a prostitute very soon after the marriage, but the director had subsequently felt that the juxtaposition of the two scenes was too close, so the 'at home' scene described above was eventually moved from its original position and placed between the wedding and the 'Shabby man' scene. Its meaning was therefore approximately the same; that 'Ray' evidently had little time for the girl, but since it now came directly after the wedding it was also intended to produce the connotation that 'Sandra' was taking pride in her new home, and that 'Ray' was already beginning to ignore her.

The second of these last three scenes dealt with the last time the audience would see 'Ray' prior to the couple's eventual divorce. It would be placed after the 'Cafe' scene, and shows 'Sandra' sat on the bed in their flat as 'Ray' shaves. Its purpose was to confirm that she was permanently 'on the game' by this time, and that her husband was now using her solely as a source of income. The connotation is that 'Sandra' had only just come home, and had probably complained about being worn out, since 'Ray's' first line of dialogue is: 'I don't give a shit, you can get back out .... you've earned chuff all today!' In a situation like this the real husband had also slashed Sandra's breast with a razor, which was the event which the scene was leading up to. This attack needed some motivation on a dramatic level, however, so this was provided by having 'Sandra' pick up a knife to



wave it threateningly at 'Ray' as a response to him trying to push her back out onto the streets. 'Ray' then overreacts, inscrews his (safety) razor and lunges at the girl, cutting her with the blade.

This scene had been added since the original script had been written. The event, or at least the result of the event (Sandra's additional scars), was a reconstruction of fact, but had originally been dealt with by the script rather differently. Here only the immediate aftermath of the event had been reconstructed such that the audience would have been given no explanation of its cause. The original scene was given as follows:

INT. RAY'S LODGINGS: STAIRCASE AND LANDING. DAY. (1972)

An Indian **TENANT** is putting rubbish into a dustbin near the front door. There is a scream of pain from one of the upstairs rooms. The **TENANT** swings round, startled, almost dropping his rubbish.

**SANDRA** staggers out onto the first-floor landing, her breast covered with blood from a razor slash. She cries out, a garbled plea for help. The **TENANT** stares, transfixed.

**RAY** emerges from his room, grabs **SANDRA**, and drags her back inside. The door slams shut. The **TENANT** hurries to his room.

The extra scene could therefore provide an explanation of the event as part of a short sequence instead of the detached observation given in the script, which the director felt would help to ameliorate the tendency of part two to be somewhat discontinuous.

The last scene of the day was the one which would be placed immediately after the 'Strip' scene in which 'Sandra' meets 'Ray' showing them both in bed. Since the next two scenes would be dealing with their wedding, this 'bed' scene was intended to serve as a shorthand sign to indicate that a relationship had been formed which would lead to that marriage. As the actress explained:

This scene is basically the result of the 'strip' scene. They are in bed together and he is just putting out the



light. The point of it is to show that 'Sandra' is once again at a possibly good pitch - she is thinking 'this could work out; this is a nice guy. I've been to bed with him and it was alright. This could be the right man for me.'

Filming the scene proved to be a little difficult on a technical level. The director had wanted the bedside light to be in shot, because 'otherwise people would want to know where the light was coming from', but this meant that the bedside light had to be practical. Most of the light in the room would also have to appear to be coming from this lamp, so even though an additional blonde was placed out of shot, the bedside light was given a relatively powerful 275 watt bulb so that it could physically light the set as well as simply appearing to do so. This in turn meant that the aperture setting for the camera was particularly critical, since a choice had to be made between dazzling the camera with the bedside light and thereby losing the actors, or losing the light altogether. As the actress has pointed out above (p. ) the scene was also difficult for the actors, since she had found that she had actually had to snuggle against 'Ray' in a somewhat unnatural manner in order to make sure that her face was properly lit.

#### Day twenty-three

The whole of this day was devoted to filming the pivotal 'Motel' scene in which 'Sandra' had been viciously attacked and left for dead by the 'Heat man'. Whereas the director had deliberately employed the technique of allowing his actors to spontaneously react to their surroundings for many of the scenes which had been filmed so far, for this scene practically every move had been worked out in advance. This was for several reasons, as I've mentioned above, there was a real danger of the actress being physically hurt if the actor playing the 'Heat man' had not known exactly



what he was doing, and as far as the film was concerned, it was important that the motivation for the violence could be worked out from the clues and cues contained within the scene, even if that motivation ultimately rested in some kind of mental imbalance on the 'Neat man's' part.

The actors concerned had spent much of the previous evening going over each move in addition to the preparation which had been carried out weeks before back in London (where the actress had worked out some of the moves with the director back at the production offices in Portman Square). The principle concern was explained by the actor playing 'Neat man' as being to discover 'What happened after he'd shut that bedroom door. Did he start to lay into her straight away? Or was it after a few minutes, and if so why?' The plan which they had worked out placed the immediate motivation upon the girl's misunderstanding of the man's action of putting his money on the bedside table, she would playfully take more than they had agreed on, and this would precipitate his reaction, which then gets out of hand as the girl tenaciously fights back.

The location for this scene was the actual motel in which the original attack had occurred, and the first shot to be taken was of 'Sandra' and the 'Neat man' driving into the motel's forecourt in his car. The director had specified that this should be a Gold-coloured Cortina, and a current model for the year (1974), since the man himself had been described as being neatly-dressed and apparently comfortably well-off. Such a man would probably therefore have owned a new car, although not a particularly expensive model, and the gold colour would just set it apart a little from most of the other cars in the district in which the 'Neat man' originally picked the girl up. (One of the features of the scene was that the neatly-dressed man, his car and the clean, neat surroundings of the motel

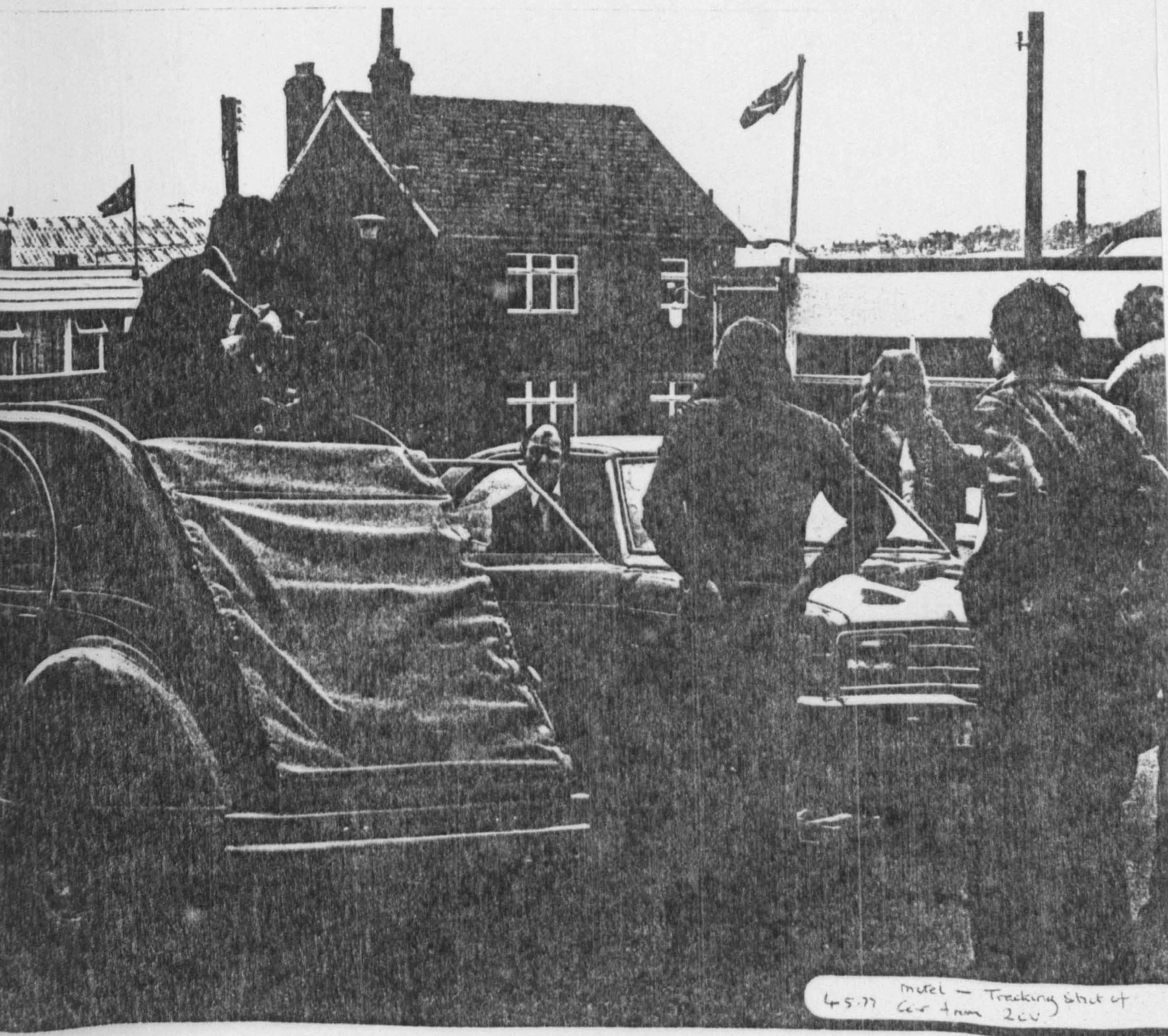


were all in some contrast to the life which Sandra had been living by that time.)

The car itself was actually an 'H' registered one, so false 'L' registered plates were added to avoid the anachronism. Similarly, a 'P' registered car standing in the car-park which might have got into shot had its suffix changed to a 'B' instead with the aid of a felt-tipped pen. The entrance of the Cortina into the forecourt involved one of the very few shots in the film in which the camera made any large-scale movements. In fact, the camera is rock-steady for 73% of the finished film, and of the 475 different shots, only 17 are tracking shots, one of which was that of the Cortina's entrance. For this the camera was mounted inside a specially hired Citroen 2CV, which is one of the few cars from which the roof can be completely removed to allow the camera and its tripod inside. As the Cortina pulled into the forecourt, this Citroen - with the camera rolling - was pushed along by about seven members of the crew to follow the action. As the Cortina stopped, so did the Citroen, and the camera panned round with 'Sandra' as she got out of the car to walk arm-in-arm with 'Heat man' towards the motel entrance, followed by the Citroen again in another tracking shot. Two important technical points had to be covered here. Firstly, it was essential that the tracking vehicle was made to stop at exactly the same time as the Cortina, for if it had continued to roll forward the Cortina would have appeared to be rolling backwards. Secondly, the cameraman had paid particular attention to the direction in which he was shooting for this shot, since there was a real danger of the tracking vehicle and the men pushing it being reflected in the motel's windows from the camera's point of view.

The next section of the sequence to be filmed was the bedroom action itself. The room was only about eight feet by ten feet, so only the





4-5-77 motel - Tracking shot of  
Car + man 2cv

The Motel scene - showing Sandra arriving with 'Neat Man' and the camera mounted on a tripod inside the Citroen tracking vehicle.



director, cameraman, assistant cameraman and sound recordist were allowed into the room in addition to the two actors. It had been lit with two HMI's outside, shining through tissue paper as for the original 'consultant' scene, and there was one blonde inside the room.

Six takes were made for the first part of the action, in which 'Sandra' was shown, fully clothed, sitting on the bed. She then made the first move by standing up and removing her skirt, at which the 'Neat man' removed his jacket, took all the money and keys out of his trouser pockets, and put the contents on the bedside table. 'Sandra' then removed a five-pound note from this pile and gestured playfully to the man with it. He became angry and slapped the girl, she kicked back and then he brought his knee up into her face, throwing her back against the wall (with the dialogue, 'You filthy whore,' etc.)

This action can be compared with the original directions as given in the script:

SANDRA is laying on the bed in her underclothes. The NEAT MAN is sitting on the edge of the bed. For the moment they remain motionless, like waxworks. The NEAT MAN rises to his feet, walks to the mirror, and straightens his tie. He looks down at SANDRA. She smiles. His face remains expressionless. SANDRA reaches across to the bedside table, picks up the five-pound note the NEAT MAN has left there, and playfully slips it down her bra. The NEAT MAN's face creases with anger.

NEAT MAN

You filthy whore!

SANDRA frowns, puzzled and alarmed.

NEAT MAN

You filthy, filthy whore!

The NEAT MAN lunges for SANDRA, trying to retrieve the five-pound note. SANDRA struggles. The NEAT MAN throws her to the floor, punching and kicking her brutally.





'Sandra' after the conclusion of the first part of the action in the motel bedroom.

( Photo courtesy of ATV Network Ltd.)



The two versions of this section of the scene are quite different; there is a strong implication in the original script that the 'Heat man' and 'Sandra' had already had intercourse, and that the 'Heat man' may not have found it particularly satisfactory, hence the girl's taking of the five-pound note as payment could have led to the connotation that the man's ensuing anger resulted from a sense of having been defrauded in some way. Alternatively, the man may not have been able to have intercourse with the girl, in which case her taking of the money may have triggered a more deep-seated frustration in the man. Either version had, however, subsequently proved to be factually incorrect, since the director and the main actress had found out from the motel manager, the original girl herself and her sister that the girl had never taken her clothes off. As the actress has explained - 'When they found her she was soaking wet, ripped up, covered in blood and fully clothed.' In fact the balance of probability suggests that the original 'Heat man' had started to beat Sandra up almost immediately after entering the room. The problem then was to find some dramatically acceptable motivation for an action which in reality seems to have been an unprovoked, motiveless attack.

When Sandra had been found after the real event, she was still clutching the five-pound note. This had been considered to be a significant clue to the girl's personality, since it illustrated her tenacity to hold on to something which she believed to be rightfully hers, so although the director could not be sure of the exact sequence of events that had occurred within the motel bedroom (the girl herself could not remember the attack in detail), he still wanted to use the money as central pivot for the action. 'Sandra's' playful taking of the five-pound note from among a pile of several others which the 'Heat man' had put on the



bedside table was therefore used to catalyse the man's albeit unjustified reaction, which then developed further as the girl fought back. The theory was, however, that the audience would understand the action to be an unjustified attack by the 'Heat man' rather than an unjustified inclusion of that violence by the director, so to help this a small concession was made to the demands of 'film reality' over the demands of the 'real reality' indicated by Sandra's story. As the actress pointed out:

From what she (the original girl) had told me, the fight seems to have started almost immediately after they got into the bedroom; since she was fully clothed afterwards, she would not have had time to get undressed, I mean. (The director) wanted her to be undressed, though, to show that she was a prostitute, and in fact we also wanted her to be a bit more vulnerable too, so in the end we compromised and I just took the shirt and shoes off.

Both the actors involved also thought that the sheer surprise of the violence was a legitimate point of structure for the film, both in terms of the action and the context. The motel sequence was to immediately follow the 'V.D. Clinic' scene, where 'Sandra' is shown at a particularly low ebb, so the juxtaposition of this with the girl's meeting with the smartly-dressed man, who then drives her out of Bradford to a clean, modern motel in a smart car, could initially lead to the connotation that things were looking up once again. The fact that this optimism is severely cut short could therefore emphasise the girl's overall condition of increasing hopelessness and degradation. Furthermore, the events leading up to the attack were felt to be a point of dramatic balance as an analogue of the previous car-journey which the audience would have witnessed; that which 'Sandra' had taken with her first boyfriend out to his smart, well-to-do house.

The second part of the action in the motel bedroom was also a departure from the script insofar as it was intended to include the extra piece of



(factual) information that the 'Neat man' seems to have tried to drown the girl in the washbasin. After 'Sandra' had been thrown against the wall over the bed, the man was then shown hauling her off the bed and towards the washbasin, with the girl still fighting him. Having reached the basin, the 'Neat man' first tried to knock the girl out by banging her head against the wall before filling the washbasin with water (with the actor physically protecting the actress with his unseen elbow) but it was found that the actress naturally fell to the floor underneath the basin, so after several rehearsals this action was retained.

Having been kneed in the face prior to this second action, the real girl's nose had been badly broken but it was felt to be impractical to have the actress play the remaining scenes of the film with a prosthetic 'broken nose', since this type of make-up would take a great deal of time to apply each time, so for the purposes of the film the 'broken nose' was allowed to 'heal' much more quickly than it had in reality. The director nevertheless wanted to signify that the girl had been badly hurt by this first action, so the make-up department applied some blood to the actress's face before moving on to the second action.

The third action of the scene was again a reconstruction of the real events insofar as these could be verified. The room in which the scene was filmed was in fact on the opposite side of the building from the original room, having been chosen according to the parameters of available light and the fact that the original room was at the front of the motel (where the activity of filming may have attracted the attention of onlookers). The original room still contained the bent and buckled radiator cover with which the original girl had been hit, however, and it was this last action of clubbing the girl with the metal shelf with which the director wanted to finish the scene. As the



writer has pointed out above, hitting the girl with this shelf was a particularly callous act, and the director was later to argue - in the face of some opposition - for the retention of this part of the scene because of its callousness and the fact that it had really happened. In order to underline the 'Neat man's' pitilessness, it was also felt to be important that he be shown to leave the room in some haste after the attack. The actor had in fact tended to linger in the room a little too long during at least one of the takes, looking down at the girl after the beating, but since this could have connoted a feeling of remorse on the man's behalf the take which was eventually used simply shows him putting on his jacket and leaving. The intention here was that, as far as the 'Neat man' was concerned, 'Sandra' had been left for dead, and since the audience would then be shown some shots of the man driving off in his car, the question of whether she really was dead would temporarily be left open (the audience would not, in other words, be given a shot of the girl lying on the floor to determine the extent of her injuries).

The next shots to be taken were, indeed, of the man driving away from the motel and these were achieved by tracking the camera with the actor as he walked towards his car and then filming him driving off with the camera mounted on a front-mount Mo-kit. The original shots of the 'Neat man' and 'Sandra' arriving at the motel had been taken in the morning, whereas the shots of the man leaving were actually filmed at about five o'clock in the afternoon, so there was some concern regarding the continuity of the light for the sequence as a whole. The running-time of the film between the arrival of the characters at the motel and the man's leaving was almost consonant with real-time at this point, since the 'Neat man' had only been in the motel for a few minutes, so it was important that the light for the two exterior shots remained reasonably constant. To this end the later shots were taken with the



camera stopped to 4.2 instead of the 5.6 it had been in the morning, and for the Mo-kit shots a 'Sun-gun' lamp was attached to the mount to illuminate the 'Neat man's' face.

The next part of the sequence to be filmed was to show 'Sandra' being found by the motel manager. She had struggled out to the reception area and had tried to telephone her sister after the 'Neat man' had left in the hope that she could relay some kind of a message. The scene was eventually cut from the film on the grounds that it was gratuitous; partially because of the extent and the nature of the girl's make-up at this point, but there was also some doubt about the scene's quality at the time. The director had not in fact auditioned the actor playing the 'Manager' and was a little surprised at the casting director's choice since the actor concerned was a very small man. The blue duster-jacket which had been requested for this actor (to indicate that he was an employee of the motel) had also not appeared and the actor himself had little idea of what he would be asked to do since the script had only supplied an outline of the action:

INT. MOTEL. CORRIDOR AND RECEPTION. DAY. (1974)

The MOTEL MANAGER is strolling across the forecourt. He enters the motel, and glances across the reception lounge. SANDRA sits slumped in one of the chairs, barely conscious. Her face is hideously cut and blood-streaked; almost like an image from a Francis Bacon painting.

The 'Manager' had not, therefore, been given any dialogue, so the director improvised some with the actor so that he could register his shock. (This was along the lines of 'Oh God! .... I'll call for an ambulance.') Since the actor was ad-libbing, however, the dialogue tended to become a little foreshortened and it was generally agreed that his overall reaction to seeing the girl was too brief. Most unusually, the cameramen cut short one of the takes for this reason, saying that the



'manager' would have reacted far more slowly in trying to understand the full extent of the situation. Several of the crew were indeed very uncertain about the scene altogether, arguing that it was unnecessarily violent and even in some sense perfidious with respect to the audience, despite the fact that it was a reconstruction of a real event. On a technical level the scene was also difficult because of the rapidly failing natural light - the extensive make-up for the actress's 'wounds' had taken the best part of two hours to complete which had pushed back the start of filming until past seven o'clock - and there was a problem with some of the windows in the reception area, which caused the crew to be reflected into the shot during at least one of the takes. Similarly, the actress herself experienced some difficulty with the scene:

In a thing like this, when you are acting, the main thing that one heads for is to find the most realistic way of doing any one thing. If the scene involves talking on a telephone, and you are supposed to be deaf, there are problems. I mean, it's impossible anyway, because if there is a reply on the other end you never hear it, but I was also supposed to be dialling (the sister). The natural position for this would have been head-on (to the 'phone) with me concentrating on the numbers, trying to get my finger, which is hurting, into the right hole to pull that dial round. That dial would become very heavy, and the arm had been battered so the effort of turning the dial around would have been enormous. As it happened, I was pressed right up against and beside the 'phone so that I was in the light, so there was no way that I could tell what number I was dialling. So the scene changed; instead of showing an actual intention to dial a certain number, it became a much more frenetic, desperate thing of getting through to somebody - anybody. That might work, but it wasn't really what was intended.

The Controller subsequently decided that it did not work, apart from the fact that he considered the make-up to be 'over the top', and he strongly advised that the scene should be cut. In the finished film, therefore, the sequence ends on the 'Neat man's' departure and this means that a



piece of information which the director had thought to be highly significant was lost. Some trouble had been taken in filming the cut scene to make sure that the five-pound note was clearly visible in 'Sandra's' hand as she tried to telephone her sister, thus demonstrating that she had still clung onto it throughout the attack, but in cutting the entire scene this 'tremendous clue' as the actress put it, was also denied to the audience.

#### Day twenty-four

The 'Motel' sequence starts with some shots of the girl being picked up by the 'Heat man' in Bradford, but there simply had not been time to film this during the previous day as planned, so this scene was carried over into the twenty-fourth day. Here the actress was dressed in much the same way as she had been for the 'V.D. Clinic' scene which would immediately proceed the 'Motel' sequence in the finished film, so the implication was that the scenes were closely consecutive and that 'Sandra's' prostitution had become a norm, despite the attention of the 'Social worker'. The first shot to be filmed was of the girl loitering on a street corner, with the camera some fifty feet away on the other side of the street. The camera was not, therefore, immediately associated with the actress, and during the first take a (real) old lady stopped to ask the actress some directions. As a natural event, this was considered to be ideal, but the lady subsequently spotted the camera and stared towards it so that take had to be rejected. Two further shots were then made of 'Sandra' and the 'Heat man' as they drove away after he had picked her up on the street corner, both of which were made with the aid of car-mounts. Here again improvised dialogue was used to indicate that the 'Heat man' was evidently used to picking up prostitutes (he briefly asks her 'How much?', to which the girl replies 'Three pound' and is invited into the



car), and the problem of the deafness was quickly subordinated to the man's apparent intentions:

HEAT MAN

.... What's the matter ...?

(SANDRA indicated that she is deaf with gestures)

HEAT MAN

Oh, you're deaf ... ah, but you do it well?

(SANDRA looks puzzled. HEAT MAN gestures with the sign for intercourse)

HEAT MAN

.... Do it!

The man's intentions were themselves intended to be purely sexual at this point, therefore, and the suggestion that he drove straight out to the motel also implied that he had done this sort of thing before, so the net result of the 'pick-up' and the drive out to the motel in juxtaposition to the ensuing scene inside the bedroom was intended to make the attack as much of a surprise to the audience as it was to the girl.

This scene had been filmed with a minimum crew while the remaining members of the unit were preparing the other locations for the day. The first of these was one of the city-centre pubs where 'Sandra' would be shown drinking alone at the bar some time after her recovery from the motel attack. The scene had three main purposes, firstly to show that the girl had returned to drinking in seedy bars after a brief stay with her sister following the attack, secondly to establish 'Charlie' as a central character, and thirdly to introduce another factor in the girl's downfall - her introduction to drugs by this man. 'Charlie' would already have been introduced as one of 'Sandra's' acquaintances in an earlier scene, but only very briefly and as one of several other people drinking with her in



a pub. This time the scene would show only the girl and this new man, and his dialogue would confirm that they already knew each other; following scenes would then confirm their relationship by showing them staggering back to his place.

'Charlie' was not intended to be a complete villain, just one of a number of Bradford's itinerant victims of fortune. In the circumstances, his offer of some pills to 'Sandra' was intended to be an act of sympathy rather than one of criminal irresponsibility, but 'Sandra's' acceptance could be used as further evidence of her continuing degradation and separation from 'normal' social life. The pills themselves were not specifically denoted as drugs, but the intended connotation was that they were probably amphetamines or illicit 'uppers' of some kind since the actor had been given a matchbox containing some pill-like sweets which he would furtively produce with the dialogue: 'Have one of these. Make you feel good.'

The constant pressures of trying to combine the relatively fixed parameters of filming in real locations with the individual requirements of the crew within the overall constraint of a tight schedule came to the surface once again here. The manager of the pub wanted the filming to be completed by three o'clock in the afternoon to give him a chance to clean up before the evening session, so the director had requested the actor playing 'Charlie' to be ready from about 10.30 a.m. onwards. He had also warned the make-up department that they would have to change 'Sandra's' make-up from that required for the 'Heat man' pick-up to the 'post-attack' make-up for the scene with 'Charlie'. Having finished the previous scene by mid-day, the actress did not, however, appear from Make-up until 2.45 p.m., which meant that another scene showing the girl crying by herself in the pub had to be postponed and two other scenes which had been scheduled as the last two of the day eventually had to be put back too, since by the



end of the day there was simply not enough time left to film them.

The next scene to be shot had itself been postponed from the previous week, and was to show the aftermath of the incident where 'Sandra' was cut across her breast by her husband. This involved the actress rushing out of her flat and downstairs past a startled tenant, with her chest covered in blood. The staircase outside the room where the associated interior had been shot had in fact been quite an impressive piece of craftsmanship, descending around the four corners of a central well, and the director had felt that these stairs were perhaps too impressive in comparison to the little flat - plus it would have taken the actress quite a long time to run down them before she disappeared out of shot. The scene was consequently filmed in another house next door, where there was a staircase which simply descended in one flight. There had always been a danger in the film, and especially in part two, that the inclusion of too much violence would simply have the effect of making the audience punch-drunk. Although all the violent events in DUNNY were essentially true, a good deal of the actual violence which the real girl had suffered had been deliberately omitted, and events such as the razor-slashing were never intended to be as precisely documented as the scarring or the motel attack. If the film had been more graphic in its description of the husband's attack the dramatic value of the other, more pivotal scenes may have been reduced. The director nevertheless wanted to include this episode because of its basis in fact and because of its status as a source of evidence for making judgements about the characters, so the events leading up to the attack were filmed, followed by the aftermath of 'Sandra' running down the stairs, screaming and bloody. The slashing itself was not, in other words,



included in the sequence, and this raised a small problem of logical continuity since making a cut between the husband's move towards 'Sandra' and her entry into the staircase area would have produced an unwarranted jump in time. The slashing itself was therefore carried out 'off camera' during the time that the audience was being shown something else, and this was the 'tenant' looking round the foot of the stairs as 'Sandra's' screams and 'Ray's' shouts could be heard from inside the room before she bursts out onto the landing. The appearance of the 'tenant' was thus a matter of technical craftsmanship as well as being a pointer towards naturalism (since it was likely that somebody would have noticed the screaming) for if the camera had simply waited patiently outside the room for 'Sandra' to come out it would have anticipated the action and therefore altered its status as 'objective observer'.

By accident rather than design the next scene to be filmed would come directly after the 'razor slash' one in the finished film. It was essentially a linking scene to show 'Sandra' in a pub with a group of mostly unidentified people, some of whom would become more centrally involved later on. (These included 'Charlie' and the older West Indian with whom 'Sandra' became friendly.) The scene played no particular part in the narrative and the dialogue consisted of improvised, conversational anecdotes which had no direct reference within the film as a whole. The one piece of dialogue which had been scripted was itself a 'free-floating' aside, and this was the 'Asthmatic woman's' story about being mistaken as a prostitute at the age of sixty-two which the writer had lifted intact from a genuine old lady he had spoken to in Bradford.

The scene nevertheless fulfilled at least two purposes. Firstly, it



situated 'Sandra' within the particular, and by this time commonplace, context of drinking in the company of a motley crew in one of Bradford's seedier pubs, and secondly, the scene could be used to punctuate the increasing episodicity of part two of the film. Originally, the scene had been placed before the motel sequence, and after another example of the girl's prostitution which was never actually filmed. (This would have shown 'Sandra' having intercourse with a client in the back of his car; a scene which was rejected on the grounds that it simply repeated information contained elsewhere, and which by being rejected could save time.) Both of these scenes had also been placed after the 'V.D. Clinic' episode in the script, but since the 'Motel' scene could itself demonstrate that the girl was continuing her career as a prostitute despite her medical problems and the 'Social worker's' interest, the scene showing the girl in the pub with her assorted acquaintances could safely be moved to its final position before the 'V.D. Clinic'. It could be moved about in this way because of its lack of direct connection with the narrative, and in its final position it served the purpose of being an indicator of time-passing since it immediately followed the razor-slashing incident and separated it from the 'V.D. Clinic'. Reorganising the scene's position in this way also avoided a possible confusion which could have resulted from following the script, since the 'V.D. Clinic' originally came directly after the 'Razor-slash' here such that the connotation could have been drawn that 'Sandra' was waiting in the hospital-like surroundings as a result of her husband's attack, rather than as a result of her unconnected venereal disease problem (see Fig. ).



Fig. The Reorganisation of scenes from the 'Razor-blade' to the 'Hotel'

Script: Razor-blade (Husband attacks 'Sandra') - V.D. Clinic ('Sandra' meets her social worker) - Street soliciting ('Sandra' and friend's solicit two men; not filmed) - Parked car ('Sandra' has intercourse with client; not filmed) - Asthmatic woman ('Sandra' with friends in pub) - Hotel

Final: Razor-blade - Asthmatic woman - V.D. Clinic - Hotel

The scene was actually shot in the same pub that had served as the location for the 'Drugs' scene filmed earlier in the day, but this time during the evening opening hours. Here the camera was released from the static mode with which most of the preceding scenes had been filmed, and the cameraman hand-held a circular track around the group of drinkers so that each actor was held in close-up momentarily. Each character could thus be picked out and identified individually without losing the cohesiveness of the group as a whole, and the effect was heightened by having the sound recordist pick up snatches of each person's conversation as the camera brought him or her into frame.

The last scene of the day was one which was eventually and - from the director's point of view - regrettably cut from the finished film in order to comply with the rigid seventy-eight minute slot. Just as 'Cross-eyed Anne' had apparently been having an affair with 'Sandra's' husband, so she subsequently replaced 'Sandra' in 'Charlie's' affections, and this scene was to have shown the girl discovering her erstwhile lover drinking with 'Cross-eyed Anne' in the pub, whereupon 'Sandra' flies into a rage and unsuccessfully tried to separate the couple. (Thus demonstrating her aggressive streak and consolidating her isolation.)

It had by now become impossible to film inside any of the city-centre pubs incognito since the word had obviously spread around that the filming was taking place and the publicans were doing a useful trade as a result. In setting up this 'fight' scene, however, the director employed the



subterfuge of not rehearsing the central action in front of the real customers in the pub. Having arranged 'Cross-eyed Anne' and 'Charlie' around a table in the middle of the bar, the plan was to have 'Sandra' storm in unannounced and start the fight such that the real customers would be taken by surprise and - hopefully - react naturally as if the fight was genuine. All the crew who were present naturally knew what was going to happen, and they were dotted about the room to occupy people in conversation and to hold them back if anything went wrong. The main actress subsequently made her entrance and picked the fight with the other two actors which diverted everyone's attention to the action rather than the camera exactly as planned. It was not until the second and third takes that everyone fully realized what was happening, and after the first one an old lady commented to me, 'Well! 'e won't be pleased with that girl messin' up 'is film like that.' The director himself was quite pleased, however, saying that this action had been the 'nearest to true documentary'. The subsequent takes could not capture the spontaneity of the first one since the real customers were then tending to anticipate the action by looking towards the door for 'Sandra's' entrance, and they had also taken to clapping and applauding each take which rather destroyed the last vestiges of the operation being conducted in 'low-profile'. The scene was nevertheless marked down as a success, and was wrapped at 10.15 p.m.

#### Day twenty-five

The last part of DUTTY opens with a scene showing 'Sandra' at her sister's house where she had stayed for a time after the motel attack, and the first scene to be shot this day was to show the girl leaving her sister's after



her recovery. This was an exterior scene and was actually filmed very near to the real sister's house; so close in fact that the real sister and the original girl herself came out to watch the filming. This meeting produced two notable occurrences with respect to the film's authenticity; firstly the original girl had initially been quite concerned about her alter ego's health, since the main actress was by this time looking very run-down and was wearing various make-up scars and bruises, and secondly this was the first time that some of the crew had seen the real sister with her counterpart in the film. As I mentioned above, one of the reasons for casting the actress playing 'Joan' was for her resemblance to the original, and by chance both women were wearing exactly the same headscarf at this meeting such that the doppelganger effect was quite startling.

The reason for choosing this location was partially for the authenticity, and partly because it complied with the description given in the script of being a 'hilly street'. The dialogue in the preceding scene had had the sister saying: 'I told her, I said to her, "Don't go back down Lumb Lane," I said. "They take you for nothing down there".' The fact that 'Sandra' is then shown leaving her sister's to walk downhill thus carried the symbolic implication that she is returning to her old ways; an implication which is quickly reinforced by subsequent scenes, and augmented at the time by 'Joan's' look of concern as she gives 'Sandra' a pack of cigarettes before watching her walk away. As an illustration of the attention to detail involved in even a relatively straightforward scene such as this it can be noted that the cigarettes were the same brand as the ones which the real girl smoked.

The next scene to be shot was set some time later, after 'Sandra' had been 'back down Lumb Lane' for some weeks. Here the 'Social worker' would be shown visiting the sister to find out how, and indeed where, 'Sandra' was.



Like the earlier scene involving the 'Social worker' this one appears in the script as a lengthy interchange between him and 'Joan' in which a lot of background detail is filled in. As I've mentioned before, it was very difficult to tie up loose ends or to map out 'Sandra's' own view of her situation because of her unavoidable lack of dialogue, but it is interesting that the 'Social worker' was used as a means of filling in some of this material since the real Social worker had also been one of the director's main sources. In this scene, for instance, it was revealed that 'Sandra's' daughter had been living with the sister ever since the mother died, and that her son had been put in care such that 'Sandra' had never seen him. Unfortunately, the bulk of the scene, including the information about 'Sandra's' children, was cut from the finished film as the director felt it 'spoiled the emotional flow' through being too long in the context of the surrounding scenes. It was also drastically cut down as a means of shortening the total running time of the film once again, but not without misgivings, for in fact it was the last major cut which was made during the editing process. Another reason for limiting the scene to only its opening section was that the performance itself was considered to be less than perfect in the final analysis.

The opening section of the scene had been altered insofar as the script had set the whole scene inside the sister's parlour, whereas for the filming the action started outside in the street. Although it was considered to be perfectly legitimate to start the scene with the 'Social worker' already installed inside the sister's house, by having him meet 'Joan' in the street outside the scene could be made a little more dynamic - or less 'stage-like' as the director put it. Also the meeting itself could then appear to be casual rather than pre-arranged which could help to reinforce the connotation that the 'Social worker' had lost contact with



'Sandra' at this time.

In order to accommodate this slight change in the scene the dialogue had had to be altered a little too (there was now a brief exchange of greetings at the beginning) and perhaps because of this both actors fluffed their lines during four of the eight takes. Producing a fluffed line can sometimes make a speech appear to be more natural, but it also unnerves an actor and increases the sense of responsibility during subsequent takes, so in a situation like this the director was always careful to reassure rather than admonish the people concerned - in this case, for example, he told the actress 'It's quite good to fluff a little here; you are talking to yourself really.'

The second part of the scene was filmed inside the sister's parlour as planned, using a small terraced house across the road from 'Mother's' house as the location. Whereas 'Mother's' house had been unoccupied at the time, 'Joan's' house had been hired for the day from the resident family, but most of the furniture, ornaments and pictures had still been supplied by the design department - including the three-piece suite which had been brought up all the way from London. A prop telephone had also been installed, and as another example of the extreme attention to detail, this 'phone had been given an authentic 'Bradford' G.P.O. sticker for the centre of the dial. A practical colour television had also been set up in the room, and was left overnight 'as a treat' for the resident family.

Once inside the room, the director had rearranged some of the pictures on the wall 'because I hate symmetry' and the lighting crew had set up the now familiar rig of two exterior HMIs and two interior 'Blondes'. This immediately began to cause problems, however, since the house's wiring could not stand the extra load being taken by the powerful lamps, and a short delay ensued as the power supply was rerouted.



The scene itself contained a lot of information, with 'Joan' introducing a number of different points; that, for example, 'Sandra' was now going out with 'a right villain', was drinking a great deal and was generally going downhill fast. The upshot of all this was that the situation was 'a real mess' as far as the sister was concerned, on top of which she had 'no idea' of 'Sandra's' whereabouts. In order to deal with all these points the director instructed the actress to look as if they had occurred to her one by one as she went about the business of making the 'Social worker' a cup of tea, but he also instructed 'Joan' not to look too sad about it all - 'Let the audience get the sadness,' he explained. 'Your own lines have to be nice and strong.' The line saying that the situation was 'a right mess' was, for instance, to be either very strongly delivered as a sign of exasperation, or thrown away as if 'Joan' was talking to herself, but it was not to be delivered too anxiously as the sister would have been relatively used to the situation by this time such that 'Sandra's' plight had simply become a fact of life.

Three takes were made for this section of the scene which seemed to the director to be reasonably satisfactory, but he decided to do some more in order to make sure that the 'Social worker' was not coming across as being too caring. As in the scene with the original hospital consultant, the director wanted the professional people involved with 'Sandra's' life to appear to be professionals; people with several other cases to consider in addition to this particular one. At this point, however, there was a massive fuse in the overloaded electrical system which took over an hour to repair. As a result of this delay, as the director explained, 'Everything seemed to have fallen apart a bit. The actors had lost their mood and I think the camera crew were not as



confident. It was no longer as spontaneous as it had been before.'

Most of the ensuing takes were consequently marked down as NG on the P.A.'s continuity report, and in the end the whole of this second part of the scene was rejected as an indirect result of the technical fault.

The next scene eventually started rehearsal at six o'clock, and this would be the opening scene for part three of the film showing 'Sandra' at home with her sister after the motel attack. 'Sandra' had been given a make-up surgical plaster to cover her 'broken' nose such that the connotation could be drawn that this scene was set not too long after the motel sequence which had ended part two. The fact that she had come to stay with her sister was introduced in several ways; firstly the audience had not been given a shot of this interior before, so the implication was that it was not one of the places in which 'Sandra' had been living beforehand (the room was in fact closely similar to 'Mother's' parlour, but could be differentiated from this because the floor-plan was reversed). Secondly, 'Joan' had been given a housecoat to wear in contrast to 'Auntie Amie's' outdoors coat such that the implication was that the latter had come to visit 'Joan' rather than vice versa, and 'Sandra' herself was dressed in indoor clothes as she busied herself with some household chores. The fact that it was not her household was implied through the dialogue where she asks if she could 'do the beans' (she would not need to ask if it had been her house).

Using an unconnected conversation between 'Joan' and 'Auntie Amie' as a bridge, the main purpose of the scene was to remind the audience of the events of part two of the film after the commercial break, to confirm the uncertainty of 'Sandra's' situation and to lead the audience back into the narrative with 'Joan's' dialogue peg: 'God knows what'll happen....'



Though unconnected with the narrative, the initial conversation between the two women nevertheless revolves around an allegorical story about a neighbour who had died from a blood clot at the age of twenty-eight (Sandra was twenty-nine) and includes the line 'You cannot change your destiny.' This line in to some extent a leitmotif for the whole film, serving as both a sign of working-class resolve and as a punctuative milestone within the film itself since 'Sandra's' fate was becoming inexorably fixed too.

Filming the scene proved to be technically difficult. 'Because there are three actors in different parts of the room,' the director explained, 'it is difficult to get them all in shot without panning the camera about, but if you do that you lose the geometry of the room.' The actors were consequently placed in several different positions within the room until a position was found which would keep the camera movement to a minimum, and the camera itself was equipped with a very wide lens. To cover this wide field of view for sound meant, in turn, that the sound recordist had to use several microphones routed through separate pre-amps in a mixer, but by the simple application of God's law two of the pre-amps subsequently failed which then meant that for the cutaways only one actor could be miked at a time. Furthermore, every time 'Joan' sat down in her armchair, the plastic upholstery made a noise like a whoopee cushion which caused a certain amount of amusement for the crew, but further problems for the sound department.

As far as the performance itself was concerned, the director's main aim was to ensure that the actors' dialogue remained as matter-of-fact as possible. 'There's no need to overdo it for the audience's sake,' he explained to them, and he instructed 'Auntie Amie' not to look overly



concerned about 'Sandra's' condition - reminding her that she did not have to whisper when talking about the girl; 'Don't forget that you have known her for over twenty years and she's been in trouble before.' Similarly, 'Joan' had been referring to 'Auntie Amie' by name at the beginning of her speech, and the director rejected this because 'It sounds as if we are trying to establish that she is 'Auntie Amie' - the use of the Aunt's name may, in other words, have sounded like a dramatic ploy to re-establish the character's identity which might have damaged the naturalistic content.

Because of the delays caused by the lighting problems earlier in the day, this scene was not completed until past eight o'clock in the evening, but one further scene had to be filmed in 'Joan's' house before it was handed back to the occupants so the director decided to press on with this having obtained the agreement of the crew. 'Cross-eyed Anne' had eventually moved in with 'Charlie', thus depriving 'Sandra' of what little comfort she had gained from that relationship, and in utter despair, 'Sandra' had tried to telephone her sister once again. The scene to be filmed in 'Joan's' house was to be the other end of this telephone call, where the sister is shown taking the call and futilely trying to understand its purpose. Apart from the tragic weight attached to the deaf girl's attempt to contact her remaining source of comfort by means of a telephone (a symbol of the hearing world), the scene was also intended to be an illustration of the contrast between 'Sandra's' position and that of her sister. 'Sandra' would be shown ringing up in a state of despair from a payphone in a seedy pub, and 'Joan' would be shown taking the call on her own telephone, in her own house and with her husband visible in the background as a symbol of secure domesticity.



The way in which this scene was filmed was compromised by one of the more unexpected constraints which can sometimes operate upon location filming. The director had already sought the agreement of the crew to work on to complete the scene, even though this meant that the rostered supper break would be missed, but in a situation like this there was no theoretical limit to the hours which could be worked beyond the progressively prohibitive overtime rates. The unit also included four drivers, however, whose job it was to ferry actors and personnel between the hotel and various locations. While these people had similar overtime agreements as members of the film unit, they also had to comply with the more general rulings applicable to their particular job as 'transport operatives' which meant that their working day was limited to ten hours irrespective of whether those hours were deemed to be normal time or overtime. Strictly speaking, this rule is designed to stop drivers being continuously behind the wheel for long (and therefore dangerous) periods, whereas the unit's drivers actually found that they had little to do for long periods during the day. The chargehand nevertheless felt that the rule was inviolable, and pointed out that the drivers should also have finished at seven o'clock instead of eight because of the lack of a supper-break. Since the director had been unable to even start shooting the last scene until after eight o'clock this generated a problem. One of the reasons for having four drivers was to enable them to work shifts such that this sort of problem could be avoided, but as it happened, only one of the drivers was on a late shift that day so an agreement was eventually reached where this driver would stay on until the scene was finished providing that the others returned to the hotel with two of the equipment vans forthwith.



The alternative would have been to postpone the shooting of this last scene, but this could easily have meant that the scene would be lost altogether since the shooting schedule was already extremely tight and there was no guarantee that the location could be hired again. Furthermore, to postpone the scene would have been a very expensive move since the actors would have to have been paid for the extra time, the location itself would need to have been re-hired and re-dressed and some of the props re-hired too. Having made the decision to carry on with the scene, the director nevertheless found himself left with only a limited number of lights since some of the equipment had been taken back to the hotel with the drivers, so the telephone scene had to be filmed as one shot without any cutaways of, for example, 'Joan's' husband or the telephone itself. The director's original plans for the scene were therefore directly compromised and the film itself ultimately - if not seriously - affected. This incident did nothing to alleviate the high level of stress which is arguably normal within a film unit, and which during this particular day had already been aggravated by a series of technical breakdowns, but it ought to be said that the drivers themselves felt that they were in a cleft stick; in fact they felt quite strongly that the ten-hour rule worked against their own best interests since it stopped them working the overtime which the rest of the crew could do. It must also be said, however, that the co-option of extra crew members on to a unit like this should perhaps have allowed for a greater degree of flexibility.

#### Day twenty-six

The script had included two short scenes after the episodes where 'Sandra' had discovered 'Cross-eyed Anne' and 'Charlie' together in the pub to show



the girl walking back to a shabby house with two 'Dossers'. The scenes had two main points to make; firstly that 'Sandra's' life was degenerating even further, since she had now taken up with two down-and-outs, and secondly it was here that the girl would be shown pocketing a small knife - the knife which she would later use to stab a man towards the end of the film. Most of the morning of this twenty-sixth day was taken up with filming these scenes at a particularly grubby location in the area where the police were still investigating the real murder which had recently taken place. Neither of the scenes were eventually used in the film, however, because the director was once again looking for ways of reducing the amount of material within the constraint of the time-slot. The scenes were relatively expendable because 'Sandra's' continuing descent was felt to have been covered by other scenes, and the establishment of the fact that she carried a knife would be denoted in a later scene where she threatens 'Cross-eyed Anne'.

Much of the rest of the day was then taken up with shooting a number of exterior shots of 'Sandra' wandering about the streets for inclusion in the film after she had left her sister's house at the beginning of part three. All of these shots were made with the aid of a minimum crew which enabled the director to set up and take a relatively large number of shots within a comparatively short space of time. Eleven different shots were in fact made in seven different locations during the afternoon, the first of which was a pick-up of 'Sandra' soliciting in the street. The first time this scene was attempted had proved to be a failure since there were too many children about, but this time the actress was positioned on a street corner opposite a pub with the camera and most of the unit well out of the way to avoid attracting the attention of





The two actors playing the 'Dossers' for a scene which was eventually rejected. Both had been asked not to shave beforehand, but the make-up department added some 'stubble' in the form of tiny hairs sprayed onto a sticky base.





Shooting 'Sandra's' wanderings in the backstreets of Bradford with a minimum crew. The actress ( at extreme left ) is just about to walk across the broken paving stones towards the cameraman ( second from left ) as the director ( centre ) instructs the crew.



onlookers. Despite the problems which having the actress mistaken for a genuine prostitute might have caused, it was nevertheless the intention to film any encounter which she had with a genuine member of the public. One or two people did in fact stop as the actress loitered on a corner, but the shot which was used in the film itself simply shows the girl on her own, which could have led to the connotation that prostitution was itself no easy option for 'Sandra'. By this stage in the shoot ninety-six magazines of film had been used up (or about sixteen hours of running-time) so to help cut down the wastage-rate these shots were made with roll-ends. Roll-ends are those lengths of film which are left exposed between magazine changes; when shooting longer scenes it is usually more economic to waste the last few feet of film in a roll than to risk having to cut a scene half-way through because the film has run out. So with short scenes like those being shot this afternoon, these roll-ends can be used up with less fear of artificially cutting short an action.

Another of the short scenes made at the 'pub exterior' location was to show 'Sandra' and her old West Indian friend coming out of the pub, on the second take of which the (real) landlady hurled some abuse at them (as down-and-outs rather than actors). This was considered to be useful footage since it was a genuine event rather than a staged one, but it was eventually rejected because of the time factor once again. Most of the remaining shots filmed in the afternoon showed 'Sandra' wandering aimlessly through alleyways and streets which would be used to indicate the fact that she really had nowhere to go after leaving her sister.

Seven different shots were made, of which two were eventually used, with the P.A. rounding up small children to play in the backgrounds and the



sound recordist barking at various dogs to make them bark back at him for some atmospheric sound-effects. Working spontaneously with a limited number of crew in this way also generated a particularly happy atmosphere within the core unit. 'I could stay here all day,' commented the director, and both cameraman and the sound recordist confided that they preferred to work in this manner.

One of the main shots was that of 'Sandra' walking behind the camera as it tracked backwards down a narrow alleyway and out into a cobbled backstreet. This was one of the shots which was used in the finished film and is interesting insofar as it was a tracking shot. Apart from the fact that there was some difficulty at the time in eliminating 'film-maker's shuffles' - the sound of the camera crew's feet as they walked backwards only a short distance in front of the actress - the fact that the camera was moving with the actress helped to make her stumbling walk more aimless. If the camera had remained static the actress would have appeared to be moving either towards or away from it, or across its line of sight. Some kind of direction would thus be imputed by her movement relative to the camera, whereas by having the camera move with the actress the fact that she was walking would be denoted but the connotation that she was not walking in any particular direction could be enhanced. Although the camera was looking at the girl, it was also in a sense taking her viewpoint since the hand-held track mirrored her eye-level and motion. This technique could therefore help to indicate both the aimlessness of the girl's wandering and her own experience of it; exactly what she was experiencing could then be included in the diegesis by having the actress look downcast and miserable. When the scene is viewed in its final context, coming as it does after her apparently carefree departure from her sister's house, the overall connotation





The Production assistant encourages some local children to play in the street prior to shooting 'Sandra' walking past them into the distance.



could thus be made that the girl was merely putting a brave face upon a situation which she knew to be desperate when she left her sister's. The director's intention to identify the girl's relative isolation through what he called a sociological examination of prevailing conditions could therefore be combined through scenes like this with a more intimate illustration of the original girl's interior perspective.

One more of these short scenes was filmed before taking an evening break, showing 'Sandra' and the West Indian returning to his flat across a block tenement square. This would be used towards the middle of part three of the film to indicate that some form of a relationship was operating between them and to provide an explanation for 'Sandra's' return to the West Indian's flat after the stabbing. The nature of this relationship would never be specifically denoted, but having established that the girl had already been to the West Indian's flat before, it was then possible for an audience to make the preferred deduction that he was someone to whom she could turn in times of trouble. Again, the way the shot was made is interesting, but for the opposite reason for which the alleyway shot was so. Here the camera was set up at some distance from the subjects, high up in a building such that 'Sandra' and the West Indian could walk from left to right across the camera's field of view, thus emphasising the direction of their travel towards the West Indian's flat.



The last scene of the day was set inside an Indian restaurant, showing 'Sandra', 'Charlie' and the West Indian having a meal. This was to be used to break up the otherwise unrelenting gloom of part three which could have habituated an audience to the idea that 'Sandra's' life was totally without light relief, but it would also establish the fact that the West Indian was interested in the girl and that in contrast to 'Charlie' he was a rather gentle man. The actor playing this character was considerably younger than the original West Indian, who was a man in his middle sixties, but he had spent some time with him, finding out about his relationship with the original girl. The actor described him as being 'really laid back', but explained that the old West Indian had genuinely loved Sandra and was thus one of the very few people who had not simply sought to use the girl in some way. In a sense, the old man and the girl were two of a kind; both having suffered prejudice and the failure of people to understand the 'otherness' of the culture of a first-generation immigrant on the one hand, or the isolation and the inability to communicate of a young, deaf girl on the other, and it was to the West Indian that the girl fled in her panic after the stabbing.

As suggested in the script, the restaurant was 'cheerless and drably-decorated', standing next to a rubble-strewn vacant site and opposite a pub advertising a pool-room and topless go-go dancers. The restaurant's proprietor nevertheless took considerable pride in his business, wiping his tables with care and assuring the crew that his coffee was made entirely with milk and 'proper Nescafe'. The normal



routine of the restaurant's business was in fact to be incorporated into the film, since several real customers were asked to sit in the background of some of the shots while eating their meals, and the genuine waiter was asked to play himself - 'just treat these people like normal customers' the director instructed.

Going out for a meal like this was supposed to be a treat for the three friends, so the director told the actors that it should be 'an almost sensual experience' conducted in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment. He also encouraged them to ad lib some conversation which would help to make the scene more natural, but which also caused some minor problems. The major problem with ad libbing in a scene like this is that ad libs included in an establishing shot have to be repeated in any cutaways that are made for the sake of continuity, and sometimes such ad libs are too long to be accurately remembered or recorded for the repeats. Here, for example, one take had to be abandoned because the two male actors became entangled in a lengthy argument about dominoes, the details of which neither could remember for the cutaways. As had happened before, there was also a danger of an actor including a genuine name in an ad lib since their research had often involved contact with the original people involved. The actor playing the West Indian, for example, mentioned somebody called 'Fenty Vera' at one point which had to be deleted, and on another occasion referred to 'Sandra' by her real name.

Originally, the script had had the West Indian trying to persuade 'Sandra' to go home with him while 'Charlie' was still sat at the table, but for the takes themselves the director tried to make this request more credible



by having 'Charlie' leave the table to fetch a Samosa. The West Indian's suggestion could thus be made more intimate and covert such that it more clearly provoked 'Charlie's' reaction on his return - 'Fuck off and leave her alone!' It was not the intention, however, to expand this exchange into another violent outburst, so the director improvised an additional action which was designed to deflate the tension of the previous action and dialogue without evacuating it of its intended meaning (that the West Indian wanted to detach 'Sandra' from 'Charlie'). This action, which does not appear in the script, involved 'Charlie' pinching the West Indian's hat as he fumed quietly to himself after the former's intervention. This action at first seems to be a further provocation for the West Indian, but on having his hat gently returned the action is revealed to be a joke and the tension is relieved. Two points arise from this: firstly the fact that the West Indian does not rise to the provocation is a further clue to his gentle, non-aggressive character, and secondly the improvised action generated a small problem on a technical level. The director had wanted the West Indian's reaction to 'Charlie's' aggressive dialogue to be shown in a big close-up so that he could be visually separated from the other two, thus foregrounding his expression of wary acquiescence and emphasising his status of being peripheral to the other two's relationship. Having set up the camera for this close-up, however, it became difficult to see the subsequent action of the hat routine, since the top of the West Indian's head was already quite close to the top edge of the frame. Had the camera pulled back from the close-up in order to show the hat being removed it would have anticipated that movement and may therefore have over-emphasised its importance. Such



a movement would certainly have illegitimately changed the scene's perspective, since the character's mood would change after the hat had been removed, not before, so an alternative technique could have been to make the whole shot wider, but then one would lose the advantages of the big close-up. In the finished film the close-up was retained, therefore, but at the expense of having the hat disappear out of the top of the frame.

The scene was wrapped at ten o'clock, and was generally considered to have been one of the most successful so far, even the cameraman, who was customarily reticent when it came to post mortems, remarked that he had enjoyed filming it - 'because it was good dialogue; well acted and well directed'.

#### Day twenty-seven

- was the last rest-day of the shoot prior to the final week in Bradford.

#### Day twenty-eight

The original schedule for this day had been altered quite extensively such that all the scenes could be shot in or around 'Charlie's' lodgings. Sandra had lived with this man for a short time before being ousted by 'Cross eyed Anne' and it was here that the stabbing took place. The director had found a filthy basement room to serve as the location for 'Charlie's' home very near the place where the original stabbing had taken place, and had negotiated its use from the Pakistani landlord in this predominantly Pakistani area of the city, even though the room itself was occupied by a white alcoholic. 'The type of Englishman who lives here won't mind moving out for a day' the



landlord explained, 'because they are half-stupid anyway' (I mention this because of an event which would take place on the following day). The first scene to be shot was set in the street outside this house, and showed 'Sandra' and 'Charlie' staggering back from the pub after their meeting where he gave her the drugs. Since this was shot in the morning, the connotation as far as the film was concerned could have been that the previous scene in the pub had occurred during a lunchtime session which would help the implication that the couple had nothing better to do than drink during the day (the script had set both scenes in the evening). During the filming of this scene a genuine rag-and-bone man with a horse and trailer was co-opted into the action, and to the director's surprise, the man informed him that he had already been on television four times - 'They usually do me in one take' he explained.

The next scene showed a very similar action, except this time 'Sandra' was shown walking up to 'Charlie's' place on her own. Originally this would have been placed after the 'Dossier's' scene to indicate that the girl had tried to return to 'Charlie' after staying with the down-and-outs following the incident where she discovered 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' together in the pub. Both of these last two scenes were subsequently rejected, however, so 'Sandra's' walk up to 'Charlie's' was eventually used as part of a sequence showing the girl walking aimlessly about before discovering 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' together in his room. Some of the reasons for making these changes will become clearer when looking at the editing process, but for the moment it can be noted that such rearrangements were possible because most of the action for part three of the film



takes place within a relatively short space of time, so 'Sandra's' appearance and costume would be relatively continuous.

For the next scene, the unit moved into the basement room to film the last part of the sequence where the girl meets 'Charlie', walks home with him and presumably goes to bed with him. This presumption was intended to be born out by the fact that 'Charlie' is shown to be asleep, with 'Sandra' getting dressed. Another purpose of the scene was to demonstrate that the girl was still basically an affectionate, caring person since she wraps a coat around the sleeping 'Charlie' with, as the script indicated, 'a gentle, loving gesture'.

The main point of filming this and subsequent scenes within the tiny, dirty room was to give an audience some idea of the squalor to which the girl had descended, and the look (and smell) of the place certainly helped the actors to work themselves into their parts.

But the cameraman still had the problem of translating the actual squalor of the location onto film, for there is a sense in which filming an object can make it look 'better' than the original. I have always found it quite a satisfying experience to receive proofs of graphics or artwork back from the printers because the printing process reduces all my irregularly imprinted drawings or overlays to one uniform surface, which can look more 'professional' than the original. If this is so, it is partially because the printer's process camera reduces the irregular three-dimensionality of the original to the two-dimensional image of the copy (which is why even a good print of a painting is instantly discernable from the original).

The same idea applies to a photograph or even a moving film of a three-dimensional object, since the flat surface of the image can only



reproduce the illusion of depth, and cannot reproduce other stimuli - such as smell - at all. The physical form of the image on a screen is, in other words, constant, so the form of the original has to be implied through the content. The content of the image of 'Charlie's' room was nevertheless constrained by the form of the room itself; being a very small room, it was once again impossible for the camera to take in all of the information which the room contained because it could not move far enough away from its object, and using too wide a lens would have the effect of making the room appear to be larger than it was intended to seem. By compromising on the distance and lens used, the cameraman consequently had to lose a view of the floor, for example, and it was the floor and bottom edge of the walls which were the most dirty and squalid. As he explained afterwards:

It's very hard for us to see the floors in these locations because of the angles we've used, but unless you are looking at the floors you can't see the muck, so then you've got to really concentrate upon the walls, and in fact in some of our nastiest places there was actually some quite good wallpaper, wasn't there? Of course you can build up the image by the use of different lenses, by the angles you choose or the kind of lighting you use, but in our case often time was the biggest factor.

The lack of time was, indeed, particularly evident during this day's shooting as will transpire.

By the beginning of the afternoon, the unit was ready to shoot the next scene, which would form part of the sequence in which 'Sandra' is seen crying alone in a pub, followed by another aimless walk after which she eventually ends up back at 'Charlie's' place to discover him with 'Cross-eyed Anne'. The script had had 'Charlie' lying face-down on the bed in a drunken stupor, revealing love-scratches on his back,



and had suggested that 'Cross-eyed Anne' should stand by the window, lighting a cigarette; the net intention of which was to indicate that these two were now together and had evidently formed a sexual relationship which would then provoke 'Sandra's' pathetic rage on her entry.

In the event, the director decided to have 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' watching television as 'Sandra' comes in, as he explained at the time, 'It may be too corny to have (Sandra) discover the "Crime passionnel"; it's enough for her to simply find them together, and having the television on increases the feeling that they have something which (Sandra) doesn't - she is already excluded from the act of watching TV. There was a good deal of discussion between the actors and the director over the playing of this scene, and particularly over the motivation for the ensuing fight between 'Sandra' and 'Cross-eyed Anne'. The director wanted to avoid the cliché of one woman finding another with her man, and also wanted the resulting fight to be contained and much less violent than the previous fight scene where 'Sandra' first discovers the couple together in the pub, 'that scene was the angry one' he pointed out, 'this one is a final rejection'. As such, the director wanted the main actresses and 'Cross-eyed Anne' to try to reason with each other initially, before they started to fight, but the actresses thought that 'Sandra' would be 'almost manic' by this stage such that she would lose her rag very quickly; 'she knows in her heart that these two will be together before she comes in' the actresses ventured. Several rehearsals were tried out, with slightly different nuances of action and motivation being introduced until the director was reasonably satisfied. The main problem was that



the director agreed with the actresses that 'Sandra' should show a degree of disbelief in finding 'Cross-eyed Anne' with 'Charlie' (it should be remembered that 'Cross-eyed Anne' had started out as 'Sandra's' friend, but had already had a relationship with her husband) but after a momentary pause to register this disbelief, the fight itself naturally tended to develop into a much bigger action than the director wanted. There was a danger, for instance, of the action becoming too much like the motel incident, where the violence was instrumental to 'Sandra's' downfall, whereas the violence in this scene was intended to be much more incidental to the girl's continuing degradation.

By mid-afternoon the director was ready for the first take, and by then the action had resolved itself into a form which allowed the main actress to express 'Sandra's' almost manic desperation, since she produced the knife which she had been carrying over since the 'Lovers' scene to threaten 'Cross-eyed Anne', but the violence was then quickly deflated as the latter easily overpowered 'Sandra', thus reinforcing the idea that the girl's impotence to change her own situation was almost complete. Working out this action had taken an unusually long time, but having made the first take there was an enforced break to allow the actress playing 'Cross-eyed Anne' to rest her eye. She had been wearing a specially-made corneal contact lens to give her the required squint, and there was a limit of about two hours to the time which she could keep it in place. During this break the cameraman took the opportunity to try to organize some more light for the scene; there was only one small window in the room, not high up on one wall since this was a basement, and the sheer size of the



room limited the number of artificial lights which could be used.

The actors were therefore placed underneath the window to catch the light coming from an ITH outside, and two blondes and a redhead were used inside in addition to the centre practical light.

By 3.30 p.m. everyone was ready to make a second take, this time with the television set working. For reasons of copyright the set was tuned to an ITV channel and the P.A. made a note on her continuity report giving the date and time of the transmission should there be any problem later. Fortunately, the programme being transmitted was an old film, so there was a good chance that it would stay on for long enough to remain in continuity while the scene was being shot, but this also provided another minor constraint in terms of the time available for filming this scene. Another minor difficulty concerned the boom microphones, which because of the lighting and the size of the room was in danger of creating shadows on the wall, and in point of fact the second take had to be scrapped for this reason.

Towards the end of the scene 'Sandra' would be struck by 'Cross-eyed Anne', whereupon she slumps onto the bed in a state of psychological rather than physical defeat. The last shot of the scene would then be a close-up of the girl, crying on the bed, after the other two had left her. The director did not want to include a cutaway of 'Cross-eyed Anne' and 'Charlie' leaving because he wished to concentrate the attention upon 'Sandra' for the last section in order to observe her desperation and defeat through a sustained close-up. It is, however, a basic rule that one does not go from a wide shot to a close-up of the same character without making such a move via a cutaway of some



other character or object since this would distort the illusion of a continuous time-flow. After the actress had been struck, she was therefore instructed to fall out of the camera's frame while the camera stayed on 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anna' for a few moments, which would then enable the cut to the close-up to be made. The close-up itself was then taken from approximately the same height as 'Sandra's' final position as she lay slumped on the bed. The director had rejected an earlier notion to have the actress look up to follow the other two's exit because, as he said, 'I want complete defeat', but having the actress collapsed on the bed with her head down in combination with the low camera height tended to make her look like a rather shapeless mass, so several different camera positions were tried before a suitable one was found.

Since this scene had been technically difficult to organise it was not completed until five o'clock, which meant that the day's work was beginning to get behind schedule. Many of the problems which had been encountered here, and particularly those associated with the lighting, would be likely to reappear in the next scene which the director had planned to shoot. This was to have shown a group of 'Charlie's' cronies having a drunken evening in his room directly after which the stabbing would take place, but there was a major problem in getting all six actors in shot given the limited amount of available space and the correlative lack of room in which to erect all the necessary lights. One alternative could have been to tape fluorescent lamps to the ceiling as had been done for the 'Scarring' scene, but this would have made the overall lighting too even and rather harsh, since the light was notionally coming from a single



bulb in the centre of the room. Another alternative could have been to use a number of single shots; lighting each actor separately, but either alternative would have taken a long time to set up and the day was already running over schedule. Another factor which the director was bearing in mind was that the other scenes which had been planned for the evening would be covering the stabbing incident, and these were to be filmed at dusk. Since dusk does not last very long before it becomes too dark to film properly, the director was constrained to film these scenes at a particular time, and that time was fast approaching.

Having considered all these factors, it was consequently decided that the 'party' scene would have to be postponed until the next day - providing that the location would be available then - and the unit moved upstairs to film the 'stabbing' scene in a hallway on the other side of the building.

The original girl had been jailed for manslaughter rather than murder because there were a number of mitigating circumstances, and in a sense DUFFY was a record of these circumstances except that the film sought to trace and identify their origin all the way back to the girl's childhood. Apart from the fact that Sandra had been constantly abused by different men, a pivotal factor in her downfall had been her inability to communicate, and it was a combination of these factors which the director wanted his audience to understand as the motivation for the stabbing. It was absolutely vital, therefore, that the stabbing should appear to result from 'Sandra's' misunderstanding of the situation within the immediate context, and that her action was in some sense justified with reference to the whole of the rest of the film.



In the completed film the action proceeds as follows: 'Max', the man whom 'Sandra' stabs, had left the party ahead of the girl in a very drunken state, but was still staggering about by the front door as 'Sandra' came down the hallway to leave. The lighting had been set up such that he was lit from behind to show him as a 'sinister silhouette' as the director instructed at the time, and the actress was told to look surprised at the fact that 'Max' was still in the house, and a little frightened of the shadowy silhouette. She therefore steps in her tracks, whereupon 'Max' turns and staggers back towards her, saying 'C'mon...you're alright' - meaning that the girl could pass by him to leave. 'Sandra', of course, cannot hear that the man is saying that it is alright for her to squeeze by him, and misunderstands that he is advancing towards her to threaten her in some way. Given the dim lighting, 'Max's' large, lumbering figure, the abuse she had just received at the party, her extremely poor psychological state and her history of being attacked by different men, 'Sandra' backs away down the hallway away from the man's advances. 'You should be thinking "Oh no, it's going to happen again!"' the director instructed the actress at the time, and her retreat was filmed with a tracking, hand-held camera from 'Max's' P.O.V. to imply that he was still moving towards her as she backs away, pressed against the wall as a sign of increasing terror. At this point in the film, and as a departure from the naturalism of other scenes, the director later included a brief flashback of about twenty frames showing the 'Heat man' from the motel also saying 'C'mon!'. The 'Heat man's' words were, however, wholly threatening as opposed to 'Max's' and the flashback was intended to increase the tension and imply



that 'Sandra' was, indeed, under the impression that this was going to be a repeat of her previous experience. A further flashback was then included of the 'Heat man'; this time of him moving in to attack the girl, after which 'Sandra' tries to push past 'Max' to escape into the street.

These two flashbacks were intended to be partially 'Sandra's' own recollection and partially a cue for the audience, as the director commented during the editing,

I think it's both. You are party to the information by the end of the film you see; at the beginning the information is all hers. At the end you know as much as she does, therefore (the flashbacks) are both our information and hers.

This is true insofar as 'Sandra' would not have heard the 'Heat man' saying 'C'mon!', but such detail is in any case irrelevant when dealing with such a non-naturalistic device. The ambivalence of the flashbacks notwithstanding, they served to catalyse the girl's panic and she tries to get past 'Max' to run out through the open door. He had meanwhile slumped to the floor, but rises up again, with his hands out to try to calm 'Sandra' down. Again, she misunderstands his intentions and tries to fend the man off, stabbing him in the process with the knife which she had picked up in the 'Dossers' scene. The act was therefore intended to be seen as a desperate attempt by 'Sandra' to protect herself, believing that 'Max' was about to attack her (whereas he was actually trying to calm her down). Although the 'Dossers' scene was never included in the final film, the audience would already have seen the knife in the scene where 'Sandra' discovers 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Annie' together, and the intended implication was that she carried the weapon for self-defence.



The knife itself was a special effects one, where the blade moved back into the handle like a child's trick knife, and the stab itself was filmed in big close-up so that it would be quite clearly visible. As another example of the attention to detail, the point of entry of the knife into 'Max's' chest was consonant with the wound which the original man had received, but at the time the director was not sure that the knife was obvious enough, given the minimal lighting conditions, so during the next shot of 'Max' staggering out of the doorway, he was given the denotational line 'Bloody' old, she's stabbed me'.

It was now ten past eight in the evening, and the light was beginning to fade rapidly so there was a considerable rush to complete the following sections of the sequence, which would show 'Max' stumbling into the street and 'Sandra' running off into the distance. In fact there simply was not time to film the second of these actions properly, since the director also wanted to shoot the chronologically earlier scene of the group of drunks arriving at the house prior to the party which he had already rehearsed. Here 'Charlie's' relationship with 'Cross-eyed Anne' would be confirmed, since these two would be shown walking arm-in-arm into the house at the head of the group, and then each member of the group would be identified in turn as the camera paused in its track along the street with them. 'Sandra' herself would be shown entering the house with the others, but she would be the last to do so since the required effect was that she was simply tagging along with the other people rather than being a welcome member of the party.

Five takes were made here within the space of about half an hour, and even then the light was getting very bad for the last of these, so the



scene was eventually wrapped at nine-o'clock to - it must be said - most people's considerable relief. The last two hours had been somewhat frenetic, with a number of people losing their customary cool and several small, but time-consuming mistakes being made (such as allowing pieces of equipment to get into shot, or putting the wrong slate number on the front of some of the takes). The camera crew in particular had been alarmed at what they referred to as the 'lack of professionalism' which they felt some people were showing in not being aware of the exact position of the camera in relation to the actors and the field of view, and it was certainly clear that the former were far more in their element (as practiced documentary-makers) than some of the other members of the unit. The net result of this slight reduction of efficiency was that the print of this scene was, indeed, very dark, and there was some discussion during the editing whether it could be used at all.

#### Day twenty-nine

Because of the difficulties of filming inside the tiny room which served as 'Charlie's' lodgings, the 'Party' scene had been postponed from the previous day, and the director had had to renegotiate permission to use the room again from the landlord and the room's occupant. This also meant that some of the actors involved in this scene had had to stay an extra night, which would be an extra expense, and another actor who had been called for this day would have to wait until the following day until his scene was ready to be shot, (this scene being that of 'Sandra' being taken to the West Indian's flat in a taxi).



I mentioned earlier that the location for 'Charlie's' flat had been found within a predominantly Pakistani area of the city, and this fact lay behind a major problem which occurred at the start of this day's shooting. When the director arrived at the location he found to his dismay that most of the equipment which had been left behind in 'Charlie's' room had been thrown out into the back yard, the house's doorbell removed and the Pakistani landlord shouting 'No more! No more!' from an upstairs window. Even though the director had gained the landlord's permission to use the room again, it transpired that several of the local people had since petitioned the man to stop any further filming because they felt that the film would misrepresent the Pakistanis as living in the sort of area where murders and fights took place, or where there were rotten, dirty lodgings like 'Charlie's'. Given the fact that there is some evidence that ethnic groups have been misrepresented in this way by the media before, the residents' fear is understandable, despite the irony of the room's real occupant being a white alcoholic and the fact that the original stabbing had taken place nearby. The local people also had no way of knowing that it was never the director's intention to make the point that this was a Pakistani quarter (this being entirely peripheral to the story), and there was also some fear that the film was going to be some kind of pornographic movie because some of the ever-present children had been peering through the window during the previous day and had reported back to their parents that they had seen 'a woman taking her clothes off'. Apart from the sheer nuisance of filming out in the street, the residents were also worried that the road could be identified as their area, so all-in-all they were not at all



happy about the idea of filming here for a second day.

From the point of view of the film, this presented a major problem. The shooting was already behind schedule, and any further delay would geometrically increase the difficulty of catching up with the backlog because of the interdependence of different factors operating within the overall constraint of a fixed length of stay in Bradford. The props men, for example, had already been scheduled to leave this location at three o'clock to prepare the location for the following day's shooting, and the aftermath of the stabbing still had to be completed during this evening under the same constraints of filming at dusk which had operated upon the previous evening's filming.

There were three main alternative solutions. Firstly an appropriate mock-up of 'Charlie's' room could be built as a set in a studio to enable the 'Party' scene to be shot, but this would be extremely costly. Secondly, another room could be found elsewhere, but this would take time and there was no guarantee that one could be found which matched the original one, which might have meant that the scenes which had already been shot inside the latter would have to be reshot. Thirdly there was the possibility of somehow getting back into the original room, and to this end the director eventually managed to persuade the landlord to discuss the matter further, which in fact meant going to see 'the Big Man' - a local Pakistani leader.

By a quarter-to-twelve the director returned with an agreement that the unit could, in fact, use the room again providing that the street was kept clear, so all the equipment was replaced and set up ready for the appropriate scene. The situation had, in the event, been saved, but at the loss of several hours of valuable shooting time;



time which was particularly important because of the complexities involved in shooting the 'Party' scene. As I mentioned above, it was well-nigh impossible to light the room such that each of the six actors could be adequately lit while retaining the impression that only one, small bulb was being used, so it had been decided to light each actor separately, and to use a large number of different angles which would inevitably take a long time to set up and film. As a result of this decision twelve different camera angles were used which meant that the 'Party' scene eventually contained more cuts than any other scene in the entire film. Since the cutting-rate for a scene can be used to signify a particular tempo, (using a fast cutting-rate in a car-chase sequence can heighten its impression of speed) the fact that the 'Party' scene contained twenty-six cuts could have imposed an unintended pace. The scene also, however, happened to be the longest one in the completed film, such that the cutting rate was comparatively low at 9.8 cuts/minute as compared to a rate of 17.6 for an action sequence like the 'Swimming baths' scenes. Nevertheless, the point I'd like to make is that the complex shooting plan for this scene was imposed as a result of a technical constraint rather than chosen as a result of a specific intention to shoot it that way, and that the scene then needed to be a certain length in order to retain the required pace.

The scene itself would immediately precede the stabbing, and would show everyone drinking heavily and taking 'Charlie's' drugs while listening to some records - from all of which activity 'Sandra' would be excluded. Furthermore, the girl would also be falsely accused of stealing some of 'Cross-eyed Anne's' records such that her isolation



would be intensified and reinforced by her use as a scapegoat. 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' would then decide to go back to the latter's house, leaving 'Sandra' alone with the remaining men, one of whom would simply assume that she would go to bed with him (thus reinforcing the idea that 'Sandra' was just an object to be used now). 'Sandra' would meanwhile be shown to be desperately miserable, wanting only to go to sleep, to which end she successfully ejects 'Max' from the bed after which he stumbles out of the room. She is unable, however, to persuade the other man to leave, so in the end 'Sandra' follows Max out into the hallway where the stabbing takes place as described above.

The scene took over six hours to make and used up about three-quarters of an hour of film-stock, but apart from the number of different shots which had to be made the filming itself was relatively straightforward so there is no need to describe it in detail. A number of specific observations can nevertheless be made. Again because of the number of different angles, a particular feature of the filming here was the careful attention to eyelines. Since the people to whom different actors were talking were mostly out of shot, the director had to make sure that the speaker was looking in the right direction in relation to the other people's notional positions in the room. In the particular case of a shot which showed 'Sandra' looking up to the man who demands that she go to bed with him, the eyeline was also dramatically important. The girl was by this time cowering beneath the sink in a state of utter misery, whereas the man was standing above her, so the juxtaposition of the relative eyelines could be



used to enhance the girl's discomfiture; her status as the underdog. (This shot is also similar to one of those in the 'Motel' scene, where the girl is looking up to the 'Neat man' after having been knocked down onto the bed, which is the same shot which was later used in the flashback for the 'stabbing' scene).

Just as the eyelines had to be carefully monitored in order to retain the spatial continuity of the room and people's positions within it, so the lighting had to appear to be spatially continuous. Although the lighting actually involved twelve separate, and different rigs, the notional source of the light was kept constant such that one particular wall was always 'hot' whenever it was in shot. This sometimes meant that other parts of the room were very dark, and the assistant cameraman occasionally had to resort to pulling focus with the aid of a penlight because of the extreme localisation of the light around the subject, which, in combination with the use of tight lenses, meant that the framing was often critical. Since there was a danger of actors moving out of frame, or into shadows, their movements had to be quite severely restricted during some of the shots.

There were also three constraints within which the director had to work which were completely external to the film itself. The first of these involved the use of the records. Several singles would be in shot for that part of the scene where 'Cross-eyed Anne' is bewailing the loss of some of her collection, and these were specifically chosen to be those issued under one of the company's subsidiary record labels (i.e. 'Eye') to avoid any free advertising or possible infringement of copyright agreements. Similarly, the characters were all



drinking cider out of proprietary bottles, and the identifying labels were all carefully hidden in different ways. The third constraint was more serious. The script had included a number of expletives in the dialogue (i.e. 'Cross-eyed Anne's' line 'who's been nicking my fucking records') and the drunken party would arguably have included a great deal of such swearing in reality. Within the required spirit of the action, the actors also tended to insert rather more expletives than the script had given which was considered to be naturalistically legitimate but diplomatically illegitimate with respect to DUNEY's status as a networkable television programme. The director consequently self-censored a number of these phrases, or ensured that he had alternative takes with less offensive expletives should he have to substitute them later in the process.

The last point which can be made is that the unhealthy atmosphere of the room which the director wished to convey within the scene was not entirely an illusion, or at least it was not an illusion for the six actors and upwards of another six members of the crew who were crowded into the limited space. The heat of the lights had evidently bestirred a number of virulent organisms which had been living in the room, and the working environment was truly appalling. 'I didn't realize this was an animal picture' the assistant cameraman admitted at the time, brushing an unidentified creature from his sleeve. If 'Sandra' in particular looks convincingly awful in this section of the finished film, it is partially because - as the actresses confided after several hours of being in the room - she was genuinely feeling quite ill.

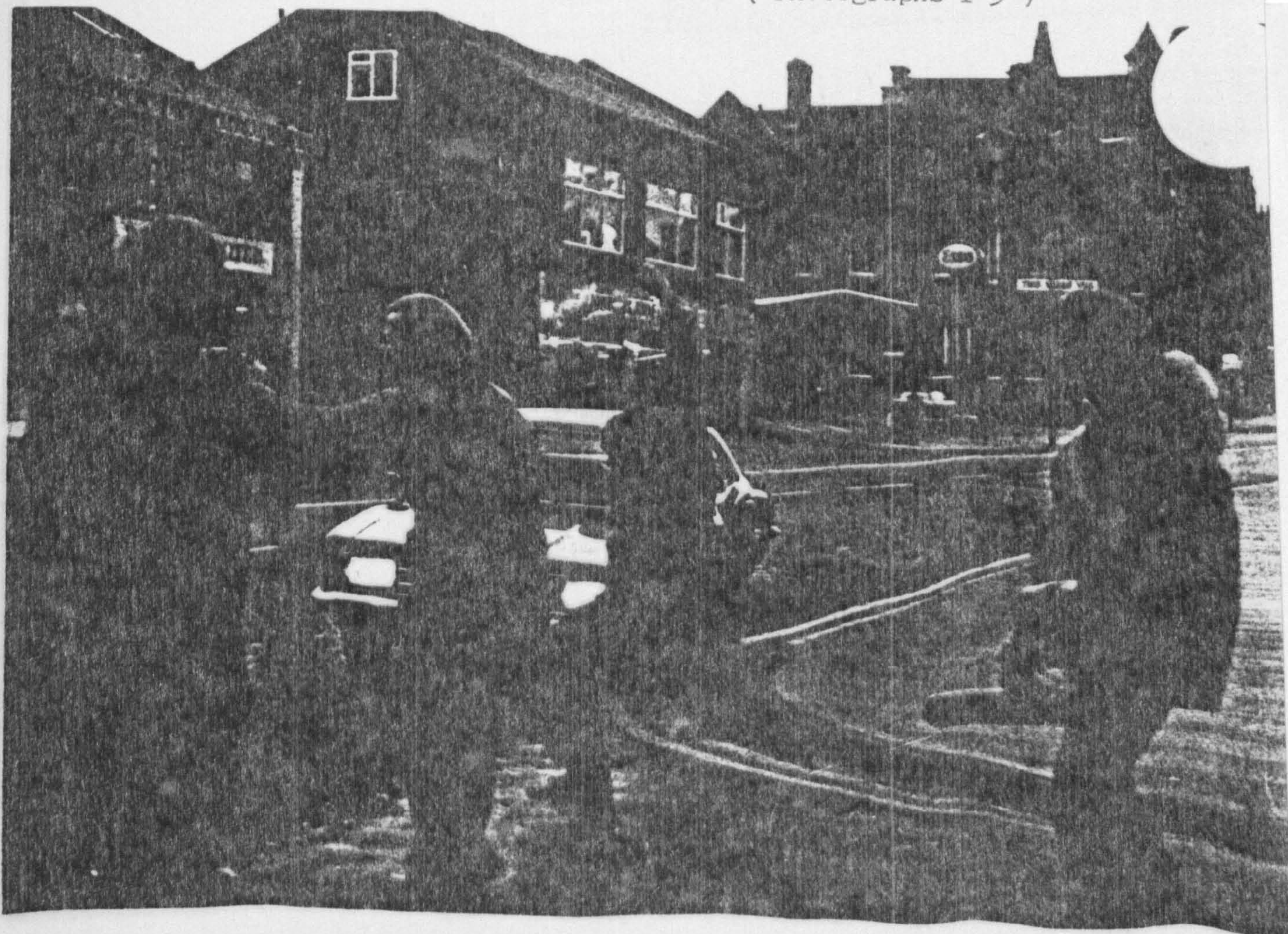


The scene was finished by about eight o'clock, which meant that there was just about enough time left to shoot the scenes dealing with the aftermath of the stabbing. 'Max' had managed to stagger about a hundred yards up the sidestreet into a main road after receiving his fatal wound, where the film would show him collapsing in front of - and being narrowly missed by - a passing car, the startled occupants of which would then call for an ambulance.

The action vehicles manager had supplied a prop police car and another Cortina to be the 'passing car', both of which vehicles had been fitted with some interior lights by the electricians so that their drivers would be visible. The ambulance was, however, genuine, as indeed were the ambulance men. Several brief rehearsals were made of the action, with the director concentrating upon the spot where 'Max' would eventually collapse, since it was essential for the driver of the Cortina to know in advance where the actor would fall so that he could avoid actually running him over. Having arrived at a basic plan for the action, the takes themselves were shot in a relatively ad hoc fashion. For one thing, it would have been very difficult to precisely choreograph 'Max's' erratic progress towards the main road, and the use of very much artificial lighting would have imposed an unnatural quality to the dusk conditions which would in any case need to be in continuity with the scenes shot the previous evening. The difficulties which this provided for the cameraman were, however, quite intentional, since the director specifically wanted this section of the film to be very documentary-like, and had this been a real event the cameraman would have been faced with similar problems. The net result was, in other words, very much intended to



Shooting 'Max's' collapse in dusk conditions ( Photographs 1-3 )



The focus-puller continually adjusts the focus ( centre, in front of car ) as the sound recordist ( far right ) picks up the sound of 'Max's' fall.





'Max' has now collapsed completely, and the car-driver looks to see what he can do.



(below) extreme close-up of 'Max' as he lies dying; a very similar shot to that rejected from the finished film.





be in the style of an ad hoc, shot-on-the-run news or true documentary story, and the jerkiness of the hand-held camera was part of the required effect.

The cameraman described the scene as 'shooting for real', and both he and the sound recordist were in their element once more; dealing with the situation quickly and efficiently as indeed they would have to if it really was shooting for real. During one of the takes, for example, a microphone cable was wrenched out of its connector, but was replaced practically on the run by the sound recordist as it would have to be in a one-off situation, and the cameraman himself appeared to be working quite instinctively; moving in for a big close-up of 'Max' as he collapsed to the ground. Unfortunately, this close-up was another of the shots which the director would later have to cut (see photograph) because it was considered to be 'over the top', but most of the material was used intact. Two minor problems had also arisen at the time, first the light had faded very rapidly for the last few takes, so the light from a portable sun-gun was bounced off a nearby hoarding to augment what little light remained, and secondly, the interior lights in both the cars had drained their batteries such that neither would restart when their time came which caused some delay.

### Day thirty

Most of the film had been shot in chronological order, but the next two days would be dealing with some material for part one of the film; that covering 'Candra's' schooling. The original special deaf school would be used as the location, and the arrangements for this had been made some time in advance so the director was constrained



to design the schedule around the school's availability.

To compound the unforeseen difficulties of the previous day, where the location had very nearly been lost, the director had found out at about the same time that the child who would play 'Sandra' again for the school scenes had pulled some tendons in her arm. There had consequently been a risk that she would not be available during this thirtieth day (or indeed at any other time during the remaining week of the shoot), so an alternative shooting plan had had to be worked out should the girl fail to appear. In fact the child was available towards the end of the week, but she did not appear this day so the appropriate scene had to be filmed in a rather different manner from that planned. The scene concerned was the first one of the day, and involved 'Baby Sandra' being taught some speech exercises along with some other genuinely deaf toddlers in one of the school's classrooms. All the children had to be dressed for the period (1950) and the director had also made sure that such articles as hearing aids would not be anachronistic. It had, for example, been his intention to make use of a hearing-test machine which the school possessed, but it was discovered that this particular model had not been invented at the time, so that idea had to be scrapped. Since 'Baby Sandra' herself was not present, the (real) teacher was shown teaching some speech-sounds to various other children such that her close-ups could be cut together with close-ups of 'Baby Sandra' if and when these were shot. Only the most minimum crew was used here with the action and dialogue being improvised at the time in order to make the situation as natural as possible for the children, and, of course, the film. Having completed this scene the unit then moved outside into a corridor for the next one.



This would show 'Mother' and the 'Senior mistress' looking into the classroom as part of the earlier sequence in which the former is being shown around the school, for which 'Baby Sandra' would logically not be required to be in the classroom. This particular shot was described as a 'nightmare' by the cameraman because it meant shooting towards a bright window such that the subjects would tend to be in shadow. It was also difficult with respect to framing, since the 'Senior mistress' was rather short which meant that there was a considerable difference in height between the two actresses.

The first scene to be shot after lunch was that showing the third, teenage version of 'Sandra' being reprimanded during a class by the 'Senior mistress' for using sign-language (as opposed to the school's policy of using speech, which the girl herself could never master fully because of her profound deafness). This was an important scene, firstly because it provided a means of transferring between the second and third versions of the girl. This was achieved by having the camera placed at the back of the classroom such that the audience would ostensibly have its attention directed towards the 'Senior mistress' and the blackboard. It also meant, however, that 'Sandra 3' would not at first be facing the camera, since she and the other pupils would be looking towards the blackboard too. Two as yet unidentified girls would then be seen communicating with each other in the foreground of the shot, one of whom would then be identified as 'Sandra' by the 'Senior mistress's' dialogue: 'Sandra... come here'. You must not use sign language...'. Secondly, in showing the girl being smacked with a ruler for something which she could not really help but do, the director hoped to implant an idea



of the particular catch 22 in which 'Sandra' was trapped. This would later be reinforced during the scene with the 'Lady social worker', but 'Sandra's' own reaction of defiance at the time, and anger in the next scene (which showed her storming into 'Mother's' parlour) could also be used as evidence of her developing character. 'Sandra's' look of defiance as she is hit with the ruler could also be used in conjunction with the ensuing scenes of her smoking in the playground and being asked about menstruation by the 'Senior mistress' as evidence of an increasing independence which would help, in turn, to indicate that time was moving on and that the girl was growing up. Thirdly, the scene also included one of 'Sandra's' classmates reading a passage from a book, and reading it comparatively well such that 'Sandra's' own rather bad speech would later seem all the more faulty.

A number of special preparations had had to be made for this scene. Since it was in period once again, the (real) pupils had to be dressed accordingly, and some of the boys also had their hair cut or tied back by the make-up department which caused great amusement at least as far as the girls were concerned. For a later scene to be set in the same classroom 'Sandra' would need to be able to look out of the window from her desk to look longingly out towards the sportsfield. This meant that the design department would need to raise the height of all the desks by installing a false floor in the classroom, and for reasons of continuity this had already been done for this scene too. As a result the practical fluorescent lights were then too low in relation to the desks, and so these were raised



up as well. Because the room was quite narrow, and the camera lens angle quite wide, nearly all of the room would be in shot which meant that there was nowhere to put any artificial lights. The room was in any case fairly well lit from the windows so no extra lighting was used. Using natural light for an interior scene in this way inevitably caused problems in the form of unwanted glares and flares, however, so some particularly reflective window ledges were painted grey to counteract such problems. During the takes themselves there were also considerable problems with the light changing, so both 'sunny' and 'cloudy' takes were made such that the appropriate quality of light could be chosen when cutting the scene together during the editing.

The director was receiving the full co-operation of the school for filming these sequences, but in this particular case he had not foregrounded his intention to include the action of 'Sandra' being punished for using sign-language, since this was potentially an indictment upon the school's methods, even though the reference was to an historical event. The event itself was important, however, and by about four o'clock in the afternoon - when it was time to move on to another scene - the director was still not completely satisfied that the scene had worked as well as it could, plus the light had been constantly fluctuating, so it was decided to abandon the scene for the moment, and retake it on the following day when the light might be more stable.

The next shots to be made were to be a continuation of the last-but-one scene showing 'Mother' talking to the 'Senior mistress'. This time



the two actresses would be walking away from the classroom, along a corridor and down some stairs before 'Mother' leaves, with the dialogue generally implying that 'Baby Sandra' should start at the school as soon as possible. These shots were, again, very difficult to film since both the camera and sound crews had to make a long, backward track along an unlit corridor and out into the comparative brightness of the stairwell, where the plan was that the camera should continue to track backwards down the stairs. The combination of a moving shot in changing light conditions meant that continuous adjustments had to be made to both focus and aperture while the camera itself was being hand-held, but the director wanted to film the scene in this way to build up the impression of the building itself as a largish institution, i.e. one which had such corridors, several different classrooms and big, 'school-like' staircases.

The proposed track backwards down the stairs ahead of the two actresses proved, however, to be virtually impossible without the aid of a camera-crane since the shot would simply have been too wobbly, so in the end the 'staircase' shots were taken with the camera mounted on a tripod at the foot of the stairs, with the actresses being miked with radio-microphones. Care then had to be taken not to get the 'Senior mistress's' feet into the frame, since she had been wearing some modern wedge shoes to give her some extra height, which would have been wrong for the period.

In the script, the dialogue for this scene had all occurred outside the building as 'Mother' prepares to leave, whereas the director had



decided to introduce some more visual interest into the scene by having the first half of the dialogue occurring while the two characters were still inside. On trying to film the remaining dialogue outside the main entrance to the deaf school as a tracking shot, it was then discovered that it finished rather abruptly, giving 'Mother' no real cue to leave, so on the cameraman's suggestion the director decided to attach all the dialogue to the corridor and staircase sections of the sequence, leaving the exterior shot simply showing 'Mother's' exit. A further four takes were therefore made of the staircase action in this modified form, and then seven takes of 'Mother' alone leaving the building. In the event this last action was not included in the film for reasons of pace, and because without the dialogue that section had actually become rather superfluous. Its main purpose had then become to indicate that the character had left, but since the next scene would show 'Mother' at home again, the previous piece of information had effectively become redundant.

The day's shooting was wrapped at the unusually early time of six o'clock, mainly because neither the children nor the school were available during the evening, but the early finish enabled the crew to participate in another unusual event - the first 'public' viewing of the rushes. ATV's controller of programmes, who as Head of documentaries had originally commissioned DUFFY, had paid a visit to the unit this day together with the programme's editor, and with the editor, the director had decided to put together a composite selection of rushes for the controller to see. Viewing rushes had hitherto been the sole preserve of a very limited number of the crew;



only the director, cameraman, associate producer, P.A. and of course the editor had been party to any extended preview of the material which had been shot so far, but then in a sense these were the only people who really needed to see it. One of the main functions of viewing rushes is to check the ungraded prints in order to ensure that what is on the film is what was intended to be there. The action and/or dialogue may not have worked on the celluloid in quite the same way that it had seemed to do so on the floor of the set, or it may not have worked at all. Seeing a set of shots placed in approximately the required sequence may also reveal potential problems for the editing; the quality of light may not, for instance, be quite continuous across different shots within the same scene, and close-ups may not fit together with their corresponding longshots because of a faulty eyeline. The main reason that rushes are seen as quickly as possible after their shooting (and the reason for their name) is that any faults of this nature can still, theoretically, be rectified while the appropriate locations and actors are still available. Although the cameraman will nearly always spot a technical fault such as a hair in the gate at the time, the viewing of rushes can occasionally show up a fault like this which had gone unnoticed. To make sure that the focus, for example, is pin sharp becomes more difficult as the light conditions get worse, so for some of the less well-lit scenes in the film the images on the Steenbeck screen sometimes gave the cameraman the first opportunity to really judge the quality of his camerawork, so in showing up any purely technical faults the rushes can also serve as an early warning system for the eventuality of having to make retakes where there has



been a camera or sound defect in addition to acting or directional faults.

Since it is the director's responsibility to check such occurrences, and to act upon them as he sees fit, it is only strictly necessary for him to view rushes, or to consult with those members of the crew who would be centrally concerned in rectifying any mistakes. Linked to this, however, is the director's need to maintain a unified concept of the film as a whole, and thus his authority as 'project leader'. To have regular, open viewings of rushes could easily undermine this authority since it is partially invested in the fact that the director, and more particularly a producer-director, is the only member of the unit who has access to the total concept. Moreover, the rushes only represent a partial, and sometimes a very poor guide to the final form of the film which will be hammered out in the editing, so judgements made as a result of seeing them can be both organizationally dysfunctional and erroneous. Apart from the disinclination to show rushes to the bulk of the crew, it is generally speaking a rule that actors do not see them either, but the actors themselves tended to agree that they should not because seeing themselves in character is something of a paradox. More specifically, in taking the 'role of the other' an actor tries to make subjective judgements about their character (particularly so in a reconstruction) whereas seeing an image of oneself as that character immediately objectifies it, especially given the peculiarly objective atmosphere of a rushes session, where several slightly different versions of the same action may be seen consecutively and out of context; the net result of which can easily change an actor's ideas about the character and thus affect the performance in ensuing scenes.



It was no accident, therefore, that the general invitation to view rushes was not extended to the cast, and came towards the end of the shoot after several retakes had already been made when the director was more confident about the unity of the film as a whole. The viewing itself was also atypical in the sense that it was not essentially a working session, being more of a gesture for the crew and demonstration of faith for the controller. One of the reasons for the latter's appearance was as a result of some internal murmurings concerning the ethics of the film itself and the means of its production in view of the fact that it had turned out to be a rather more intimate reconstruction than some people had expected. By laying his cards on the table in setting up this preview, the director was thus in some sense begging the question of whether the end justified the means while the product was still in an extremely vulnerable state. The controller nevertheless remained unreservedly enthusiastic about the film - at least insofar as his comments during the 'public' viewing can be judged - and made a point of saying that this kind of 'Photorealism' was Television's particular forte; 'I'm really very much for this style of programme', he commented afterwards, ' - and ATV at least will be doing a lot more of this kind of thing in the future'.

All this is not to say that there was not an air of wary justification about the viewing. The director, for example, was at pains to point out that scenes like the 'Razor slash' could possibly be used as 'insurance' should the 'Motel' scene need to be cut, and explained that the violence of the 'Scarring' scene could perhaps be reduced by cutting the last few shots where 'Ian' slashes his wrists. While



the controller was clearly sympathetic to the venture as a whole (he had, after all, originally backed the idea, and was no stranger to this kind of film-making himself) his overall power of veto was evident in several different respects. One member of the crew, for instance, inadvertantly mentioned that they had used up a hundred and twelve rolls of film by that point in the shoot, which won him an extremely baleful glare from the director since the wastage rate was a sore point at the time. Similarly, the controller would be coming out to the next day's location 'to have a look round' since he had obviously been aware of some of the difficulties with respect to crewing on the production and was interested in the use of real locations.

#### Day thirty-one

The unit returned to the school again in the morning, starting off with the retake of the scene where 'Sandra' is smacked with a ruler by the 'Senior mistress'. It was quite a cloudy day which meant that the light was less intense but more constant such that the continuity between different shots would be easier to maintain. The scene consequently proceeded more satisfactorily, and was completed in twenty takes for five different shots. While in the same classroom the later scene of 'Sandra' staring longingly out of the window towards the playing fields was also shot although the scene was never used; partly for reasons of pace, and partly as a point of logic. Originally, the film was to have included a scene of the girl winning a race outside on the sportsfield in order to give the audience the information that 'Sandra' was a good athlete, but since the film would already include the 'swimming baths' sequence it was considered to be repetitive to



include the running scene. Without this scene, it would not then be particularly obvious that 'Sandra' was looking towards the sportsfield from the classroom window (the sportsfield being a symbol of success and fulfillment for the girl in contrast to the reading class) so the scene was rejected.

Although the sportsfield scene was rejected in this way, it was shot, and most of the afternoon of this thirty-first day was devoted to shooting 'Sandra 3' racing against her (genuine) schoolmates out on the school's playing fields. The next scene to be shot was used, however, and showed 'Sandra 3' enjoying an illicit cigarette with some friends near the playground's toilets as part of the 'growing-up' sequence. Here the director and one of the genuinely deaf schoolboys improvised some tricks with the cigarette, involving the boy pretending to inhale smoke through his ear, which helped to make the scene more intimate and 'deliciously naughty'. Part of the inference of the scene was, indeed, to hint at the development of 'Sandra' from childhood to young womanhood through the 'rite de passage' of smoking, and of enjoying that illicit pleasure in the company of the boy. The next scene in the film, of the 'Senior mistress' enquiring about the start of menstruation, would then reaffirm the girl's developing sexuality, but the 'Smoking' scene was also considered to be important because the content was essentially visual rather than verbal - the joke with the cigarette being a visual joke of the kind in which deaf people could participate. In filming the scene this action and its context was gradually revealed and thus foregrounded by using one of the very few ~~st~~shots in the film.

The scene starts, in other words, on a big close-up of 'Sandra' which



then expands into a wider shot such that the audience could 522  
discover the context and thus deduce its secrecy.

The last scene to be shot with 'Sandra 3' was that showing the 'Senior mistress' asking about 'Sandra's' period, or at least it showed the girl's reaction since the 'Senior mistress' was never in shot. The latter's presence was nevertheless denoted by her off-camera dialogue and indicated by having the camera take her approximate P.O.V. which then meant that most of the attention could be concentrated upon the girl. Here, as I've mentioned above, the director wanted to say that the girl was growing up, and that she was doing so quite normally apart from her deafness, but he also wanted to indicate 'Sandra's' intelligence by having her understand the question fairly rapidly. To this end he instructed the girl to look as if she only half understood the question initially, and then to quickly realise its import as the 'Senior mistress' rephrased her dialogue; 'Pain here, have you had a pain here?' Having rejected the first take because the microphone boom had entered the frame, the main shot was made in only two takes here, which is worth noting since this potentially embarrassing scene was being played by - it should be remembered - a non-professional, young and genuinely deaf girl to whom communicating the director's requirements could have been very difficult had she not been in reality quite a bright child, and had the director himself not spent a good deal of time assimilating the problems involved.

After a supper break, the last two scenes of the day were shot, these being set in and around the taxi office where 'Sandra' had run to after the stabbing, and which had been postponed from earlier in the



week. The first scene, being in continuity with the rest of the stabbing sequence, conformed to many of the parameters which had operated before (even down to the taxi failing to start because of the drain on its battery from the interior lights), but the second scene was set inside the taxi office to show the (real) radio operator calling up 'Sandra's' driver to tell him that she had just stabbed 'Max'. It was therefore lit and miked as an interior scene, even though the shots were taken from outside; looking in through the office window. One of the reasons for including this scene was to provide an explanation for the speed with which the police found the girl at the West Indian's flat, since knowing that his passenger was a fugitive, the taxi-driver would subsequently be shown radioing back the girl's destination. It was not, however, absolutely necessary to show the 'Taxi-office' scene, since the driver might well have informed his office of the drop-off point in the normal course of his job, and 'Max's' friends could conceivably have guessed that 'Sandra' might go to the West Indian's, and given that information to the police. It was possible to cut the scene altogether, therefore, and in fact the director later decided to do this since the performance of the genuine radio-operator was considered to be less than natural. It later transpired that there was a very good reason for this; while the operator was genuine insofar as he was not an actor, the director found out the next day that he was not in fact the firm's actual radio-operator, and had simply been hanging around the office at the time to find himself being co-opted through a genuine mistake. Whatever the man himself felt about this sudden claim to fame, the taxi operators were furious since the man was a Pakistani, and the director received an irate



'phonecall from the company during the next day informing him that 'We are not a Paki firm'.

### Day thirty-two

Fortunately, 'Baby Sandra' was well enough to participate again by this penultimate day of the shoot, and several shots were taken of her supposedly reacting (or, more accurately, non-reacting) to the teacher in the toddler's classroom so that these shots could be cut into the other shots which had been made two days previously. The child's temperament had not improved in the few weeks since she had last been involved, and it took the best part of the morning to obtain the required shots, but by about two-thirty this scene and another with 'Sandra 2' had been completed. Both these scenes had been concerned with showing the children being taught speech exercises. The next scene to be shot was of the main actress, playing 'Sandra' at the age of about fifteen, reading in front of a class. Despite all the years of training with speech exercises both at school and at home, the purpose of this scene was to show that 'Sandra's' speech was still poor. The reason for this could be found, however, in the preceeding scene in the finished film, where the lady 'Social worker' explains that the girl cannot learn to speak as well as other deaf children because of the degree of her deafness. This scene contains 'Mother's' enquiry about why the school could not, therefore, teach 'Sandra' sign-language, to which the 'Social worker' replies: 'They just don't do it. It's not their method.' The juxtaposition of this scene with that of the girl reading in class therefore answers the question 'well what is their method?' since 'Sandra' is shown to be still struggling with speech rather than sign-language.



Having finished at the school by four o'clock, the unit then moved to the location for the West Indian's flat to film 'Sandra's' arrest and a pick-up on the earlier shot which had shown the girl walking back with the West Indian some time after the 'Indian restaurant' episode. This location actually was the original West Indian's home, and the man himself was present during the filming, spending most of his time shouting at the local children to keep them out of the way. The first shots here were of 'Sandra' and the West Indian entering the flat from the outside after the walk across the tenement square for which the director asked a black girl to walk through the background of the shot 'because she looked good'. A dog also co-operated by standing in the background to help the connotation that this was a backstreet residential area, but it became so rooted to the spot that some of the crew began to wonder if it looked like a stuffed one. The next scene was then part of the arrest sequence, and showed 'Sandra' being escorted out of the flat by two detective sergeants and a plain clothes officer into another of the action vehicles manager's police cars. There was by this time a mounting problem with the local children, who were shouting 'Fuzzi! Fuzzi!' at the actors and building up into a sizeable crowd. The scene was being shot in the early evening such that the light would look apparently right for 'dawn', but since the girl was being arrested in the early morning there would not have been a large crowd of onlookers, so keeping the children out of the way became a major consideration for reasons of authenticity as well as for reasons of logistics. Some of the adult residents were also becoming annoyed at the disturbance, explaining that 'this is our square' and arguing, like the Pakistani community earlier, that they



did not want their area to be shown in a bad light. The director tried to reassure them, saying 'You won't even know that the film is about Bradford, let alone... Square' which somewhat illegitimately reassured people, but there were still significant problems with crowd control, and particularly with crowd noise. On the first two takes of 'Sandra' being brought out by the 'police', there was a general murmur of 'Aaah' from the crowd as if to say 'poor thing', and this would obviously have changed the meaning of the scene, so there was some discussion about shooting the action mute to dub in some background footsteps and atmosphere later. The solution which was eventually employed was in fact to reshoot the whole action later in the evening when the crowd had dispersed.

While it is true that the original West Indian's flat was used for the interior scene here, the exterior scenes were actually filmed in a closely similar square nearby, so while the crowd was dispersing from that square, the unit moved around the corner to shoot the interior scene in the flat itself. Since this would be a night scene, the main room had been blacked out such that most of the light would appear to be coming from a centre practical. The intention here was to show 'Sandra' sleeping on the West Indian's settee (significantly, not in bed with him, since it was important to demonstrate that she had fled to the West Indian as someone who had not, and right not take advantage of her) whereupon she would be awakened by the police who then arrest her for the stabbing. The girl would thus be sleeping in comparative darkness before the policemen come in and turn on the centre light, but some additional light source would then be needed for the camera to be able to register an image of the girl sleeping.



To this end a 'redhead' was used to pick out the actress before the main light was switched on, arranged to give the impression of a notional source like a streetlamp or moonlight. On the policeman's entrance, this lamp would then be dimmed down with the aid of a rheostat as the main light was supposedly turned on by the detective chief inspector such that all the reflected light appeared to be relational to the latter rather than the former. (The main light had itself been uprated with a photoflood and augmented with some additional lights shining in from the hallway).

Apart from denoting the arrest and confirming the fact of 'Max's' death, the scene also included the detective chief inspector's action of writing out the caution for 'Sandra' to read. This event, as I have noted above, particularly impressed the writer because of its strength as a final symbol of the girl's predicament, and the director wanted to make this action the central focus of the scene: 'We are really trying to show just how difficult it is to communicate here' the director explained to his actors at the time, 'but the words themselves are important; she is being obliged to go with you; she has no choice once again'. The words which the inspector wrote down were as follows:

We are making enquiries about an incident which happened earlier tonight when a man was stabbed. We believe you know something about this. You are not obliged to say anything unless you wish to do so and whatever you do say may be put into writing and may be used in evidence. Do you understand?

To actually write all this would take quite a long time, so the actor was asked to write it as fast as he could, and not necessarily legibly, when the writing itself was out of shot. One of the scene's shots would, however, show the audience what was being written, and for this



the actor had to write clearly, and therefore more slowly. In fact it takes sixty-four seconds to write the caution in the finished film, which is a very long time for a single action (the average length of complete scenes in *DUPY* is less than a minute). The director had nevertheless fully intended that this action should take so long such that the problem of communication would become inescapably self-evident, plus this intentional 'longeur' would also help to slow down the pace of the film in direct contrast to the preceeding sequence. There was, however, a danger of the action grinding to a dead stop, so one of the detective constables was asked to look around the room as the caution was being written, (instead of staring fixedly at the notebook) and 'Sandra' was shown gesticulating towards the West Indian as if to ask 'what is he writing?'. The director had made a point of encouraging the actors to work out their actions for themselves here, and an unusually large number of trial runs were rehearsed before the first take was made in order to ensure that the action seemed to be credible. In the first few rehearsals, for example, there was a tendency for everyone to remain motionless while the note was being written, whereas it was more likely that 'Sandra', at least, would have become far more agitated. The director was also concerned to make the attack of the dialogue as natural as possible, and thus told the 'Detective chief inspector' to be less severe and more authoritative, and the actor playing the West Indian was instructed to throw away his line in which he explained that the girl was 'deaf and dumb' to save it from sounding 'too sentimental' as the director put it; 'There's nothing you can do for her now'.



By about half-past eight the light was beginning to fade outside, so the close-up of the inspector's notebook was postponed until later in the evening and the unit moved back outdoors to retake the scene where 'Sandra' is being taken away by the police. This time there were far fewer onlookers, and the two shots were completed in just four takes. One of these shots was a longshot, taken from high up in a nearby building, and would actually be the last shot in the film. After the police car had left, the camera was allowed to run on for just over a minute while it was looking down across the bleak square, and this would later enable the director to hold that shot for about ten seconds before bringing up the end caption and the credits.

The last scene of the day was shot at the same location, but was set a few hours earlier to show 'Sandra' arriving at the West Indian's flat in the taxi. This scene had originally been scheduled for shooting earlier in the week to enable all the 'taxi-driver's' scenes to be shot at the same time, but it had had to be postponed until now as an indirect result of the trouble with the 'Party' scene (where the location had nearly been lost). As a result of this reshuffle, however, the actor who had played the 'taxi-driver' was no longer available, so a stand-in was quickly found who looked sufficiently like the original actor to pass muster in an extreme longshot of the car arriving. Oddly enough, the scene then became the only one of the shoot to be completed in one take.

#### Day thirty-three

- was, as scheduled, the last day of the shoot. It began in a mortuary which the director had found at a hospital some miles out of Bradford,



and this was to be used as the location for a scene showing 'Max' 530  
lying dead on a slab. The scene itself would be placed after the  
stabbing sequence and before 'Sandra's' arrest in order to establish  
the fact that she had actually killed the man rather than simply  
hurt him, but it was also to be used to cover the jump in time  
between the two events.

Since the stabbing had occurred at night, and the arrest in the  
early hours of the following morning, the mortuary scene logically  
had to be set at night too, so it was shot 'day-for-night' by  
blacking out the windows and arranging the film lighting to give  
the effect of harsh overhead fluorescents. The mortuary was very  
much a working establishment, with a fully-occupied body-fridge and  
rows of rather grubby dissection instruments on the wall ('They  
don't have to be clean for dead'uns' a porter explained). The set  
did not, therefore, have to be dressed, and unfortunately for the  
actor playing 'Max', neither did he. Make-up applied a small area  
of 'kensington gore' to his upper left chest to indicate the knifewound;  
accurately reproducing the original photographs, and the actor sat  
in the sun for a while to allow the 'blood' to dry. One of the  
lighting crew meanwhile warmed up the slab with the heat from a  
'blonde', and the actor subsequently settled himself onto it ready  
for a take. 'Do you want me to adjust anything' he asked the director,  
'No, it looks O.K.' he replied, 'Just hold your breath when I say'.  
Four takes were made, two as medium-wide shots showing the whole body  
as a 'Police photographer' moved round the slab taking pictures,  
and two as close-ups of just the head and shoulders. It was the  
former angle which the controller subsequently objected to (see p. )  
and as a result of the suggested cut only the profile close-up was used.



The rest of the day was taken up with shooting a number of 'pick-ups' for earlier scenes in the film, the first of which was a scene showing 'Sandra' sitting alone in a pub, crying and taking pills, which would be placed after the scene where her sister is visited by the male 'Social worker'. In this preceding scene the general import of the sister's conversation was that 'Sandra's' life had become 'A real mess', so the following scene could be read as a concurrent illustration of that judgement insofar as the girl is shown alone, in an extremely miserable state and with very little money (a close-up of the contents of her purse reveals only a few coppers plus a few paltry odds and ends). The scene was filmed in the same pub which had already been used for scenes like the 'Shabby man' episode, although there was no necessity of it appearing to be the same one, and the (real) barman was asked to tell the girl to drink up and leave. He did this fairly roughly, and, the director hoped, convincingly (since he was playing himself) as a result of which 'Sandra' is shown leaving with an air of resignation as if to indicate that this sort of ejection was now commonplace. Technically speaking, the scene was quite straightforward, but there was a problem for sound because of a background hum from an extractor fan which could not be turned off. If one cannot see the source of such noises, and they play no part in the action, it is generally considered to be best to avoid them since they can be read as technical faults. In the case of an extractor fan - which emits a relatively constant set of sound frequencies - the noise could be removed during the editing process by running the soundtrack through a notch filter.



The unit left this pub by four o'clock to move over the street to another pub which had been used before for the 'Strip' scene. The scene to be shot here would show 'Max', 'Charlie', 'Cross-eyed Anne' and some other friends playing pool before going back to 'Charlie's' place for the drunken party. 'Sandra' would be there too, but was to be shown as being very much excluded from the general merriment as a precursor to her rejection at the party itself. This scenario is that given in the script, but in fact it was subtly changed during the editing such that the interior 'poolgame' scene was placed much earlier in the film as part of the montage of different aspects of 'Sandra's' life which included the 'Restaurant' and 'Soliciting' scenes. The last two scenes to be filmed during this thirty-third day would also play a part in this rearrangement. The first of these showed 'Sandra' making the desperate telephone call to her sister from a pub, and the second showed the girl (theoretically) following the group of friends out of the pub after the game of pool. In the event, the sequence of the 'Poolgame' and 'Exit from poolgame' scenes was split into two quite separate events, such that in the finished film 'Sandra' appears to have tried to 'phone her sister immediately before leaving the pub with the group of people to go on to the party. The audience thus has to make the assumption that the others were in the pub at the same time as 'Sandra' was telephoning from there, since the 'Poolgame' scene eventually comes much earlier on. (See fig. ).



Fig. The reorganisation of a section of part three.

<u>Original</u>	Indian Restaurant - Charlie's flat (where Sandra has slept with him) - Sandra stumbling through alleyways - Fight with Cross-eyed Anne and Charlie in pub - Sandra with dossers - Return to Charlie's to discover him with Cross-eyed Anne again - <u>Desperate telephone call to sister</u> - Walk back to West Indian's flat - Social worker visits sister - Sandra alone in pub, crying - Sandra walking away from a club (not shot) - <u>Poolgame</u> - <u>Group staggers out of pub</u> - staggers into Charlie's - Party.
<u>Final</u>	Indian Restaurant - Sandra soliciting in street - <u>Poolgame</u> - Walk back to West Indian's flat - Social worker visits sister - Sandra alone in pub, crying - Sandra stumbling through alleyways - Return to Charlie's to discover him with Cross-eyed Anne ( <u>Not for the second time; the 'fight' scene was deleted</u> ) - <u>Desperate telephone call to sister</u> - <u>Group staggers out of pub</u> - Staggers into Charlie's - party.

One of the original purposes of the 'Poolgame' scene was to establish the fact that everyone except 'Sandra' was drunkenly boisterous. This would then provide a reason for the ejection of the whole group from the pub, and the fact that they all then leave together - while still in a drunken state - provides some motivation for the return to 'Charlie's' place and the party. In the final version the group is still seen returning from a pub, but on a different occasion. The theory was, therefore, that having seen this particular group of people being ejected from a pub at one point in the film, the audience would then accept that a similar event might have happened again. Wherever the 'Poolgame' scene was placed it could therefore carry approximately the same meaning; firstly that the group was a rather rough bunch, and secondly that 'Sandra' was tagging along with them rather than being a central member of the group.

The scene was filmed 'day-for-night' once again, and the director instructed the actors to generate an atmosphere of animated drunkenness and to ad lib an argument over the game of pool. 'Sandra', meanwhile, was to be shown rather pathetically trying to solicit 'Max' and his



--

friend 'Billy' to which the latter would simply dismiss the idea 534  
with an indifferent 'Piss off, will yer!'. Significantly, 'Max's'  
refusal was to be more gentle, since he simply explains that he  
knows what she wants but has not got any money. He is therefore  
shown to be comparatively non-aggressive, which was intended to be  
an important cue towards making the judgement that 'Candra' mistook  
the man's intentions during the stabbing incident.

Although the group were being generally noisy and disorderly, the  
director felt that there ought to be some specific reason for their  
being chucked out of the pub. The (real) landlord had been asked  
to perform this task (which as an ex-professional wrestler he was  
eminently well qualified as to do), and the director asked him what  
would normally provoke him to eject somebody. He suggested that one  
of the actors should put a beer glass down on the pool table's baize,  
so this then became the specific motive for the ejection. In planning  
the shots for this scene, the director wanted to have at least one  
close-up of 'Candra' sitting alone in order to emphasise the fact  
that she was somewhat peripheral to the group as a whole, and since  
there were a number of different actions there would also have to be  
a number of different shots of the rest of the actors. Five different  
shots were consequently used, which meant that care had to be taken  
about people's relative positions such that continuity could be  
maintained across the different cuts. As with the 'Restaurant' scene,  
this one was largely ad-libbed, so individual actors' positions were  
marked with chalk on the floor to enable them to resume whatever  
positions they had happened to assume at the end of each take.



The design department had meanwhile installed a prop pay-phone in the other pub over the road, and the unit moved back over there by eight o'clock to shoot 'Sandra's' desperate call to her sister. Unfortunately, the real Sandra came into the pub at that point, and since the telephone scene was a particularly painful incident the director had to wait until the girl had left before it could be filmed. Finally, the shots of the group leaving the pub were filmed out in the street, showing 'Charlie', 'Cross-eyed Anne' and the others staggering noisily up the road with 'Sandra' bringing up the rear. After a brief rehearsal the first take was made just as a genuine police van pulled into the street, whereupon - to the director's horror - one of the actors banged his fist on the van's roof as it went past. Luckily the policeman had a sense of humour, and in fact he drove the van around again for some of the subsequent takes; blowing his horn and flashing his lights at the 'drunken' group.

The shoot ended on arguably the most surreal note of all. It is customary to organise an end-of-shoot party, and the director had invited all the crew and those actors who were still in Bradford to come along. He had also invited several of the people who had helped in various ways during the shoot, such as the pop group and their agent, pub landlords and people from the deaf school, plus the family itself. Sandra, her sister and auntie joined in with the drinking and dining along with some of the actors who had played them in the film, and several members of the crew found themselves sharing a dance with the girl whose life they had lived for five weeks. 'We've taken her secrets' someone said, 'God knows what will happen to her now.'



The Editing

Adlai Stevenson once observed that an editor is someone who separates the wheat from the chaff and then prints the chaff. While some would take issue with his conclusion, Stevenson's metaphor is a useful point of departure for examining the process of editing a film since in *LUSH*'s case just seventy-eight minutes of screen-time had to be winnowed from nearly twenty-four hours of exposed stock. There the metaphor ends, however, since not only was the quantity of material which could be harvested from the shoot predetermined by the slot, but the quality of that material was determined by the way it fitted together. During the shoot, the director had deconstructed the perceived reality of Sandra's life into separate scenes and it was now the task of the editor to reconstruct these in some semblance of order, firstly as a coherent film, and secondly as an authentic model of the original events.

'Everything is beautiful' John Grierson said, 'providing it is in the right order', and the imposition of order upon one's material is the name of the game. Hence, if the process of shooting is that of quarrying blocks of material from the putative reality of different actions, sets or locations, then the process of editing is that of dressing and carving those blocks so that they fit back together again as a true representation of the producer's original vision. At the beginning of the editing the producer himself described the process as being like a jigsaw puzzle:

We started out with a total picture, then we cut it up into a jigsaw of little bits; all out of order. We have made the pieces now, and now we have to make it back into the picture we started with. We may find that it doesn't fit - there may be a leg sticking out from one end.



Some of these 'logs' had already been edited before the film arrived in the editing suite. Of the hundred and ninety-eight scenes which the original script contained, sixteen had been deleted from the final version and another thirty-six were never shot. Of these, for instance, the eleven scenes in the original opening sequence which had established the general location (a working-class area of Bradford) and the period (1943) had been abandoned in favour of starting with the more rapid establishment of 'Candra's' deafness through the 'Consultant' and 'school' scenes. The reason for making this change was that the producer had decided to try to 'emotionally involve' the audience as quickly as possible. In part this can be seen as a simple ploy to engage the audience's attention and stop them turning over to another channel, but it is also an aspect of basic narrative structure. In fact the film eventually starts with a 'flash-forward' to 'Mother's' funeral such that the audience can be engaged through the familiar - and emotional - event of someone's death; an event which immediately begs a number of questions. (i.e. Whose funeral is it? Why did they die? What are the relationships of the mourners to each other and the deceased?). If the narrative is a form of getting from one state of equilibrium to another, more stable equilibrium which is itself given coherence by working out the tensions in the original, then to start on the pre-packaged, connotative sign of a funeral can provide a potent 'hook'; a set of questions which need to be answered.

Having lost the original opening sequence (Scenes 1-9, 13 and 16 in the script) it was no longer necessary for the film to go out with a structurally similar set of scenes as had been planned (see scene 193 and the following sequence in the script) so these were not



filmed either. Furthermore, the producer had felt that to begin and end the film with similar scenes of early-morning life in Bradford was perhaps a little too neat; like a carefully written play, whereas *SWIFT* was supposed to be a reconstruction of a real, and inconclusive life. 'That's the difference' he ventured, 'between conventional drama and this film; conventional drama is conclusive whereas real life is not.'

Most of the other scenes which had not been shot were rejected on the basis that they repeated information contained elsewhere. One scene in the script, for example, had a young version of 'Sandra' engaged in some exploratory fondling with a boy at school. While this could have been used as evidence for her future promiscuity or as part of the information that she was growing up, the same kind of willing, if illicit innocence would already have been demonstrated in the scene where 'Sandra' is shown smoking with friends near the playground's toilets. Similarly, several scenes of the girl as a prostitute, showing her near sleazy clubs or having intercourse in the back of a car, were never shot because the fact that she had become a prostitute and was forced to behave in this way would be demonstrated elsewhere.

Other scenes had been combined together or cut because they were simply felt to be unnecessary. A scene showing the young 'Sandra' hurrying towards the fish-and-chip shop had been cut, as I mentioned, since her approach could be combined with an interior shot by having the camera look out through the window at the girl coming down the street. Similarly, the script had included a scene of the sister coming out of the telephone box after having made the call to 'Ian' to find out why he had stopped coming round to see the girl. There was no need to provide this information for reasons of logic



(she would have to have come out of the telephone box at some point), and there was no longer any need to include the scene for reasons of pace, since the intercut of 'Sandra' staring out of a window would provide sufficient punctuation in this respect, so the scene was not shot.

By the end of the shoot the producer was still left with 146 scenes on some fifty-thousand feet of film involving 380 different shots and more than a thousand takes. All this material was then gathered together at ATV's Ilstree studios where it became the immediate responsibility of a very small group - the producer, the editor and the editor's assistant. This is important - with respect to the editor's assistant (who was chiefly engaged in the purely mechanical aspects of cataloguing and locating pieces of film) DUFFY had now become the creative focus of only two people, in direct contrast to the shoot, where up to thirty people had been involved. The programme itself had thus started out as an idea held by one man; it had then been 'pre-edited' through discussion and an exchange of ideas with the writer, shot within the essentially mechanistic environment of the five-week shoot and was now being drawn back into a unified state once again through the organic exchange of 'post-edition' in the editing itself. Rather like the cosmological hypothesis of the 'pulsating universe' the conditions which had allowed the 'big bang' of the original idea to expand and fill a particular universe of discourse had now dictated that the elements of the story should resume a state of equilibrium as a film through the compression of the editing.



'Breaking-down' the material

Before the producer and editor could begin the long, and intimate process of fitting the jigsaw together a number of mechanical operations had to be performed on the material. First of all the soundtrack was transferred from the sound recordist's quarter-inch tapes onto 16mm 'Repmag' so that it could be physically synchronised with the film itself on a Steenbeck editing machine. This synchronisation was achieved by matching the visual image of the clapperboard's clapper hitting the board with the sound it made on the soundtrack (or in some cases a finger-snap had been used where the clapperboard might have disturbed the action). The visual information contained on the clapperboard giving each piece of film a scene, slate and take number was then transferred through a process called 'rubber numbering' onto the edge of the film itself such that the frames showing the clapperboard could be cut off. The producer then explained what happened next;

When it came back from rubber-numbering we viewed it all, and we actually did this on a large screen to get an idea of what it really looked like - the steadiness of the shots and so on. Once it has come back we can then look at it in much greater detail, and we spent the first week just familiarising ourselves with the whole thing. Also during that week we started selecting on the Steenbeck from things we had seen on the large screen; putting them into sections such that we had all the cutaways close-ups - all the takes from a particular scene - together. We then go through those and select our take. Take one might be best in the wideshot, say, and take three the best on the close-up.

The very first stages of edition are consequently concerned with the technical quality of the film, and it is interesting to note that this is judged by viewing each section of the film on a much larger screen than that of the Steenbeck where most of the fine cutting would be done (this screen being even smaller than an average



television screen). Both the large screen and the Steenbeck's screen, moreover, provide projected images directly from the film as opposed to the scanned image of a television set. It would be most unusual for a director to view his film as his audience would, on a television screen, before the film was completed, so he will always be looking at images with a higher definition, where tiny technical faults will be more visible. At this stage in the editing the producer was also examining broader factors too:

Performance; light - all the things we were concerned with when we were shooting. The shape of shot, framing; the relationship of people to one another - everything really. Certainly technical factors are important, if any shots have jolts, for instance, you have to throw them out. There are a lot of cases, for example, where we were shooting with the younger child where the shots are unsatisfactory, and there are large sections of the film where you can only use one piece, because that is the only time when she was not crying. It's dictated to you which piece you can use very often. Sometimes the choice is dictated by the technical problems which have arisen, and sometimes it's dictated to you by the performance problems. Other times it's a question of choice whether, for instance, you want the performance to go one way or another - which type of emotion comes over best.

The first three weeks of editing were mainly devoted to this process of 'breaking down' the material; the process of arranging it all in approximately the right order with all the different shots for any particular scene associated together. As the producer explained, this process has to be conducted quite formally since 'if you start trying to cut before you have coded and broken down everything you just get in a mess'. Thus the whole of the second week was taken up with re-viewing the material, choosing in slate-order the sections required and breaking them down into 'tiny, manageable pieces'. Both the producer



and the editor would discuss each section, examining how it was likely to cut together, and then the latter would go away and physically chop the pieces up and arrange them in order, without, that is, making any attempt to cut them together. The choice was being made on the basis of the technical parameters mentioned above with the producer referring back to the continuity reports to remind him of decisions which had been made at the time:

Often there were certain things wrong on the day, which I wanted to improve during the shooting. Therefore the choice of which take to use is often obvious since I am simply referring back to the notes.

But were there occasions when a scene looked right on a dramatic level which the editor then advised the producer to reject for technical reasons?

Not really, I've spent time in cutting rooms as well, so therefore my knowledge of what will cut and what won't is fairly good. Usually (the editor) can back up my decisions on an aesthetic basis or disagree with them...It's often fairly obvious if something's wrong. In what was supposed to be the sister's house, for instance, there was an electrical fuse (which had caused a long delay) - we had done one take before that, and when we started again we did about seven more takes, but I wasn't very happy with the performance because the actors had lost their mood in the delay. We are actually going to use the first take, therefore, because it just looks better... Sometimes it's only small nuances that I feel strongly about. Most times the reason why you went on to do another take is very obvious; there is a recommended take on most of the sheets, and more than likely these are the ones that we use. If it has been a difficult scene I have printed several of the takes to give a bit of leeway. With the child it is very unpredictable, for instance, so you tend to print a lot of it because you are trying to get snatches. Other times you just know when it's gelled - gelled technically for camera, sound, for the actors and for yourself... sometimes the information has come across purely as you wanted it to; other times there have been little things that you think have lifted the scene, or given the characters some personality.

Almost a whole week was lost from the first three weeks of the editing



for a number of unavoidable reasons (the editor himself was still partially committed to another production during the first week, the assistant caught flu and there was a bank holiday) but by the end of the third week the producer was beginning to be able to see the trees as a wood:

We've now viewed the material right from top to bottom, so we are totally familiar with the whole thing. We have seen it all in a concentrated state so we have an idea of what the total feeling of the film is going to be like. Now we have to start making a more intimate selection; having broken it down we can then begin the cutting.

By this stage there had been no major changes such as rejecting entire scenes, but the amount of material with which the producer was working had been reduced to only about ten or fifteen percent of the original. Although this sounds as if drastic creative decisions had been made, the remaining material would still have run for about twice the required length so there was still a great deal of 'fine tuning' to be carried out. Furthermore, a great deal of the rejected material consisted of repeat takes of very similar actions - some of the scenes involving the very young version of Sandra had run to more than twenty takes, for example, and had used up vast amounts of film. Having reached what amounted to a first draft, the producer could nevertheless begin to see where more drastic changes might have to be made:

We haven't dropped any scenes yet, but we probably will. Sometimes it will be because there has been a repetition - a repetition of thought. There might be something you don't need, in other words. You don't need to keep hammering home the fact that the child is deaf, for instance, or there's no need to keep hammering home the violence. Sometimes two scenes will just be too similar, which is something you hadn't noticed at the time. At other times I might decide (to drop a scene) because it's not good enough; I mean apart from a technical fault in terms



of the camera there might be a directorial error, or it may be a script or an acting error which I may or may not have noticed at the time. At the moment we've just 'zipped it down into manageable bits and the rest will come later.

The major problems were still those which the producer had been aware of during the shoot; the problems with the young girl, the transitions between the different versions of her and the problems imposed by the locations themselves:

What worries me is the confinement of those small rooms. They gave me more obstruction than I'd thought, and that made shooting more difficult. Ken Leach would have used a studio; rebuilding a room as a set to give him more room, but there was an attempt to use as many real locations as possible here. Then you might get problems with the script; it depends upon the way a scene is written, you see; if you are going from a room full of grown-ups to a little baby on the floor - and you can't get back with a telephoto lens - you have difficulties.

Some of the difficulties experienced at the time with different actors and varying situations were now coming home to roost too:

Different parts of the film had different requirements - the murder at the end in the streets was handled quite spontaneously, but in other instances it is no good being spontaneous if it doesn't work. That takes us back to the fight in the pub; you try it as a spontaneous thing, but if you are not totally satisfied with it then you dictate how it's going to happen piece by piece. This happens particularly with young children. If you can get spontaneous reactions from young children then that is marvellous, but it's a costly process because you have to wait for it. With actors too - if you let them improvise and then you don't like it, then to hell with spontaneity, because I have to get the information across... If you are going to do a fight sequence you have to work it out; I choreographed the scene in the motel, the slashing of the face and the strip-tease, but in some of the other scenes I wanted a looser effect from it; I didn't want it to be formal because I wanted to get away from the drama fear; to get in there and use the space. This also has its problems though, sometimes



(the planning) depended upon the actors themselves. If you tell an actor as much as you know about a character and he still wants more instruction or is insecure, or he still wants to talk it through, then you have to go in and try things out. In this film there were a lot of small parts so we didn't have the luxury of working with those people in advance. Sometimes I wouldn't rehearse a scene - because I couldn't - and sometimes I hadn't made a shooting plan because I hadn't met the people before, and wanted to see how they would behave on that location. It's no good saying you want a person thrown against this door if, when you get there, the landlord says you can't do that.

Scenes which had been shot with a range of different techniques therefore had to be arranged in order and cut together to form a coherent whole, and with this goal in mind the producer and the editor now began to examine the material in a much more detailed fashion. Again, it's important to note that only these two men were involved at this stage, although neither were continuously working on the project since as a staff editor the latter had some commitment to other work and the producer was still concerned with typing up some loose ends from the shoot (such as writing a report on the running difficulties and arranging for the possibility of filming pick-ups for some sections of the film). Apart from those people who had seen rushes during the shoot, only the writer had since seen any of the material and no-one besides the editor and producer had seen any form of an assembly - or compilation - of the working material. After about four weeks of editing, however, the controller asked to see such an assembly. This was a somewhat unexpected move since higher management might not normally be expected to become involved until the roughcut stage, (an assembly being the grouping together of scenes in approximate order, whereas a roughcut is a later stage where the scenes have actually been cut together). One of the department's



executive producers had already unofficially asked for a viewing, to which request the producer had demurred until the roughcut stage had been reached, but the controller's request was unavoidable. The move was in any case regarded as legitimate since the controller's interest in the film was that of patron as well as publisher, and one reason given for seeing the material at this stage was simply that the controller was about to take a holiday, and wanted to see it before he went away.

The producer and the editor nevertheless had to forge ahead with their preliminary selection more rapidly than they had planned, and the former pointed out that he would rather not have shown this selection to anyone before it had been cut together because any number of different interpretations could have been drawn from the material in that state. Some of these interpretations may have been quite opposed to the preferred reading and may, for instance, have led to prematurely imposed alterations. But what the producer was really arguing was that an assembly of scenes is unlikely to give a true impression of his final intentions. An assembly, in other words, is a collection of phrases without context or syntagma without syntax, and as such it is comparatively formless. Editing in general, and fine-cutting in particular is a process in which form is imposed and relativism concealed through a forclosure of the range of options which an audience has in interpreting the material. Thus the imposition of a particular pace, balance and rhythm both within and between different scenes is what provides context, and - theoretically - a preferred meaning. Without that context the meaning of an individual scene remains open in relation to a viewer's own frame of reference. The 'Motel' scene, for example, would be literally gratuitous in a state in which it had not been precisely fitted into the overall context of the



girl's life since its referent would be more strongly embedded in a viewer's prior knowledge than in the additional information supplied within the film. Hence it was at least possible that viewing such a scene as part of an assembly might lead to premature censoring.

After six weeks the first full assembly was ready, and was shown to the controller at the beginning of July. He in fact only suggested one or two minor changes at that stage, leaving his decision to suggest three major cuts until later. The producer felt considerably heartened by this response, and subsequently showed the assembly to the writer too - everyone's main concern at this point being centred upon the film's overall length. This was now down to 112 minutes (or about 30% overlength) and after the viewing there had been some discussion about taking a two-hour slot for the film. After subtracting the time for commercial breaks BUNNY could then have run for 104 minutes which would have meant that only a 7% reduction would have to be made. The 1½ hour slot was to all intents and purposes fixed by that time, however, one of the reasons for this being that the controller had already agreed upon a transmission day with the network. This day was to be 9th November and neither the controller nor the producer wanted to delay transmission until a less propitious time, for the beginning of November was generally regarded to be an excellent choice. By that time the autumn schedules would have 'settled down' such that BUNNY's originality would not have been swamped by a welter of other new programmes, and the producer was also particularly pleased with the mid-week slot; again because he felt that the programme would have a chance to stand on its own without the competition of high-rated programmes at the weekend.



The need to reduce the programme's length within the constraint of the 76 minute slot was therefore of paramount importance, and the decisions to be made from this point onwards were to be much more critical. Even getting the length down to 112 minutes had involved some rigorous editing, and whole scenes had indeed already been rejected. These included the following; the scene which had introduced 'Sandra's' father (scene 11 in the script) had been cut since it was notionally part of the introductory sequence of 'life in Bradford' and was consequently now superfluous. This particular scene had also been the one which had been shot in the real girl's local which had caused some problems with the family, so its rejection was also partly diplomatic. A scene showing 'Baby Sandra' being tested with various noises in a doctor's surgery (sc. 21) had also been rejected because it repeated the information that the girl was deaf, but it had also been unsatisfactory in terms of performance since the child had actually reacted to the hearing-tests throughout the bulk of the takes. Similarly the 'Coalman' scene (sc. 18) where the child was supposed to be non-reacting to the sound of some coal being delivered was lost, as was the scene inside a bus (sc. 37) which had to be scrapped because of the shakiness of the shots and the fact that the slightly older version of the girl had been crying during several of the takes.

Other scenes had been cut because they had been designed to get characters from one place to another, and it had subsequently been felt that these were relatively unnecessary. The scenes in the hallway of 'Ian's' house (scs. 79 and 93) had been lost for this reason, for example, because they had chiefly served to transport people from an exterior to an interior location; a movement which could be inferred from the remaining scenes. Similarly 'Phil's' awakening



to the sound of a police car prior to his arrest (sc. 111) had been cut because the arrest itself was felt to be sufficiently informative, and in fact the awakening had looked rather humorous in the event. The 'Social Security' scene (sc. 103) had been lost because it had proved to be technically unsound, with badly framed shots as a result of trying to shoot it 'in the bag' with a concealed camera. A scene like 'Ian' and 'Candra's' departure in his car from the dry-cleaning factory (sc. 88) had been cut for reasons of pace, (since the car had simply taken too long to exit the frame) as had 'Mother's' departure from the school (sc. 25), and the 'Playing field's' scene (sc. 40) had been rejected because it repeated the information that the girl was good at sports (this information being contained in the 'Swimming baths' scene which was generally considered to be better for reasons of visual interest and excitement).



Although the editor is working with preformed pieces of material, the cutting room is arguably a primary creative context since it is here that the material is cut and joined together to form a film; that is to say a structured sequence of images and sounds balanced against one another with a rhythm that ensures a unity greater than the sum of its parts. That the process is essentially creative is true insofar as the same material would not necessarily generate the same film with two different editors, and the amount of debate and experiment which characterized the fine-cutting of *DULCE* is evidence of the fluidity of the process. This is not to say that there are not rules and discernable patterns in the construction of any one scene or in its mode of connection to other scenes. One of the first rules of editing according to the producer was, for example, that one has to have a reason for making a cut; in any given scene there are 'natural cutting points' which become rapidly self-evident. Quite why they do was, however, accredited to 'natural rhythm' by the two men which is a phrase which needs to be carefully examined. Numerous hints and tips can be found in the professional literature explaining that cuts should be made either on an action or a reaction, either just before or just after that action has occurred. Such an action does not have to be central to the narrative; it could be a secondary action such as replacing a glass upon a table, but it is generally considered to be illegitimate to delay making a cut until very long after such an action has taken place unless there is a reason for so doing. One such reason could be to gain suspense or anticipation, or to slow down the pace of the film at that point or to imply introspection on the part of the character.



If a character actually exits the frame the cutting-point is more clearly dictated by the action; the prime example being that of a character leaving both the frame and the room which they happened to be in through a doorway. The point at which the door closes then provides the justification for cutting to the next scene. A scene can contain several 'natural' cutting-points, and although the constraint of having to lose as much time as possible was operating throughout that latter stages of editing DUSTY, the first cutting-point was not always the one used. In the scene where 'Charlie' gives 'Sandra' some drugs, for example, a genuine regular in the pub walks across the background of the shot after the first cutting point has occurred at the end of 'Charlie's' dialogue. Wishing to retain this action as a natural event, the producer decided to let the scene run on until the next cutting-point, which in this case was 'Sandra's' action of drawing on her cigarette. Sometimes an action will be so long and continuous that no cutting-point occurs before the length of the scene begins to detract from the required pace. This happened with 'Ian' and 'Sandra's' departure from the dry-cleaning factory, where the car took so long to exit the frame that the whole action eventually had to be scrapped.

The dialogue often provides 'natural' cutting-points, and in a scripted film is often specifically designed so to do. Hence 'Sandra's' sister is given an 'out' towards the end of the scene where she is visiting the girl in hospital; 'I've got to get home, love' and the same character has the line 'God knows what'll happen' towards the end of the first scene in part three which provides a 'natural' lead in to the concluding sections of the film. Cutting on particular lines can also



associate two ideas together even though the action is not continuous, a good example of which is where the female social worker explains to 'Mother' that the school does not teach sign language: 'It's not their method' - the cut to 'Sandra' trying to read in front of a class therefore illustrates what their method is.

Cutting different scenes together is not just a process of linking ideas by association, however, the producer also used the juxtaposition of scenes in contrast to one another in order to persuade his audience to reach certain conclusions. At one point, for example, he wanted to place the scenes showing the girl taking pills alone in a pub and the 'Restaurant' scene together to emphasise the transience of happy events like the meal, and in the finished film a similar idea is in operation as the 'Restaurant' is immediately followed by some shots of 'Sandra' soliciting in the streets.

The mechanics of cutting the component shots of any one scene together are often dictated by the 'logic of the situation'. Hence if a character is looking from left to right towards another character during a conversation, then in assembling the two halves of the dialogue the editor will use shots where the other character is looking from right to left. Similarly, if a movement is to be carried across several different shots, then the direction of that movement is usually maintained relative to the frame. This may only apply, however, if the action is continuous - in point of fact the girl's journey out to the motel with the 'heat man' starts off as a movement from left to right, but this changes to the opposite direction as the car eventually pulls into the motel forecourt. One of the points of that sequence was to demonstrate that the motel was some distance out of Bradford, but because of the



need to lose time several of the shots of the two people driving out of the city were lost, so the change in direction vic-a-vic the frame could actually help to imply that the journey had taken a certain amount of time. Cutting can therefore imply, condense or expand time as well as establish or emphasize relationships between different periods, events or individuals.

The way a cut is made is important too; apart from a straight cut from one scene to another, there are numerous variations such as fades, focus or lap dissolves (mixes), splits and wipes, which in different circumstances are felt to have conventional meanings. A fade to black at the end of a scene can mean, for instance, that a passage of time has passed between that scene and the next one, or a rapid mix can imply that the two scenes linked by such a device are happening concurrently.

All these points are aspects of basic grammar, and they are essentially arbitrary or conventional rather than motivated or natural. The producer's 'natural rhythm' can therefore be seen to be drawn, in part, from a professional rhetoric which governs the way in which a film can be cut together. Arbitrary signs like fades or mixes were, however, kept to a minimum in *DUMBY* precisely because they were felt to detract from the film's naturalism. Similarly, the 'Drama fear' which the producer mentioned above led to an avoidance of formal set-pieces in which actions would take place as discrete events. An examination of the original and terminal points of each scene reveals that most begin and end half-way through an action, and while an unresolved action is often more dramatic, the lack of such predetermination also opens up different options of interpretation and expands the possibility of



inferring that characters inhabit a world beyond that which has been specifically denoted. The audience is not, for instance, given any immediate explanation of why 'Sandra' is crying by herself in the pub during part three, so in theory the audience is forced to interpret the event with reference to an anterior reality indexed throughout the film as a whole. Against the idea that film-making should remain mannerist, or hamstrung by the subordination of a viewer's interpretation to the film-maker's explanation through the conventional 'signposting' of each cut, Dai Vaughan (1976: 18) argues that:

Film is not a pure, symbolic sign-system. To articulate it as if it were - as if its grammar were anterior to its imagery, rather than our attribution of sense calling forth the grammar in a gestalt - is to reduce it to such perurious abstraction that the satisfying of prior expectations is all it can do.

Vaughan, himself a practicing editor, goes on to say (ibid. p.19) that one should distinguish between the mannerist structuring of material to meet a preconception of the responses of others and the structuring of material in direct response to one's perception of its 'human significance'. The producer's 'natural rhythm' can thus be seen to involve both modes through a combination of professionalism and intuition, the latter being constrained or motivated in its grasp of 'human significance' or reality through its coherence with a culturally determined intersubjectivity.

DUFFY had to be edited, first to distil a truth from reports covering twenty-nine years of someone's life, and secondly to contain that distillation within a seventy-eight minute slot. The mode of that edition was then dictated by the nature of the medium, and its potential indexicality had to be 'clawed back' (to borrow Fiske and Hartley's term - see Reading Television 1978: 87) through an inversion of the degree of conventionalisation of each signifier until they



resumed the iconicity or motivation of their uncut state as rushes.

As Fiske and Hartley (1978: 38) have noted:

The faithfulness or accuracy of the representation, that is the degree to which the signified is re-presented in the signifier, is an inverse measure of how conventionalised it is. Thus a realistic portrait is lightly conventionalised: it relies for its ability to signify on our experience of the sort of reality that it re-presents ... the more closely the signifier reproduces our common experience, our culturally determined intersubjectivity, the more realistic it appears to be.

The authors of Reading television are, however, careful to point out that:

... the signified to which the signifier relates is itself arbitrary, for the way we see it, categorise it and structure it is a result of our culture's way of seeing, just as much as the way we reproduce it in verbal language. (Ibid, p.39)

Unfortunately, they cannot tell us much about the process of categorization.

A scrutiny of the film will enable one to deduce that the producer made use of very little camera-movement, and one might guess that existing locations and 'real' people had been used to reduce the intervention of conventional tricks of the trade (even though the use of documentary syntax is itself becoming a convention for drama). A committed semiotician would, however, be at fault in inferring that the producer always used a static camera in order to deliberately avoid the arbitrary signification of zooms or dolly shots; in fact the cameraman very much regretted not having brought a dolly along to the shoot, and very often the camera was physically restrained from moving about in some of the small interior locations.

Similarly, to understand the way in which 'the signified' is seen, categorised and structured in the course of the editing, and by implication to understand the illocutionary intent of a cultural



producer at least requires that the process be observed. Hence the following section is itself an edited account of some of the decision-making carried out during the latter stages of editing, where the major concern was the sequencing of part three of the film.

### In the cutting room

ATV have several suites of cutting rooms at their production centre at Elstree, each one the domain of an editor and his assistant. One of these was allocated to DUMMY for the duration. The room itself was quite small, and when the blinds were drawn for viewing it provided an environment conducive to the private, intimate atmosphere which characterised much of the process. Along the side of the room was a long workbench to which was fixed the Compeditor, a small motorised viewer upon which several spools could be mounted at once, each one being driven through a clutch mechanism to enable fine synchronisation to be carried out. The rest of the room was filled with racks for cans of film, trimming bins and racks for short lengths of film hung vertically and coded for easy access. Under the single window was a sign reading:

IT TAKES A TOUGH EDITOR TO MAKE A TENDER FILM

and under this stood the six-plate Steenbeck editor/viewer. The general procedure for cutting was to lay up a section of assembled film on one of the Steenbeck's pairs of drive-plates, with the soundtrack on the next pair and the new piece of film on the third. The editor and producer would then view the material on the comparatively large screen mounted above the plates, choose the position for the cut and mark it with a chinagraph pencil. The editor would use one of a number of different markings here to indicate the type of cut



required (straight cuts, fades, dissolves, etc.) as a guide to the processor, and would then move to the Compositor to line up the different pieces and make the actual cut. At this stage the two pieces of film would simply be butted together, leaving all the markings on either side of the cut, but the soundtrack would be cut at an angle such that a partial sound-fade would result and sudden jolts avoided (the sepmag would also travel through the Steenbeck's transport mechanism more smoothly if cut in this way). Having edited some fifty-five films, the speed with which the editor cut and spliced the film was truly remarkable, but was not simply a display of professional virtuosity since the physical result of a decision could then be assessed very quickly, and changed if necessary while an idea was still fresh in the two men's minds.

Decisions made about the cutting together of different shots within any one scene were not always made according to the precepts of 'natural rhythm'; sometimes they were dictated by the material and decisions which had already been made during the shoot. For example, the deliberate use of 'Wobblyncope' or the hand-held camera made it difficult to adhere to the rules of continuity between shots where the camera's position was constantly changing - as in the stabbing sequence. However, the overall style of part three, and to some extent part two, meant that the duration of individual actions could be reduced even when they had been shot like a conventional drama. In one of the pub scenes where 'Ralph' is planning a robbery with a friend, there is, for example, a shot of 'Sandra' rising from the table followed by another shot of her approaching the bar to buy some more drinks. Normally the two shots would be cut together such that the girl's movements would form a continuous action in 'real-time', but here the



cut was made such that 'Sandra's' walk to the bar only took about half the time it should have done. 'That sort of cut is legitimate given the style,' the editor argued, 'providing the audience believes that it is grab-shooting; it would look odd if this was a straight drama, where you would normally let her walk out of the shot before cutting.'

By contrast, the scene of 'Sandra' being taught how to operate the steam-press in the dry-cleaning factory was cut together in much longer sections than might have been expected in a conventional drama. In fact, there are only two cuts in the scene even though it is one of the longest in the film; its cutting rate being only 0.8 cuts/minute as compared to 7.12 cuts/minute as an average for that part of the programme (part one) and 6.02 cuts/minute for the film as a whole.

The reasons for extending the scene in this way was that the genuine working environment of the dry-cleaning works was itself very 'busy'.

The noise of the machinery and the movements of the press combined with the complicated instructions given by the foreman provided a mass of information which the producer considered was inherently interesting.

In contrast to the documentary evidence of this data the producer nevertheless wanted to make the dramatic point that the girl's new job was actually rather boring. He therefore employed the theory that by letting the scene run on the audience would begin to think 'God, this is boring' in the sense that they would begin to get fed up with the scene rather than its contents. Having defamiliarised the content in this way the producer then felt that the scene ought to run on even further, as he explained:



The audience will then go through the boredom-barrier and actually begin to get involved in the action of the steam and the work. Once you have bored the audience and then let the scene run on further to get them back into it, you cut to the next scene; hoping that the audience will have realised how boring (the work) was.

Using the fabric of the film in this way depended upon the director having foreseen a potential problem during the shoot, but sometimes the conditions at the time had dictated the way a scene could be cut together. In the scene showing 'Sandra' being visited by her sister in the maternity hospital the director had been constrained to shoot in single shots (see p. ) which meant that the scene had to be built up from a number of cross-cuts between the two subjects. The editor, however, felt that this format intruded upon the intimacy of the action since the framing of the shots separated the two women from each other. He therefore intercut a wide shot of the two of them together to set the camera in an observational rather than an interrogatory position, but was unable to hold this intercut for as long as he wanted because the light had changed halfway through that particular shot and there had not been any further takes.

Cutting the 'Strip' scene together proved to be one of the most difficult tasks during the latter stages of editing. This is the scene where 'Sandra' performs an impromptu strip in one of the sleazy pubs, and is the place where she meets her future husband. The problem was chiefly upon the continuity of the music. The professional stripper - in fact a drag artiste - was performing to a well-known Cilla Black recording of the sixties, and this record would have to appear to run on continuously despite any cuts which were introduced into the visual information. Normally, background music could be separated from the dialogue tracks and re-recorded during the dub, but in this case the



music was linked to the visuals by the drag artiste's movements - particularly where he pulled the front of his canilmickers out to make a gesture on the song's repeated phrase, 'Step inside love'. Since the tracks had in any case been pre-mixed, the only way to reduce the length of the sequence was to cut pieces off from either end or to 'cheat' in some way. A number of 'cheats' were therefore used. First of all the main actress had made an ad-libbed reference to the fact that the 'stripper' was a drag-artiste which was considered to be unnecessary and possibly destructive since part of the intention of the scene was to show 'Sandra' in competition with the genuine performer; the denotation that he was a man could therefore devalue the girl's own performance. This was consequently cut, as indeed were several other ad-libbed comments exchanged between the girl and her friend, 'Cross-eyed Anne'. Other comments were considered to be useful however, such as 'Cross-eyed Anne's' explanation to 'Ray' that 'Sandra' is deaf and her prophetic remark on 'Sandra's' return from the stage that 'You could do that for a living, love.' Since the performer was not in shot for these shots the music could be lifted off the master track and laid under the dialogue, providing, that is, that it was reduced in volume to disguise any jumps in continuity (a reduction which was possible because of the change in perspective). A more drastic 'cheat' was used earlier in the scene; before 'Sandra' moves across to join the drag artiste on stage she is shown looking towards him, and the audience would normally be given her P.O.V. in the following shot. Because of the difficulties with sound continuity, the editor and producer decided to go to a wide shot here which would serve as 'Sandra's' P.O.V. since it was looking towards the stage, albeit from the back of the room. 'Sandra' was actually in shot during this



wideshot, however, so logically it could not be her P.O.V. The producer nevertheless argued that the audience's attention would be directed away from the people in the foreground - one of whom was the girl - towards the brightly-lit drag artiste. 'Sandra' had also removed her identifying coat by that time and was facing away from the camera so the producer decided that an audience would believe that the girl was simply one of several other unidentified people.

Similarly, the tail-end of 'Ray's' entrance into the pub was used as an intercut to save time between 'Sandra's' climb down from the stage and her arrival back at the bar even though his entrance ought to have been completed much earlier. This nevertheless meant that 'Ray's' face would be more definitively established as well as covering for a potential jump in action continuity (caused by losing 'Sandra's' movement from the stage to the bar), but then the sound continuity had to be regained by completely erasing the original soundtrack behind 'Ray's' entrance and allowing the master track to run on over the cuts. This master-track itself needed to be artificially extended because the record had been cut short while 'Sandra' was still on the stage, so another section of the music was spliced on such that it was still in synchronisation although actually a verse advanced.

One of the points of discussion with respect to this scene was that the editor felt the 'natural' end occurred with 'Sandra's' climb down from the stage. The conversation back at the bar, where 'Ray' approaches the two girls to compliment 'Sandra' on her performance, was considered to be a separate action. As such it needed to be of a certain length to allow the audience time to explore the content, or



if there was insufficient material then it ought to be scrapped altogether. The producer particularly wanted to retain this second part of the scene because it contained the information about 'Ray's' interest in the girl, but he was also working within two constraints. Firstly there was the continuous need to lose time, and secondly much of the conversation between 'Ray' and 'Sandra' was marred by one of the members of the crew who was staring at the camera from the background of the shot. This had not been noticed during the shoot itself, and there were other takes which could have been used, but none were as good as this one in terms of the actor's ad libbed comments. Eventually this was in fact the take which appears in the finished film since if any of that section of the scene was used then the producer had little choice but to use that particular take too.

The discussions surrounding the cutting of the 'Motel' scene were also very interesting. The shots taken inside the motel bedroom described a number of different actions; firstly the 'Heat man' empties his trouser pockets onto the bedside table, and from the pile of money 'Sandra' takes a five-pound note. This then motivates - if not justifies - the man's anger and precipitates the initial action of 'Sandra' being knocked down onto the bed. She retaliates, whereupon he drags her to the washbasin and bangs her head against the wall. The third and last action then involves the 'Heat man' ripping a radiator shelf from the wall to club the girl again before making a rapid exit. In many ways this final action is dramatically superfluous, since 'Sandra' is already overpowered and in fact has fallen out of shot, so the point has been made that the attack is serious and possibly fatal before the start of the last action. Furthermore, the 'Heat man'



was shown hitting the girl three times with the heavy shelf which may well have been construed to be 'over the top' in terms of the violent content of the scene.

The producer wanted to retain all of these actions, firstly because the attack was 'unusually violent' as he put it, and could therefore be used as a pivotal and memorable reference point in the description of the girl's life. Secondly the attack had actually happened, so it was in some sense the producer's duty to record it as accurately as possible. The editor, however, felt quite strongly that the third action (the use of the radiator cover) at least looked gratuitous because the previous action had wound up to a 'natural' conclusion with 'Sandra's' disappearance out of frame. Indeed, the more one shortened the last action by, say, reducing the number of times the 'Neat man' hit the girl with the radiator cover, then the more gratuitous it looked. The editor argued that given the disconnection of the last action with the preceding one, then the whole of that secondary action should be retained in order to allow enough time for it to 'justify itself', but remembering that time was of the essence, the editor was generally persuaded that they should therefore lose the action altogether. 'We've got to lose time,' he argued, 'and this will be cut anyway.' In fact the editor was of the opinion that if the film was to be shown in the U.S.A. then the scene would have to be cut after the first action, at the point where 'Sandra' is first hit by the 'Neat man'.

Both men came back to this scene several times, and by the latter stages of editing the 'radiator cover' action had been retained on the basis of the producer's argument that it was vital because true; plus the 'Neat man's' accompanying dialogue, 'I'll kill yer!' was felt to be



dramatically valid since at that point the audience would not be sure that he hadn't killed the girl. In order to connect this action with the previous one, the editor had nevertheless included a little more of the 'Heat man's' movement away from the washbasin towards the radiator than had been used earlier. This, however, looked 'too logical' or 'too stereographed' to the producer, even though the editor still felt that the action looked like an afterthought (meaning a second thought by the director rather than that of the character). The producer actually wanted the cut to the last action to seem somewhat illogical to help the connotation that the whole scene was one of illogical violence; that the 'Heat man' was indeed a 'weird character'. As he argued at the time:

I'm worried that without the radiator bit it will look like just a 'normal' beating-up, a standard beating as you'd have in *THE SWEENEY*. The radiator, apart from being authentic, takes the scene beyond the norm and gives some motivation for the shock to (Sandra) and the fact that she kills the other guy six weeks later.

Many different versions were tried out here, with the position of the cut from the action at the washbasin to the action with the radiator cover being altered by sometimes only a few frames. One of the problems from the points of view of continuity was the change of camera angle between the two shots and a considerable difference in the quality of the light, so the only real way of maintaining any continuity was to include the 'Heat man's' movement towards the radiator. After several days of experiment (in which several other scenes were being dealt with too; it should be noted) the producer agreed that the action looked smoother with this movement, but he still argued that the battering with the radiator cover therefore looked more calculated, which was not his intention; 'I want it to be more scary,' he explained. The editor's argument had now become that the audience would balk at the f'



section of violence (the initial fight and the battering at the washbasin) but would then accept and believe it because of the way it had been built up. People would not, therefore, believe the second action (the radiator cover) because it would ruin the credibility which had been achieved in the first section. A period of experiment then ensued in which the 'radiator cover' action was removed once more, with the cut from the washbasin coming at the point where the 'Heat man' has finished beating the girl and was just about to give her a final kick. The producer liked this as a point of style, since the cut from the washbasin was initially to a blank white wall before the 'Heat man' steps into frame for the kick, and there was consequently an element of surprise in this final action. There was also an element of surprise on a different level here, since the character was saying 'Fuck you!' as he kicks the injured girl. The editor was not at all sure that this would be allowed by the IBI, given the fact that the kick was already out of context insofar as it was shot from a different angle than the previous action. The argument consequently swung back to including the whole of the radiator action, with the producer bartering by proxy the bad language for the violence. 'If we take the "fucks" out, can we put the violence back?' he queried. 'Well, which do you want,' the editor asked. 'We've got three bits of violence and two 'fucks', something's got to go.'

In the end the 'radiator cover' action was retained, with the producer concluding that 'it is so unusual that it must be seen as true by the audience', a conclusion which was evidently shared by the controller who allowed the scene to go out as it stood. To save time, the cut from the 'Heat man's' exit from the room was then made to his entry



into the car, instead of his walk across the motel's forecourt. This was strictly an illogical cut, since no time was allowed for the man to get from the room to his Cortina, but it saved valuable space and was considered to be a 'good cut'. 'It would make him look more of a bastard,' the producer explained, 'since you don't see him thinking about it on the way out; he just leaves and drives off.'

Where the cutting together of a scene like this involved so many different permutations the editor, and more particularly the producer, sometimes felt that they were in danger of losing their objectivity. Their unwritten brief was to construct each scene in such a way that their audience would understand their intention correctly (i.e. they would decode the information in the preferred mode), and understand it on a first showing. It is essential to remember that the producer may have seen each section of the film, in various forms, perhaps fifty times, and this exposure could only increase as the process advanced. Occasionally other editors would therefore be asked to view the material to reintroduce an objective eye or to reaffirm decisions which had been made, and both the producer and his editor would often deliberately leave a section of the film to one side for a while to work on a different section in the hope that they could return refreshed.

One of the biggest problems in this respect was the sequencing of part three of the film. Apart from getting the interior logic of each scene to work properly in terms of all the parameters of grammar, balance, pace and rhythm, the bulk of the scenes in parts one and two could be cut together according to the anterior logic of advancing time. Part one covered eighteen years of Sandra's life and part two covered eight, but part three dealt with only about six weeks. Many of the



scenes in the first two parts of the film therefore had to follow one another in a particular order, whereas the scenes in part three were more open to rearrangement since the chronological logic had become subordinate to the logic of motivation between different actions. Furthermore, the chronological logic of the first two parts of the film meant that their running-time had become more or less fixed by the latter stages of editing, which meant in turn that the reduction in the film's overall length had to be made through a reduction in the length of part three. By the middle of July the total running-time of the film had been brought down to 87'46", with parts one and two running at 55'54" and part three 31'52". The total running-time was thus 9'46" overlength at that stage, 8'27" of which was eventually subtracted through a reorganisation of part three. The last part of the film, in other words, yielded 87% of the time which needed to be lost while parts one and two only yielded the remaining 13%, which represents a reduction by over a quarter to the length of part three as compared to a reduction of less than 3% for parts one and two combined at this stage of the editing. (The reduction of part three increases to nearly a third if one includes the time taken for the credits at the end of the film.)

Losing nearly a third of the material from part three during the post-assembly stage of the editing obviously meant that some fairly radical moves had to be made, and the following few paragraphs are a log of some of the decision-making which took place.

#### Re-sequencing part three

A number of the scenes which had already been rejected would have appeared in part three, but it was still clear that further complete scenes might have to be dropped in order to reduce the length within the



constraint of the time-slot. The producer and editor consequently began to scrutinise the existing material to see if they could re-order it in such a way that at least one more scene could become redundant without losing the essential threads of the narrative. The major problem was in maintaining a balance between 'Sandra's' sad decline and the aggression which part three described, and several dozen permutations were tried before a satisfactory balance was achieved. Several examples of the different sequences are given below, these being taken from a number of separate sessions in the editing suite to illustrate the possibilities which were explored. Fig.      lists the original and final scenes in sequence, and from this it can be seen that most of the re-ordering concentrated upon the middle section of part three, from the scene set in the Indian restaurant to 'Sandra's' arrival at the drunken party prior to the stabbing.

#### Permutation one

In the original script 'Sandra' had been crying alone in a pub after having stayed at the West Indian's flat (see scenes 22 and 23 in Fig.      ). The latter scene had not been shot, but even substituting the related scene of the girl walking towards the flat with the West Indian failed to provide any reason for the girl's distress. As it stood, this 'crying' scene therefore remained relatively free of the narrative as an indicator of the girl's general misery. As part of the process of tightening up the narrative structure of part three, the producer had subsequently decided that the girl should be crying for a particular reason, so this scene was initially placed directly after the girl's discovery of her lover, 'Charlie', with her erstwhile friend, 'Cross-eyed Anne' in a city-centre pub. Putting these two scenes together would have produced a confusion, however, since



Original script

Final film

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <u>Yard behind Sister's house: Children playing.</u>                       |   |
| 2. Inside Sister's house: she discusses Sandra's future.                      | 2. Inside Sister's house: she discusses Sandra's future.      |
| 3. Sandra leaves Sister's house.  | 3. Sandra leaves Sister's house.                              |
| 4. Sandra wanders through alleyways   | 4. Sandra wanders through alleyways.                          |
| 5. Sandra meets Charlie in pub: he gives her drugs.                           | 5. Sandra meets Charlie in pub: he gives her drugs.           |
| 6. They return to his flat.   | 6. They return to his flat.                                   |
| 7. <u>Sandra alone in cafe.</u> )Not  |   |
| 8. <u>Sandra asleep on church bench.</u> )Shot                                | 11. Sandra inside Charlie's, having slept with him.           |
| 9. <u>Sandra urinates on wasteground.)</u>                                    |   |
| 10. Indian restaurant.  | 10. Indian restaurant   |
| 11. Sandra inside Charlie's, having slept with him.                           |   |
| 12. Sandra wandering through alleyways.                                       | 24. Sandra soliciting in street (alternative scene)           |
| 13. <u>Sandra discovers 'Cross-eyed Anne' with Charlie in pub: fight.</u>     | 25. Sandra in pub where Charlie and friends are playing pool. |
| 14. <u>Sandra with two dossers in street.</u>                                 |   |
| 15. <u>Inside dosser's house, Sandra picks up knife.</u>                      | 20. Sandra and West Indian walk towards his flat.             |
| 16. Sandra walks towards Charlie's flat.                                      | 21. Social worker visits sister.                              |
| 17. She discovers him with 'Cross-eyed Anne': fight.                          | 23. Sandra alone in pub, crying.                              |
| 18. Sandra tries to telephone her sister.                                     | 12. Sandra wandering through alleyways.                       |
| 19. Sister receives the call.   | 16. Sandra walks towards Charlie's flat.                      |
| 20. Sandra and West Indian walk towards his flat.                             | 17. She discovers him with 'Cross-eyed Anne': fight.          |
| 21. Social worker visits sister.  |   |
| 22. <u>Sandra in West Indian's flat, having slept on the sofa. (Not shot)</u> | 18. Sandra tries to telephone sister.                         |
| 23. Sandra alone in pub, crying.  | 19. Sister receives the call.                                 |
| 24. Sandra outside city club. (Not shot)                                      |   |
| 25. Sandra in pub where Charlie and friends are playing pool.                 | 26. They stagger out of pub.                                  |
| 26. They stagger out of pub.  | 27. They stagger into Charlie's flat.                         |
| 27. They stagger into Charlie's flat.   | 28. Drunken party.  |
| 28. Drunken party.  | 29. Stabbing.   |
| 29. Stabbing.   | 30. Sandra runs off.  |
| 30. Sandra runs off.  | 32. Sandra finds taxi.  |
| 31. Stabbed man staggers to main road.  | 31. Stabbed man staggers to main road.                        |
| 32. Sandra finds a taxi.  |   |
| 33. <u>Radio operator radios taxi driver.</u>                                 | 36. Sandra arrives at West Indian's.                          |
| 34. <u>Driver acknowledges.</u>   | 35. Ambulancemen lift stabbed man into ambulance.             |
| 35. Ambulancemen lift stabbed man into ambulance.                             | 37. Ambulance drives away.                                    |
| 36. Sandra arrives at West Indian's flat.                                     | 39. Stabbed man in mortuary.                                  |
| 37. Ambulance drives away.  | 40. Sandra arrested in West Indian's.                         |
| 38. <u>Sandra washes off blood stains.</u>                                    | 41. She is escorted to police car.                            |
| 39. Stabbed man in mortuary.  | 42. <u>Street at dawn.</u>                                    |
| 40. Sandra arrested in West Indian's flat.                                    | 43. <u>Another street at dawn: people waking.</u>             |
| 41. She is escorted to police car.  | 44. <u>People going to work.</u>                              |
| 42. <u>Street at dawn.</u>  | 45. Longshot of city.   |
| 43. <u>Another street at dawn: people waking.</u>                             |   |
| 44. <u>People going to work.</u>  |   |
| 45. Longshot of city.   |   |

(Underlined scenes were rejected)



they had both been shot in the same pub which thus foreclosed the intended option that 'Sandra' had left one pub to cry alone in another. The girl had also discovered 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' together in his flat a little later in the original sequence, and this was considered to provide a more likely motivation for the crying in the pub, so one of the earlier permutations for the middle of part three looked like this:

11. Sandra in Charlie's flat, having slept with him.
10. Indian restaurant (showing Charlie, the West Indian and Sandra enjoying a meal together).
14. Sandra with two dossers in the street.
15. Inside the dossers' house: Sandra pockets the knife.
24. Sandra soliciting in the street.
12. Sandra wandering through streets and alleyways,
16. - and walks towards Charlie's flat.
17. - and discovers him with Cross-eyed Anne.
23. Sandra crying alone in pub.
21. Social worker visits sister.
20. Sandra and the West Indian walk towards his flat.
13. Sandra discovers Charlie and Cross-eyed Anne together again, this time in a pub.
18. - she tries to telephone her sister.
19. Sister receives call
25. Sandra in pub where Charlie and friends are playing pool ...

This arrangement appeared to be quite logical, providing the audience accepted that the 'Social worker's' visit (sc.21) was a parallel or concurrent event and that many of the conjunctions involved jumps in time. The sequence also had a number of more serious difficulties though, first of all there was no reason why the girl should have taken up with the two 'Dossers'. The audience would not have seen these characters before so there was no connective with any a priori evidence, and at that juncture the girl's relationship with 'Charlie' would seem to be quite healthy (hence there was no motivation for 'Sandra' to go off with the 'Dossers'). The editor argued that there was a demonstrable time-jump between scenes 10 and 14, indicated by the girl's change of



clothes and the fact that the restaurant scene was set at night whereas the 'Dossers' scene was day, so the option of assuming that 'Sandra' had met the 'Dossers' under a range of different circumstances remained open. The producer nevertheless felt that if there was such a time-jump then its duration was not clear. The 'Dossers' scenes could, for example, be occurring the next day, in which case one would still be left with the problem of motivation in relation to 'Sandra's' apparently secure position with 'Charlie' in the restaurant scene. The two men consequently experimented with putting some of the reservoir of shots of the girl wandering about different alleyways either side of the 'Dossers' sequence such that it would be more definitively separated from the restaurant scene. It could thus serve as an example of the kind of event which might occur as 'Sandra' wandered about the streets during the day without becoming locked into the narrative as such. In one version of the sequence the girl would also be shown turning up at the West Indian's flat after a spate of wandering about the streets, and the producer now began to worry that the West Indian might be thematically linked with the dossers for this reason. This interpretation was certainly not intentional, since unlike the dossers, 'Sandra' knew the West Indian well, and regarded his flat as a haven. It was therefore dangerous to link him in any way with the dossers, so the producer and editor started to rethink the whole sequence once again.

#### Permutation two

The reason for including the Dossers' sequence was partly to introduce another element of degradation in the girl's life, and partly to establish the fact that she carried a knife (since she picks one up in the slum house). The editor, and indeed the writer, had nevertheless felt that



this sequence was becoming something of a red herring, so a subsequent reorganisation produced the following:

11. Sandra in Charlie's flat, having slept with him	Day
10. Indian restaurant	Night
24. Sandra soliciting in street	Day
16. - and walks towards Charlie's flat	"
17. and discovers him with Cross-eyed Anne	"
23. Sandra crying alone in pub	"
12. Sandra wandering through alleyways	"
18. She tries to telephone her sister	Night
19. Sister receives call	"
25. Sandra in pub where Charlie and friends are playing pool .....	"

Thus the 'Dossers' scene had been lost and all the action neatly telescoped into one day after the restaurant scene the night before (providing scene 23 was taken as a lunch-time session in the pub). The 'Social worker's' visit to the sister had been temporarily omitted from this arrangement, but since it was relatively free of the narrative it could be inserted in any of several places. 'Sandra's' return to the West Indian's flat (sc.20) had also been left out, however, and this could not be moved about with such ease since the producer felt that some form of motivation was needed for the action. Hence it was suggested that the walk back to the West Indian's flat should be inserted between scenes 19 and 25 along with scene 23. After discovering 'Charlie' with 'Cross-eyed Anne' in his flat, the girl would then be shown wandering (merably) about the alleyways, after which she eventually tries to telephone her sister. This desperate call having failed, the girl would then be seen crying alone in the pub after which she (presumably) meets the West Indian and goes home with him (for support).

This arrangement was judged to work quite well as a narrative, but it proved to be untenable because the walk back to the West Indian's flat was a day scene whereas the telephone sequence was set at night. This would have wrecked the connotation that everything after the restaurant



scene had happened during the course of one day, and even if this had been sacrificed the change from day to night and back again was felt to contradict the rhythm which had been built up from the start of the third part - 'Time doesn't jump around like that', the producer commented. The most serious problem with this second permutation was the loss of the scene where 'Sandra' discovers 'Charlie' with 'Cross-eyed Anne' in the pub. (sc.13). This had originally been the first of two occasions on which the girl had found the couple together, and was far more aggressive on 'Sandra's' behalf. The producer wanted to retain this as a character-clue to show that the girl did have an aggressive streak, despite the element of provocation in the scene, and without it the second discovery of the couple in 'Charlie's' flat may have seemed less credible. While shooting the second discovery the actress had argued that she would already have suspected that she would find the couple together (because she had found them together before) and the scene was played as if 'Sandra' was almost resigned to the fact that she had lost 'Charlie's' affection; after the initial threats and shouts the girl puts up little resistance. If the discovery in the pub was removed, the second time 'Sandra' finds 'Cross-eyed Anne' alone with 'Charlie' would therefore effectively become the first time as far as the audience was concerned, and the overall feeling of the scene would then be given a different - and potentially confusing - context.

#### Permutation three

In order to retain the first discovery of 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' together in the pub a new line of thought was explored which involved using the 'Social worker's' visit to the girl's sister as a passage-of-time indicator instead of a piece of parallel action. By placing it after the



restaurant scene and before the discovery in the pub the producer hoped to imply that a certain amount of time had passed between these last two scenes in which 'Sandra's relationship with 'Charlie' could have had the opportunity to break up. Two versions of this new idea were then tried out:

#### Version One

11.	Sandra in Charlie's flat	Day
10.	Indian restaurant	Night
21.	Social worker visits sister	Day
13.	Sandra discovers Charlie and Cross-eyed Anne in pub	Night
24.	Sandra soliciting in street	Day
12.	She wanders around alleyways	"
14.	(meets) dossers in street	"
15.	- and goes home with them	"
16.	Sandra walks towards Charlie's flat	"
17.	- and discovers him with Cross-eyed Anne (again)	"
....		

#### Version two

11.	Sandra in Charlie's flat	Day
10.	Indian restaurant	Night
21.	Social worker visits sister	Day
13.	Sandra discovers Charlie and Cross-eyed Anne in pub	Night
24.	Sandra soliciting in the street	Day
16.	- she walks towards Charlie's flat	"
17.	- and discovers him with Cross-eyed Anne (again)	"
18.	Sandra tries to telephone her sister	Night
19.	Sister receives call	"
23.	Sandra crying alone in pub	Day
20.	Walks back to West Indian's flat	"

Thus in version one the 'Dossers' have been reintroduced, as the producer explained, to act as a sign that the girl is beginning to 'crack up' after 'Charlie' has initially left her. In this position the 'Dossers' scene was also felt to punctuate the sequence and imply that more time has passed between the first and second discoveries of 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' together. In the second version the same idea applies, except that without the 'Dossers' the soliciting scene (sc.24) should then be taken as occurring during the day following scene 13.



Both these versions have extended the time-scale once again, since either arrangement covers at least three days. This is because both the restaurant and 'Sandra's' first discovery of the couple together are night scenes whereas her crying in the pub is ostensibly taking place in the daytime. Hence in version two one is moving into a fourth day after the girl's (night-time) telephone call to her sister, which also means that the crying in the pub cannot be as a direct result of the failed telephone call (since it is at least half a day later).

#### Permutation four

The re-sequencing of part three had been left in abeyance for a few days while possible savings were sought elsewhere in the film, but on their return to the examination of the last part of the film the producer and editor decided that 'Radical' would be the word for the day. Radical it was, for one of the main changes to be introduced was to reverse the order in which the two discoveries of the errant couple were made. One of the first arrangements in this set looked like this:

11.	Sandra in Charlie's flat	Day
10.	Indian restaurant	Night
24.	Sandra soliciting in street	Day
16.	- she walks back towards Charlie's flat	"
17.	- and discovers him with Cross-eyed Anne	"
23.	Sandra alone in pub, crying	"
12.	Sandra walking through alleyways	"
21.	Social worker visits sister	"
20.	Sandra and West Indian walk towards his flat	"
13.	Sandra discovers Cross-eyed Anne with Charlie in pub: fight.	Night

This sequence therefore enabled both discoveries to be made during the same day, which then meant that it would be more legitimate to start cutting out some of the scenes altogether and thus reduce the sequence's overall running time. It was also felt to be legitimate to reverse the order of scenes 17 and 13 since 'Sandra's' anger in the latter could then



be justified by her previous discovery of the couple at home, whereas her resignation at finding them together here could be interpreted as incredulity or despair with reference to the fact that 'Cross-eyed Anne' had already had an affair with 'Sandra's' husband (and was repeating this treachery with the girl's new lover).

In seeking material which could be safely cut, the producer suggested cutting straight from scene 21 (the 'social worker's' visit) to scene 13 (the fight in the pub), thus losing the walk to the West Indian's flat. This could be done, he thought, because the 'Social worker' scene was built around references to the girl's increasing degradation, and the fight in the pub over 'Charlie' could then be used to reinforce this idea. The producer also suggested losing scene 24 ('Sandra' soliciting in the street), but the editor argued that this was an essential scene because it provided a 'hard cut' from the restaurant and established that the girl was walking from her pitch to 'Charlie's', and not from the restaurant to his flat; a sequence which would have been very confusing as the restaurant was night and 'Charlie's' flat day, with 'Charlie' appearing in both scenes.

Both men felt that something ought to happen as a direct result of the 'Pub fight' (sc.13) before they moved into the next day, and the suggestion was made of bringing back the walk to the West Indian's flat here to impute the idea that the girl had sought help or sympathy from him. Unfortunately, the problem of day/night continuity applied again since scene 13 was night and scene 20 day. 'People are pre-conditioned about night and day now', the editor argued, 'the audience is more sophisticated; they know enough about continuity to pick up incongruous juxtapositions.' At one point the editor suggested scrapping most of the scenes between the restaurant and the pub fight by recutting the former to end on 'Charlie's' line:



'Fuck off and leave her alone' (which he delivers as the West Indian tries to invite 'Sandra' home with him). This aggressive dialogue could then act as a bridge to the aggression of the pub fight, but in cutting out the intervening scenes one would lose the element of sadness in the girl's decline.

As I mentioned above, one of the major problems was in maintaining a balance between the sad decline and the aggression, both of which were facets of the real girl's life, and both of which needed to be held in tension - one against the other - in order to maintain a dramatic balance as a narrative. The structure of the film at this point could not, however, take the form of a simple set of opposing events because the aggressive content was generally unidimensional (occurring as discrete events) whereas the 'sad decline' was two-dimensional (occurring as a result of discrete events). The other major problem was that of maintaining night/day continuity, and one scene in particular had constantly generated both of these problems. 'Our concern is how best to cut the sad decline together with the aggressive facets without having the sad decline arrested by that aggression', the producer explained at the time, 'and the main aggressive event is the pub fight,' i.e. scene 13. The editor agreed: 'What is out of context all the way through each permutation is the pub fight, plus possibly the walk back to (the West Indian's flat). If you remove these two scenes then it would work.'

The producer did not want to lose the scene if he could possibly help it, for apart from its essential content it was regarded as one of the better scenes of the film on a technical level. It was this scene which had been shot without the genuine customers in the pub being fully aware of the nature of the action, and as a result it had been considered to be one of the more truly naturalistic scenes. The continuing demands of 'Film



reality' in contradistinction to 'Real reality' which had operated throughout the resequencing of part three were nevertheless forcing the issue such that one of the near-final permutations took the following form:

11.	Sandra in Charlie's flat	Day
10.	Indian restaurant	Night
24.	Sandra soliciting in street	Day
12.	Sandra walking through alleyways	"
21.	Social worker visits sister	"
23.	Sandra alone in pub crying	"
16.	- she walks back to Charlie's	"
17.	- and discovers him with Cross-eyed Anne	"
18.	Sandra telephone's sister	Night
19.	Sister receives call	"
25.	Sandra in pub where Charlie and friends are playing pool	"
26.	- they stagger out of pub	"
27.	- into Charlie's flat	"
28.	Drunken party ....	"

Here 'Sandra's' crying in the pub (scene 23) had changed from being a result of her discovery of 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' together to being a parallel illustration of the information given in the 'Social worker' scene. In the latter the dialogue had described the girl's downhill path:

SISTER

Our Sandra's cracking up, Mr. Coleman, she really is.  
Living rough, taking them pills.

SOCIAL WORKER

What pills?

SISTER

I don't know. A friend of mine saw her the other day,  
and Sandra asked her for some pills. She were in a  
right bad way: filthy dirty, scabs all over her face.

The cut from this to the 'Crying in the pub' scene therefore illustrated this dialogue as a generalized statement rather than as a particular result of a known incident, which the producer felt helped to extend the notion that 'life was going on' beyond the text. The girl could then appear to leave the pub to walk back to 'Charlie's' as part of a continuous sequence



because she had, the producer thought, the same air of dejection in both scenes (even though this conjunction had not been specifically planned, and the actress was actually wearing different shoes in either scene - a discontinuity which the two men felt could be legitimately 'cheated' through). The rest of the sequence could then proceed according to the original script, with 'Sandra' desperately trying to telephone her sister. Instead of going to the West Indian's for help after the failure of the 'phone call, the girl would then be shown ending up at a pub later in the evening, 'seeking light relief' according to the editor's theory, which just happened to be the pub where 'Charlie' and his cronies had gone too.

Both the walk to the West Indian's and the 'Pub fight' had therefore been missed out, and both the producer and the editor reluctantly decided that this arrangement would probably have to suffice. The latter nevertheless remained unconvinced about placing the 'Pub crying' scene (sc.23) after the (Social worker's) visit (sc.21) - 'We don't really know why she is crying like that,' he argued, to which the producer replied:

Actually it doesn't matter if the audience is intrigued to know why, and in fact that can be a good thing; you've got to respect the audience, and besides, people will be referring back to the whole substance of the film rather than the immediately preceding or succeeding scenes ... you need to understand the whole film rather than individual bits of it.

#### The final permutation

Having decided that the 'Pub fight' scene would have to go (which would also save about two minutes in the running-time) the editor still felt uneasy about the construction of part three. Then early one morning he suddenly thought of a possible solution and drove into the studios at about half-past seven to try it out on the Steenbeck.



In nearly every permutation which had been tried, the one section which had remained undisturbed was the lead up to the stabbing, the event itself and its aftermath. This sequence of events had been to some extent determined by the original sequence which it sought to reconstruct; There had been a drunken party involving a relatively large number of people, and some sort of explanation seemed to be required in order to gather all these people together in 'Charlie's' flat prior to the stabbing itself. This explanation was rooted in the fact that the group had all been together in the pub playing pool, from which they had all been prematurely - and bodily - ejected and thus motivated to continue the merrymaking elsewhere. One of the features of the 'Poolgame' scene (cc.25) had been that 'Sandra' was tagging along with the rest of the group rather than being a welcome member of it. 'Charlie' had not paid any attention to her (because he was notionally with 'Cross-eyed Anne' by that time) and she had resorted to soliciting 'Max' and his companion instead.

The editor nevertheless perceived that the group's walk out of the pub could perform much the same function of establishing the motivation for the party and the general mood of the participants. The initial shots of the group showed them in a city street at night, and they were apparently drunk (because of their boisterous shouting and staggering) so it would be fair to assume that they had all been together in a pub. The 'Poolgame' scene could thus be released to serve another purpose, and its meaning subtly changed. By placing it much earlier in the sequence, before 'Charlie's' relationship with 'Cross-eyed Anne' had been established, the 'Poolgame' scene could then be used to (a) plant the seeds of 'Sandra's' break-up with 'Charlie' and thus make his relationship with 'Cross-eyed Anne' more credible later (since in the 'Poolgame' scene 'Charlie' is



more interested in the game than he is in 'Sandra'; it is only in the walk out of the pub that he is definitely shown with 'Cross-eyed Anno'). When 'Sandra' later discovers the couple together in 'Charlie's' flat her apparent resignation and/or submission to the fact would also therefore be more credible given that the earlier discovery of the couple in the pub (scene 13) had been omitted. As a night scene, placing the 'Poolgame' before the girl's return to 'Charlie's' could also be used to (b) extend the duration between the happy episode at the restaurant and the discovery of the couple together some time later, rather than the next day as had been the case with some of the permutations - a situation which may have seemed less believable. The fact that the only daytime scene between the two night scenes (the restaurant and the poolgame) would not be that showing the girl soliciting in the streets could also help to imply that (c) 'Sandra' had spent all day soliciting and that (d) even this had proved to be unsuccessful, since she had not been shown with any men and, indeed, was still trying to drum up custom during the poolgame in the evening. This was felt to strengthen the intended connotation that the girl's life was rapidly declining, which thereby provided a stronger motivation for (e) 'Sandra's' visit to the West Indian's flat the next morning and also (f) her crying in the pub at lunchtime.

Apart from all this, the introduction of the character who was to be stabbed - 'Max' - at an earlier point in the film would also help to establish that 'Sandra' knew him prior to the party. On a point of dramatic structure 'Max' would not therefore look as if he had simply been imported into the narrative in order to be killed, since his first appearance would now be towards the beginning of part three instead of towards the end; and on a point of authenticity the original girl had



known the man whom she stabbed prior to the immediate events which led up to that attack.

The 'cheating' of the position of scene 25 in this way proved to be the key for which the producer and editor had been looking. The sequencing of part three was now deemed to 'work', and scenes like the 'Dossers' and the girl's first discovery of the couple in the pub had now become redundant such that the overall running-time could be reduced to just under 80 minutes (or about 1½ minutes overlength).

#### FINAL STAGES

Working within the constraint of the time-slot and according to the precepts of 'Film reality', the producer and his editor had satisfied themselves that DUMMIE now existed as a logical sequence of events. As the material had been modified through the process of editing it had become less of a reproduction of fact but more of a distillation of truth insofar as the system of representation which had been used to structure and form the material had produced a true model of the producer's intentions - despite and because of those modifications. By the beginning of August the film consequently existed as a 'Roughcut' and the producer was ready to start showing it to different people. These people included the producer's wife, the department's executive producer and the controller; the writer, casting director and the main actress, of whom more in a moment. One or two 'outsiders' also saw the film at this stage, including another editor and a researcher from a different television company who was doing some background work on a proposed documentary about the making of programmes like DUMMIE and (he let slip) the producer's responsibility in so doing. The reason for mentioning the latter is that this researcher was the first person to see the film cold; that is, without any real idea of its content, so that viewing was a significant test as far as the producer was concerned. Even in its



unfinished state the film impressed this researcher, but most interestingly he assumed that it had finished at the end of part one and was quite surprised that there was another two reels to go. He was not perhaps as surprised as the producer and the editor at this occurrence, although part one is an entity in itself insofar as it tells the story of a young deaf girl's (successful) struggle against misfortune in winning the heart of the personable young middle-class boy. There would be less chance of making this mistake during the transmission of the film because the first two parts would end with a caption saying, 'End of part one' or 'End of part two', and the producer subsequently decided to open the last two parts with captions repeating the film's title (i.e. 'Dummy - part two' and 'Dummy - part three').

On seeing the roughcut the casting director had this to say:

Excellent; but heavy going. There were certain scenes where - even though I'd read it - I couldn't look at it. The motel bit is awful (i.e. the content, not the production), that's the bit you remember ..... it was absorbing, and the performances were very good; (the main actress) was unbelievable (i.e. 'astounding'). You have to forgive the age bit at the beginning, but you can't have it all ways, and as a first impression I don't have any real criticisms ... I would have to see it again to get any proper objective feelings about it though.

One of the reasons for the casting director's desire to see the film for a second time was that she was watching it with a specific purpose in mind; to work out the order of actors' credits, so she was not watching it purely as an objective viewer. She did, however, consider that the film had maintained the producer's intention vis-a-vis the script, which was a view shared by the writer himself after his viewing of the roughcut:

I think it's achieved almost everything that (the producer) and I set out to achieve, and it's terribly rare for that to happen ... I think it's got the decline and the feeling of the character together with keeping the sympathy for the girl. All the things that I cherished are there.



Given the research which the writer and producer had undertaken in Bradford with the original family, the former considered that the film had proved to be 'An astonishingly faithful representation; it is very near, as near as you can get to making someone's life into a film.' He did not consider that there had been any drastic changes from the original script, and felt that scenes such as the opening sequence (where the location had been established) and events such as 'Sandra's' meeting with the 'Doctors' did not damage the film by their absence. All in all, the writer was most afraid that the film would escape the critical comment which he felt it deserved, especially in view of the fact that the BBC had been running some repeats of classic plays like UP THE JUNCTION as part of their anniversary celebrations. 'People might have been bludgeoned (by these programmes) by the time DUMY is shown,' he pointed out, 'and I hope they don't miss what I think is an astonishing job.'

The main actress's reaction after her first viewing was more reserved.

She felt 'disappointed' with her own performance, which - far from being false modesty - is a reflection of the difficulty of being objective about a character one has played; especially in view of the actress's continuous involvement during her research period and throughout the shoot. 'I don't think the film shows the effort which actually went into making it,' she commented, 'although I suppose it shouldn't if it's good.' Apart from herself she thought the acting was excellent, but was initially quite alarmed by some of the changes which had occurred during the editing:

When I first saw the pool game where it is I had a bit of a shock, since I thought they had rejected the whole of the rest of that sequence, but when I realised what had been done I was quite impressed. Also the flashback (in the stabbing sequence) works very well; I hadn't fully understood (the producer's) intentions at that



stage, but I can see that it works now, and the psychological unfolding of the character works better than I'd feared - also the humour, although the blood isn't very good sometimes.

With reference to the flashback in the stabbing scene, the producer had commented on another occasion:

I knew that I had that flashback up my sleeve if I had to use it, and that's why I had (the actress) slide along the wall like that at the time. I'd worked this out with her, but had not discussed it with the editor. People on the shoot didn't always understand how you can cut a selection of shots down and re-order them so that you can get the same bit of information across. I knew I had various options; I could have started the film with the girl as a twelve-year-old for instance, or started with the murder and worked backwards. People you are working with don't always understand that, so they get anxious if they see a certain bit is missing, or only half-covered - I take these options for granted because of my experience in the cutting room, where it's all a question of balance. If the film works it's because of the balance; a set of balances between being too sentimental and too hard on the girl - you have to work out a balance for the character, the editing and the film to make it acceptable. Once you've reached that degree of acceptance you can then start to expand people's horizons. I've learned a lot about rhythm and so on from making commercials, and an old advertising trick is that you can't give people all the information immediately, so you give them a basis upon which they can build the new information.

Receptable might be a better word to use, because by 'acceptable' the producer did not mean that he was trying to make different characters conform to particular norms; only the mode of their descriptions needed to do this in order that new information could be synthesised from a series of balanced dichotomies. Within all the constraints surrounding the planning, shooting and editing of the film this balance had therefore been sought in order to make the film receptable as a communicative artifact. The producer had, in other words, tried to encode the information in such a way that it was possible to decode it in an equivalent form which could, and did, mean that much of the original content was modified or lost altogether. The sheer weight of material in the original script had been a general *bete noir* throughout the shooting and editing and a good deal of this had inevitably



fallen by the wayside. Hindsight nevertheless reveals the curious paradox that the results of eight days' shooting had been lost during the editing; eight days which the producer had badly needed during the very tight shooting-schedule.

### Titles

Titles and captions can be used as part of the 'fine-tuning' of a film's receptability to denote precise pieces of information. They are not part of the narrative, but refer to it in the same way as a voice-over narrator signposts particular directions. As non-naturalistic devices they were kept to a minimum in DUMFY, but the producer considered that three captions were necessary in addition to the title itself and the credits.

The first of these was worded as follows:

THIS IS A TRUE STORY

THE EVENTS TOOK PLACE BETWEEN 1950 and 1975

This was superimposed upon the opening shots of the funeral after 55 seconds and was followed by another caption saying '1950' over the next scene of 'Mother' waiting in the hospital corridor. This therefore established the period for the first few scenes after the funeral (which was a 'flash-forward to 1971') and the assumption ought then to have been that the film progressed at varying rates through to 1975 at the end. Here a closing caption was used, which in its final form said:

AFTER A TERM OF IMPRISONMENT CANDRA RETURNED HOME  
SHE IS AT PRESENT UNEMPLOYED

This was superimposed upon the closing shot of the tenement square, ten seconds after the police car had left the frame. Both the executive producer and the controller had wanted to include such a statement, and had argued that it could even be longer since they had both taken the film 'very seriously' according to the producer; comparing it with programmes like



GALE IS DEAD and, inevitably, CATHY COME HOME. They had not wanted to 'throw away' the programme by failing to reinforce the fact that it was a true story, and as I mentioned above (p. ) there was also an element of self-protection in using the caption to disclaim the responsibility of having simply made up the story in general, or of including gratuitous violence in particular (since there had been an argument that the violence was not gratuitous because it was a reproduction of fact). The producer himself wanted to include such a caption too, providing that it was fairly brief:

I particularly wanted to put a note in at the end in this (the final) form) because, first of all, I don't want to give away too much more information; I want people to ask 'How long did she get?' and so on. I don't want to wrap it too conclusively and in that form the statement is very open-ended and full of innuendo .... I like that last shot anyway; it's so empty. What's good about that shot is that it is a thinking shot which gives a bit of air. When the police car goes I'd like to leave that shot for a little while before bringing in the credits, so that when the caption explaining about the story comes up it really does make the whole thing very, very serious. Then we'll roll our captions (i.e. the credits) up without imposing ourselves on it, as if to say that 'we are secondary to the idea'.

At one point the producer had toyed with the idea of not having this caption at all in order to leave the film even more open-ended, and the idea of having a half-hour panel discussion after the programme had also been mooted to enable a studio audience to put questions to the programme-makers in response to its deliberate inconclusivity. The producer admitted that this idea would be good for his own career; 'A whole evening of me!', but it would also overstate the case, he felt, and would have been very difficult to organise in terms of the network. One of his previous films had deliberately been left open in this way, but the producer explained that with DUMMY a closing caption was more necessary:



I left HINI in the air, but what this caption does is to remind you that it is a true story; it reminds you that everything that you have seen has been true. It means that the girl has been in jail; that she's out and nothing is going to be done for her; in fact she could probably be back on the game again.

The content and form of the main title and credits had also been the subject of discussions between the producer, a staff titles designer and the casting director:

Both (the editor) and I agree that it should be kept simple. I don't want the titles to impose upon the film and they will be laid over action anyway. The titles man and myself have agreed that 'Dummy' is a fat-sounding word, though, so it will fill a large part of the screen but it will appear as a soft cut; I won't bang it in as you would if the film was called 'Censored' or 'Fire', for instance, I want to ease it on and off over what is after all a graveyard scene. We argued whether to have the titles in yellow or white and agreed upon the latter. The title '1950' will have something of the style of the period in its lettering, and I will use a roller caption for the end credits since there are a lot of them and it would simply take too long to fade one in and fade out to another. (The casting director) helped there, and we have given (the main actress) a full credit on her own, then there are the three children and then a 'with' followed by about ten actors whom I thought played senior parts, but I'm not saying which parts they played. I'd like to have identified them but we haven't got the time; that's a hard decision to make and it's unfortunate. Next there is an 'and' followed by the smaller parts. (The casting director) and (the P.A.) are both getting credits which is unusual. Sound and camera assistants don't usually get credits either, but I'm giving them one in smaller typefaces with the cameraman and soundman.

These decisions had been taken during the middle of August, and it was also at this time that the producer started to work out some initial plans for publicising the programme. I would, however, like to deal with the publicity under a separate section (see p. ), and the controller's recommendation to make three cuts in the film, which occurred at this time too, has already been discussed above (pp. ). I will therefore move on to the last major phase in the construction of DUMMY, which was the dubbing of the soundtrack.



Dubbing

There had been a final cutting meeting following the removal of the censored scenes on September 11th to ensure that the visual elements of the film all fitted together in a fixed and final form. There then followed a period of 'track laying', a mechanical process carried out by the editor in which all the soundtrack was fitted in level synchronisation with the appropriate pictures and linked with related tracks such as traffic-noise or 'roomtone'. All the separate tracks then had to be dubbed together, or blended to form just one continuous soundtrack. Having been asked about his propositions for the dub, the producer replied that:

At every stage in the film there are opportunities to add to it or to detract from it. You must always add to it. The simple answer is that I intend to make the film better in the dub. I can even up the sound to get the balance that I want, and sometimes I can use effects, but the purpose is to improve it; to make it into a film.

DUMBY was dubbed in an independent dubbing theatre in Oxford Street in two and a half days at the beginning of October. Since the hire rate was £32/hour time was of the essence once again, so the 'pre-mix' of the dialogue and effects tracks was carried out within the first two days and the 'final mix' completed in just one morning.

The people involved in this process were the producer, the editor (who functioned as the dubbing editor here), his assistant, the theatre's director (who functioned as dubbing mixer) and his assistant. The dubbing mixer was probably one of the best-known technicians in the business, having worked on a vast number of productions for both the BBC and ITV as well as many independent productions (even including the PADDINGTON BEAR animated series). The theatre itself was a large, darkened room equipped



with comfy swivel chairs so that it could double as a preview theatre when necessary. These chairs faced a 4' x 5' screen below which was an illuminated footage display from which the exact position of any section of the film could be read at any point, and on either side of this were two monitor speakers. At the back of the room was an insulated voice-over booth, in which a narrator or commentator could set and record speech while synchronizing this with the film which could be seen through a double-glazed window. In front of this was the control desk, from which the mixer could control the projector and the sound desks which were housed in a separate room behind the theatre itself. This 'service room' contained a bank of 16mm sound stock players on which all the separate tracks could be laid to be mixed together through the front desk, plus a number of effects systems such as continuous loop players. In the theatre, next to the control desk, stood two record decks which could be used to play standard library recordings such as traffic noise or birdsong. The track-laying process had provided the mixer with a series of selected but 'raw' tracks which could not be mixed together according to a number of different requirements. As the sound-recordist had explained, his job had been to provide recordings of a uniformly high quality, separated as clearly as possible from one another to provide the maximum scope for their manipulation together during the dub. These tracks could now be faded in and out, adjusted for gain, 'brightened' or 'softened' to help lend perspective and depth to the visual image, or they could be mixed with effects tracks to provide atmosphere or to identify particular pieces of information. The general pattern of the process was to view a section of the film, rewind it (at running speed) and then add or subtract tracks and modify them as needs be. Normally about seven tracks would be involved in any one section, of which three of these might be dialogue. The first day



was primarily concerned with dialogue, and the next few paragraphs trace some of the decision-making which occurred during its manipulation.

Premix (1) - dubbing the dialogue

Although the producer would ultimately be given the benefit of the doubt, the decision-making during the dubbing process was characterised by an exchange of views based upon perceptions of a range of different requirements. For example, the film opens on 'Mother's' funeral, into which is cut what is then a flashback to 'Sandra 2' learning speech-sounds with her mother. On returning to the funeral, the clergyman's speech originally came in 'hard'; chiefly because he had just started a new sentence, and the producer thought about retaining this as a direct contrast to the young girl's soft speech-sounds in order to emphasise her deafness. The mixer nevertheless felt that the sudden increase in sound produced an unnecessarily heavy jolt in the soundtrack and suggested that the clergyman's speech should be faded back in rather than cut back in 'hard'. The producer agreed to this as a valid point with respect to the aesthetic form of the film, even though such a fade is strictly non-naturalistic. By contrast, in the same funeral scene the clergyman is seen reading the service in both close and longshots, and here the sound-level was adjusted according to a judgement of logic insofar as the speech was reduced in volume for the longshot to lend perspective in proportion to the apparent distance of the subject from the camera.

Sometimes the sound could be altered in order to transfer a particular piece of information irrespective of the original content. Where the young girl is being taught speech-exercises at school, for example, the teacher refers to her by name (thus establishing the name 'Sandra' for the first time), but the word 'tree' which the teacher is trying to get the child to



repeat tended to be harder and clearer than the girl's name, so the treble frequencies in the latter were boosted and those in the former reduced in order to reverse the original emphasis and to focus an audience's attention upon the more important piece of information.

As a general rule the producer tried to provide a contrast in the soundtracks of each scene as well as their visual content such that information could be extracted by comparison with juxtaposed data, but dubbing can also be used to provide important connectives between scenes. Early in the film 'Sandra 1' is shown at school followed by a scene of her at home where she fails to react to the sound of a jug breaking on the floor. Here some 'Ooooh-oooh' noises which the child had been making in the first scene were redubbed on to the second in order to reinforce the idea that it was the same child in addition to establishing that she was happily occupying herself on the floor as 'Mother' prepares the tea.

In this second scene the producer wanted the sound of the jug crashing to the floor to be fairly dramatic on contrast to the child's non-reaction, but the sound of 'Mother' laying the table had originally been almost as loud and 'bright' as the crash itself. The sound of the crash was therefore taken from a different, brighter track than that which had originally accompanied the visuals, and the sound of the knives and forks being arranged was taken down proportionately.

Dubbing can also eradicate discontinuities in the soundtrack. In the scene where 'Sandra 2' is being taught how to say her own name at school the roomtone on the wide shot was of a slightly different tone to that on the close-up although it should have been constant because the move to the close-up was an arbitrary rather than a motivational sign. Such a discontinuity can be removed by either artificially extending one of the



tracks via a loop to cover both shots, or by running one of the tracks through a graphic equaliser until it sounds the same as the other.

Discontinuities can also be deliberately introduced in order to signify a change of perspective, mood or time. Between the scene showing 'Sandra 2' being taught speech exercises at home and the following scene of 'Sandra 3' at school (where she is punished for using sign-language) there was notionally a six-year time-gap. The producer therefore proposed that the dialogue in the second scene should come in hard, without, that is, fading in gradually, and this could then help to impute the idea that a time-jump had occurred as a result of an obvious discontinuity in both the visuals and the sound.

To enhance this punctuation the producer had also thought of freezing the last few frames of the previous scene such that it assumed the status of a still photograph and something of a photograph's connotation in being a recording of 'things past' or a memory. It was felt that this idea could help to signal the time-leap, but it was eventually rejected on the grounds that 'Sandra 2' did not move very much anyway towards the end of the scene such that a frozen frame would lose much of its impact (plus such an arbitrary device could have run counter to the naturalistic intent at this point). The idea of coming in hard on the second scene was also felt to be illegitimate given the fact that the preceding scene had also had its soundtrack cut without the use of a fade. Putting two such 'hard' cuts together would perhaps have had the effect of linking the two scenes more strongly than was desired, so the soundtrack of the outgoing scene was eventually softened towards its conclusion - not for its own sake, but in relation to the incoming scene.

Because of the way in which the tracks had been laid down, all the close-up tracking shots of 'Sandra 4' racing in the swimming baths initially



appeared without any soundtrack at all. This could easily be overlaid by taking a track off the master, but as it happened the lack of sound over the close-ups actually seemed to be rather effective to the producer and the editor since this could indicate the girl's own point of view as a deaf swimmer. A recent BRASS TACKS from the BBC has used a similar effect in a film about deaf people - the producer of which was a friend of DUMNY's producer - but in this programme the effect was used several times; arguably reducing its impact. Since there were several close-ups of 'Sandra' swimming the producer felt that any deliberate sound-loss ought to apply to either all of these close-ups or to none of them for the sake of consistency. If, as in the BRASS TACKS film, the sound was lost on all of the close-ups the effect might be diminished, or it might even begin to look contrived, so eventually it was decided not to use the effect at all in this instance.

One problem which could not easily be resolved in the dubbing of part one of the film concerned the dancing scene, where 'Sandra 3' is seen joining in with her mother and sister to dance to a record at home. Like the 'strip' scene in part two, the record was on the original dialogue tracks for this scene since the three women needed to be able to synchronise their movements with the song. When it came to dubbing this scene, the record seemed to be too loud in comparison with the dialogue for the producer, but if the volume of the record was reduced this would also take down the dialogue with it, so in this case the mixer simply had to provide a compromise.

In mixing the dialogue for part two the producer was more concerned with manipulating tracks for specific effects than he had been for part one. In the 'occurring' scene, for example, he wanted the sound-level to build up as the action became more intense to enhance the action itself, and a



similar train of thought operated in dubbing the scene where 'Sandra' brings the petty criminal 'Phil' home and subsequently fights with her mother. In both cases the gain was increased slightly as the scenes progressed, but by contrast the sound could also be reduced in volume in order to play down particular actions. Where 'Ian' is clobbering in the hospital after the scarring incident, for instance, the producer felt that the action was 'over the top', and where the same character is being sick after his return from the pop group's performance, the producer considered that his first retch was believable, but not the second. In both cases the overall effect of the visuals was consequently reduced by holding down the soundtrack.

There are various conventional ways of handling telephone conversations on film. Visually they can be shot as single scenes, where only one of the two people involved appears, indicating the content of the other end of the conversation through such dialogue as 'What's that you say? - He's coming round to see me tonight?' Split-screens have been used, or intercuts between either character. In the sister's call to 'Ian' to find out why he had not been round to see his erstwhile girlfriend he does not appear, partly because the scene already includes an intercut to 'Sandra' herself as the subject of the conversation. 'Ian's' half of the dialogue had nevertheless been recorded as a wildtrack, and this was inserted into the scene during the dub after being scrambled to make it sound more authentic from the sister's point of view. It was not, however, essential for the audience to hear what the boy was saying, so to make it more realistic his conversation was held right down such that it was only barely audible. The editor in fact argued that one should not be able to hear the boy's voice at all during the intercut to 'Sandra' standing by the window because of a space/time distortion, and there was a lengthy discussion over whether to remove the boy's dialogue altogether. In the



and the dialogue was retained, but was almost completely drowned by some overdubbed traffic noise; a compromise which both the editor and producer considered to have worked best of all.

Occasionally, dialogue tracks can have cuts or jumps which cannot be properly covered with fades or additional tracks. This happened during the pub scene where 'Sandra' first meets 'Phil'; the petty criminal, so here a visual cut to a beer tap was introduced to cover a cut in the dialogue (a shot which had actually been taken in a completely different pub). Such an interrelationship between sound and visuals on a structural level was also evident in a scene like the sister's visit to 'Sandra' in the maternity hospital, where the sound-level was dropped at the beginning in order to de-emphasise the relatively unimportant opening conversation and foreground the main dialogue. Similarly, the sound-track on the preceding scene showing 'Phil' being taken away in a police car was brought up a little in order to 'compensate for the rather boring visuals' as the editor put it.

One of the reasons why the sound of the police car could be increased in this way was that there were no other tracks involved, and there were no problems with fluctuating signals. There had, however, been problems with the signal whilst filming the 'Sterilization' scene (where a consultant recommends that 'Sandra' should be sterilised) because the transmission from the actors' radio-mikes had fallen off as they disappeared around a corner. During the dub the producer had wanted to increase the volume slightly as the actors discussed signing some forms in order to emphasise the machinations of bureaucracy involved, but none of the available dialogue tracks could have coped with this because the gain had already been increased to compensate for the fall-off of the original signal. In



increasing the gain in this way the overlaid static had also been increased, and would have reached an unacceptable level had the lines concerning the forms been brought up any further. The producer's intention to emphasise this particular section of the dialogue was therefore thwarted by a purely technical constraint.

The need to adhere to rules of perspective can also constrain intentions. In the scene where the girl's husband arranges her business with the 'Shabby man' the producer originally wanted to foreground the two men's conversation by increasing its level beyond that originally recorded. The detached, businesslike dialogue was felt to be important as it totally ignored any feelings which 'Sandra' may have had about the situation, but this section of the scene 'had been shot with 'Sandra' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' in the foreground, so in order to maintain the perspective the two men's conversation had to remain relatively quiet. In the same scene, where 'Sandra' and the 'Shabby man' return from the alleyway back to the pub, there had originally been a sudden noise from the interior which the mixer argued should be lost. There was some discussion over this because the mixer felt that such a sudden increase in sound would be distracting, and perhaps even unprofessional, but the producer argued that there had been a sudden decrease in sound as the couple left the pub, and that this ought to be balanced by a correlative increase on their return; plus 'the shock as they come back in helps to emphasise the sordidity and will contrast with the funeral.' The funeral was the next scene, and its overall sound-level was reduced in comparison with its appearance at the beginning of the film because, the producer argued, it was now part of the narrative rather than an introductory sequence. The following scene of 'Sandra' by herself in a cafe was also dubbed at a lower level than



recorded 'to emphasize her reflectiveness' and to contrast with the ensuing action where she fights with her husband and 'Cross-eyed Anne'.

In discussing the use of sound in terms of perspective, the producer, editor and mixer also had to take account of different characters' points of view. For example, in the scene where 'Sandra' is being attacked by her husband with a razor the camera was placed outside the room to cover the girl's exit and flight down the stairs. Her screams, which had been recorded inside the room, should then have been dubbed softer than recorded to provide the correct perspective. The mixer, however, pointed out that the screams would still have to be loud enough to attract the attention of the tenant at the foot of the stairs, so the sound-level was kept quite high; high enough to serve as the tenant's P.O.V. as opposed to that of the audience.

In the scene where 'Sandra' discovers 'Charlie' with 'Cross-eyed Anne' in his lodgings they had been watching television, and the soundtrack of the film being shown had subsequently proved to be quite pertinent. At a stage in DUNNY where 'Sandra' had reached a very low ebb, one of the characters in the televised film asked: 'Why do you dislike me?' to which another character replies: 'You're rich, and spoilt and beautiful.' The contrast between this dialogue and 'Sandra's' situation interested the producer, and he wanted his audience to be able to catch this snatch of dialogue without having their attention diverted from the central action. In order to achieve this the television's soundtrack was kept high enough for an audience to hear the appropriate lines, and was then 'cheated' down on 'Sandra's' entrance to divert the attention to the 'real' action. Then after 'Charlie' and 'Cross-eyed Anne' had left the room the television's sound was lost almost completely such that all the attention could be



focused upon the girl crying on the bed. Theoretically, the television's sound should have remained constant throughout, since no-one is seen adjusting the volume, but such a 'Cheat' was felt to be legitimate in the circumstances.

One last example of the kind of decision-making which occurred during the dubbing of the dialogue tracks concerns 'Max's' line after he has been stabbed, where he says: 'Bloody 'ell! She's stabbed us.' The line had originally been included in order to reinforce the fact that he had been stabbed (which may not have been totally clear given the deliberate confusion of the action itself) but the producer wanted the line to be held down to save it from becoming too obvious. The line was not lost altogether because, as the producer explained: 'People with black and-white sets may not have got as much information out of the stabbing as colour viewers, and the dialogue reinforces what has happened.'

#### Premix (2) - dubbing the effects

In the sense in which I am using the term here 'effects' are tracks which are added to the existing soundtrack from the dubbing studio's stock of library recordings; they are not, in other words, tracks which were recorded during the shoot. One such effects track was used for the sound of the 'Neat man's' car as it drove away from the motel. The car which had actually been used had been an automatic, and the sound which it made had in fact sounded rather detached from the action so a library recording of a manual car was dubbed in instead. Similarly, the scene where 'Sandra's' sister telephones 'Ian' had been shot in a quiet backstreet, but the producer wanted his audience to be able to make the connotation that the sister had had to walk some distance to the 'phone box which could thus imply that not only did the family not have their own telephone, but that



the nearest one was some distance away. In order to draw the contrast between the street where the girls lived and that in which the telephone box was situated, some traffic noise from an effects record was therefore dubbed over the existing tracks. The first effects track which was tried here contained some fairly sustained traffic noises, and the producer commented that this 'makes it look like a studio shot'. A track was consequently sought which would help to imply that the telephone box was in a street rather than a busy road, and eventually the producer decided on one which contained a motorbike and the sound of just one car passing by. By contrast, the intercut to 'Sandra' standing by the window in her house was overdubbed with the sound of some children playing outside such that the difference between the two streets would be obvious, plus, as the producer ventures, 'It stops her being quite so isolated; she is looking out of the window at reality now.'

Effects can be used to cover faults or discrepancies in the dialogue tracks as well as operating as discrete signs. A good example of this is the dubbing of a police siren over a section of the scene prior to the drunken party and the stabbing. Here the group of drunks had been staggering back to 'Charlie's' lodgings and 'Cross-eyed Anne' had indulged in a lascivious laugh which the producer felt was out of context. The overdubbing of the police siren was therefore used to mask this laugh as well as indicating 'the times we are living in and the sort of district this is,' as the producer explained.

Other effects introduced included the taxi-driver's intercom conversation as he leaves 'Sandra' at the West Indian's flat after the stabbing (a conversation which had not been recorded at the time because of the absence of the original actor). The tyres of the car which nearly runs



into 'Max' as he stumbles into the main road after being stabbed were made to squeal, and the thumps made by the radiator-cover as the 'Heat man' beats 'Sandra' in the motel were both added from stock recordings (the sound of the girl's head being hit against the wall in the same scene had been achieved at the time by the actor playing the 'Heat man' banging his knee against it).

Two effects tracks were recorded specially in the dubbing theatre. The first of these was the radio broadcast of the football pools results which would be dubbed into the scene near the beginning of the film where the young 'Sandra' is being harassed by her father. For this the producer had tracked down a genuine results-reader, and had booked him to read through a list of results which had been checked with the Football Association for authenticity (given the period; 1952). The reader spent about half-an-hour reading through the list in the dubbing theatre's voice-over booth, for which he was paid about £40, and the recording was then dubbed into the scene through a scrambler to make it sound like an old radio set. The second effect recorded during the dub was the sound of the Detective Chief Inspector's pen scratching on his pad as he wrote out the caution right at the end of the film, and this was achieved by recording the sound of a fibre-tip pen in the voice-over booth as the writer synchronised his movements with the visuals on the display screen.

### The final mix

Having spent two days on the 'pre-mix', the various sections of music could now be added; starting with part two, the most complex reel of the film. Part two opens with 'Ian's' pop group performing in a club and here the producer deliberately brought the music in as a hard cut in contrast to the silence of the 'Part two' caption. Such a cut could help to imply



that the group had been on stage for some time, and that the point at which the scene had opened had been chosen 'at random'. The music could therefore provide a hook to draw the audience back into the film after the commercial break without interrupting an anterior narrative; that is to say a continuous world of 'real reality' being connoted by the film. The separate tracks containing the general hubbub of conversation were, however, faded in gradually here such that the pop-group would be established first and the action second. This, as the producer explained, would 'give the audience time to realise where they were', even though the hard cut on the music should theoretically have applied to the conversation too.

A similar train of thought operated in dubbing the scene where 'Sandra' first meets 'Phil' in a city-centre pub. Here the girl is seen entering the pub with two of her friends, and there was considerable discussion over whether one should hear wafts of music from the pub's interior before one heard the general conversation from inside. The producer wanted his audience to hear the music as the girls opened the pub's door, but the mixer argued that one should hear snatches of sound from the jukebox before the door had been opened. The editor agreed that the music should be faded in gradually as the girls approached the door, to be increased suddenly as the door was actually opened, but the producer felt that this would then distract an audience's attention from the action. 'Even though it is the wrong way round,' he argued, 'I think you should get the conversation first, because the concentration is then on the people rather than the music.' Another compromise solved the problem, since in the finished film the music track is overlaid upon the whole sequence, but without the sudden (and potentially distracting) increase during the transition through the door.



This particular scene presented another minor problem on a technical level as opposed to that of structure. After 'Sandra' had successfully attracted 'Phil's' attention, one of her girlfriends had ad libbed: 'She's done it!' This sounded like a cue for a song to the producer, so the line was held down beneath the general level of pub conversation. Another ad lib from one of the girlfriends was considered to be valuable, however, this being the comment (about 'Phil') that 'I'd rather go home to fish and chips (than him)'. While the former ad lib could be submerged beneath the ambient chatter, it was impossible to apply the reverse process to the second ad lib to make it stand out more clearly because of the situation in which the original recording had been made. The background conversation had been added during the dub since the original dialogue tracks had been recorded relatively cleanly (i.e. without background chatter). This dialogue had consequently been recorded at quite a low level, and more importantly, the actress had not had the ambient noise to punch above. An artificially high playback level would therefore have sounded out of context since only the volume would have been increased and not the tone of voice of someone who was struggling against background noise. Once again the track could only be manipulated as much as was technically feasible as opposed to the amount which the producer had originally intended.

An unexpected constraint which could have operated with respect to this same scene concerned the choice of the music itself. A record which had been popular at the time ('Black is black' by Lon Bravos) had been specifically chosen to be correct for period, but as it happened another version of the song had entered the charts at the time the dub was being carried out. The producer was aware of the potential paradox here, but



since the record on the film had been scrambled (to make it sound as if it were being played on a jukebox some distance from the central action) he decided to risk using it in the hope that the content would not be too noticeable.

Problems also arose over the use of Procol Harum's record 'A Whiter Shade of Pale' during the 'Party' scene prior to the stabbing. Again the record had been specifically chosen to be correct for period, but it had also been chosen as the sort of record which 'Cross-eyed Anne' might have played towards the end of a drunken, sleepy gathering. In using the record as an indicator of a particular mood, the producer did not want to damage this by including any other records. Unfortunately the record ended naturally somewhat short of an appropriate point in the scene, such as 'Cross-eyed Anne's' exit, so there was a danger of allowing the mood to evaporate unless another record could be found or the existing one extended. Since the action could not easily imply that anyone had physically put another record on, the Procol Harum recording was retracked such that it played for a longer period than the original. The mixer then felt that the lyrics had begun to take on an unintendedly pertinent meaning, and the producer thought that the extra length had begun to foreground the record itself. As a particularly well-known record the choice might then have seemed 'too pat, too coy' - as the producer commented - so eventually the record was extended only as far as 'Cross-eyed Anne's' exit, with the last few passages turned right down so that the lyrics were only barely audible.

Dubbing this particular sequence revealed two interesting points. Firstly, where the mixer wanted a track to be only just audible he would often check his work through a very small loudspeaker similar to the type found in domestic receivers;



the studio monitors being far more efficient (especially in low-frequency response) than the average television set. Hence while the sound was dubbed to the highest standards within a professional ethic, due account was also taken of the impoverished viewer. A second observation is less reassuring; one of the ideas put forward for dealing with the problem of the Procol Harum record was to run the whole scene without any records being played at all, such that the scene would proceed in comparative silence. Whether or not it is strictly the case, the mixer and editor certainly believed that this would have been impossible to achieve, not because of any disjuncture in the film, but because after a gap of more than thirty seconds without a sufficiently strong signal, the IBA's automatic transmitters would throw up a 'Fault' card. Furthermore, the editor pointed out, transmission engineers can, and sometimes do, adjust what they take to be poor sound or vision signals when degraded signals have actually been quite intentional.

Despite this possibility, one deliberately silent passage was introduced into the film. During the pre-mix, as I mentioned above, some of 'Sandra's' gurglings from the school scene had been re-dubbed on to the 'Jug-break' scene; partially for reasons of continuity and partially to establish that the child was indeed present as 'Mother' lays the table prior to knocking the jug on to the floor. In the pre-mix these 'Ooooh-oooh' noises had been continued throughout the scene to indicate that the child had been undisturbed by the crash of the jug, but during the final mix the producer experimented with the idea of losing the sound altogether for the child's close-up in order to indicate her P.O.V. as a deaf child. The objection which had been raised against this idea during the dubbing of the swimming baths sequence did not apply as strongly in this case precisely because the swimming baths episode was a



sequence; a set of alternating shots which would have diminished the effect of losing the sound if this was done for each of several close-ups. In the 'Jug-break' scene there was only one close-up of the child, so the effect of losing sound was felt to be more legitimate. In the end the sound was lost for this close-up, but not without making the difficult decision of reversing, so to speak, the proscenium arch to give the 'objective' audience a 'subjective' datum. This was one of the last decisions to be made during the dub, and it was made as time was rapidly running out. The producer nevertheless considered the move very carefully before finalising it, one of the factors involved being that the scene was in danger of being about 'Mother's' irritation over breaking the jug rather than being about the child's deafness, so the added dimension of the subjective loss of sound could help to delineate the central purpose.

#### Publicity plans and the run-up to transmission

Having completed the dub by the beginning of October, and barring any direct intervention by the IBA, the producer now considered that the film existed as a finished entity. During the month before transmission he consequently began to work more closely with ATV's publicity department to sell the film to the press. In this section I am drawing a distinction between publicity which was directly or indirectly generated from within the programme company before transmission and that publicity (i.e. reviews and critical comment) which appeared after the film had been shown.

One form of publicity which was actually precluded during the film's production was the inclusion of sections of the film in a composite trailer which Yorkshire Television was putting together for the autumn schedules. This trailer would be one of those transmitted towards the end of the summer to promote forthcoming new series, feature films and



'Specials', prefaced by an identifying logo and a voice-over such as 'Coming to you from ITV this autumn .....'. The producer had been asked to supply some representative material from DUMFY to be cut into this trailer, and the obvious section to use, he felt, would be the opening sequences showing the young child learning to speak. Unfortunately, neither this section, nor indeed any of the film had been dubbed at the time of the request, and many dissolves and fades had yet to be included. Furthermore the film would remain in a fluid state until after it had been finally approved by the controller and the IBA (apart from alterations which the producer himself might decide to introduce) so there was a possibility of putting something in the trailer which would not in fact be in the finished film. The trailer would nevertheless have been good publicity for DUMFY, and the producer and editor spent some time debating which section or sections of the film might best represent the programme as a whole, assuming that they would eventually appear therein. In the end they decided that it would be very difficult to encapsulate an idea such as the girl's decline in a 30 second composite, or to show any of the individual acts of violence without either pre-determining people's view of the film or positively distorting information. The producer therefore declined the offer to supply a trailer, arguing that 'We'll do it right at the right time.'

One aspect of publicity which could have influenced the production itself was the early appearance of an article about the film which appeared in the now defunct Reveille magazine on August 12th. There is no evidence that this article actually prompted the producer to make any changes in the film, but it certainly oriented his approach to publicity about it.

The Daily Mirror, which had printed the original story about the real girl,



had dispatched a reporter to Bradford during the last week of shooting to take some photographs of the main actress and to write a short piece on the filming. The producer had reluctantly agreed to this at the time, working on the theory that since the Mirror already knew about the film it was pointless not to co-operate. An ATV press officer had nevertheless been on hand, and under her supervision several photographs were taken and interviews given before the reporter went off to write up the piece in his car. The article duly appeared in Reveille (Reveille being part of the Mirror group) and the producer felt that the body of the text had been reasonably accurate and sympathetic. I cannot, however, print what he thought about the headline, which read 'Sandra the killer is now a heroine'. This may have been written by a sub, innocently seeking a tag for the story, but it misrepresented the producer's intentions quite seriously. DUTY's writer was also 'staggered', explaining that he'd never thought of the film in those terms at all, 'I thought the press might pick up on the sex, or the hopelessness of the girl's life, but it never occurred to me that they'd pick up on the "killer" aspect.'

The article appeared just at the time when the producer was starting to plan the 'official' publicity for the film, which he would do through the company's publicity department.

I'm going to see the publicity lady next week to discuss what to do. I want to avoid the Reveille thing here - the writer was quite put out about that; he's never thought that she would be thought of as a killer - we have got to try to avoid that. I would like to try to get the front page of the TV Times, because obviously I want to get people to watch it, but we must make sure that it is not sensationalised in the wrong way. This comes back to (The executive producer's) and (The controller's) attitudes towards the film. They treat it immensely seriously and are not necessarily thinking about big viewing figures - they have said that it is an immensely powerful film and that we are going to have to be very careful with it, which means that we will have to treat the publicity in the same way. At the same time I naturally want people to watch it ... I will send



letters to people who were involved; letters of politeness, and also hustling letters to people who I want to watch for my benefit. Being a freelance I have to do this, and I will also try to write an article for Screen International\* for this reason.

(\*See Screen International for 12th September 1977)

The idea of getting DUMMY on to the front page of the TV Times was not pursued, perhaps because of the content of the film which the producer had subsequently decided was not '(TV Times') kind of story'. A two-page article had nevertheless been prepared for the magazine, with a huge photograph of 'Sandra' at the funeral and a smaller one of her and new husband at the wedding. Apart from mis-spelling the producer's name and giving the wrong credit for the actor playing the husband, this article provided the most important 'official guide' to the film, using up nearly a third of its length with direct quotations from the producer and the film's writer. I would like to examine the specific content of this and other articles in a later section, but for the moment it can be noted that the main article in the TV Times (and the smaller piece attached to the programme list) acted as both a definitive guide and as something of a disclaimer. The article did not abrogate the producer's (or the company's) responsibility, but it heavily emphasised the fact that the film represented a true story and was not, therefore, sensationalising violence or the girl's plight for its own sake. Indeed, the article began with the words: 'Certainly a sense of violence pervades DUMMY, on Wednesday. How else? But the action is never shoddy, never gratuitous.'

As part of the process of selling both the film and a particular interpretation of its content (that is, the preferred reading of DUMMY as a responsible, true but provocative story) the producer also started to arrange private viewings for selected representatives of the press.



Among others, critics from TIME OUT, the DAILY MAIL, TELEGRAPH, GUARDIAN and SUNDAY TIMES all saw the film before transmission, and the producer had spent some time with such interested parties 'explaining and defending' his ideas and intentions.

During the same period in which these previews were being held (at the end of October and the beginning of November), the producer also arranged a viewing for those members of the original production unit who were available at Ilstree. In contrast to the public audience, both this viewing and those set up for the press involved the use of a large projection screen. This does have some relevance in so far as the film was shot for the relatively small screen of domestic television, and it could be argued that the higher definition of a projected image could increase the impact of the film in general, or of scenes like those in the motel sequence in particular - especially when big close-ups are being used. This argument notwithstanding, and bearing in mind the unit's personal and professional involvement, they all seemed to be genuinely impressed with their processed efforts. Indeed, there was some sporadic clapping after the film had finished, which the associate producer considered to be quite unusual for such a 'professional' preview. It is also interesting to note that, during the film's showing, the unit reacted in much the same way and at the same times that my discussion groups did during their viewing some weeks later. The unease generated by the motel sequence, for instance, was quite indistinguishable among these professional viewers from that generated for my non-professional groups.

Having seen the finished product for the first time, various members of the unit nevertheless voiced a number of critical comments. The associate producer expressed 'enormous shock' at seeing Bradford again,



but was surprised at 'how little we actually see of the city'. He also felt that the third reel was a little confusing and that some of the acting was not up to par. One of the main sources of confusion for several members of the unit was the loss of the explanatory scenes concerning 'Sandra's' children. Once again, this was a common objection among the 'non-professional' audience too (neither group being party to the reasons for dropping these scenes; the need to save time during the editing).

On the level of strictly professional criticism the unit was almost unanimous in its praise of the camerawork and editing. One of the sound crew, for example, felt that there was only one really obvious cut, and that was where the girl was shown aiming at a target in the fairground, followed by a cut to the target falling over. 'Actually, I was pleasantly surprised,' commented one person, 'at the time I really couldn't imagine how it was all going to fit together.'

There were two last hurdles for the producer to negotiate before transmission. The first of these was the final viewing of DUEBY for representatives of the IBA. Having ordered, or at least strongly recommended, the three cuts in the film, the controller had subsequently backed it unreservedly, and the IBA eventually accepted that the film should go out. Two riders were nevertheless attached to the transmission; firstly it should be preceded by a warning caption and voice-over. This read as follows:

IN THE DRAMATISED DOCUMENTARY WHICH FOLLOWS SOME VIEWERS  
MAY FIND CERTAIN SCENES DISTURBING

Secondly, the small square symbol which is supposed to indicate that a programme contains disturbing material was held on the screen throughout.

The last hurdle; the 'ultimate test' in the producer's view, was to show the film to the original family. He had maintained contact with them



throughout (and was also to do so after the film had been transmitted) and had travelled up to Bradford in the week before transmission to see the family after the publication of the TV Times article. Some members of the family had been quite miserable about the whole venture during the last few months, but the sister in particular had been reassured by the article and the girl herself had approved of the general tone too. They had, however, expressed the desire not to watch the actual transmission of the film, partly - one strongly suspects - for fear of any immediate repercussions. Indeed, the girl and her sister had been given a holiday in Spain during the period in which DUMY was to be transmitted, partly for their co-operation in the making of the film, and partly for the diplomatic reason of shielding them (and, indirectly, the company) from any local reaction or publicity. It was not, therefore, until after their return from Spain that 'Sandra' and her sister saw the film, which was nearly a week after its national transmission. A number of conclusions can obviously be drawn from the timing of this private viewing, not all of which are entirely complimentary of the procedure, but they also illustrate the enormous personal responsibility of the producer to his sources and the degree of trust which had been inculcated between them. Luckily, the immediate family seems to have 'Appreciated the portrayal' as the producer put it:

(The sister) arrived very tense and uptight, and was tearful throughout, but was relieved by the end. She thought it was fair. ('Sandra') recognised herself and the people in it, and even laughed at some of the events - particularly the (Shabby man) scene. She also clapped at the end of part two (after the motel sequence) which was both surprising and interesting.

DUMY was transmitted, nearly two years after the producer had read the original newspaper article which provided the programme idea, on November 9th 1977. It was sandwiched between a situation comedy called



SPAZIS and a Conservative party political broadcast, and was seen by an estimated thirteen and a half million people (JICTAR figures). The main actress was subsequently nominated as Best Actress by BAFTA and won the Broadcasting Press Guild's award for the best On-Screen Performance. She was also highly commended in the Royal Television Society's annual awards for performance. In addition, DUFFY won the Radiotelevisione Italiana prize in the television drama category at the 1979 Prix Italia, and narrowly missed winning the main Prix Italia award itself. Quoting Sean Day-Lewis in the TELEGRAPH (20.9.79), the film was awarded the former prize after ...

'.... the jury chairman, Mr Keith Williams, BBC Television's Head of Plays, told delegates the ATV production had been given the prize for "the exceptional quality of the acting and production".'



**SECTION THREE**

**A selective analysis of the film**



## Introduction

While writing about the phenomenological film theorist Amédée Ayfre,

Andrew (1976: 249) notes that:

One can examine cinema, he claimed, from the position of its creator (auteur, studio, etc.) and seek the world view of the author, whose intentions become our goal and whose sincerity is our criterion. One can focus instead on the audience and determine this time the effect of the film, the practical change cinema makes in man and his culture. One can, finally, aim at reality itself in its most normal sense, seeking some kind of scientific truth or knowledge in the images. But it is only when we consider film in its totality that we encounter its human truth. The author's intentions are valuable only when they are modified and formed in symbiosis with the world. The film, far from being a cold record of the world, is a record of that symbiotic rapport between intention and resistance, between author and material, mind and matter. The audience alone (including the author when he reviews his film) transforms this dull physical record into a vibrant human reality by experiencing that drama of mind and matter.

In the previous section the focus has been upon the first of these three areas, where I have mapped what might be called the professionalised intuition of the producer and his management of intention and resistance in the making of the film. In the next section the focus will be on the audience's creation of a 'vibrant human reality' - or meaning - from the 'dull physical record' of the text. This leaves the text itself, which as a physical record might lend itself to empirical content analysis.

Such an analysis would nevertheless presuppose that films are physical records or natural objects which can be 'ripped from their genesis,' as Chambers (1974) puts it, 'and analysed in the closed universe of a self-reflexive totality.' In the search for the cinematograph fact



the analyst of film-as-object would be seeking to construct a pure science of meaning; a system of laws governing signification in film. There is no signification in films or television. Television, as John McGrath (1976) wryly comments, is just a piece of furniture, and it derives its meaning at any particular moment only through a 'drama of mind and matter'. More accurately, the cinematographic fact results from a dynamic interaction between sign and receiver, producing a 'multiplicity of subjective interpretations' (Outhwaite, 1975: 35). It is not, therefore, an object to be explained, but a construct to be understood.

While the process of understanding a film is carried out by individuals, subjective responses are not necessarily 'individualistic in nature' as Fiske and Hartley (1978: 46) point out. They continue:

Since they (subjective responses) are invoked by signs which mean what they do only through agreement between the members of the culture, they are centred in that ill-defined area we call intersubjectivity.

The focus of analysis when examining the text of a film should therefore be its intersubjective rather than its objective nature. This does not require the analyst to abandon all the panoply of objective classification; the use of the categories developed by, for example, semiotics, but it does remove the datum of 'objectivity'. That, however, is no bad thing, since post-hoc semiotic analyses of films-as-objects often reveal more about the virtuosity of the analyst than the latent ideological purposes of the film and its makers.

An analysis nevertheless has to have a base, a point of departure, so instead of searching for an empirical referent in the film itself it is consistent with an holistic approach to refer back to the material gathered during the production study. The producer's use of a set of



hypotheses, constituted as a film (or sign vehicle), will consequently be used as the datum, which, one notes, has been generated from empirical research rather than formalist inference.

This is not to conflate the distinction between the filmic and the cinematic. The doyen of semiotic film theory, Christian Metz, makes it clear that his concern is the latter; the study of the internal mechanics of film and the manner in which it embodies meaning. His concern is to map and catalogue the processes of signification in order to determine how it is possible for a film to be viewed. As a structural analysis this approach is legitimate and valuable; it provides a language through which a film can be understood. It nevertheless eschews the filmic (the 'externals' of film; its production as a social process) or for that matter the socio-cultural articulation which determines how a film is actually viewed. A combination (not a conflation) of structural and phenomenological analysis is therefore required. With this one can then examine the units of actual relationships (syntagmas) which appear to exist in the film, the units of potential relationships (paradigms) and those relationships which were perceived by the film-makers and the film-viewers.

Having established a base for analysis, which is to examine the film as the result of a producer's theory of form and content, it is now possible to deconstruct that theory in preparation for a comparison of intention and reception.

#### The raw material

The raw materials with which a film-maker constructs his film and from which the audience reconstructs or creates meaning are outlined by Metz and others (see Andrew 1976: 218) as those channels of information which include:



1. Images which are photographic, moving and multiple
2. Graphic traces, which include all the written material read off the screen (such as the caption '1950' at the beginning of DUTTY)
3. Recorded speech
4. Recorded music
5. Recorded noise and/or sound effects.

The question which the semiotician then asks is how this raw material can convey meaning, to which the answer is given that the film-maker uses codes to make the material speak to the audience. This answer needs to be unravelled.

Making the material speak is a central concept. Metz, for example, in his essay, The Cinema: Language or language system (1974, orig. 1967) says that a film is hard to explain because it is easy to understand. This is because the object of explanatory analysis in language, the word, is missing in the film image. A film, in other words, is not composed entirely of arbitrary signs like words in a language, it is also composed of iconic and indexical signs which are irreducible to monemes. In plain terms this means that film is more of a language system than a language as such, because its currency is the sentence rather than the word. Since the sentence is the unit of speech, it then makes sense to talk about making the raw materials of film 'speak' to an audience in a way that is readily understandable.

It is, for example, possible to understand a film even when the dialogue is set in a foreign language, which is due to the fact that a film operates through a multiple set of channels containing a potentially infinite set of basic units. As a language system it therefore differs from a language proper, which operates through single channels with a finite set



of basic units. Andrew (ibid, p.220) illustrates this point by drawing a comparison between a verbal language and a digital computer, whereas a film would have to be compared to an analogue computer which operates through at least five 'materials of expression' instead of one.

Since the film uses a number of these materials of expression, it can therefore build an analogue of what we take to be the real world, using signs both iconically and indexically as well as symbolically such that a sequence (or even just a procession) of images can be meaningful without dialogue or narration.

The problem for the film-maker is how to foreclose the range of meaning that an audience can interpret from single or multiple images, sounds, graphic traces, etc., given the lack of a grammar of the type that controls the use of finite units like words. Signs are therefore selected and combined in codes which can be the specific inventions of cinema or analogues of other ways of being culled directly from habits of cultural perception which include codes from other media too.

Codes have to be used, for the simple reason that every image in a film is, in the words of Metz's translator, a hapax (i.e. a unique determination).

For example, while the word 'girl' has to be linked to any number of other words ('tall', 'young', 'deaf') in order to determine a particular meaning, the film image 'girl' is always that of a particular girl to start with.

That is why Metz says that the cinema can speak only in neologisms, which then have to be codified in order to be understood. In this sense a language therefore operates deductively, while a language system such as film operates inductively.

The encoding of particular images within a text thus creates artificial



boundaries around them which enables each unique determination to be read as part of a whole; as part, that is, of a system which includes the text but which also represents cultural perspectives such as particular ideologies.

It is, however, the intention of the documentary film-maker that he should not only make the material speak to an audience, but that he should also provide the conditions through which the subject of that material can speak for itself. Bertolucci's view that 'reality is always there' (while making a film) 'so you leave a door open for it to come in' illustrates the desire to retain some of the unique determination of each image; the desire not to foreclose every avenue of interpretation.

In this respect it is useful to introduce Vaughan's (1976: 25) concept of the 'putative event'. This is the event which would have occurred had a camera crew not been present, which then becomes a 'pro-filmic event' as soon as it is the subject of a film. This is then the event known to the film-maker (and should be distinguished from the diegesis or interpretation of the viewer, which is his or her creation from the raw material of the film). In the traditional fiction film one can assert an identity between the pro-filmic and the putative events 'since the activity before the camera existed only to be filmed', as Vaughan says. In other words, the fiction film effaces both the putative and the pro-filmic behind the diegesis, entirely subjugating the unique determination of each image to the codification of the text.

In a drama-documentary like DUMY the producer seeks to eliminate the pro-filmic by manipulating his material until it 'works', or as Vaughan says, until it reaches an acceptable equivalent to the putative event. The result has been called 'Observational film'. DUMY, however, also contains



elements of Cinéma vérité, where the putative event is theoretically absorbed within the pro-filmic. An example of this is the 'Football pools' scene where the young 'Sandra' cries as a result of being harassed by her 'father' (her reaction being quite genuine and unrehearsed, even though the conditions had been partially set up in advance). Similarly, the use of real locations and the choice of actors who could 'play themselves' can be seen as attempts to force the iconicity of each sign towards the indexical.

The goal of achieving an equivalence or absorption of the putative with the pro-filmic event is part of the documentary aspiration to display portions of reality to an audience, where the film-maker is working with a correspondence theory of truth. As I argue above, such a potential link between a proposition and a state-of-affairs in the real world nevertheless remains a case of constructed equivalence achieved by means of coherence theory of truth. 'Constructed equivalence' is a term used by Fiske and Hartley (1973: 48) to describe the perceived similarity between signifier and signified through which television ends up not displaying the real world but displacing it. What it displays are ways of seeing, since both the signified and Vaughan's putative event are mental concepts, their signifiers being subject to a range of choice constrained by culturally determined paradigms. Hence film documentarism (like sociology) can be said to be engaged in a discourse with its own object, or in the words of a documentary-maker (Paul Watson, of *THE FAMILY* and *BREAKAWAY GIRLS*) 'It is trying to explain ourselves to ourselves.'

To impute objectivity by correspondence, the film-maker must consequently employ intersubjectivity through coherence, which means that the logic of intention (to 'expand the margin of tolerance') is transcendental to the



logic of praxis (the acceptance of those margins) which is cultural. The avowed pursuit of the putative event, which is amenable to phenomenological analysis, is thus a transcendental condition of the human mode of existence, which is amenable to a structural analysis. This mode, in Habermas's (1972: 194) terms, is the reproduction of life 'both through learning processes of socially organized labour and processes of mutual understanding in interactions mediated in ordinary language'. Hence the logic of film as explanatory system (like natural or cultural science) deals with methodological rules for the organisation of processes of enquiry: rules arising from human structures, but rules (as Habermas points out) which have a transcendental function.

This function, in the documentary movement, is to encourage an audience to view a film indexically; to actually subvert the logic of its own construction by giving individuals the chance to realise what Marcuse used to call 'images of liberation'. It is transcendental because the success of film-making at this level, like sociology, 'can only be measured by the degree to which the opposition between consensus and truth is gradually reduced, and the problem of understanding as an activity distinct from communal life gradually disappears.' (Bauman, 1978: 246).

The fact that a documentary venture like DUMMY may not be in the domain of radical praxis does not, therefore, preclude the transcendental function of working towards radical change since the intention is to make use of methodological rules for the organisation of processes of enquiry to increase the range of experience available to any given individual. Without forgetting that intention, the rules can be excavated epistemically; as means rather than ends, and as rules rather than laws.

#### Means of signification

Perhaps the best way of looking at the means of signification is by way of example. The central character in DUMMY is denoted through a number of



iconic signs in which the form of the signifier is strongly constrained, or motivated by the signified. That is to say, the materials of expression which the producer used to signify 'girl' (images, recorded speech, etc.) reproduced a common experience of the concept 'girl'; they looked and sounded that way to the producer, and, indeed to all the respondents in the audience survey. In order to convey that denotation the raw material had to be used in such a way that other denotations could be excluded. Each sign for 'girl' was consequently selected from a potential set of alternatives; from a paradigm which included, for instance, 'boy'.

This is what is generally described as the first order of signification.

In the second, as Fiske and Hartley say, (ibid. p.41)

... this simple motivated meaning meets a whole range of cultural meanings that derive not from the sign itself, but from the way society uses and values both the signifier and the signified.

In this second order the sign 'girl' may acquire a connotative value signifying, say, vulnerability. The basic sign would then have become a signifier itself, where the signified is the value, emotion or attitude attributed to it. Such an attribution may be further oriented by what Barthes (1973) calls a myth, which in this case could be that of 'the weaker sex'; a cultural meaning connoted by the original sign but not denoted by it.

Such myths also contract relations with other myths to cohere as a more comprehensive way of seeing which Barthes would call a mythology. This coherence occurs in a third order of signification where weakness and vulnerability may, for example, be linked to blamelessness and purity in a generalised, mythological structure attached to the unadorned sign 'girl'. Related mythologies can be reinforced 'in interactions mediated in ordinary language' in both society and society-as-audience. The typification of the



sign 'girl' within the context of television programmes of the drama-documentary form as 'victim' can, for instance, be found in a number of programmes from CATHY COME HOME through to SCROUNGERS. Similarly, a lady-in-distress story will regularly find space in the press because of the ready-made, pre-sold nature of the idea of 'lady-as-victim' (as opposed to lady-as-perpetrator, or, indeed, 'man-in-distress').

Choosing a sign like 'girl' from a given paradigm is consequently like giving half a map-reference from which an ordinate line can be drawn to exclude others, but upon which there are no necessary fixed points - only those irregularities dictated by the texture of the medium upon which the map is drawn (the second order of signification) and the pattern these may seem to form (in the third order of signification). In order to pre-empt some of the possible connotations, signs can therefore be systematically related to other signs to form co-ordinates of meaning. In other words, they can be combined in syntagmatic chains to form codes. Hence the producer's intention to encode the information that the girl came from a working-class background was carried out by using signs in the form of images (of back-to-back housing, small rooms, cobbled streets) and dialogue such as the language of the powerless (i.e. the sister's line, 'You cannot change your destiny') in juxtaposition to contrary images of 'Ian's more opulent home, his car and the pop group.

Each of these signs can be analysed separately in addition to analysing their relationships to one another. For example, a photographic image of a small back-to-back house is iconic, like an image of 'girl', in so far as a number of aspects of the signified are reproduced in the signifier (i.e. the spatial relationships of windows and doors can be reproduced in an image of a house in a way which is impossible in an



arbitrary sign like the word 'house'). That image can also be metonymic, which means that a picture of a particular house can be used to signify a type of housing, which in turn can become a metaphor for 'working-classness'. Within particular paradigms an image which was originally iconic can then lose its specific motivation and become a conventional sign. Hence within a media paradigm it could become conventional to think of 'working-class housing' in terms of the kind of images used under the titles of *CORONATION STREET*. Within a genre paradigm similar images, through frequent use, may also signify potentially contrary conventions; in a drama like *CORONATION STREET* images of terraced houses may invoke the convention of equating 'working class' with 'tight-knit community', but in a documentary report in *PANORAMA* the equation may be with decay and atomization.

This leads to a consideration of the way in which signs can be combined in codes. As I mention above, *DUFFY*'s producer drew a specific relationship between the signs he used for 'Sandra' and 'Ian's' homes, which, in concert with a number of other cues, was intended to nudge an audience towards making a number of specific connotations (i.e. that 'Sandra's' experience with 'Ian' was quite novel and special). The contrast or opposition of various paradigmatic elements within either character's background thus provided a way of encoding a great deal of information through different sub-codes. These could range from the 'traditional-dramatic' subcode indicating potential tragedy (the Montague and Capulet syndrome) to the documentary subcode of telling the truth (i.e. that 'Ian' and 'Sandra's' relationship was not a dramatic ploy but a statement of fact). As the writer said, the relationship was so unlikely that he would never have made it up, so its very novelty could be used as an indicator of objectivity.)



Juxtaposing opposing sets of signs is a way of organising them, but one is really seeking the logic of that organisation. The reducibility of codes to subcodes is only one of at least three characteristics which can be used for analysis. Codes also have degrees of specificity and levels of generality.

#### Specific codes

These occur in films and nowhere else. It is, however, quite difficult to find codes which are completely film-specific since by their very nature codes need to be able to be decoded and a completely arbitrary usage of the materials of expression would preclude this. In his essay, Problems of denotation in the fiction film (in Film language 1974), Metz refers to the 'rhetoric of the screen' - montage, camera movements and optical effects - as specialized codes, through which, say, a zoom shot can signify 'increasing intensity'. Zooming in from a wide to a big close-up of a face is nevertheless a perceptual analogy of the way someone might move closer to a speaker as the conversation becomes more intense. So the possibility of the zoom shot is specifically present in film in a way that it is not in a still photograph, but is still analogous (on the level of connotation) to cultural codes of perception. On the other hand, the same cultural codes may not allow an individual to 'zoom in' as intimately as a camera can (a camera being able to alter focal length without moving physically closer to a subject) so the possibilities of the zoom shot can be extended beyond normal perceptual codes while still being rooted in them.

Metz then shares the view of film aestheticians that pre-existing symbols are not simply 'tacked on' to film. They are assimilated through syntagmatic components of which Metz identifies six; the autonomous shot, the scene, the sequence, and the descriptive, alternating and frequentive



syntagmas. Hence a number of signs can be syntagmatically linked within a single shot, as within the frame of a painting, to form scenes and sequences of scenes organised, for example, as a descriptive syntagma (where the relationship between motifs may be simultaneous even though physically consecutive, as in a descriptive syntagma of a landscape made up of consecutive shots of trees and fields of which the relationship of those signified to one another is simultaneous).

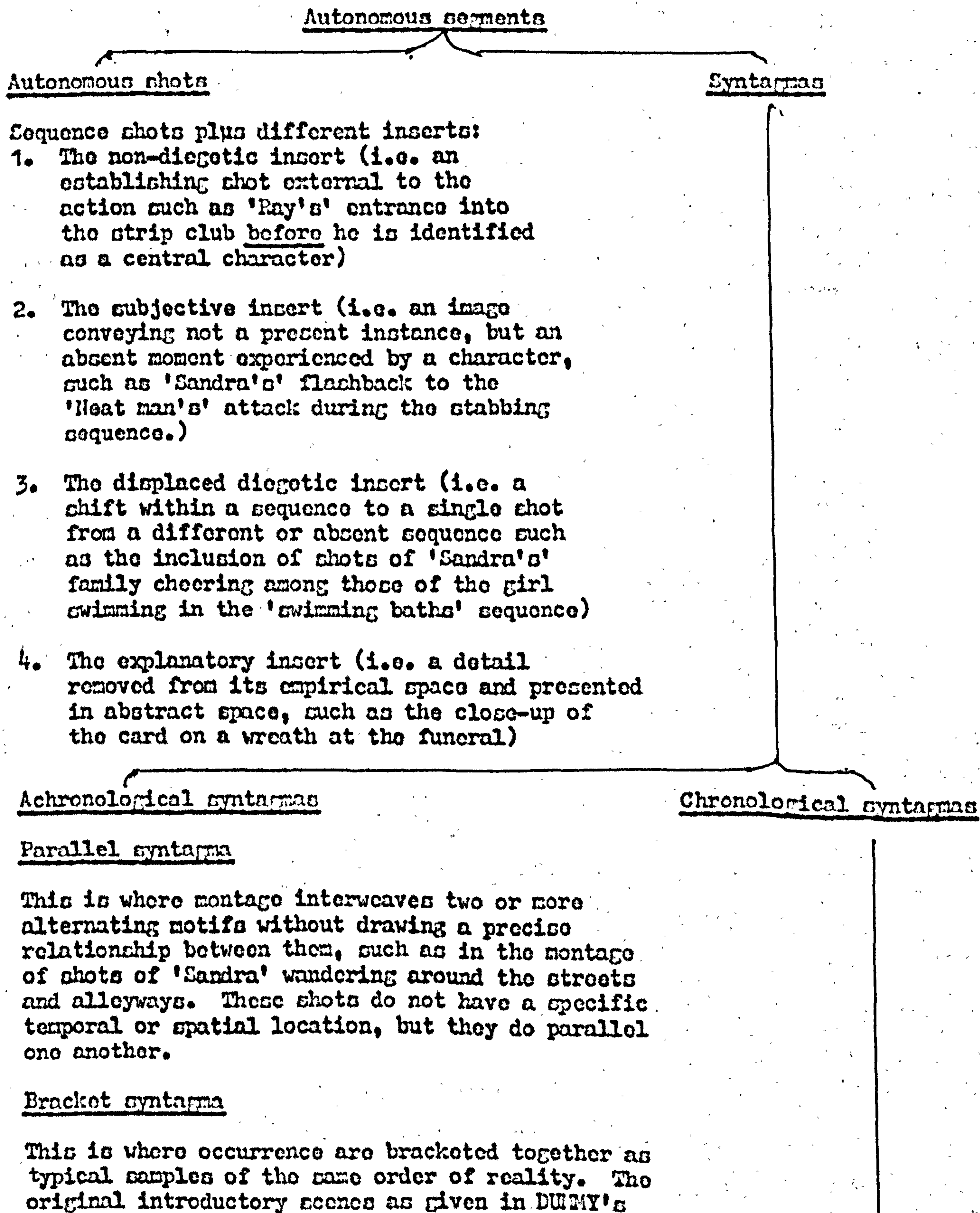
Another example of the use of these syntagmatic components could involve the alternating syntagma. Here signs are linked in series by alternating between them, with - as Metz says - a sufficiently rapid rhythm that the spectator is able to guess that a series of events is continuing to unfold in the diegesis. Hence a shot of someone speaking placed next to a shot of another person listening would not necessarily constitute a series of related events, whereas an alternation between those shots would begin to form a narrative.

Metz organises these components into a system of successive dichotomies which outline a structure of choices confronting the film-maker (see Fig. 8), some of which can be operationalised with a high degree of specificity. The alternating syntagma can, for instance, be used through accelerated montage as a code delivering a 'distinct message that no normal viewer will miss', as Andrew (1978: 225) reports. Here two images are presented in alternating and progressively shorter and quicker fragments to indicate a spatial or dramatic convergence (as in alternating images of the occupants of separate cars which eventually crash into one another). 'If Faulkner and certain other modern authors mimic this technique in their narratives,' Andrew continues, 'it is only in vague imitation and never with the same result, for accelerated montage is a cinema-specific code.'



Netz's classification of his syntagmatic components is given on page 146 of Film Language, which I've reproduced with examples from DUMY:

Fig. 8 Syntagmatic types





script would have bracketed a number of discontinuous motifs together in this way (i.e. a number of different shots of early morning activity in Bradford)

### Descriptive syntagmas

These organise materials of expression which appear consecutively on the screen but which have no diegetic consecutiveness, as in the example of a description of a landscape given above. Some of the shots describing the fairground in *DUFFY* are used in this way, where the shots follow one another as a mode of discourse rather than as an analogue of a property of the object of that discourse, i.e. an action occurring through time.

### Narrative syntagmas

#### Alternate narrative syntagmas

If a film-maker specifically wants to indicate simultaneity in time he can alternate between different images or series of images. The code which equates alternation with simultaneity is illustrated in practice towards the end of *DUFFY*, where 'Sandra's' journey to the West Indian's flat is supposed to be taking place at the same time as 'Max' (the man she stabbed) is being attended by the police and ambulancemen.

#### Linear narrative syntagmas

### Scenes

A linear narrative syntagma, which successively links a number of images, need not necessarily do so continuously. When it does the result is a scene. Metz excludes breaks such as cutaways or camera movements to define a scene as a succession with no diegetic breaks, 'a spacio-temporal integrality experienced as being without a flaw'. There are eighty-nine in *DUFFY*, one of which is the 'Restaurant' scene where all the action takes place in 'real time'.

### Sequences

#### Episodic sequences

A sequence is a group of scenes having a unity, but not necessarily temporal organisation. An episodic sequence is one in which temporal discontinuities are organised, such as the 'Hotel' sequence where each scene leads directly to the next despite breaks in continuity.

#### Ordinary sequences

An ordinary sequence is a group of scenes where temporal discontinuities remain unorganised, i.e. the last two scenes of part one in *DUFFY* (the band rehearsal and 'Ian' and 'Sandra's' cuddle) are linked successively but we do not know how closely.



The syntagmatic components listed above make up what Metz calls the 'large' syntagmatic category through which a film can be made from fragments which are not specifically filmic in themselves. The further one goes towards the 'small' syntagmatic categories (within autonomous shots, for instance) then the greater becomes the likelihood of meeting all the countless non-specific cultural codes. These would produce the kind of connotations in the second and third order of signification which I suggested as possible with respect to the sign 'girl'.

Between the use of non-specific codes and codes which have been invented in film there are also codes which have a degree of specificity relative to other media. A good example of this is the use of flashbacks, which appear in literary forms as well as in films, although a film may signify the advent of a flashback in a way that a piece of literature cannot (i.e. by ripple dissolves).

#### General codes

By 'general codes' I mean codes which are universally used in all films, not codes which are in general operation in films and elsewhere, and different levels of generality can be detected. Metz, for instance, cites the panorama shot as a code which can play a part in any film, and which therefore has a very high level of generality. By contrast, there is an extremely lengthy sequence in Tarkovsky's feature *SOULARIS* showing a man driving along the Russian equivalent of a motorway. The very length of this sequence makes the encoding operate at a very particularistic level. Similarly, the use of optical effects in a programme like *TOP OF THE POPS* could not be cited as a form of coding with a very high level of generality.

*DUMBY* used several codes like the panorama - or pan - shot, close-ups and tracks, but it also used a number of more particular codes in the



sense that the director made a particular point of not using ripple dissolves to his flashbacks. Particular codes, or their identification, are a way of determining the style and genre of the film being presented. DUMY was intended to be documentary in nature, and part of the nature of a documentary consists in 'showing it like it is'. In other words, it is a particular code of documentary films, and thus of films with documentary intent, to irradicate techniques which directly imply manipulation of the subject and which may therefore fictionalise it.

Hence DUMY's producer was drawing upon a paradigm of syntagmas by excluding that kind of complicated dolly or crane shot, incidental music and optical effect which may be more readily associated with fictional films such as thrillers or westerns, and by including many of those codes associated with straight documentary films. Since a documentary is ostensibly observing a putative event, and not an event which has been designed to be filmed, that event might be expected to impose special restrictions upon the process rather than vice-versa. The use of real locations, ad libbed dialogue and natural lighting can therefore be adopted as a code within a dramatised documentary such that the lack of camera movement (apparently caused by the restrictions of locations as opposed to the freedom of having 'floating walls' and variable lighting in a studio) can be used to signify the reality of the subject. Correlatively, the use of hand-held camera and genuinely failing light to film 'Max's' stagger up to the main road towards the end of DUMY deliberately exploited the likelihood of obtaining a lot of jerky camera movements and downgraded shots of the type associated with 'on the spot' coverage in news broadcasts.

By looking at the different possibilities, avenues of expression or choices open to a film-maker and the range of concatenation (or modes of linkage)



available, the analyst can begin to perceive a structure by determining what it is not. He can, in other words, examine the degrees of specificity and levels of generality of codes and their divisibility into subcodes, which are separate instances of the use of a code that transform denotation into connotation, and he can then pay attention to the interaction of these codes by making reference to a catalogue like Metz's 'La Grande Syntagmatique du cinema' outlined above.

This interaction of codes at the cinematic level takes place within texts, which essentially set boundaries around a process of signification by delimiting it within beginnings, middles and endings - although not necessarily in that order as Jean-Luc Godard has often been quoted as saying.

#### The text

A text systematically assimilates a given amount of material within boundaries; literally giving it context, but the boundaries do not necessarily have to be those of individual books, plays or films. A text can also be approached as a set of multiple systems such that each of, say, Dickens' books or Zeffirelli's films can be considered as parts of the author's oeuvre or as part of a whole genre. DUMY could also be considered in this way, as part of an extended text which also includes the producer's previous films, and indeed those which he has made afterwards. This approach is nevertheless in danger of begging the question of for whom such an interpretation might operate, so at this point 'the text' will be considered as the immediate object of the producer's intention, which can be described as the selection and organisation of signs, within codes, as a system bounded within the opening and closing titles of a single film.



In this case that system is a narrative, which Metz defines in another of his essays collected in Film Language (Notes towards a phenomenology of the narrative) as: 'a closed discourse that proceeds by unrealising a temporal sequence of events'. This means that a narrative has a beginning and an ending and is thus distinct from the real world even though it deals with temporal sequences which we perceive to occur therein. It therefore 'unrealises' those sequences within the closed discourse of the individual text by inventing one time scheme inside of another. For example, the 'real' duration of the sequence of events in 'Sandra's' life was twenty-nine years, whereas the duration of the filmed version of that life was seventy-eight minutes. This temporal displacement is therefore essentially unreal, having been 'unrealised' by the narrative structure of the film. Even a live, continuous broadcast processes reality within the terms of such an argument, although through spatial rather than temporal displacement.

As a narrative, DUMBY is open to analysis within the terms of a 'Grande Syntagmatique', which as a theory can help to identify and explain how successivity, precession and spatial proximity in a film is possible.

As a theory applied to historical analysis semiotics can also detect the introduction of new subcodes (of punctuation such as fades or wipes, or of the large syntagmatic category itself). As a critique of an individual text a semiotic analysis can, in addition, locate specific instances of such codes and subcodes. The extreme compression of the narrative structure which seems to occur at the point where 'Phil' is arrested in DUMBY could, for example, be cited as a novel use of a linear narrative syntagma. Such a citation is nevertheless a statement made within the terms of the theory, not within the terms of the actual reception or production of the film. In terms of the production, for instance, the foreshortening of the time-scale at that point was as



much to do with the need to lose actual running-time within the constraint of the slot as it was to do with innovatory encoding procedures.

The objection which I am raising is to the use of the definite article by textual analysts when they make the move from theory to criticism, which is often the shift from discussing ways of seeing cultural products to the dogmatic assertion that individual products have particular meanings; that is to say constant meanings through time and across socio-cultural boundaries. Codes are constructed by analysts and wittingly or otherwise used by film-makers; they do not exist in films, neither do they define them; they define ways of seeing, not the way a film is seen by individual film-makers or viewers.

In Reading Television, for example, Fiske and Hartley analyse a syntagma (sic) from CATHY COME HOME, one of the shots from which shows a child putting a bullet into a toy gun. They say (p.56):

The fact that the gun is a relatively realistic one that can be loaded with 'bullets' is also significant. The child may be only playing aggression now, but the hint of real violence to follow is clearly contained in the sign.

Well, is it? How do they know with such certainty? Who did they ask, and what happens if I disagree? The Italian semiotician, Umberto Eco (1972: 104), might consign me to the outer darkness reserved for 'aberrant decoders' if I felt that no such inference was 'clearly' contained in the sign, in which case I would at least like to know what I was being aberrant from. The film-maker's intention perhaps? No - the textual analyst draws the line at what is 'actually there on the screen' (Fiske and Hartley, *ibid.* p.21).

Even if television is more than McGrath's 'piece of furniture', what is on the screen is no more than a number of 'screen instances' or



signifiers. The fact that these can become 'diegetic instances' or 'signifieds' can be predicted by a science of signs, but their nature cannot; at least not without reconnecting the link between social and cultural processes. Semiotics itself describes how signification operates through connotation at the second and third levels as the product of culture, convention and work such that no image is 'pure'. So, as Gerbner (1964) says, the content can be seen as a continuum from manifest to latent, from the most simple to the greatest diversity of its understanding by an audience. Points along that continuum can be marked off as clusters of intersubjectivity agreement about the 'actual' content of a message, and patterns can be detected which indicate the systematic use of limited ideological or explanatory repertoires (see Hall, 1977: 343-5). This view is, however, distinct from the determinism which seems to afflict the textual analyst who seeks the 'actual' structure of individual texts from the safety of his or her own armchair, and is the reason why the present study has attempted to combine a labour-process analysis with some of the techniques of semiotics. Hence in looking at the text I want to consider firstly the manifest content (by which I mean some of the physical aspects of the 'screen instances' such as cutting rates) and then those points on the continuum between manifest and latent content between which the producer preferred that decoding should take place.

#### The text: manifest content

This section deals with a brief micro-analysis of some of the quantitative elements to be found in DUMMY, that is, with the signifiers rather than the signified. The reason for making such an analysis is twofold. Firstly, I have already made several references to the relative paucity of moving camera shots or to cutting rates and scene lengths, so in this section I want to record the relevant data. Secondly, the



audience study revealed various views about the intelligibility of the film at different points within it, so if any correlations are to be drawn between, say, those areas of the film which people found confusing and those areas which contained a high proportion of very short scenes then one would need to know where those areas are.

First of all I will run through the order of scenes as transmitted, giving their physical duration and the number of cuts between shots plus the number of cuts per minute for each scene. (S1-4 refers to different versions of 'Sandra')

<u>Scene</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cuts</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Cuts per</u> <u>minute</u>	<u>Cumulative</u> <u>time</u>	<u>Captions etc.</u>
						Warning caption
1	Funeral (+ flashback)	7	1:00	8.6	1:00	Main title (after 55") then subtitle
2	Hospital corridor	1	:10	6	1:10	Caption '1950'
3	Consultant's office	8	:30	16	1:40	
4	School: Mum with Head & S1 with teacher	11	1:17	8.6	2:57	
5	Jug breaks on floor	4	:15	16	3:12	
6	School: S2 learning	10	1:25	7	4:36	
7	Bus home	1	:15	4	4:52	
8	Football pools	11	1:28	7.5	6:20	
9	S2 playing in street	1	:15	4	6:35	
10	S2 learning with Mum	12	1:00	12	7:35	
11	S3 at school (smacked)	9	1:05	8.3	8:40	
12	S3 returns home	2	:45	2.6	9:25	
13	S3 goes to fish shop	15	:55	16.4	10:20	
14	S3 dancing at home	1	:40	1.5	11:00	
15	S3 smoking at school	1	:25	2.4	11:25	
16	S3 with headmistress	1	:25	2.4	11:50	
17	Lady social worker visit	12	1:20	9	13:10	
18	S4 reading at school	2	:20	6	13:30	
19	Swimming baths	25	1:25	17.6	14:55	
20	Laundry (entrance)	1	:30	2	15:25	
21	Laundry (interior)	2	2:15	0.8	17:40	
22	Wage packet	1	:35	1.7	18:15	
23	Fairground	15	2:10	6.9	20:25	
24	S4 waits for 'Ian'	6	:53	8.8	21:18	
25	Drive to 'Ian's' house		1:05	3	22:23	
26	S4 in 'Ian's' bedroom	8	:48	10	23:11	
27	Band rehearsal	8	:53	9	24:04	
28	Fondle on 'Ian's' bed	1	:20	3	24:24	

'End of part one'



<u>Scene</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cuts</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Cuts per</u> <u>Minute</u>	<u>Cumulative</u> <u>Time</u>	<u>Captions etc.</u>
--------------	--------------------	-------------	---------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------

'Dummy part two'

29	Interior dance hall	16	1:53	8.5	26:17	
30	Drive home	1	:40	1.5	26:57	
31	S4 scarred by 'Ian'	7	1:20	5.3	28:17	
32	Hospital: Mum, Aunt, 'Joan'	1				
33	Hospital: Emergency room	2				
34	Hospital: 'Ian's' Dad	1	:55	4.4	29:12	
35	'Joan' phones 'Ian'	6	:50	7.2	30:02	
36	Pub: S4 picks up 'Phil'	6	1:05	5.5	31:07	
37	S4 brings 'Phil' home	1	1:00	1	32:07	
38	S4 at 'Phil's' flat	1	:35	1.7	32:42	
39	Pub: plan robbery	3	:40	4.5	33:22	
40	'Phil' arrested	5	:35	8.8	33:57	
41	Hospital: S4 after birth	4	:43	5.6	34:40	
42	S4 home with baby	9	:25	21.6	35:05	
43	S4 & 'Phil' going out	3	:30	6	35:35	
44	Pub: Sr and 'Phil' drink	1	:20	3	35:55	
45	Hospital: Gynaecologist	1	:50	1.2	36:45	
46	Hospital: S4 and 'Joan'	8	1:07	7.2	37:52	
47	Club: S4's strip	8	1:50	4.4	39:42	
48	S4 in bed with man	1	:17	3.5	39:59	
49	Wedding preparation	1	:32	1.9	40:31	
50	Wedding	9	1:21	6.7	41:52	
51	S4 & new husband in flat	1	1:05	0.9	42:57	
52	Shabby man	5	2:10	2.3	45:07	
53	Funeral	6	:55	6.5	46:02	
54	Cafe: S4 sees husband	5	1:05	4.6	47:07	
	Husband attack with razor	3	1:00	3	48:07	
55	Pub: S4 with group	2	:45	2.7	48:52	
56	VD clinic	24	1:30	16	50:22	
57	S4 soliciting	1	:45	1.3	51:07	
58	S4 in car with 'Heat man'	9	:30	18	51:37	
59	Motel: exterior	1	:47	1.3	52:24	
60	Motel: interior	12	1:20	9	53:44	
61	Motel: exterior (exit)	2	:25	4.8	54:09	
62	Hospital: 'Joan' waits	1	:15	4	54:24	

'End of part two'

'Dummy part three'

63	S4 at 'Joan's' house	13	1:00	13	55:24	
64	S4 leaves 'Joan'	4	:35	6.9	55:59	
65	S4 wanders round alleys	1	:20	3	56:59	
66	Pub: S4 meets 'Charlie'	6	1:00	6	57:19	
67	Walk to 'Charlie's' place	2	:25	4.8	57:44	
68	Interior 'Charlie's'	1	:35	1.7	58:19	
69	Restaurant	12	1:55	6.3	60:14	
70	S4 soliciting on corner	1	:17	3.5	60:31	
71	Poolgame	7	1:05	6.5	61:36	
72	S4 goes to West Indian's	2	:40	3	62:16	
73	'Joan' meets s. worker	1	:30	2	62:46	
74	S4 crying in pub.	4	1:00	4	63:46	
75	S4 wanders round alleys	2	:55	2.2	64:41	
76	S4 arrives at 'Charlie's'	3	1:25	2	66:06	



<u>Scene</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cuts</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Cuts per</u> <u>Minute</u>	<u>Cumulative</u> <u>Time</u>	<u>Captions etc.</u>
77	S4 'phones 'Joan'	6	:45	8	66:51	
78	Group exit from pub	2	1:20	1.5	68:11	
79	Party at 'Charlie's'	26	2:40	9.8	70:51	
80	S4 stabs man	11	:53	12.5	71:44	
81	S4 runs to taxi		:26		72:10	
82	Stabbed man stumbles		:35		72:45	
83	Taxi arrives destination		:20		73:05	
84	Ambulance arrives etc.	11	:52	5	73:57	
85	Mortuary	1	:15	4	74:12	
86	S4 at West Indian's	19	2:23	8	76:35	
87	S4 put in police car	2	:25	4.8	77:00	(Last image held for 10" before caption)

\*NB. Scenes 19 & 23 are strictly-speaking sequences, but are referred to as scenes because of the continuity of location

78:00 Credits

A number of conclusions can be drawn from these raw figures. Firstly the sheer weight of information potentially carried by the film belies casual inspection for within 87 discrete scenes there are some 475 cuts between shots in just 78 minutes. This gives an overall cutting rate of just over six cuts per minute (or one cut every 9.8 seconds) which may seem very rapid, although in fact it is comparatively normal. The cutting rate in some commercials may be several times higher than this, rising to a theoretical limit of over a thousand cuts/minute for short bursts, but a rate of between five and ten cuts/minute would appear to be more usual, for an extended film; the drama-documentary *SPEND, SPEND, SPEND*, for example, had an overall cutting rate of 6.4 cuts/minute.

These figures are more interesting when broken down with respect to each of the three parts of the film. Here it can be seen that the cutting rate becomes progressively slower in proportion to the amount of 'real' time which is being covered. Hence part one (which covers about 17 years) has a cutting rate of 7.12 cuts/minute; part two (covering about 8 years) has a cutting rate of 5.57 cuts/minute and part three (covering about



six weeks) has a rate of 5.39 cuts/minute. Despite the paramount constraint of the time-slot, one of the producer's original intentions has therefore remained intact; this being the basic stylistic feature which he outlined long before shooting started (see p.25 of the production study) in terms of making part one 'feel different' from the rest of the film. He had specifically intended to use a lot more static shots in part one to 'add to the feeling of the period', and to make the third part 'very documentary-like, with lots of hand-held shots and shooting on the run in order to bring out the grit'. Thus although the overall cutting-rate in part three is lower than for the other two parts, it is actually sustained at a much higher rate for the 'party' and 'stabbing' scenes.

As a point of policy the producer also said at one time that it was essential to involve the audience from the start. Thus to open the film with the funeral scene might be expected to immediately pose a number of questions; as I noted above, one would perhaps be curious as to who had died and in what circumstances, plus a funeral implies emotional involvement for the participants which by identity could emotionally involve the audience. In terms of the physical structure of the film the funeral scene is also, however, a relatively long one, giving an audience time to become involved. Looking at the film as a whole, it can in fact be observed that each of the three parts begins with a relatively long scene (1.00' 1:53' and 1:00') and finished with a shorter one (20", 15", and 25" - not including the sustained final image of the tenement square).

The comparative importance of the latent content of particular scenes as set pieces or as scenes which 'stood out' for the audience may be linked



to the manifest structure in terms of length or cutting rates. In terms of scene length the following observations can be made; in part one the average length of scenes is 59" with a standard deviation up to 1:37". Thus both the interior laundry and the fairground scenes extend beyond this by about 33". In part two the average length is 54.5" with a standard deviation up to 1:22.5" which means that the Dance hall scene is over by 30", the Strip scene by 28", the Shabby man by 48" and the VD clinic scene by 8". The average scene length in part three is down to 54.2" with standard deviation to 1.32' making the Restaurant scene over by 23", the Party scene by 1:8' and the penultimate scene in the West Indian's flat over by 51".

In terms of cutting rates the standard deviation from the norm in parts one and two is +/- 5 cuts/minute, and in part three it is +/- 3 cuts/minute (which may be a contributory factor to the relative pace of part three).

Hence the following scenes have relatively abnormal cutting rates:

Part one  
High rate

- (3) Consultant's office
- (5) Jug breaks on floor
- (10) S2 learning with Mum
- (13) S2 goes to fish shop
- (19) Swimming baths

Low rate

- (14) S3 dancing at home
- (20 & 21) Laundry
- (22) Wage packet

Part two  
High rate

- (42) S4 at home with baby
- (56) VD clinic
- (58) S4 in car with 'Heat man'

Low rate

None

Part three  
High rate

- (63) S4 at 'Joan's'
- (79) Party at 'Charlie's'
- (80) S4 stabs man

Low rate

- (68) Interior 'Charlie's'
- (73) 'Joan' meets social worker
- (75) S4 wanders round alleys
- (76) S4 arrives at 'Charlie's'
- (78) Group exit from pub



One scene in particular stands out as having both a low cutting rate (0.8 cuts/minute) and extreme length (2'15") and this is the interior laundry scene. These figures therefore quantify the results of the producer's hypothesis that this scene needed to carry an audience through the 'boredom barrier'. It was here that the producer was concerned about the intrinsic interest or 'busyness' of the machinery in the laundry, which may have detracted from the point of the job being very repetitive and boring (for a relatively intelligent girl). The extent to which the scene was lengthened in order to make this point (and to retain the naturalistic performance) is clearly illustrated in Fig. 9.

The manifest structure of DUFFY in terms of scene length against cutting-rate can now be graphically plotted as an illustration of the intention to make the different sections of the film 'feel' distinct from one another in terms of style as well as content.

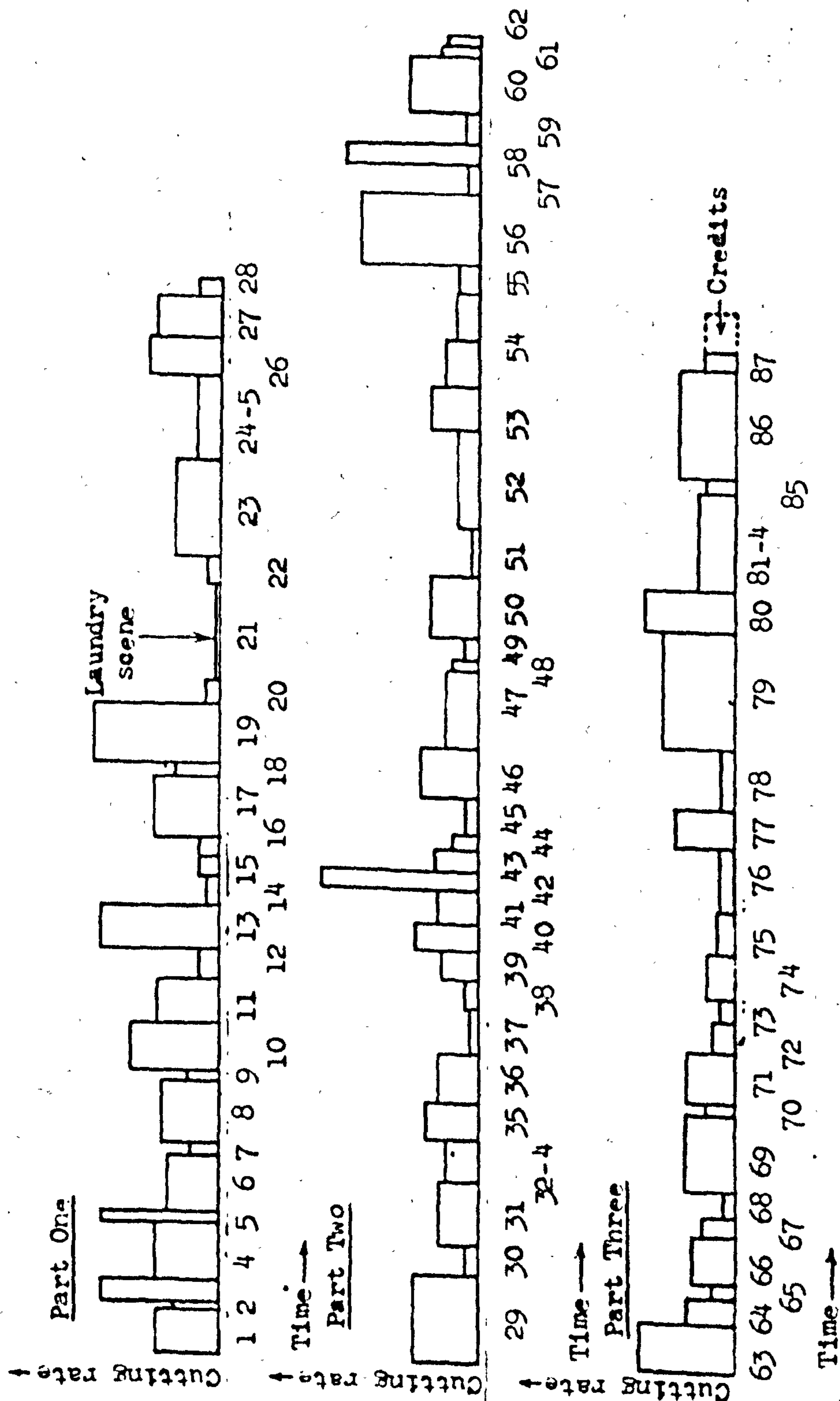
A narrative has been described as a means of getting from one state of equilibrium to another, more stable, equilibrium which is given coherence by working our tension in the original. More simply, it ties loose ends together, but this need not be solely the function of a storyline, for Fig. 9 reveals that the physical structure of DUFFY also becomes progressively more coherent. For example, while the average number of cuts per minute in the first two parts of the film decreases relative to the last part in the ratios of 1.3:1 and 1.03:1 respectively, the average number of cuts per minute per scene also decreases in a comparable way, the ratios being 1.4:1 and 1.05:1. This means that there are fewer changes of shot or scene as the film progresses, and therefore fewer discrete pieces of information for a viewer to process, all other things being equal.



Fig.

Scene lengths against cutting rates for each of the three parts of DUMMY

Numbers refer to scenes as given in the list above.





All other things are not, however, equal. Part one in particular follows a definite pattern of having short scenes alternating with long ones (the standard deviation in the length of scenes in part one also being some 35% greater than in part two) whereas the pattern for the other two parts is less regular. The reason for this alternation can be explained in terms of the latent content of the film in part one, where the producer was using what Metz might call bracket syntagmas to illustrate examples of incidents from 'Sandra's' early life in alternation with longer, narrative syntagmas. In a sense he was forced to use this kind of construction because of the comparative length of time - seventeen years - to be covered. Thus 'Sandra's' trip to the fish-and-chip shop was an example; just one of several similar incidents which could have been used to illustrate the difficulties of being deaf. Several such incidents were indeed filmed but later rejected on the basis of their being superfluous given the constraints of the time-slot (or because of technical problems). In terms of the physical structure, however, the regular alternation of long and short scenes in part one may have ameliorated the relative lack of coherence afforded by the number of scenes and their shot density.

Another factor contributing to the physical texture of the film is camera movement. Following the producer's original intention, the camera moves relative to fixed objects in the frame more than twice as much in part three as it does in part one. In fact the amount of camera movement increases throughout the film, since only 17% of part one contains moving shots, whereas part two contains 28% and part three 37%. Excluding small moves made in order to keep minor actions within the frame, the amount of camera movement therefore increases in inverse proportion to the number of cuts per minute per scene. The overall effect could therefore



amount to an increase in pace as the film progresses even though the number of static images appearing on the screen decreases.

A related point concerns the way in which shots were generally framed in different parts of the film. Television has often been referred to as the medium of the close-up since a tight shot of someone's face or head and shoulders has become a conventional stock-in-trade for interviews, news broadcasts and the like. A close-up may also be used to signal intimacy or to make another dramatic point by excluding a background and thus concentrate the attention upon a face alone; a face which on a standard domestic receiver will be approximately life-size and thus arguably more naturalistic. Close-ups are also favoured for the simple reason that a television screen cannot resolve as much detail as a cinema screen, where each face in a crowd can often be picked out quite clearly. It might be expected, therefore, that a good many of the shots in DUMMY would be close-ups and indeed some 65% were either close-ups or big close-ups. The use of close-ups was not, however, constant.

Approximately 61% of part one was filmed in close-up or big close-up, 65% of part two and 70% of part three. Thus in addition to moving with the action more and more as the film progressed, the camera can also be said to have moved closer to it. In terms of the content this meant moving closer to 'Sandra' herself such that the 'screen instances' (the type and organization of shots) could be seen as supportive of the 'diegetic instances' (the character's 'type and organization' as represented to an audience). By this I mean that, having established 'Sandra's' relationship to other characters within a given environment, the producer progressively closed in upon 'Sandra' herself, not only in terms of the narrative but also in terms of the physical structure of the



film. The status of the camera, for example, can be seen to have changed from that of 'objective observer' (where a distance was maintained from events which moved in relation to the camera) to almost that of 'subjective participant' 'where the distance between events and the camera was reduced at the same time as the camera began to move with those events). The changing form of the signifiers can therefore be closely linked with the intended form of the signified, and, incidentally, with the producer's desire to move from a 'sociological' to a 'psychological' analysis of the character during the course of the film.

One last point to make in this section concerns eye-contact. Considerable care had been taken while filming in locations such as pubs and hospitals to ensure that 'real' people who were in shot did not look directly at the camera. As I mention above, the reason for taking such care was that people's natural curiosity of the camera would appear on film as a direct stare towards the audience. Not only would a viewer then tend to be distracted away from the central action towards the source of that gaze, but its very existence would begin to imply that the viewer was watching a filmed event. Part of the contract of realism would consequently have been breached, and its coherence ruptured precisely because of the correspondence between a filmed stare to camera and the actual event. Taking a photograph of oneself in a mirror carried a similar sense of having 'given the game away' when the camera itself is in shot. The producer could have deliberately encouraged such eye-contact as a double-bluff during the 'cinéma-vérité' passages towards the end of the film, but in fact there is none to speak of. In the first two parts there are, however, some instances of direct stares to camera which are listed below in order to locate their positions. The reason for locating these



occurrences is that the sample audience cited different passages in DUMY as being more or less realistic than others, and the existence of stares to camera may be a contributory factor in such judgements.

### Eye contact

( -F- = Fleeting, -S- = Sustained)

### Part One

- (8) Football pools: S2 -F-
- (11) S3 at school: Boy in background -F-
- (19) Swimming baths: Man in audience foreground -F-
- (22) Wago packet: Ladies in background -S-\*
- (23) Fairground: Teddy-boy behind 'Ian' and 'Sandra' at rifle stall -S- and girl in background at Hot-dog stall -F-

### Part Two

- (34) Hospital: People behind 'Ian's' Dad and the policeman -F-
- (36) Pub: People in background -F-
- (47) Club (S4's strip): Lady behind and between 'Sandra' and 'Ray' -S-\*\*
- (50) Wedding: Passer-by -F-

- \* The ladies in the background here may be looking towards the central action, but the angle is such that direct eye-contact is possible.
- \*\* This lady's stare is particularly prominent.

### The text: preferred reading

Objective statements can be made about the fabric of the film, and classificatory schemes can be drawn up in order to analyse how it is possible for a film like DUMY to convey meaning, but the notion of the meaning itself being objective remains open to refutation. That is why the attention now needs to be shifted away from the signifiers and back to the signified at that point on the continuum between manifest and latent content where the producer intended particular meanings to cohere as a text.

At any given position in the film this point is where the producer judged that a sign had 'worked', or would work given the application of



'common sense' to the process of understanding the film. It is therefore the point at which intersubjectivity was assumed to be operating at its strongest level, given the producer's theoretical understanding of the limits of that intersubjectivity (his sense of what is common) and his intention to communicate a message to a mass audience.

The different ways in which that theory can be worked out within the context of the practices and structures of production are the legitimate subject of a processual study, just as the results of that theory are the subject of a textual analysis, but a study of the realization of that theory demands a combination of the two. The following few pages therefore outline some of the means by which it was possible for the film to convey meaning and some of the meaning which was intended therein.

It would be perfectly possible to run through the entire film, explicating the intended meaning of each individual sign within given co-ordinates, but for the sake of brevity I have confined myself to a selection of passages from the film in order to demonstrate the logic of which the producer formed the hypothesis that it would be readily understood by his audience. It must be remembered, however, that the film was intended to be viewed as a whole; as a gestalt with qualities different from those of its components separately considered. Thus the general intention of building up a feeling of sympathy for 'Sandra' is a function of the whole film, even though particular events can be picked out as components of that function. The audience study will look at understandings of both these particular and general intentions and the way they were encoded within the text, but for the moment the focus remains upon the intended diegesis of selected passages; passages about



which specific questions were asked in the audience study.

In running through these passages the motivational aspects (where the signifieds appear to exert a determining influence upon the form of the signifiers) have been broadly separated from the arbitrary aspects (where the constraint or motivation of the signified upon the signifier is weaker or more conventionalised). The reason for so doing is to explicate some of the associative or paradigmatic dimensions of the structure which the producer expected his audience to be able to decode. Similarly, Metz's 'Grande syntagmatique' has been employed in order to provide a vocabulary when disengaging the combinative or syntagmatic dimensions of the film as a narrative.

Thus the left-hand column in the following pages represents the intended diegesis of the film; the sum of its denotation plus the preferred range of connotation organised within the producer's 'common sense' iconology. The middle column then lists some of the more clearly symbolic elements of the sound and image tracks, and the right-hand column describes the kind of links used between segments to form a narrative.



Sc. Content précis (motivational)

Arbitrary

Narrative code

1. A funeral (gravestones, black clothes, vicar's dialogue) - a girl standing by the graveside is singled out, who is she? What has happened? What is the girl's relationship to the deceased? She thinks back to when she was little - with her mother - it is probably her mother who has died.

The individual shots form a chronological syntagma (through the continuity of the vicar's dialogue) but the flashback is a subjective insert.

2. A hospital corridor (institutional architecture; two nurses walk by). Mother, recognisable from flashback, is waiting for something (she is seated, and is looking around anxiously). She has a young child with her - not the one in the flashback, but perhaps a younger version of her and therefore of the girl by the graveside. This is reinforced by the appearance of the caption '1950' since that date is known to mark the beginning of the story. Why are they waiting here? Is something wrong with either the mother or child?

Time-jump affirmed as backwards by the caption.

Autonomous shot in parallel with previous shots, but in sequence with following one through continuity of wardrobe, etc.

3. A doctor's room. The doctor (referred to as such in the dialogue) is the person mother has been waiting to see, the subject of her concern being the young child who is denoted as being profoundly deaf in the doctor's dialogue. The child is referred to by name for the first time, and the central theme of her needing 'specialist help' is introduced.

The relative positions of the camera for the P.O.V.'s dictated by the actors' positions also symbolises his authority.

Scenes 2 & 3 make up an episodic sequence.

4. A school (children, teachers and dialogue reference, 'This is the nursery class') but special kind of school since children are being taught to speak. This is therefore the 'specialist help' referred to above, and mother has presumably taken the doctor's advice to bring 'Sandra' here. Mother is established as not

The camera focusses on the unidentified child learning, then on mother and the senior mistress and back to the child, signifying the teaching

Scene 4 is part of a linear narrative syntagma insofar as it follows scene 3, but the two together make up an ordinary, rather than an



being very well off (difficulties with transport) and as having domestic problems (husband portrayed as not being willing to help with the transport to the school etc.) Child is not present at first, but is therefore the object of their conversation. When she is reintroduced (recognisable from the previous scene) she has become absorbed into the 'specialist' situation in being taught by the teacher. Her deafness is apparent from her wandering attention and the patience of the teacher.

5. House interior: Mother's home (because she is laying the table etc.) The idea of her relatively humble situation is reinforced by the small size of the living room and its contents. Perhaps she is preparing tea, having returned from the school. In any case she accidentally knocks a jug from the table, and the fact that the child (who is playing on the floor) does not react in any way demonstrates just how deaf 'Sandra' is.

6. School. Probably the same school, but the children are older and there is a different teacher. In fact 'Sandra' is revealed to be one of these older children by being referred to by name again. Time must therefore have moved on, but the child's problem remains unrecolved. She is unable to pronounce her own name properly even though her education has been continuing for some time and she appears to be a willing pupil.

as the object of their conversation. The tracking shot of a corridor and pan down the stairs helps to empty space, that is, the actual size of the institution.

episodic sequence.

Similar 'ooo-oooh' noises from S1 in scene 4 dubbed onto this scene provide notational link. Sound-loss on child's O.O.V. gives sound P.O.V. symbolising her deafness.

The relationship of scene 5 to scene 4 could be either that of an ordinary or an episodic sequence, since it could equally well be following mother's return from school or be some time later. The definition of continuity was not vital here.

Similar shots of the child and teacher as used in scene 4 help to locate the environment.

This is syntagmatically bracketed with scene 5 insofar as it is comparative, but it is also part of a narrative syntagma signifying chronological pace.



('Sandra' has decided to spend some of her first wages at a fair ...)

23. Fairground: (denoted through images of stalls; coloured lights etc.) 'Sandra has come to the fair on her own, and is enjoying herself at a shooting stall. The relative freedom of being able to spend her own money is implied, as is her competence at the shooting stall (her deafness is irrelevant here). A boy appears from the crowd and starts to comment about her shooting; 'Sandra' does not notice at first, because of her deafness, but the boy persists, seeming to be genuinely interested in her. Having realised that she is deaf, he still remains interested, and takes her on a number of rides, buying her a hot-dog and talking about himself. He appears to be better-off than her, offering to take her home 'in my car', but this and 'Sandra's' disability both seem to be irrelevant to the newly-formed relationship.

The use of different camera angles and positions relative to the fairground rides emphasises their speed and spectacle. The long tracking shot of the couple as they leave the fair lifts them out of the immediate context, thus increasing the sense of intimacy.

The different shots of the fairground rides are organised as bracket syntagmas insofar as they are not necessarily in chronological order, and can thus be seen as part of a descriptive syntagma of the fair itself. (The shot of the targets falling over being an explanatory insert.)

24. 'Sandra's' bedroom: (dressing table etc.) she is putting on make-up ready to go out, helped by sister (possibly identified from earlier 'dance' scene 14). They are both excited, since it transpires that the boy from the fair is coming round. The relationship is therefore a going concern rather than a casual meeting. The boy arrives, in a fairly expensive car, which is also the only car in the terraced, cobbled street. He greets 'Sandra' with respect as she runs out to him and they drive off happily together. He crunches the gears, perhaps in eagerness, or because of inexperience (they are both very young).

Camera starts on the reflected image of 'Sandra' in the mirror changing to the mirror's 'P.O.V.' after intercut, thus symbolising her concentration on getting ready for 'Ian'.

The mirror shot acts as subjective insert in the scene, which is in ordinary sequence with scene 23. (We don't know how long after scene 23 this occurs.)

25. The boy drives 'Sandra' some distance to a 'better class' district where he lives ('This is our house'). His relative wealth is reinforced by the house itself, which is large, with a garden and a second car in the driveway. 'Sandra' is suitably impressed (she looks

A dissolve during the car journey indicates a passage of time, and therefore a distance between.

Scene 25 is in episodic sequence with scene 24 through the continuity of the car.



around, taking in the new surroundings). The boy's father is gardening ('Candra' has neither a garden nor a father by this time) and invites the couple to tea at a friend's house, which again is novel for the girl. She declines, however, because of her dislike of groups of people (the possible implication being that it is difficult for her to communicate or participate in such a group). The boy translates this reply to his father in an offhand manner, implying both his acceptance of her deafness and youthful casualness.

26. Boy's bedroom: (ceiling has angled beams etc., connoting that the room is high up in the house) The boy shows off to 'Candra', he has many possessions and is particularly interested in music (there are posters of musicians on the wall, and there is a drum kit in the room). 'Ian's' brother is introduced (dialogue) as his younger brother, whom 'Ian' treats aggressively, showing off to 'Candra' again. The brother leaves, and the couple kiss, cementing the relationship.

Episodic sequence.

Camera angle is low, emphasising the spatial relationships of the actors in the room and showing the ceiling etc.

27. Rehearsal hall: 'Ian's' interest in music shown to be active, since he and his brother are now shown as part of a professional-sounding pop-group (with instruments and amplification equipment). They seem to be rehearsing for a particular event (dialogue references - 'Get it right' etc.) The relationship between 'Ian' and 'Candra' is now established as normal, since she is present at the rehearsal (i.e. she is going wherever he goes) and she has also established a relationship with the brother, who seeks good-natured collusion with her as 'Ian' rather aggressively berates him for a mistake in his drumming.

Rapid cross-cutting emphasises the exchange between the brothers. The relationship of scene 27 to scene 26 is in ordinary sequence.



28. Boys' bedrooms. 'Ian' and 'Sandra' are alone this time, and are kissing intimately, perhaps prior to intercourse. The relationship seems therefore to be stable and normal, despite class differences and 'Sandra's' deafness, etc. This is the end of part one of the film, which has therefore concluded with a happy ending; it has been a story of a deaf girl's success in finding a job and a normal relationship with a hearing boy, who, on the face of it, represents all those things of which 'Sandra' was deprived.

Once again, this scene could be regarded as being in ordinary sequence with scene 27, or as part of an achronological syntagma since scene 28 does not have to follow on from scene 27 in linear sequence.

The relative silence of this scene in contrast to the pop-group's rehearsal helps to denote the intimacy of the scene. The punctative fade to black signals the end of the scene before the 'End of part one' title, but also makes potential use of the conventional fade to signify sexual intercourse.

29. (Beginning of part two) A dance-hall (large room packed with young dancers, lights, music). 'Ian' is revealed to be the singer in the group (confirming that scene 27 was probably a rehearsal for this performance). 'Sandra' looks proudly at him as he sings even though she cannot hear the music. Her happiness is reflected in his success.

Music track is brought in 'hard', signifying that the event has been going on for some time.

The different shots of the group and dancers are descriptively syntagmatic (their consecutiveness does not necessarily indicate successivity) and the scene as a whole is bracketed to previous ones as another sample of 'Ian' and 'Sandra's' relationship.

30. 'Ian', 'Sandra' and the brother drive home, either after the concert or after a similar event. 'Ian', at least, has been drinking (he drives the car erratically, and vomits outside his front door).

A night scene, but recognition of 'Ian's' house is aided by the camera taking a closely similar position as for the day scene 25.

This is either an ordinary or an episodic sequence in relation to scene 29 ('Sandra's wardrobe is in continuity, but the boys' is not, although it could be assumed that they had changed after the concert).



31. 'Ian's' kitchen (i.e. modern, large kitchen in contrast to 'Sandra's'). 'Sandra' is making coffee by herself. There are the two boys? - Brother enters and explains that 'Ian' is being sick upstairs. He doesn't seem to be as drunk himself, but nevertheless begins to playfully fondle 'Sandra'. She does not object with any seriousness (her relationship with the brother having been established as friendly), but 'Ian' enters and seems to assume that very much more has been going on in his absence. His aggression (which has been intimated earlier) towards his brother mixed with possible jealousy and confirmed drunkenness flares up and he attacks the brother, in fact stabbing him with a kitchen knife which has come to hand. 'Sandra' tries to intervene, but 'Ian' lashes out and inadvertently slashes her face with the knife which he is still holding. She screams uncontrollably, and 'Ian' shocked and immediately remorseful, tries to slash his own wrists.

#### Passage No. 3 (The motel sequence, scenes 57-62)

('Sandra's' prostitution has been established, and her divorce confirmed. She has just paid one of several visits to a VD clinic ...)

57. Not long after visiting the VD clinic, 'Sandra' is back on the streets again (she wears the same clothes). Soliciting on street corners seems to have become part of her life, despite, that is, the attentions of the social worker. Whilst waiting at a corner a smart car draws up and the driver propositions the girl. The transaction proceeds smoothly (i.e. both of them have done this before), even though 'Sandra' still has difficulty in communicating the simple information that her price is £3; a fact which might generate sympathy for the girl, even though she is

Hand-held camera emphasises the action, but the intercut of 'Sandra' actually being slashed is a static big close-up, signifying the centrality of that event. The scene is cut before 'Ian' completes the action of slashing his wrists, thus heightening the drama with an unresolved action (leaving the scene full of questions).

The relationship of scene 57 to scene 50 is episodic in which sequence the actual scarring operates as an explanatory insert.

Wideshot enables the audience to see that 'Sandra' is alone, plus the distance of the camera from the subject contains the implication of clandestine witness (as in a straight documentary). The punter's voice is non-natural with respect to the camera's P.O.V.

Scene 57 in in ordinary sequence with scene 56.



(it would be inaudible from that distance) so the realism of his dialogue must be dependent upon conventional coding for 'Interior car dialogue'.

58. 'Sandra' and the neatly-dressed man drive some distance away (they seem to be travelling quite fast, and the built-up area gives way to trees and an open road). The neat man realises that 'Sandra' is deaf, but only seems to be interested in whether she can 'do it'. As in the previous car-journey (to 'Inn's' house) 'Sandra' is being taken away from her home ground and therefore towards something else. This time, however, the neat man is an unknown quantity.

The relative length of Scene 58 is in this scene (30") helps episodic sequence to suggest the length of the journey and therefore its distance.

59. The idea that the neat man has previous experience with prostitutes, and knows the area quite well is confirmed by his driving straight to a motel, which he enters (with 'Sandra') without preamble. His control of the situation becomes more evident at the same time as 'Sandra' seems to become more wary (she keeps him constantly in view).

The movement of the journey to the motel is continued in the tracking shot of the couple's walk from the car to the motel foyer; symbolising an inexorable movement towards an unknown event. The last shot of this scene also lingers on the motel entrance after the couple has entered as a point of pace and expectation.

The movement of the journey to the motel is continued in the tracking shot of the couple's walk from the car to the motel foyer; symbolising an inexorable movement towards an unknown event. The last shot of this scene also lingers on the motel entrance after the couple has entered as a point of pace and expectation.



60. Motel bedroom: (standard, small, clean room with bed and bedside tables etc.) Continuity of sequence strengthens the suspicion that something is about to happen. The neat man looks at 'Sandra' as she starts to undress, and in the context the probability is that a sexual act will result. The neat man starts to prepare himself too, taking the contents of his pockets out and putting it on the bedside table. He has quite a bit of money on him, from which 'Sandra' extracts a £5 note and waves it teasingly towards him as if to say 'For me?' Maybe this is part of a sexual preamble; a game (since the agreed price was £3), but the neat man doesn't see it that way. In fact he flies off the handle, hitting the girl, who reacts with a kick towards him (demonstrating her capacity of self-defence). The situation develops rapidly, the neat man seeming to lose all control, dragging the struggling girl towards the washbasin where he bangs her head repeatedly against the wall. 'I'll kill yer!' he says, and as she slumps to the floor it looks as if he may have done so. Not content with this, he wrenches a metal shelf from a radiator and strikes the girl again. Cooling down rapidly, he retrieves his jacket and leaves the room. What has become of 'Sandra'. Who was this man? Did he just have a pathological hate for prostitutes ('You dirty filthy whore,' in dialogue) or did 'Sandra' herself provoke the attack?

61. The neat man gets in his car and drives away from the motel, quickly and calmly. He doesn't look remorseful, even though he may have killed the girl.

As in the consultant scene (3) the relevant P.O.V.'s of the actors are also used to symbolise his dominance and her subjection, especially in 'Sandra's' P.O.V. of the radiator shelf attack.

Episodic sequence continues ...

Scene 60 cuts on the man's exit through the bedroom door, and scene 61 opens on his getting in through the door of his car, thus

Episodic sequence continues ...



emphasizing the rapidity of his exit, but also, by default, his lack of concern in comparison to the track shot covering the entrance to the motel.

62. A hospital (Nurses, a casualty trolley, etc.) 'Sandra's' sister (identified from previous scenes) waits in the corridor, looking worried. What has happened to 'Sandra'? The patient on the trolley is not her (Sister makes no reaction of recognition), so where is she? She is probably not dead (because of the implication that she has been taken to hospital) but one does not know how badly she is injured. (End of part two)

A very short scene (15") Scene 62 is in ending with a fade to black providing a bridge across the commercial break, i.e. a peg for part three. since the temporal discontinuity is un-organised ('Sandra' could have been in hospital for several hours or several weeks).

Passage No. 4 (from the party at 'Charlie's' to the end of the film; scenes 79-87)

('Sandra', sick, tired and alone, has tagged along with the group of drunken people back to her erstwhile lover's lodgings, even though 'Charlie' is now firmly linked with 'Cross-eyed Anne' ...)

79. Interior 'Charlie's' lodgings (identified from previous scenes). Everyone is drinking and/or taking uppers except 'Sandra', who is further isolated from the others by being accused of stealing some of 'Cross-eyed Anne's' records. By now she seems to have given up completely, as she covers beneath the sink. 'Charlie' tries to point out that 'Sandra' would have no interest in the records, but eventually persuades 'Cross-eyed Anne' to leave with him, avoiding the issue and leaving the now pathetic 'Sandra' alone with his drunken companions. One of them simply assumes that she will sleep with him, treating her purely as an object. When she refuses, he does not

Relatively high cutting rate enables the number of people in the small room to be identified through single shots. P.O.V. camera angles again used to symbolize 'Sandra's' subjection; particularly with the shot from her P.O.V. up to the man who propositions her (which is a directly

Scene 79 is in episodic sequence with scene 78. The scene itself, having no definite time-scale, functions as a descriptive syntagma.



seem to be particularly bothered and moves off somewhere else. 'Sandra' simply wants to go to sleep now, and tries to remove the others from the bed. Max (one of the more sympathetic men - see scene 71) eventually acquiesces after some grumbling, and he stumbles out of the room (presumably heading towards his own lodgings). 'Sandra', meanwhile, is unable to remove the other man from the bed, so she gives up and leaves too.

80. Outside the room, in a narrow corridor leading to the front door, 'Sandra' makes her way out. In the dim light she suddenly sees the figure of a man silhouetted in the doorway. This is 'Max', the man whom 'Sandra' persuaded to leave the bed, but she is startled by the fact that he is still in the house, and becomes more afraid as he stumbles about (drunkenly) in the doorway. In fact 'Max' is trying to let her pass by him (he says, 'C'mon; you're alright') but given the fact that 'Sandra' cannot hear this, her general state of mind by this time and her history of being attacked by different men ('Max's' relative gentleness notwithstanding) she panics and tries to push past 'Max' to get out of the house. He meanwhile recovers from his slump and rears up with his hands outstretched trying to calm her down. 'Sandra' again misunderstands 'Max's' intention, misreading his gesture as a threat - a threat of the same nature as that which culminated in the attack at the motel. Thoroughly terrified, the girl produces a knife (which she is known to have carried from previous scenes) and lunges at the man. She in fact stabs him (confirmed in dialogue; 'Bloody 'ell, she's stabbed us') and runs out of the house.

comparable shot to that of the 'Heat man' in the motel as he attacks the girl).

Tracking shot of 'Sandra' Episodic sequence as she slides along the wall away from 'Max' is shot from his P.O.V., thus implying that he is moving towards her as well as showing her moving away from him. This is, however, symbolic rather than iconic since he remains relatively still. 20 frame flashback to 'Heat man' changes from mid to extreme low angle flashback (18 frames across intermediary track shot symbolising increasing menace.

function as displaced diegetic inserts if the flashbacks are not taken as 'Sandra's' but as the audience's. The stab itself; a 20 frame big close-up functions as an explanatory insert.



81. 'Sandra' runs off some distance away (environment changes from a street to a main road, with traffic etc.) and finds a taxi. She manages to communicate a particular destination to the driver and they drive off.
82. Meanwhile, 'Max' has managed to stumble up to a main road (not necessarily the same one) and the seriousness of his condition is apparent as he collapses in front of a car (which may or may not have actually hit him). The occupants of the car rush out and decide to call for an ambulance.
83. Meanwhile, 'Sandra' arrives at her as yet undisclosed destination in the taxi. The driver radios back to base.
84. At the same time, 'Max' is being loaded into an ambulance back at the main road. The confusion of whether he was actually hit by the car is cleared up in the dialogue 'he wasn't') but he is nevertheless badly wounded (bleeding). The question of whether he has been fatally wounded remains open. 'Max' himself concludes that 'Christ, I'm pissed.)
85. A mortuary. ('Max' lays on slab in brightly-lit room). 'Max' evidently was fatally wounded therefore.
86. 'Sandra' is asleep on a sofa, presumably in the place she headed for in the taxi, which is revealed to be the West Indian's flat as he comes in, half-dressed, with some policemen. Because he is wearing just a vest and trousers the implication is that he has let the police in to his flat, but that he has not slept with 'Sandra' because she was sleeping 'undisturbed) on
- Episodic sequence.
- Hand-held camera employed The episodic sequence starts to become part of an alternating narrative syntagma here as the scenes swap between 'Max's' demise and 'Sandra's' escape.
- Complete change of sound and light quality, plus use of static camera breaks the flow of the narrative and mirrors 'Max's' stillness.
- The alternation has now been arrested, signifying a time-jump such that scene 85 is back into ordinary sequence with scene 84.
- As the caution is being written out 'Sandra' is in the centre of the frame, gesticulating towards the West Indian. This shot is not, however his P.O.V. which gives written out.



the sofa. 'Sandra' must have trusted the West Indian as a refuge (she came straight to his flat after the stabbing) and must have been in his flat for at least a period of hours since she had been asleep. Any doubt that 'Max' has been killed is dispelled in the Inspector's dialogue, and the police arrival can be explained by the taxi-driver's radio-call. The girl's deafness is finally reaffirmed by the fact that the Inspector has to write out the caution. She makes a noise of surprise at the fact of 'Max's' death; killing him not being her intention, although she assents to the content of the caution (by nodding) thus implying that she was aware of the possible consequences of a conscious action, even though it was a case of self defence as far as she was concerned. The girl is once again alone against more powerful forces, represented this time by the police. She gives a fleeting glance towards the West Indian, but he is also powerless to help her.

87. (Sandra' is taken outside and into a police car, which drives off out of sight. The assumption that she would then be tried and imprisoned is then affirmed by the caption: 'After a term of imprisonment Sandra returned home. She is at present unemployed'.

the shot a kind of neutrality; symbolising the camera's retreat from subjectivism back into an observatory status as the inevitability of 'Sandra's' fate becomes apparent. The conventional sign for arrest, that is, the recital of the caution, becomes a symbol of the girl's basic inability to communicate, or of hearing people to communicate with her.

Episodic sequence  
finishing on sustained  
longshot of the  
tenement square.



This section has delved behind the practical operation of day-to-day television film-making to discuss how - working with a number of raw materials of expression - signs can be selected and organised within codes in a narrative form. Through the use of several examples underpinned by the experience of the production study, the attempt has also been made to outline how these signs were intended to be decoded as part of the realisation of a social theory. This theory enabled the producer to proceed on the basis that his film would be understood; that is to say his use of the raw materials was assumed to be to all intents and purposes the same as the use to which they would be put by his audience. That was the point of working with the material until it worked; until it assumed a self-evidence which transcended the fact of its construction.

This theory assumes that a symmetry of encoding and decoding is possible, firstly between an individual and an audience, and secondly between the producer and the mass audience. In this particular case the primary assumption is that there is a generalisable code of resemblance; a code which is realism, the use of which presupposes the audience's predisposition to use it too.

The next section aims to broadly test this hypothesis, not through an 'objective' critique of the text, but through an examination of an audience's understanding of the system of representation employed.



SECTION FOUR

An Audience Study



Introduction

Perhaps the most massive assumption which I have made in writing the last few hundred pages is that someone other than myself is going to read them. Writing on that assumption I have made use of certain rules to which I also assume a reader would have access; rules which would enable him or her to construct a model of my intended meaning. I have, for example, used sentences composed of words arranged in grammatical order for the most part, and where I have used words which may not be in common use I have explained them with words which are, or which I assume are in common use.

Since you are now reading this, my first assumption would seem to have some grounding; in fact, but the adequacy of your model of my intended meaning cannot be so easily tested - leastways from the text itself. Writing the text of a thesis is, however, a special kind of communication in so far as the process shares some of the advantages of face-to-face exchanges, that is, I have a certain amount of information about the likely nature of my audience and can therefore tailor my use of language accordingly. In short I can negotiate - albeit indirectly - a preferred interpretation.

The polar opposite of this is the problem which faced the NASA scientists who wanted to include a 'we are here' message in one of their space-probes. This particular probe would eventually escape the solar system and might one day be found by an intelligent extraterrestrial. A message was therefore affixed to the body of the spacecraft in the form of an outline drawing of a man and a woman plus a simple chart of our planetary system in order to say: 'This is what we look like, and this is where we live'. The problem in framing this message was, of course, that



the nature of the audience was completely unknown, although the scientists apparently assumed that an alien being would at least know which way round to hold the picture.

The production of a television programme lies somewhere in between. A producer has the consolation that his or her audience is likely to be human, but does not have access to the kind of feedback mechanisms experienced in face-to-face encounters through which the form of the message can be modified as it is being communicated in order to produce some form of mutual knowledge.

As a result there is likely to be a good deal of uncertainty about the audience, an uncertainty which is unlikely to be relieved during the making of a programme by ratings which are gathered afterwards. Ratings and other forms of conventional audience research may in any case deliver very little data about whether a programme was understood in the way that a producer wanted it to be (or by whom) and are very often used purely for professional justification in terms of popularity and track-records or for corporate commercial interests. Even when more serious feedback is tapped through Audience Reaction Indices or specially-commissioned reports there is no guarantee that individual producers will see the results. The BBC, for example, produced a relatively wide-ranging report on audience reactions to the controversial programme *THE FAMILY*, on which DUFFY's producer was co-director, and yet he had never officially been given a copy.

McQuail (1969: pp 75-84) locates four main obstacles between the producer and the audience. These are the sheer size of media organisations, the backgrounds of the producers themselves (in being generally middle-class, articulate folk), the inability of producers to select particular audiences and the limited possibility of gaining



the kind of feedback mentioned above. To this list Fiske and Hartley (1978: pp 109-126) add that the television medium is characteristically oral rather than literate in mode, whereas it serves a society 'whose investment in the modes of thought associated with literacy is very great' (ibid. 159).

The uncertainty which is generated can lead to a number of defensive responses. McQuail cites 'paternalism' as being one such response, where everyone is lumped together as a mass come what may. (Stuart Hall has proposed the 'Mass Viewing Unit' as a term to describe any individual in this mass). Elliott (1972: pp 144-167) satisfyingly rejects true mass communications as a contradiction in terms, but programme controllers have the option of 'specialisation' where a great diversity of programmes are produced for as many identifiable audiences as possible. With regard to individual programmes one could advance the notion of redundancy as a form of specialisation here, meaning that the same basic message can be put in several different ways during the course of a programme in order to allow for different modes of understanding. In *DUTY*, for example, the fact of 'Sandra's' deafness could be understood according to the linguistic subcode of the 'Consultant's' specialised jargon 'She is profoundly deaf'. Alternatively, her deafness could be gauged from the child's failure to react to the jug breaking, from her attendance at a special school, her 'odd' speech and so on. Beyond this strategy a producer may sometimes retreat into journalistic ideology, stressing his autonomy and independence as a 'professional' defence against a perceived requirement to provide for a disparate audience. Lastly, McQuail offers



'ritualism' as a possible defence, where the producer simply uses tried and tested, routinised methods to produce formulaic programmes such as CROSSROADS or the innumerable Hanna-Barbera adventure cartoons. (To be fair to CROSSROADS, it does receive a large mail from loyal viewers, so its producers can be said to be rather less uncertain about the audience than many other programme-makers).

Another response which could be added as a variation of 'paternalism' is that suggested by DULUX's writer, that is to ignore the audience altogether. This may turn out to be the most tenable arrangement for someone actually engaged in typing out a screenplay in view of the inherently stressful nature of the task, but an audience must always be implicitly posited by a writer if communication is desired. The admission of any audience into the argument then poses problems of strategy which prefigure the above discussion of orientations towards the audience.

#### A Creative Audience

In working with the raw materials of expression a writer or producer can seek to produce autonomous objects of his or her own invention, reflections of the real world or a mixture of both. A photographic image, for example, can be intended as an objet d'art in its own right, as a documentary record of an object in the world or as a record of such an object which is at the same time aesthetically unique. If the producer also wishes to communicate any of these expressions to an audience he or she must take account of the fact that the materials of expression become, for an audience, materials of impression, and that there is likely to be a difference between them. Indeed, it is the assumption that there is such a difference which motivates the communicative act in the first place.



This notion nevertheless rejects the idea of there being any kind of linear flow of pristine information between a communicator and an audience by positing the audience as creator. It also rejects any necessary connection between the identification of the meaning of a communicative act by an audience and its intended meaning. Furthermore, as Giddens (1976:158) points out:

Mutual knowledge is not corrigible to the sociological observer, who must draw upon it just as lay actors do in order to generate descriptions of their conduct...

However, ... in so far as such 'knowledge'... can be represented as 'commonsense', as a series of factual beliefs, it is in principle open to confirmation or otherwise in the light of social scientific analysis.

The relevance of these bald statements needs to be explicated, bearing in mind the documentary nature of the programme under consideration, and this task can be begun by quoting Giddens' summary conclusion to New rules of Sociological Method (p155)

... the social world, unlike the world of nature, has to be grasped as a skilled accomplishment of active human subjects; the constitution of this world as 'meaningful', 'accountable' or 'intelligible' depends upon language, regarded however not simply as a system of signs or symbols but as a medium of practical activity; the social scientist of necessity draws upon the same sorts of skills as those whose conduct he seeks to analyse in order to describe it; generating descriptions of social conduct depends upon the hermeneutic task of penetrating the frames of meaning which lay actors themselves draw upon in constituting and reconstituting the social world.

It is conceded that we do not produce the world of nature, but we do produce the way in which nature is apprehended. Thus while the differences in cognitive style, method and perspective between scientific, philosophical or artistic modes of human knowledge should not be confounded (see Luckmann, 1978:11) each of these remain human modes and can therefore be seen as being engaged in essentially the same task of surrounding experience with context such that it ceases to be simply sensation.



The point is that the production of a television programme involves such contextualisations too; modes of knowledge which are of particular interest when they are applied to the real world since a 'mass communicator' is then seeking to float these modes as public currency in the public sector. However, in using that currency a producer may be operating two hypotheses, the first being an ontological hypothesis about the nature of reality and the second being a sociological hypothesis about the understanding of that reality.

Working within the bounds of the first hypothesis a producer may seek to reproduce indexically the a priori nature of a situation by circumventing his or her own expression and allowing reality to leave - in Andre Bazin's terms - direct tracings upon the celluloid. Reality is here allowed to leave its impression directly upon the film to become the material of impression for an audience without, that is, having first been adulterated by being the producer's material of expression. As Bazin (1967:13) says:

The objective nature of photography confers on it a quality of credibility absent from all other picture-taking... We are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually represented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space.

In operating the second hypothesis the producer builds iconic or symbolic models of reality of which the degree of isomorphism or authenticity is assumed to be very high for an audience, which means for the audience in general terms.

The first hypothesis is ultimately untenable because it depends upon the second. Whatever else reality may possess it does not possess meaning, so a television programme can communicate messages about the



real world, but it can never 'communicate' the world itself because the natural world communicates nothing. It has no significance independent of that which is assigned to it by people, so the manner in which a communication relates to its object lies in the manner in which people do that relating.

Both of the hypotheses can be operated within a theory about the real world in the form of a communication, but neither therefore leads to a conveyance of reality itself. As Immanuel Kant pointed out, an audience as subject produces possible objects of knowledge from his or her materials of impression (which in this case happen to include a televised drama-documentary), not objects of reality, for perception only produces the mode in which reality appears to us.

That mode remains theoretical, but in being only theoretically objective it is also creative. If objects of knowledge are provisional understandings of reality which are open to revision or revolutionary change in the face of other objects of knowledge it is because they represent possibility rather than actuality. Given the potentially infinite range of such possibilities, any object of knowledge produced by any subject would be equally valid, or equally invalid with respect to any other object of knowledge.

How to avoid such relativism would indeed be a skilled accomplishment, but that is precisely what people, as active human subjects, have achieved in constructing the social world by coming to arbitrary agreements through language. The resulting reciprocity of perspectives produces a commonsense view of the world; a sense of that which is commonly accepted to be the current range of possibilities. Its production is also an eminently practical activity because it enables us to control reality (by creating the principle that it is not



totally relativistic). The ways in which social reality maintains this control are so important that they become rules; a body of procedural knowledge which enables us to see - as Wittgenstein would say - 'how to go on'. Bauman, (ibid. pp 195-7) argues that such control can take the form of preventative barriers between ourselves and untamed nature, 'civilization' being 'the testimony of our efforts'. To build a house in order to keep out the rain is an example of such effort, but it is an unsubtle one, for human beings are capable of far more subtle means of control. As Bauman continues:

The other form our efforts to prevent uncertainty may take is agreement. Only a part of 'outer reality' is potentially amenable to this form of control, the part which consists of other people. Since we see them as replicas of ourselves, we suppose that they, like ourselves, can, if only they try hard enough, abstain from behaving haphazardly, i.e. from creating a situation of uncertainty for the others. That is to say, we suppose that they can, by and large, control their 'inner reality'.

Thus we also build houses of mutual knowledge as well as bricks and mortar in order to keep the wolf of relativism from the door; frames of meaning which may posit the idea of truth but which actually rely upon practical conditions of agreement such as those formed as a result of the work of history or reason.

Albrecht Durer, for example, can be said to have produced an object of mutual knowledge when he made his famous drawing of a rhinoceros. He executed this drawing on the basis of a second-hand description of the beast and had never in fact seen one for himself. Perhaps as a result of this the artist added a pectoral horn which rhinoceri do not appear to actually possess. Durer's picture nevertheless came to be regarded as the definitive study such that even during the



nineteenth century - when drawings were executed from life - the animal was still depicted with the extra horn. Less obviously, some of Durer's ideas about perspective are still being taken as a definitive mode of reproducing three-dimensionality in art and graphic works even though such forms of perspective are pure constructs (where, as Berger says - 1972:16 - 'the visible world is arranged for the spectator as the universe was once thought to be arranged for God').

By the same token, realism in a television programme is a construct;

Its 'naturalness' arises not from nature itself but from the fact that realism is the mode in which our particular culture prefers its ritual condensations to be cast. (Fiske and Hartley, *ibid.* p160)

It works as a theory about the world and as a strategy towards an audience insofar as it subordinates its own structure beneath its exploitation of the mode in which people are thought to perceive objects of knowledge during the course of everyday life. At a very simple level, for example, each shot in *DUSTY* was carefully and consciously constructed with the result that each detail of the reality before the camera was subject to manipulation. On the other hand, the camera itself was nearly always placed at eye-level. The producer did not, in other words, manipulate the camera by using Hitchcockian overhead shots or, with one exception, zoom shots because people do not normally observe actions or conversations from a point on the ceiling or whilst gliding smoothly towards the protagonists.

Realism can therefore be regarded as an essentially conservative mode of representation, especially when employed in a mass medium, and some would go further in saying that the extent of its ubiquity is a measure of bourgeois domination in society. While the mode may be



conservative, or more accurately, normative, the very familiarity of the form can nevertheless be used to defamiliarise content.

By this I mean that realism, as a theory based upon a conventionally coded premise of belief in a correspondence between 'work of art' and 'reality' can also be used as a self-reflexive means of criticism.

The language of realism aims to identify actuality with possibility but it never finally succeeds in doing so. If it did it could not be used to communicate anything, because, as Bauman (ibid, p160) points out during his discussion of the work of Martin Heidegger, the question 'what is X?' makes sense only when the possibility that 'X' can be something else has been discovered. Any mode of discourse might then be described - as Bismarck described politics - as an art of the possible; or as a medium of practical activity in Giddens's terms. In fact, Giddens argues (ibid, p161) that the structures involved '... must not be conceptualized as simply placing constraints upon human agency, but as enabling'. On one level, for example, the structural constraints of the production process enabled DUFFY's producer to make a film, but on a more subtle level they also enabled him to exercise his own creative autonomy by forcing him to use existing materials in a new way - which is as creative as humanity can be.

In much the same way the producer wanted to use his own creation as bait for his audience's creativity. Just as it is part of the sociologist's job to remind people that their world is a construct, to produce case-studies by way of example and to criticize those structures which most obviously preclude access by the greatest number of different points of view or forms of life, so it is the



critical film-maker's concern to 'show ourselves to ourselves'. It is in everybody's interests to do so, since we cannot exclude the possibility of one of those forms of life being right. We have to be able to make that discovery even if that discovery is not in fact achieved, which is why particular structures of dominance need to be identified and critically examined. The existence of censorship in its various forms needs, for example, to be open to criticism since in excluding 'the bad' it also devalues 'the good'. One aspect of pornography is that it defines erotica, just as the existence of the National Front in this country in some sense defines the Broad Left, and in the U.S.S.R. - as Volosinov points out - atheism is as unfree as religion.

Atheism, in other words, only makes sense when the possibility of religious experience is admitted, just as our understanding of 'rhinoceros' results not in spite of Durer's drawing, but in part because of it.

In a world in which that discovery (of possibility) could not be made, theoretical knowledge would not arise; it would be unthinkable in a world in which all possibilities were identified with actuality. But our world is not such a world. To be exact, our existence is specifically human existence, *Dasein*\*, only in so far as our world is not such a world. Our world not being such a world, and our existence being human, are in fact two wordings of the same truth. In as far as our existence is human, the lack of identity between possibility and actuality, and therefore theoretical knowledge, is not just conceivable, but inevitable.

(\**Dasein* = existence, as in Heidegger's central message  
 'Das Dasein ist seine Erschlossenheit' - Existence  
 is its own disclosure.)

So says Barman (ibid, p160) in concluding that theory is our fate and that...



The theoretical question about the essence of things, whether articulated within realistic discourse (what are they in themselves?), or in the empiricist discourse (how do they appear to us?), or in a phenomenological one (how do they exist in their mode of being?), is not a feat accomplished by the philosopher; in its rough form it continually emerges, and cannot but emerge, in the very midst of our ordinary existence.

Insofar as our existence is specifically human, any mutual knowledge must therefore be represented as a series of factual beliefs, as structures which Giddens points out are both a condition and a consequence of the production of interaction in enabling as well as constraining human agency. As a constraint a series of factual beliefs or reproduced practices involves what Giddens calls a 'horizon of legitimacy'. Since, however, the nature of such a horizon is conditional upon structures which are, in turn, only theoretically objective (having been created by active human subjects) that horizon can, in principle, be expanded.

That theoretical objectivity is a system of power which specifically excludes those agencies which have the potential of disrupting or undermining its potency. As Bauman (ibid, p196) says,

Normally there are types of people whom, like intractable nature, we prefer to keep out of bounds. We usually prefer to separate alien races, criminals, mentally insane, sometimes children or women.

One of the principal ways in which such agencies can be re-engaged as part of the process of expansion is to use a mode for producing normative models of reality in such a way that both forms of life (the 'legitimate' and the 'illegitimate') can be accommodated. Giddens says that one of the primary tasks of sociological analysis is the hermeneutic explication and mediation of divergent forms of life within the descriptive metalanguages of social science. If one



substitutes 'documentary film-making' for 'social science', and posits 'realism' as a metalanguage then the underlying strategy of a film like *DUSKY* begins to surface.

To return to my opening remarks in this section, a producer can be said to be uncertain about the nature of the audience, but he can be sure that any audience will interpret his film according to the rules of a form of life. Not knowing what that form of life might be in any given instance, the most obvious strategy is to try to contest the centre by constructing an ideal-typical framework through which the producer can demand an engagement in discourse of those who adhere to such a conventionally coded premise of belief with the object of that belief. Hence the system of signs and symbols employed in a film like *DUSKY* can be employed as a medium of practical activity which depends upon the possibility of gaining concerted action for autonomous subjects under conditions in which such action is not automatically assured.

The critical film-maker's task is therefore, like the sociologist's, that of penetrating the frames of meaning which lay actors draw upon in constituting and reconstituting the social world (such as those frames of meaning which control by exclusion the uncertainty generated by those people who are unable to communicate normally - people like 'Candra'). The next stage in the task is then to mediate those frames of meaning reflexively within a metalanguage such as realism in order to enable people to gain an equal chance of participating in a form of concerted action based not upon a given structure of dominance, but upon 'generalizable interests' or 'needs that can be communicatively shared' (Habermas 1976:108). A move can then be made towards obtaining the 'expansion of the margins of tolerance',



which was the producer's avowed intention in making DUTY, by enabling society-as-audience to commit an operation upon itself in requiring that:

... the grounds of validity of the action-oriented meanings are discussed openly and that they are discussed, with equal rights, by all concerned.  
(Lauran, *ibid* p.244)

There is one major problem here, which is the inability of escaping the vicious hermeneutic circle which results from the lack of a context-independent form of understanding. For as Giddens points out, social science - and I would add, film documentarism - can equally well be a potential instrument of domination as a potential instrument of the expansion of rational autonomy of action. This, however, is an argument for continuous self-criticism by sociologists and film-makers during the process of negotiating agreements about what stands for truth. It is not of itself an argument towards the establishment of a conspiracy theory because an interrogator would first have to find himself a context-independent platform.

In summary, a mass media producer's fundamental uncertainty about any audience has to be tackled before discussing his strategy towards any particular audience, that uncertainty being rooted in a lack of necessary control over an audience's creativity - and therefore of their perception of his intentions. Even when seeking to reflect the real world a producer cannot turn to that reality as a truly objective arbiter, so the alternative is to make use of arbitrary agreements which people have made about reality through language. Consciously or otherwise a distinction therefore has to be made between sense and reference in employing the rules of social life through which mutual knowledge can be constructed. In so doing,



DUFFY's producer was also aiming to criticise those rules by using an audience's creativity as its own catalyst in a process of expansion. As the producer said, he wanted people to understand 'Sandra's' story as a narrative, but he also wanted people to discuss it with other people 'in the pub, or at work the next day'. There needed, therefore, to be a basis for discussion; a built-in possibility of decode-variance to enable the film to operate as a medium of practical activity, but not as a medium of random activity. In order to foreclose the range of conclusions which could be drawn from the film the producer therefore had to be able to penetrate potentially disparate frames of meaning and to mediate these within a language which had both a referential and a metalinguistic function. The film, in other words, was intended to be read as both a true story and as a message about truth.

The central question to be asked in a study of the audience consequently concerns the nature of the practical activity mediated by a product like DUFFY given the possibility of that mediation through a system of signs. Now, for instance, were people disposed to make use of the programme, and how far or to what degree was that use anticipated by the producer? Did he sufficiently generalise the 'unique determination' of each sound or image to enable an audience to create coherent objects of knowledge, and how symmetrical were these in relation to the producer's objects of knowledge and those of other people? In addition, one can ask whether people were able to make use of the form in order to perceive the content as authentic, and how far 'Sandra', for example, was accommodated within different forms of life as a sympathetic character given her potential typification



as being beyond the limits of tolerance. Similarly, one can examine the degree to which the film was extracted from the 'mosaic of television programming'. The producer specifically stated that one of his intentions was 'to shock', which may be taken as a desire to produce a gestalt shift, or as Schutz would say, a change from the mode of Zukunfts to Vorhanden; so to what degree did such a change occur?

These and other questions form the basis of a study of an audience which was undertaken during and after the transmission of DUNEY, the methodology and results of which are set out below.

#### What an audience did with DUNEY

No television producer could expect everyone to understand his programmes in precisely the manner he wanted them to, but every television producer expects a large proportion of the audience to broadly grasp the point he is making or the feeling he wanted to generate. That - money and status excepted - is a primary reason for working in a mass medium in the first place. In examining the grounds for such an expectation it is therefore useful to assume the opposite and to work from the hypothesis that every member of the audience would understand DUNEY differently.

If one regards people as active human subjects whose fate it is to continually create and re-create their world then one must also abandon the notion of any direct kind of stimulus-response relationship between object and subject and thus move away from linear theories of communication which would support the above expectation. People



do not, however, create their world independently and are not free to use a television programme in a completely random or selective way as, for example, a source of the gratification of needs. It is by means of people's 'disposition to react to language' (Quine) which may be derived from resources and conditions 'of which they are unaware or perceive only dimly' (Giddens) that reality (including television) becomes a 'coherent view of experience which is held by individuals or groups' (Kreiling) and thus stands for a correspondence with truth. Indeed, it is only through interpretation that we are able to hear at all (Ricoeur) and it is only through communication between men that ideas come into existence (Feurbach).

If the relationship between, say, a realistic television programme and its object is then taken to be a relationship between the system of representation employed and a system which people take, or are thought to take, for granted the operationalisation of the primary hypothesis would therefore need to be able to take account of such a system.

In this study I have therefore allowed for the possibility of everyone understanding DUEBY differently whilst allowing any clusters of agreement to surface. In as much as it is possible to locate such clusters it is also then possible to begin to reconnect the link between social and cultural processes which tends to be severed by regarding a sign-system as a context-independent lexicon. Truly communicative processes may prefer one semantic domain over another but they rely on context-dependency; on the possibility of theory-building on the part of an audience. Now it is quite possible for



everyone to arrive at the same theory, and it was the producer's intention that this would be the case with respect to DMIH, in addition to which he hoped that such a theory would be consonant with his own. It is also possible that everyone could arrive at the same theory by different routes; routes which could equally well lead an audience to another destination.

These routes are defined by co-ordination drawn from the rules of social life, and as responses to those conditions they have been categorized by Parkin (1972) in terms of three 'meaning systems'. Hence the dominant, subordinate and radical systems identified by Parkin encompasses deferential or aspirational, accommodative or negotiated and oppositional responses to those conditions; any of which might be used when decoding a television message. Stuart Hall has in fact identified such responses as the basis for both encoding and decoding processes, arguing that (1973:12):

... to clarify a 'misunderstanding' at the denotative level, we need primarily to refer to the immanent world of the sign and its codes. But to clarify and resolve 'misunderstanding' at the level of connotation, we must refer, through the codes to the rules of social life, of history and life-situation, of economic and political power, and, ultimately, of ideology.

The reason why Hall has put 'misunderstanding' between inverted commas is that he disagrees with the usage of the word when it implies 'faulty' or 'wrong' understanding beyond that of straight error. By 'straight error' I mean the kind of mistake someone might make in thinking I'd said 'I've relieved the dog' when I actually said 'I believe in God'. Beyond that level, the charge of misunderstanding becomes at best meaningless, or at its worst, partisan. For as Hall says (ibid p17):



To interpret what are in fact essential elements in the systematic distortions of a socio-communications system as if (they were) technical faults in transmission is to misread a deep-structure process for a surface phenomenon.

Thus to understand *DUSTY* as being about a girl who deserved everything she got is not to misunderstand the producer's intention that she was to some degree a victim of circumstances beyond her control. It is to understand that intention through the use of a different meaning system or societal perspective which has enabled its user to negotiate or oppose the preferred system. The fact that *DUSTY* can be said to have already been encoded within the radical system in so far as it was promoting an oppositional response to inequality does not therefore mean that it could not be decoded as part of the dominant system. Simply by being 'on television' the programme could have been regarded as a double-bluff on behalf of the establishment. Graham Wardlock, for example, delights in using the example of a regularly-scheduled 'Trotzky hour' on national TV as a means of deflating the power of a radical system by accommodating it within a dominant one. Similarly, it would not be impossible to regard *DUSTY* in toto as an argument for euthanasia. That is one reason why the programme needed to be seen as being different, and also why 'Sandra' needed to be 'clawed back' (to use Fiske & Hartley's term again) into central focus as a sympathetic character; a character basically 'like us'. In order to look at the extent of the boundaries of 'objectivity' with respect to the audience's understanding of the film and its symmetry with respect to the producer's intentions I have therefore assumed that objectivity to be based upon a series of factual beliefs mediated by societal perspectives. In thus modifying the initial



hypothesis (that everyone would understand the programme differently) a means by which such perspectives could be located has also been accommodated within the research design.

### Methodology

The audience study was not intended to be a comprehensive survey of the thirteen million or so people who watched DUMX, nor do I offer the results as more than a brief indication of possible understandings which people held. In being able to isolate certain factors which may have oriented respondents' understanding of the programme the data collected from a small sample survey and three discussion groups nevertheless enables one to draw a number of conclusions about the nature of the practical activity in which an audience can be engaged.

Those factors were the 'meaning systems' or societal perspectives mentioned above, people's local knowledge of the subject-matter of the programme and their 'professional' experience of film and television.

#### 1. Societal perspectives

In testing a relationship between societal perspectives and different responses to the programme I have looked at class in itself, in so far as this can be determined by a simple division by occupation and in as much as the objective existence of class gives rise to related responses to class for itself within the principle meaning-systems categorised by Parkin. Although this approach may lack precision, the resources available for a modest survey can still, as will be shown, deliver significant correlations.

A postal survey was chosen as the main vehicle for a structured questionnaire chiefly for reasons of cost, but also because this meant that a respectable



sample of the audience could be questioned at the same time. This time was intended to be that of the transmission of the programme, it being important to gather people's responses either immediately after transmission or very soon afterwards in order to eliminate the possibility of too much mediated discussion through such means as press comment.

In mounting a postal survey there was, however, a danger of pre-sensitising respondents either to the programme itself or to the questions about it. The survey was therefore conducted as follows.

Firstly a random sample was generated (n=200) from the electoral registers in two cities (Leicester and Bradford) with equal numbers being drawn from the broad categories of 'manual' and 'non-manual' occupations. This division was obtained according to the City Planning Officers' distribution of socio-economic groups by ward, enabling a sample to be drawn from those wards with the highest and lowest concentration of either category. In Leicester, for example, 72.5% of Knighton wards voting population were 'non-manual' people, whereas only 20.1% of Latimer ward's population were in this category. This classification was then used as a working guide and later checked by a question about occupation in the survey itself.

Having selected a sample, each person was then sent a letter about a week before DUTY's transmission. This letter basically asked people to watch ITV between certain hours on the appropriate night and gave advance warning that a questionnaire would follow in due course. It did not specifically mention DUTY, nor did it give any hint about the kind of questions which might be asked.



The questionnaires themselves were then posted, together with a covering letter, such that people would receive them on the morning after transmission. The risk of pre-sensitization was thus largely averted, even if at the expense of some spontaneity, and the overall response rate proved to be quite respectable for this kind of operation. Over a half of the questionnaires were in fact returned, of which 90% were at least partially useable. Several people, for instance, were only able to watch part of the programme, others failed to answer all the questions and there were at least two people who were blind and therefore able only to listen. Thirty-seven percent of the sample nevertheless returned fully completed questionnaires despite the fact that reminder letters were not sent and this response can be regarded as average to good for a postal survey (see Hooper, 1958:179). Reminder letters were not sent out because it was felt that undue delay in returning the questionnaires would already have wrecked some of the purpose of the survey in that a 'late respondent' might then have been remembering notices in the press or comments from friends rather than the programme itself.

A postal survey necessarily imposes severe restrictions upon the nature and extent of questions, particularly when one is concentrating upon the understanding of a single television programme. There is a difference, for instance, in understanding something and being able to give an account of it, let alone being able to give an account in terms of yes/no responses. The nature of the questions therefore had to be carefully controlled, but in an experimental sense of the word the main control remained the preferred understanding of different parts of the programme as discovered during the production study. The closed questions in the questionnaire were therefore framed with respect to various aspects



of the characterization and narrative which were known to be important media of the producer's intentions, and a large proportion of the questions were left more open-ended in order to enable respondents to pick up particular cues providing that a certain degree of information had been derived from the film itself.

In recognising the limitations of macroanalysis two discussion groups were also organised at the time of transmission. These were gathered according to an equivalent determination of class, each group consisting of eight people who watched DUMBY off-air in the company of myself and a colleague (in two separate locations). Both of these groups were asked the same questions as the postal sample but they were also given the opportunity to discuss the programme at length in a far less structured manner. These discussions were tape-recorded and provide a much more detailed insight of understandings formed which can then be used as an adjunct to the main survey.

#### Local Knowledge

Countless different factors could have oriented people's response to DUMBY. Deaf people, prostitutes, social workers or doctors could all have provided interesting data, but their inclusion in the present study would have extended its scope beyond the bounds of practicability. Two specific factors were, however, included in the plan, the first being local knowledge. DUMBY had been made entirely on location in Bradford, and the original girl's story had been quite extensively covered by the local press. In addition, prostitution can be said to have been particularly 'visible' in Bradford. This is not solely because of the existence of a well-known red-light area in the city (Leicester has one too) but also because of the 'Yorkshire ripper' cases involving prostitutes who have lived in the Bradford-Leeds area. It might therefore



be reasonable to hypothesise that viewers living in Bradford may have pre-judged some of the issues raised in DUSBY. Half of the postal survey was consequently conducted in that city in order to be able to pick up a 'nearness/remoteness' factor in the overall response.

### Professional experience

The second factor included in the research was related to the hypothesis that a producer might be 'producing for himself'; that is to say producing programmes according to reference-codes which were more readily available to other professionals than for the audience in general. If the producer's 'imaginary interlocutor' (see McQuail 1969:77) or his 'meta-audience' was equivalent to those interlocutors which he used during the making of the film then he would be to some degree committing the fallacy of pars pro toto (or taking the part for the whole - see Stark 1958:156) since his actual interlocutors were generally other professionals.

In order to test this point a third discussion group was organised, being composed of people with a demonstrable access to professional film-making (i.e. people who had either been professionally involved or who had taught film theory or criticism). This group was shown a videotape of the programme some time after its original transmission, but none of the respondents had seen it before. Once again they were asked the same questions as the other respondents and were also allowed to discuss the programme freely for about an hour afterwards.

### Questions and findings

All the documentation relating to the survey and discussion groups plus the tabulated numerical results are included in the appendices. The



purpose of this section is to draw these results together in order to examine the degree of isomorphism in people's understanding of DUFFY and the degree of alignment with the producer's intentions.

### 1. General reactions to the programme

DUFFY was regarded as a 'good' programme by the majority of the sample audience and it was also extracted from a perceived pattern of television programming. Indeed, 84% of the survey respondents indicated their approval and 88% indicated that DUFFY was 'different from most other programmes on television'. Even though these percentages are perhaps surprisingly high and carry the implication that the programme had proved to be intelligible to the majority of the audience, the raw figures do not indicate a reason for such approbation. For this one must turn to the discussion groups. As might have been expected people drew a number of unprompted comparisons between DUFFY and programmes like CATHY COME HOME and EDNA, THE IMMEDIATE WOMAN, but they also located DUFFY's comparative uniqueness in its open-ended narrative. In general, the members of both discussion groups also felt involved in the programme to an essentially different degree than they might have been with respect to a straight drama. Here, for example, are two of the comments made at the time (the first being from a lady in the 'non-manual' group and the second from a man in the 'manual' group).

Last night's play (OY VAY MARIA) was entertainment; exaggerated and amusing. This one was real, it wasn't really entertaining, I mean it was absorbing.

I got fed up with television where everything is made up and not real life. Nobody can find out a pickpocket in five minutes like COLLEDO does, whereas you know (DUFFY) is real because it's happening all around you. In these fiction stories there's always good guys and bad guys. In this it's your own opinion whether she's a good'un or a bad'un.



Despite this, only a little over a fifth of the sample stated that they had learned anything new from the programme. To ask someone whether they had increased their experience in this way is of course to ask a somewhat loaded question (since it contains the implication that one's experience or knowledge is less than complete) but the discussion groups expanded the point by agreeing that the film provided further evidence for previously held ideas - 'it reinforces something I've known already' one of the 'manual' group commented, 'although I think the laws against prostitution, and living off immoral earnings should be tightened up now'. Interestingly, it was the Bradford sample who most often stated that they had learned something new from the programme, despite the possible existence of 'local knowledge'. One man in the 'manual' category, for instance, commented that DUFFY was...

A very good programme. Down to earth. Exceptionally acted by the lady who took Sandra as an adult. Coming from the area myself I couldn't understand why she was not picked up by more coloured people but I hadn't realised how difficult life can be for someone like her.

Sixty percent of the total sample disagreed with the suggestion that there was 'too much unnecessary violence' in the programme, with people in the discussion groups arguing that a certain amount of violence was to be expected given the subject matter. 'I think they dealt with (the violence) very well indeed' said a lady in the 'non-manual' group; 'I expected there to be much more than there was. They didn't dwell on it - they only put in the relevant bits'. Where violence or a feeling of shock was mentioned in free discussion it was most often with reference to the motel scene, there being several expressions of shock from both discussion groups during the transmission of that particular episode. There was a certain amount of equivocation about



the content of this scene as will be shown in a moment, but it would be fair to say that the more middle-class group were in a greater state of 'shock' because they were more surprised given the perceived stereotype of the 'neat man'. Compare, for example, these two comments. The first is from a lady in the 'non-manual' group, and the second is from a man in the 'manual' group:

I think the motel thing shocked me. There was this respectable citizen with his nice, high-powered car, looking very suave in his suit. The horror was in his hidden violence and aggression ... the aggression wasn't evident when they were driving out there.

The bit where she got bolted by that fella in the motel... I think there's a lot of blokes walking around like that who would do a thing like that, but she should have expected it being what she was.

In addition to the question about violence the survey also specifically asked for a direct response to the question 'Would you say the programme was shocking'. It is clear from another direct question and most of the comments made by the discussion groups that the majority thought DUMBY was not shocking in the sense of being badly made, but 38% of the survey sample indicated that the content was shocking. As in the overall reaction to the motel scene, this response was also clearly divided along the class axis. Nearly twice as many 'non-manual' people in Bradford, and more than three times as many 'non-manual' people in Leicester found the programme shocking when compared to the 'manual' samples' response. It is dangerous to draw very general conclusions from this, but the discussion groups once again reinforced the findings of the survey and in addition indicated that the degree of 'shock' was related to individual's accommodation of or opposition to cues in the film according to their own proximity to the perceived content. For example, the 'manual' group appeared to have been more prepared for



'Sandra's' introduction to drugs in the programme (and less shocked by this) than the 'non-manual' people. During the transmission itself unprompted comments from the former included 'I was waiting for this' and 'told you so', while comments from the latter included 'Oh, that's all we need'. Similarly, there were notable differences in attitudes towards prostitution between the two groups which might have altered the distance between 'Zuhanden' and 'Vorhanden', or the gradient of shock, for different individuals:

I live in the depths of Highfields. We live right in the depth of it, with all the prostitutes; there's one right across us' road. It's her pimp that's the real trouble, but the police don't want to do nothing because they don't know who these people are. They know the prostitutes but they don't know the blokes what's running it. The girls are frightened into it with drugs and that, you see, so they don't reveal who the pimps are. ('manual' man)

I thought the mother was overstressing that she was a 'bright girl' from the beginning - I thought that actually she probably wasn't. Her mother and sister were respectable, and very adequate in their surroundings, but she wasn't. I do not think that she could have been exceptionally intelligent from that background, and if she was she wouldn't have become a whore. ('non-manual' lady)

If people had found the programme shocking, in the sense of finding various elements in the film accelerated from background to foreground, then one might also expect there to have been secondary reactions of surprise or even anger. Respondents were in fact asked if the programme made them angry and the distribution of response to this question was, indeed, almost identical to that of the question about 'shock'. This shock-related anger can be taken as a reaction against the circumstances of 'Sandra's' downfall rather than as a reaction to the programme itself, its component of violence or its use of 'bad language', since less than 10% of the unstructured comments from the survey sample complained in any



way about these elements. Objections raised were mainly about the portrayal of violence, sex or bad language - particularly with reference to the 'Shabby man' scene - but such objections were only raised by single-figure percentages. Of those people who did object to such aspects of the film most argued that the transmission time should have been later in the evening. Seven percent of the survey sample in fact made this point, one lady suggesting that it should have been shown at 'around three in the morning'.

While most people indicated that they were neither shocked nor angered by the programme, a large proportion (38% and 37%) were so moved, even bearing in mind the wording of the questions ('shock' and 'anger' being very positive words to use in the knowledge that survey responses will tend to over-represent middle-ground reactions). This being the case, were people also therefore motivated by the programme in any way? Once again, approximately the same number of people indicated that the programme had made them 'want to do something', but this indication of potential action extending beyond a straight reaction to the programme itself was not evinced by the same people in so far as they were divided by class. It was the more middle-class sample who most often indicated 'shock' or 'anger', but it was the more working-class sample who most often indicated that they had been motivated by the programme to 'do something'.

The nature of this motivation was also interesting. Respondents were asked what they wanted to do, having stated that the programme had made them want to do something, and the replies generally indicated a distinct difference between the 'manual' and the 'non-manual' respondents. The 'manual' people broadly indicated a feeling of personal responsibility



towards others in 'Sandra's' position while the 'non-manual' people tended to shift this responsibility onto various institutional authorities. The first group of comments are taken by way of example from 'manual' replies, and the second from 'non-manual' replies:

1. I personally would have liked to help the girl had I known her. I would have to have the backing of my family to do any real positive good.

I could have throttled her family for letting her get into such a state, there were plenty of times when they could have stepped in. Well what can you do? I felt helpless. I felt like giving her a bath. I never saw her once, apart from in hospital, getting a bath. I wanted to look after her and give her a bit more help.

2. I was angry at the lack of concern, or lack of positive action by the professional people involved in Sandra's life.

I was angry at the lack of understanding when Sandra was small - the lack of help given to her mother.

I was annoyed at the exploitation of the helpless, and would like to punish the guilty to the extreme degree. Dropouts should be rounded up and the state handouts spent on curing them instead of it being spent on drink. The cure should be discipline and hard work.

While some of these comments may seem extreme, they do illustrate the relative distance between 'object' and 'subject' which was assumed by either category. The more middle-class category, for instance, generally tended to stand back, dissipating their immediate feelings of motivation through references to 'our permissive society' or the inefficiencies of the social services, whereas the more working-class category tended to form a more immediate identity with the subject matter. Highly constructive comments were nevertheless given by



different people irrespective of the study's classification. A member of the 'manual' discussion group said:

The trouble is, people will watch this in their homes and get up and say 'That was good' and go on, but then forget it. I think there ought to be more public meetings like this one where we can discuss whether this sort of thing is happening, and whether we can do something about it. I thought to myself 'what can I do' when that social worker went to see her mother. Perhaps I can do something-part time. It got me like that.

... and a 'non-manual' lady in the survey sample commented:

There seems to be a lack of interest in the individual as opposed to the mass. I am a teacher of the deaf, and am now examining my role. I shall no longer be content to dismiss the 'deaf' - male or female - with 10p, and will become more involved with things like SHULTER.

## 2. General understanding of the programme

The vast majority of the survey sample indicated that BUREAU was 'mainly a true story about something that had actually happened'. In fact, only 3% disagreed with this, and perhaps surprisingly, only a further 3% said that they were uncertain. Correlatively, the majority also agreed that people like Sandra do actually exist. The fact that people can hold a number of apparently contradictory views at the same time was nonetheless evident, since at least 10% of the sample indicated the opposite while vouching for the truth of the story as a whole. Oddly enough, where people agreed with the statement 'people like Sandra just don't exist', it was most often those respondents in the 'manual' category who did so; and in a ratio of 3:1 as compared to those in the 'non-manual' category. That this was the case is surprising, since many of the 'manual' people in Bradford were well aware of the problems associated with particular areas in the city,



and the Leicester 'manual' discussion group were unanimous in agreeing that people like Sandra certainly did exist. In the 'non-manual' discussion group, however, there was strong evidence that (a) more people had read ATV's pre-transmission publicity, in which a certain amount of background information had been given about the making of the programme as a reconstruction, and that (b) there was a strong element of trust in the producer himself, that is to say a professional trust. As different members of that group said:

I think the producer would have researched this fairly well, and he tried as best he could - and I think he did it very well - you were with her all the way, I was with the girl right through to the end.

If you put yourself in the producer's shoes the only source of information would either have been the girl herself or the sister, or one of the sisters - both the mother and father had gone. If he was researching back twenty years you'd have a devil of a job to find even the teachers, so it's more of an achievement.

In this case, then, there does seem to be some evidence for the existence of a dominant code operating independently of cues contained within the programme itself which could be decoded oppositionally by people who may not have had access to that code - even when this meant accommodating apparently contradictory views (that the story was true and yet didn't represent anyone who had actually existed).

Everyone decoded the denotation of Sandra as 'girl'. Nobody, that is, disagreed with the use of the feminine gender with reference to Sandra throughout the survey. Only one person questioned the fact of her deafness, arguing that the character (not the actress) was 'only pretending', but in an open question about the programme's content most people referred to the girl as being either 'deaf' or 'deaf and dumb' (34% and 36% i.e. 70% in total respectively). 'Deaf and dumb'



is, unfortunately, a common turn of phrase and was in fact used as such in the film itself by even the sympathetic character, the old West Indian. Most deaf people, Sandra included, are not 'dumb' in the sense of being unable to speak, but the respondents' use of the term should not therefore be taken as a case of aberrant decoding. The use of 'dumb' in the other sense of 'stupid' can also be partially ruled out in view of the response to a question about Sandra's apparent intelligence which will be dealt with later. The fact that Sandra was intended to be seen as profoundly deaf (and therefore unable to get as much out of her schooling as her fellows) does not, however, seem to have come across very well. Only 17% of the survey sample referred to Sandra as being 'deaf from birth', 'totally' or 'profoundly' deaf, and those who did were usually people from the 'non-manual' sections of the sample - of whom 23% referred to her in this way. This may have been due to the 'Consultant's' use of the word 'profound' - which is almost a technical term - and a differential level of access to such vocabulary by the two categories, despite the fact that 'Mother' translated the 'Consultant's' words as: 'You mean she cannot hear at all?'. It is nevertheless significant that nearly twice as many Bradford 'manuals' referred to total deafness in comparison with Leicester 'manuals', which may imply some 'local knowledge' exterior to the programme itself.

Most people wrote down a more detailed account of what they thought the programme had been mainly about beyond being the story of a 'deaf girl'. Several distinct themes could be picked out from these replies, and they are listed below in the average order of their occurrence with the relative percentage score on the left of the page.



Fig. Major perceived themes in DUTY.

- 100  
60
1. Sandra was vulnerable and/or taken advantage of by others.
  2. She was basically a nice/normal/loving girl
    - who was inadequately taught at school
    - who had a deprived home environment
    - whose life went 'from bad to worse'
- 50
3. She fell into bad company
    - ending up as a murderer
    - and inevitable (i.e. non-voluntary) prostitution
- 40
4. Her life was ruled by circumstance  
She had insufficient care or understanding from others
- 35
5. She came from an insecure/broken home (Mainly 'lack of father')
    - and had difficulty communicating with others
    - lapsing into drink and/or drugs
    - voluntarily becoming a prostitute
- 20
6. She had an unhappy/bad marriage
    - becoming a prostitute (i.e. no value attached re. motivation)
    - and was incapable of fitting into society (- a 'square peg').

A simplified sentence indicating the most commonly identified central theme of the programme would read: 'It was about a deaf-and-dumb girl who was taken advantage of by others'. There was, however, a difference between the responses gathered from the two main categories. The more 'manual' people tended to see Sandra's misfortune as being circumstantial, or causally linked with 'getting into bad company', whereas the more 'non-manual' people tended to emphasise the girl's 'helplessness'. The latter, for example, mentioned Sandra's gradual degradation more often than the 'manual' people did, and also picked out the influence of drink and/or drugs more often. Examples from 'manual' respondents' views of the main themes include:



- a. It was about an unfortunate deaf girl whose life was ruled by circumstance.
- b. A family trying to bring up a deaf and dumb child to the best of their ability, yet as she matures she is provoked into the wrong kind of company.
- c. A deaf and dumb child growing up, who as a child missed the love of a father. She had to be taught the way of life much harder than a normal child in the years of her growing up. She got into the wrong company and made her living as a prostitute.
- d. The life of a young deaf and dumb girl who through unfortunate circumstances grew up to a life of prostitution.
- e. About a girl born deaf and exploited by society - starting from a slum area, brought up in a town that is typical of what is happening in all big cities, where people are living in over-crowded poor parts of the towns where it is easy for young people to get into trouble as there is no place for entertainment for the young. They resort to pubs, therefore, where young girls are easily lured by the wrong type of man who shows them easy ways to make money. Sandra being deaf made it easy for men to live on her and push her around until she became a drunken prostitute.

Examples from 'non-manual' respondents' views of the main themes are as follows:

- a. (it was about) the problems of a deaf girl growing up in a working class environment that did not know how to cope with the problems.
- b. A girl who was deaf and dumb who was trying to cope with everyday life.
- c. A deaf girl's rapid decline stemming from her inability to slot into respectable society; sliding from drink to drugs and prostitution.
- d. The story of a deaf girl looking for love, companionship and friendship in an atmosphere of feverish movement and rhythm. In such a situation where drink - and drugs? - are an inevitable adjunct to the scene she gave herself willingly at first in adolescent hero-worship, and then, when her overpossessiveness led to her being spurned, she turned to prostitution, going swiftly downhill as she frequented the rougher and less salubrious areas of Bradford. A beating-up by a more well-to-do 'customer' led her to carry a knife with which, (when) she was at her lowest ebb, suffering from VD and living rough, she stabbed a drunken down-and-out who was probably, like herself, only looking for companionship. Her feverish imagination led her to strike, as she thought, in self-defence.
- e. It was about the life of a totally deaf young girl, weak-willed and pleasure seeking, who became a common prostitute, and through excessive drinking and drug-taking sank as low as it is possible to get. There might have been a chance for her had she got a decent husband, but unfortunately she got one who pushed her even lower.



Although all of these comments reveal differences in people's points of view, they also indicate that a 'world' had been created from the film; a world which was by and large accepted to be a true representation of the real world. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the film was consistently held to 'ring true' throughout its duration or for different members of the audience. The phrase 'true to life' and congratulatory comments about the standard of the acting recurred throughout the unprompted statements given at the end of the questionnaire, and many people referred to DUMBY as a documentary rather than as a drama-documentary or a play. Here, for example, are two comments from Bradford people (the first from the 'non-manual' section and the second from the 'manual').

It was extremely well directed and acted. The part of Sandra was played convincingly. The squalor, degradation and violence were all portrayed within the context of the story, and the settings were very authentic.

I was born in ...\* street, and I found it very involving on occasion, very true to life.

(\* a street shown in the film).

Similarly, there were other respondents who could be said to have 'special knowledge' of the reality which DUMBY sought to reconstruct. One Leicester respondent who was actually a police inspector had this to say:

The filming, acting and dialogue of the film was first class, and the result was a good documentary concerned particularly with prostitution, and secondly with the disadvantages of being physically handicapped. I felt the message and effect would come through to someone paying careful and thoughtful attention to the programme, and being a person of reasonable maturity and intellect it did. The majority of TV viewers seeing such violence whilst being in conversation on other matters, or whilst reading the paper would probably miss the message and be left with the impression that it was just violence and degradation. Personally I see too many similar cases of



people in a vicious circle of crime and degradation to want to watch this sort of thing at home. I feel that some message would have got home to the 'thinking' man without the use of such stark reality, whereas those with the programme on in the background would have been given the impression of mindless violence and crime.

However, there were a number of points and issues within the programme which some people did not consider to have 'rung true'. A few people in the Bradford sample appeared to possess outside information about the actual facts of the case; one lady, for instance wrote that 'The impression was given that Sandra did not mix with other people at the deaf club. In actual fact she did'. That same impression was nevertheless used by other people as evidence of a more generalised authenticity - witness the following conversation from the 'non-manual' discussion group:

- Woman: People didn't care about her, when she was invited to the tea-party and she didn't want to go Ian just shrugged her off...
- Man: ... but that was because she didn't like groups of people, even deaf people, I thought it was interesting that after the school scenes nobody else that appears in the film was deaf...
- 2nd Woman: ... Yes, my mother is deaf, and she doesn't like a lot of people around her because she cannot communicate in a group.

Just as this last lady had perceived the point as being authentic with reference to her own experience so the opposite conclusion could be reached for different parts of the programme. Having mentioned that some parts of DUMFY had not rung true, one member of the 'non-manual' discussion group specifically cited the attitude of the arresting officer at the end of the film as being non-realistic: 'He wouldn't have behaved like that'. Compare this to a conversation which took place during the 'manual' group's discussion:



- 1st man: I thought the arrogance of the arresting officer was good, that happens to me all the time.
- 2nd man: Yeah. Not four weeks back I was arrested, and if you thought that bloke was arrogant - well this bloke walked into my house at half past six in the morning and talk about arrogant! You could have ate your dinner out of his pocket. Mind you, what could this bloke (in DUNNY) do? The only thing he could do was to write it down, he couldn't do nothing else.
- 3rd man: He could have been more sympathetic. He pulled her out like a bag of potatoes.
- 2nd man: Well she looked like a bag of taters didn't she; she'd let herself go.

Needless to say, I did not have previous knowledge of these people's experience of the police, but it is clear that this experience was mediating their judgements of authenticity in a quite different way than the 'non-manual' lady's experience was mediating hers.

Other sections of the programme which provoked a discussion in this area included the following. People spontaneously suggested that the 'Laundry' scene had not rung true, although not because of its great length. It was the laundry foreman who caused the problem, 'he wouldn't have treated her like that' one respondent argued, 'he would have been a lot more compassionate and understanding'. This is unfortunate for the foreman, who happened to be playing himself, but it may also indicate that the push towards indexicality had reached an unacceptable level at this point. People did actually mention several instances of what they considered to be simply bad acting, particularly with respect to the first part of the programme, but these were isolated cases which need not be precisely located. Suffice it to say that some of the performances which had worried the producer at the time were the same ones which were picked out by some members of the discussion groups.

Having said that, a number of people in both discussion groups were generally uncertain about Sandra's relationship with 'Ian', the middle-class boyfriend, and the events surrounding the girl's scarring. People



were particularly uncertain about what had actually happened in the 'scarring scene' (only half of the survey sample having realised that 'Ian's' brother had been stabbed) but this may have been connected with a certain 'sales resistance' towards the whole idea of Sandra having a successful relationship with 'Ian' in the first place. That relationship was, of course, a fact, but does not seem to have been accepted as such by the entire audience. The main questionnaire had asked people to point out any differences which they saw between the young couple, and 60% referred to the difference in class, enumerating such factors as wealth (i.e. 'Ian's family had two cars') and the types of housing. Some 17% specifically mentioned the difference in parental background, Sandra being seen as coming from a broken home while 'Ian' still had both his parents (Although 'Ian's' mother did not appear in the film, several respondents had understood the lady seen at the hospital - after the scarring - to be his mother, whereas she was actually Sandra's mother).

Given these perceived differences, plus the girl's disability, some people felt that the programme did not sufficiently reify the relationship itself. That this would affect understandings of the programme as a whole is clear in so far as nearly twice as many people in the survey sample judged Sandra's marriage to be the turning-point rather than the scarring. With reference to this part of the film both of the discussion groups were also driven to speculation about 'Ian's' relationship with his parents as a possible explanation. It is worth quoting these conversations in full ('Non-manual' group first):



1st Woman: She got no affection, no communication at all, and I thought the point of it was that she was prepared to find affection at any cost, no matter how low it dropped her. This is where I don't agree that she started on the downward path with her first boyfriend - I think it started long before that. Her first boyfriend could have been anyone; she was just looking for affection, the first boy who spoke to her. She was prepared to go to any lengths to find somebody that would take an interest, who wanted to be with her.

1st Man: That particular part with the first boyfriend I thought was a fill-in by the producer. In other words he had got a beginning and an ending and he had to produce the first sexual experiences, and the first contact with boys, and he chose that particular situation. I didn't think that rang particularly true.

2nd Man: I think that might be right. There was a comparatively large gap between the two of them's background. It would have been about '64 I suppose, and I've lived in Bradford, and somehow that just didn't ring true to me. I don't think they would have met on those terms. I don't think they would have been taken on those terms by the parents or others.

(Question: What appeared to be happening in that scene between them in the kitchen?)

2nd Man: Yes, well I didn't accept that...

2nd Woman: I didn't believe that bit at all...

1st Man: Well, he had had enough alcohol so I suppose he could have grabbed a kitchen knife, but I don't think he would have done that. I think the producer put that bit in to step it up a bit. It could happen I suppose...

3rd Man: The elder brother sobered up pretty quickly...

2nd Woman: I got the impression that both the brothers were not living up to their parents' expectations anyway. They were in this pop group - the swinging sixties and all that. I think the elder brother probably regarded her as an easy pick-up, and the brother regarded her in the same light. He obviously didn't think much of her anyway by the way he scurried her.

1st Man: I still stick to what we said that this was the real turn downwards. These things do happen, and I think the parents had virtually abdicated as far as their children were concerned. The parents just cut themselves off, 'went out and left them'.

'Manual' group:

1st Man: I found Sandra's going out with that boy, Ian, a bit odd, I mean, different backgrounds and that...

2nd Man: Two different class distinctions...

1st Woman: No, no, I wouldn't say that. The boyfriend was from a very good background, his parents and that, Sandra was a sort of outcast, but both families were working.



2nd Man: But one was middle and one was working class!

1st Woman: O.K., different environments...

1st Man: But it was surprising, wasn't it?

2nd Man: This goes back to the environment. I think the boy was over-supervised by his father, so he took Sandra under his wing, more or less to prove to himself that he could look after himself. He wanted to prove to his parents that he could do something on his own. That's why he took her home. This is what happens in these middle-class, semi-detached houses with tiled roofs and that...

1st Woman: Then the scar was when it all went wrong...

2nd Man: Yes, the actual facial disfigurement was the turning point, she no longer saw herself as attractive, she didn't care after that, she didn't care if she got hit again, because she'd already been hit...

1st Man: But a slash with a sharp knife doesn't leave a scar like that, it would have healed up... my young niece has just had her face cut in a car accident, and she had ninety stitches, but you can't see a thing now.

It is clear from these two conversations that neither group was wholly convinced, and members of both groups consequently produced covering explanations which were neither denoted nor intentionally connoted by the film itself. In the case of the 'non-manual' group the producer's intention that the relationship should be seen as rather unique or special was in fact in danger of being seen as simply a dramatic ploy - and therefore an unsuccessful one (since story-telling, unlike justice, must not be seen to be done).

Both groups found certain sections of the film confusing to various degrees. They both, for instance, spontaneously cited that section which contained Sandra's marriage as being 'sketchy' or 'confusing', which is interesting in as much as the form of the narrative was comparatively highly compressed at that point. For example, a member of the 'non-manual' group considered that:

... the courtship and marriage was a bit too sketchy, it all happened so quickly (general murmurings of agreement from other members of the group). I was a bit surprised that he married her, but it is supposed to be based on real life, and that is how it happens isn't it?



A member of the 'manual' group had this to say:

You are given a limited time to pack everything in, but you do have to follow up things if they are put in in the first place. This wasn't always done. Also I was confused whether she was forced into a life of vice or whether she wanted to; the strip scene seemed to say that she wanted to do it - that she liked doing it. I'm still confused now. The marriage and everything happened so quickly. If I was making it I would make sure that it proved whether she was forced to do it or not.

The point about 'following up things' was most strongly put by both groups and a number of people in the main survey with reference to Sandra's children. Many people asked what had happened to them and found it difficult to differentiate between Sandra's various bouts of hospitalisation (i.e. whether she was having abortions, being sterilised or having just one or several babies). The following comment from a lady in the 'manual' group illustrates this point and also raises another:

What happened to the baby? I know the mother had it, but what happened after she died? I suppose it went to a home. If they'd let her keep the baby she wouldn't have got like that... she had nothing else to call her own. Her sister didn't want her. If she (the sister) was really worried about her she would have tried to find her, but she said she hadn't seen her for weeks.

Apart from the fact that this lady had evidently understood there to have been only one child, she also raises the point about the sister as being somewhat to blame for Sandra's condition. In fact the 'manual' group was surprisingly condemnatory of the sister, but on probing the reasons given for this it was found that all but one of the 'manual' group had mistaken Sandra's workmate in the pub (where Sandra meets the petty criminal 'Phil') for the sister.



There was perhaps a similarity between the two actresses, but the mistaken identity led to quite a serious excursion away from the producer's intention at this point:

One of the reasons (for Sandra's decline) was when Sandra went down to the pub with her sister and that friend where she met the bloke who gave her that baby; her sister was encouraging her.

People certainly picked up tiny cues as the producer had hoped they would, (a lady in the 'non-manual' group mentioned Sandra's gentle covering-up of the sleeping 'Charlie' as being particularly moving, another member of that group commented on the girl's husband flicking ash on the floor as she was trying to keep the flat tidy and members of the 'manual' group accurately remembered the year-code on car registration-plates when asked to date the motel scene) but they also therefore used unintentional cues to form an overall understanding of the content which was sometimes quite erroneous from the producer's point of view. Again, there was some doubt among the 'non-manual' group as to whether Sandra was profoundly deaf, and in following up this point another tiny clue was cited as evidence:

Well, when she was in the school she was wearing one of those super-powerful hearing aids. Now if she was totally deaf, what was the point of wearing one of those?

One last point to make on the subject of authenticity concerns the producer's use of locations as opposed to studio sets. I have already mentioned that people from Bradford recognised areas of their city in the film and used this as evidence for the programme



being 'true to life', but people in general also decoded the significance of the physical environment in the preferred manner. That is to say, there was very little confusion about where different characters were situated at any given point and there was no evidence of anyone finding these locations false or contrived. Hence respondents confidently referred to 'the motel', 'the hospital', 'mother's house' or 'the VD clinic' as if these were real places, and neither the main survey nor the group discussions picked up any references to anachronisms in period or disorientations in spatial location. People were certainly aware of changes in period, for instance, and occasionally commented on this:

One thing I liked was that they moved with the time. When Sandra was young they showed her in an old kitchen; her mother ironing and that. When she was older they showed her in a more modernised home. They kept up with the times.

('manual' group)

Interestingly, the 'manual' group made more references to their own environment when talking about locations in DUFFY, drawing comparisons between 'Highfields' and 'Stoneygate' in Leicester and Sandra's and Ian's environments in the film. By contrast, there was some evidence that the 'non-manual' group was making judgements of authenticity in terms of media paradigms. For example, when asked to describe Sandra's physical environment at the beginning of the film, a member of this group referred - not to local conditions in Leicester - but to another television programme: 'It was kind of Coronation Street'.

Although nobody mentioned any perceived disjunctions in period there was a general tendency towards underestimating actual dates. When asked to estimate the date of the motel incident this was, on average,



given as 1970, whereas it was actually set in 1974. Similarly, the survey sample estimated Sandra's age at the end of each part of the film at an average of 16½, 21½ and 26½, whereas her age was intended to be 18 at the end of part one, 26 at the end of part two and 27 at the end of the programme. While it would be asking a lot of people to accurately date different sections of the programme on the basis of wardrobe or 'set-dressing' alone, it is nevertheless significant that almost no-one saw the gap between the ends of parts two and three as being anywhere near as small as it was intended to be - about six weeks. The duration of part three as a whole was in fact estimated to be about five years. This, however, is much more likely to be a function of the film's form rather than its content, since the inertia of having covered twenty-six years in the first two parts may well have carried on into part three in the absence of any explanatory captions or voice-over narration.

Having discussed the perceived truth of the film and its main themes it is important to deal with two other factors concerning understanding of the programme as a whole before moving on to more specific understandings of the main character and the narrative itself. The first of these is the degree to which particular scenes or sequences 'stood out' for the audience, the hypothesis being that if, say, the motel scene had made a particularly strong impression (and had been understood in the preferred way) then this could be related to people's overall understanding of the central theme and intention in the programme.



People were asked to indicate any scene or scenes which had 'really stuck in your mind' and the frequency with which different scenes were mentioned can be ranked as follows. The highest ranking scene has been given a score of 100 with the rest in proportion.

1. (100) Motel
2. (76) Intercourse behind pub (Shabby man)
3. (43) Scarring of Sandra by Ian
4. (27) Sandra's father doing football pools: young Sandra's tears etc.
5. (21) Young Sandra at school (unspecified scene)
6. (17) Young Sandra with mother (learning to talk), Stabbing at end of film, Young Sandra being hit with ruler at school
7. (14) Mother with Social Worker
8. (10) Sterilisation discussion
9. (7) Party scene prior to stabbing, Dry-cleaning factory, Sandra's 'phonecall to sister, Swimming baths, Wedding
10. (3) Sandra crying in pub, Husband's attack with razor, Sandra's alleywalk, Restaurant, Wagon-packet scene, Fish-and-chip shop.

The motel scene was indeed mentioned more often than any other scene in the film. It was, for instance, mentioned more than five times as often as the stabbing at the end of DUMBY as having 'stuck in one's mind'. As a prime example of Sandra 'being taken advantage of' or 'having things done to her' the relative prominence of the motel scene can therefore be linked to people's perception of the major theme of the programme. This theme, as I noted above, was stated by most of the audience to be that of 'a deaf-and-dumb girl who was taken advantage of by others' and not, for instance, that of a 'deaf-and-dumb girl who declines into prostitution and murder' (which is broadly the description given in the Press). If the stabbing scene had 'stuck in the mind' more than it did, the overall understanding of the programme might well have been oriented towards the killing itself, and away from the events which led up to it. In placing not only the motel scene, but also the 'shabby man' sequence, the scarring incident and incidents from Sandra's childhood above the stabbing, the audience can therefore be said to have been



deflected away from seeing the killing as the axial point of the film, and channelled instead towards those areas of the programme where the girl was being portrayed as the object - rather than the subject - of different relationships of power.

The second factor to examine in people's overall understanding of the programme as such is their elicitation of its central message, or messages. Respondents were asked: 'What message, if any, do you think those who made the programme were trying to get across to those who watched?'. In perceiving that Sandra's life chiefly consisted in having things done to her, rather than vice-versa, the main message of the programme was most often given in terms of altering attitudes to Sandra in particular and people like her in general. Just under half the survey sample specifically mentioned that the programme was saying that there should be more sympathy or understanding of people like Sandra and about 15% said that the programme was trying to provide information in a more general way about modern society. About the same percentage nevertheless thought that the programme was specifically aimed at 'the authorities'; indicting them for intolerance or failing to take due account of the girl's problems. Ten percent felt that the programme was a warning about the perils of prostitution as such and about 9% did not see the programme as containing any particular message. Of the remainder some 10% of the total sample failed to answer the question, but about 5% specifically linked Sandra's degradation with her disability - arguing that the 'message' was an equation of physical or mental disenfranchisement with social illegitimacy, for example:



The message was that children with serious physical disabilities who become frustrated by lack of opportunity, or frustrated with their miserable lives can turn to a way of life which satisfies them more. They usually turn to a way of life which would be considered degenerate by most people - e.g. prostitution. (Bradford 'manual' lady).

Other responses to this question included the following:

(Key: Bradford-B, Leicester-L, Manual-M, Non-manual-NM, Female-X, Male-Y)

The message was...

1. That society as a whole should take more care of people in Sandra's condition. (LMY)
2. 'Beware of prostitution' - what happened to Sandra could easily happen, and does happen to other women. (EMX)
3. The intolerance of society to people like her, through fear, contempt and impatience (EMX)
4. How inadequate our system is for people like Sandra (LMX)
5. Because of ignorance people can be made to do anything (EMY)
6. The influence of a handicap such as total deafness and a terrible family background and upbringing can cause a person to fall into such shocking ways (EMY)
7. More teaching needed in younger years and help and understanding in later years - and that the probation service is useless (LMX)
8. That she was intelligent but could not develop her intelligence due to her handicap; also that society does not easily accommodate handicapped people (EMX)
9. How the environment in which we live, the company which we keep and the lack of parental authority can so quickly lead to disaster - also how a lively teenager of average intelligence who found communication difficult inevitably followed her heart rather than her intellect. A much firmer watch needs to be kept on such people (EMX)
10. Deaf mutes are happier when using sign-language (LMX)
11. Nothing came over to me. It could just as well have been a fictional play (EMY)
12. To try to understand and communicate with people who have something wrong with them. Also to let people know just how other people live. We must help these people, not treat them like muck as Sandra was (EMX)
13. How a young woman in her circumstances got took advantage of. Deaf and dumb people are very physically emotional because of their impediment - they'll hug a person when meeting them. This could I suppose be took the wrong way if they didn't know any different. (LMY)
14. How circumstances led her to the final scene through her disability (EMX)



### 3. Specific understandings of the main character

A series of questions were included in the questionnaire and incorporated in the group discussions which were designed to test people's judgements of the central character in DUSTY. These questions were framed as statements to which respondents could indicate agreement, disagreement or uncertainty, and the findings are as follows.

It was important for the purposes of the film that Sandra should be regarded in a sympathetic light, so three different statements were offered as possible descriptions of her situation. It was found that the majority (67%) disagreed with the proposition that 'Sandra got what she deserved', that 64% agreed that 'what happened was more the fault of society than Sandra's fault' and that 77% agreed that 'she was more to be pitied than condemned'.

Although the use of words like 'pity' or 'fault' is open to criticism, the conclusion must be that people in general decoded the description of Sandra in the preferred manner. There was, however, further evidence that such judgements were once again oriented by people's own social environment. With particular reference to the first two questions both of the 'manual' sections of the sample can be said to have been significantly less sympathetic than the 'non-manual' sections despite the fact that it was these people who most often saw the prostitution as being forced upon the girl. Furthermore, it was the Bradford 'manuals' who were least sympathetic of all in as much as a third of them agreed that Sandra 'got what she deserved'.



Related questions concerned the girl's personality. Despite the 'warts and all' approach of the film most people (73%) agreed that Sandra was 'really quite likeable' and 'had a good sense of humour' (69%). She seemed, however, to be more likeable in Leicester where the subject-matter was also arguably more distant, and people in general were less sure either way about this point. Similarly, there was more equivocation about the girl's intelligence, with 10% registering an uncertainty that 'she was an intelligent girl' and nearly 50% indicating that she was not. Once again, it was the Bradford sample who most often disagreed with this statement.

The discussion groups revealed that people looked to the evidence of the girl's background in making this kind of judgement, with several people questioning the possibility of her being intelligent given her relatively unsuccessful schooling and poor home environment. On the other hand, the rapidity with which Sandra picked up the operation of the laundry machinery was also used (as intended) as evidence for her basic intelligence. For example:

She was educationally retarded, due to her deafness, but was still a bright girl - look how quickly she picked up the laundry business. ('Non-manual' lady)

Most people (65%) nevertheless agreed that Sandra was 'very weak-willed', which is quite a high percentage in view of the qualifying adjective. Since this view represents something of a departure from the producer's intention it is worthwhile to examine it further. Two main reasons for making this kind of judgement can be discovered from the discussion groups' response. Firstly, some doubt was expressed that the film had delved deeply enough into Sandra's inner being. This had been a major worry while actually making the programme,



being exacerbated by the real Sandra's comparative inability to communicate verbally and therefore the character's lack of dialogue (self-reflexive or otherwise). It was, indeed, the central problem of the subject. An example of the doubt which was nevertheless expressed takes the form of the following conversation from the 'manual' discussion group:

1st Man: The one thing that the film didn't tell you was her mentality. Nobody knew how she was in the mind - the film didn't sort of let you know. We don't know if she was looney or what.

2nd Man: I think she were a schizophrenic...

3rd Man: Schizophrenic - my wife's one. I must say I wasn't clear about her intelligence. It's quite possible that she was a bit mental. I mean she didn't have much schooling did she, because she was deaf.

This lack of insight into the girl's mental processes can be combined with a second reason for seeing her as 'weak-willed'.

This revolves around a question of the form of the film rather than its content for there was some confusion of 'film-time' and 'real-time'. Since the programme was compressing a great deal of real time into a comparatively short space of actual running time there was a tendency to present large chunks of Sandra's life as a montage of events which were not necessarily linked. There is some evidence, however, that members of the audience supplied such links and used these to support theories about Sandra's character. For example, the following three comments from different respondents share a similar assumption:

She went home every time she was in trouble, but then kept going straight back to the same troubles again. This kept happening. (HIS)



Why didn't she stay longer with her sister? (after the motel attack) - she didn't seem to be able to stay away from her old cronies. (LNEY)

I thought it was her own fault. I would have thought that after she gets slashed again (by her husband) she would have learned not to trust blokes, but days afterwards she was back out on the streets again (LNY)

The common assumption is the timing of these events. In other words, the possibility existed of taking the film's juxtaposition of different events as an indication of chronological proximity. Hence Sandra could be seen as going 'straight' back to the same troubles (rather than spending time considering such a move), or as spending the minimum time possible with her sister, or she could be seen as being silly enough to return to the streets 'within days' of being attacked again. If the girl was seen as being constantly taken advantage of, rather than generally abused, then there would be some reason for thinking that she was rather weak-willed in so far as she never had time to take positive action.

Sandra's mental condition was included among four further statements about her which respondents were asked to rank in order. The phrasing of this statement as: 'Sandra was mentally deficient' was, however, intended to 'distinguish it from the proposition that she was simply weak-willed, and the majority of people ranked it as the least applicable of the four descriptions. The majority ranked the statements in the following order, with 86% of the total sample ranking statement one above statement two:

1. Sandra was completely deaf
2. Sandra was a common prostitute
3. Sandra was a delinquent or criminal
4. Sandra was mentally deficient



With the exception of Bradford 'manuals', the other three elements of the sample were within 4% of each other in ranking the statements in this order. Ninety-three percent of the Leicester and Bradford 'non-manual' samples in fact produced this ranking whereas more than 20% of the Bradford 'manual' sample placed statement two above statement one in first place. This is consistent with that same element of the sample saying that Sandra 'got what she deserved' more often than any other element (given a prejudice against prostitutes), and is likely to be a reflection of 'local knowledge'. Given local concern with prostitution, it is in other words possible that this aspect of the film could be foregrounded for some viewers at the expense of other aspects regardless of the producer's intention.

#### 4. Specific understandings of the narrative

In the last chapter a narrative was described as an invention of one time-scheme inside another. From the observations above it can be seen that the audience generally re-invented a time-scheme (Sandra's life) within the actual duration of the film which was broadly consonant with the intended diegesis. In specific cases, however, this re-invention could significantly differ from that intended by the producer and result in an understanding which - from his point of view - was mistaken. To return to the third comment given on the previous page, for example, the gap between the husband's attack on Sandra and her return to the sleazy pub (and more 'bad company') was intended to be far longer than a few days. The equivalent gap in the original script is in fact indicated as being up to a year in duration.



From the producer's point of view, then, the lady in question had misread the encoding of Sandra's return to her old ways as 'soon after' and not 'some appreciable time after' her husband's attack. Alternatively, in terms of Metz's *Grande Syntagmatique*, the respondent had misread an ordinary sequence for an episodic one. It has been suggested above that one of the reasons for such an asymmetry between encoding and decoding is rooted in the enforced compression of the narrative - particularly in part two of the film. As a member of the 'non-manual' discussion group commented:

It was powerful stuff, but I found it a bit bitty in some ways, especially in the middle. Scenes seemed to jump from one to another without any continuity. I know that it was part of the scheme of things to show her life, from a baby up to her twenties, but you had each episode, from the pub to - well, you had to adjust very quickly to what was happening.

Part one does not seem to have caused the same problems, probably because Sandra herself was growing up and was thus providing a clear line of continuity through her changing appearance. The point at issue, however, is that the perceived cues for determining the nature of a procession of events were not necessarily the same cues as those provided by the producer.

For example, in the case of the sequence mentioned above, the producer had intended the scene following the husband's attack upon Sandra to be a self-contained incident; almost an aside. It was intended to chronologically separate the attack from the scene in the V.D. clinic. In the latter scene Sandra specifically refers to her divorce from her husband, which must therefore have



already happened, and must also have happened after the razor attack. In occupying the space between these two scenes, Sandra's return to the pub was consequently intended to be a punctuative, chronological 'spacer' with no necessary connection with either of the other two scenes. Apart from the fact that the scene also separates Sandra from her husband both physically and metaphorically by placing her - not in his company - but in the company of a number of new characters, the producer included a number of cues through which the nature of the scene's syntagmatic status could be deduced. For instance, Sandra's wardrobe and make-up had been changed to indicate a time-jump, and the conviviality of the pub conversation (in contrast to the violence of the razor slash) was enhanced by a unique circular pan shot of the assembled company.

Subtle though such cues may be, they could obviously still be ignored or interpreted differently. This therefore begs the question of how other, more central aspects of the storyline were understood by an audience.

In order to examine people's understanding of such specific aspects of the narrative a number of statements were offered to the sample audience concerning different parts of the programme. Each of these statements was composed in the knowledge that their content had been the subject of a great deal of discussion during the making of the programme, and the sample was once again invited to agree, disagree or indicate uncertainty.

#### Statement one

Sandra provoked the man in the motel into attacking her. This statement anticipates a judgement of motive and action based upon



an understanding of the motel scene. It was intended as a test of whether people had seen the action as warranted, that is to say, whether Sandra was responsible for provoking the attack. The discussion groups actually underlined a certain ambivalence in the question in so far as Sandra could indeed be seen as precipitating the action, though not the nature of that action. In fact, both discussion groups decoded the immediate motivation to be the girl's flourishing of the five-pound note at the start of the scene:

She agreed to three pounds, but wanted to keep the bloody fiver - that's why he hit her. ('manual' man)

She wasn't going to change his fiver ('non-manual' man)

Neither group, however, seemed to catch the intention that Sandra was being playful about taking the five-pound note for herself, nor did they refer to the possibly mutual misunderstanding of the action by either party, although they did agree that the ensuing attack was completely unwarranted. In view of the problem with the question, the results from the postal survey may not mean very much in this instance, but for the record 39% agreed that Sandra 'provoked the man', 47% disagreed and 14% were unsure.

#### Statement two

The man in the motel was mentally disturbed.

Although Sandra was seen by the discussion groups to have initially precipitated the action in the motel bedroom, nearly everyone in these groups agreed that the 'neat man' must have been mentally disturbed in some way. The majority of the postal sample also



concurred with this, the preferred decoding, although a quarter of them indicated that they were unsure and a fifth disagreed.

In combining the results of these two questions it can be seen that the sample audience generally decoded the scene as intended, that is, Sandra was seen as being the victim of an irrational attack. This understanding was also used as evidence for the general conclusion that the girl was 'taken advantage of', but not as a deaf person. Both discussion groups tended to see the attack as an occupational hazard rather than the result of a misunderstanding.

### Statement three

Sandra was afraid of the big West Indian (who is seen in the restaurant)

This statement was included as a test of people's understanding of characterization in *URBY*, since the West Indian was supposed to be one of the very few men whom Sandra encountered who did not pose a direct threat to her. In terms of the storyline, the West Indian was intended to be a rather gentle character (dominated by 'Charlie' in the restaurant scene) and it was to him that Sandra fled after the stabbing. A large majority of the postal sample (76%) disagreed with the above statement, which suggests that the nature of Sandra's relationship with this particular man had been successfully decoded from the producer's point of view.

Whereas there had been little difference between the four main categories of the sample in terms of their response to the first two statements in this section, the response to this statement was less isomorphic. Most of those people who agreed that Sandra was afraid



of the man were members of the 'manual' category. One reason for this emerged from the 'manual' discussion group, from which it was clear that a local prejudice was operating against West Indians in general. Witness the following conversation from that group:

- 1st Man: That West Indian chap - he wanted to help her to start with, but when the police came to fetch her she tried to explain to him - to get her out of this - but he never helped her at all. It shows how people's minds can change.
- 2nd Man: He were only interested in getting her to bed. There's nobody worse than West Indians for that game.
- Interviewer: Didn't you feel any sympathy for him then?
- 3rd Man: (Mishearing) Towards her? Yes, certainly.
- Interviewer: No, the West Indian, I meant.
- All: No, no...
- 4th Man: It was only because the West Indian was playing that role, it would have been the same if it had been a white man.
- 1st Man: Why did they pick on a West Indian in the film? I mean that, pimping, is normally the West Indian's role isn't it?
- 2nd Man: Most of the prostitution is run by West Indians here.
- Interviewer: Do you think the West Indian in the film was shown to be a pimp?
- 2nd Man: Yes, definitely. He didn't want her in his flat for nothing did he? He didn't want to make her a cup of tea and then just let her out of the door again did he?

(\*N.B. the fourth man was himself an Indian)

#### Statement four

Sandra agreed to be sterilised.

Only 1% of the survey sample agreed with this statement, although 20% indicated that they were not sure. The great majority of the audience therefore decoded the fact that Sandra did not agree (or was even



consulted) about her sterilization. In fact, the producer's intentions were particularly accurately decoded here, as some of the statements from the discussion groups indicated:

(Sandra) desperately wanted her idea of a happy home. She wanted a nice house, the baby and she wanted to keep it clean herself. She couldn't have these things. They were taken away from her - even her right to have babies.

Statement five

When Sandra stabs the man towards the end of the film, she does so because he was definitely going to attack her.

The point of the scene to which this statement refers is that Sandra thinks the man is going to attack her, whereas the audience can see that he is not. More to the point, the audience can hear that he is not since the man says 'C'mon, you're alright' etc., and is actually trying to let the girl pass by him to leave. It was absolutely vital for the audience to understand this as far as the producer was concerned, since the stabbing had to appear to be based upon a misunderstanding resulting from (a) the girl's deafness, and (b) her personal history of abuse.

In the event, the majority of the survey sample (61%) disagreed with the statement even though a comparatively large percentage (23%) were not sure. Having agreed that the man was not attacking Sandra, the majority of viewers would then need to find a reason for the stabbing, the intention being that they should refer back to the whole of the rest of the film. Both the discussion groups did so to varying degrees, suggesting that Sandra stabbed the man



because he was 'trying to get her to come to bed - like all the rest of them' or because 'she thought he was like all the other men in her life'. More specifically, members of both groups noticed the flashback to the man in the motel and used this as an explanation of the girl's behaviour:

She saw him as the image of the man who attacked her at the motel, and was terrified.  
(Manual group)

The actual event wasn't shocking. I could see why she used it (the knife) because we've got the shot back to the Little Chef motel. I was surprised that she actually had the knife with her though. ('Non-manual' group)

The source of this last person's surprise about the knife can be linked to the omission of the scene showing Sandra picking it up at the 'dossier's' lodgings, but the main point here is that respondents had decoded the somewhat film-specific code of the flashback in the preferred manner and had linked its content to the motivation of the stabbing scene. Furthermore, while there had been some equivocation during the editing over whether this flashback was (in Metz's terms) a Subjective insert or a Displaced Diagetic insert, it can be observed that the members of the discussion groups saw it as a case of the former. It was, in other words, seen as Sandra's mental picture of the 'neat man' and not as an artifice of the film as such.

This can be contrasted with the discussion groups' reaction to the 'flashforward' of the funeral which opened the film. This tended to be seen as a Non-diagetic insert, or as an almost metaphorical prologue external to the main narrative. It was also the source of some confusion as this extract from the 'non-manual' group's discussion shows:



1st Woman: I wonder why it began with the mother's burial? They repeated it half-way through and that rather threw me.

1st Man: Yes, I didn't see the relevance of that...

2nd Woman: This was the deaf girl's link, wasn't it - her link had gone with her mother.

1st Man: But you didn't know that when it started. (general murmurings of agreement).

2nd Man: I think the producer was trying to say here that the programme is all about life and death. I thought it was good actually - it was a foretaste of a situation which was unavoidable. He was trying to ask what society is going to do about it, having seen it...

3rd Man: The situation was painted such that she drops through these social layers. Now she was deaf and everything, but the fact remains that there were these social layers to drop through. No matter what society does there have always been these layers, and there always will be. I can't see any reason why it should ever change. This is where the vicar's words were very relevant.

#### Statement six

The man Sandra stabbed was severely wounded, but eventually recovered.

This statement can be taken as a simple test of people's understanding of a piece of straight denotational information. The arresting officer at the end of DUEY specifically says that 'the man has since died', so one might expect most people to have disagreed with the proposition. The statement was, however, included for another reason. The producer had originally wanted to have a long-shot of the stabbed man, showing him lying entirely nude upon a mortuary slab, which was intended to provide the audience with a strong connotational sign that he was in fact dead before Sandra herself knew for certain. That shot had been cut from the film in



favour of an extended close-up of just the man's face, which arguably reduced the power of the original sign.

It was therefore decided to include the above statement in order to find out how the remaining information had been decoded. In fact, the majority of people still disagreed with the statement as the producer would have intended them to do, but at 61% the percentage was surprisingly low - 16% actually agreed that the man had eventually recovered and 23% were not sure either way. In addition, seven out of every ten Bradford respondents disagreed with the statement while only half of the Leicester people did so. Since the original events had been extensively covered in the local press in Bradford it is once again possible that the reason for this difference is rooted in factors external to the film itself.

Although these findings lead to the conclusion that the loss of the original longshot may have damaged the intended understanding at this point, it was found that the discussion groups actually had little trouble in identifying the man as being in a mortuary. Having asked one member of the 'manual' group whether the stabbed man had subsequently died, he replied: 'Of course he had - that's why he had a woodwork pillow'.

Another example of connotational encoding which was examined was Sandra's use of drugs. There were dialogue references to 'pills' and shots of them being given to the girl, but they were never specifically identified as amphetamines or barbiturates, or indeed



as 'drugs' as such. An additional statement concerning this was consequently inserted in the questionnaire and this time the response was more clear-cut, with 76% of the total sample disagreeing with the proffered statement: 'Sandra never took drugs'.

One last aspect of the narrative with which the survey dealt was the perception of a 'turning-point' in the storyline. There were several critical junctures in Sandra's life which the producer saw as contributory factors in her downfall, but the major turn downwards was considered to be the girl's scarring at the hands of her first real boyfriend. As the original ATV press release said:

Dummy... sensitively chronicles Sandra's early life, her first job, her first love, and the dreadful moment when things started to go wrong for her. Scarred both physically and mentally, Sandra's life became a series of degradations culminating in the death of a man at her hand.

In asking an audience whether they agreed with this, one was in fact asking for more than just a judgement about dramatic structure. The question could also help to indicate how people had perceived contrasts between different sets of circumstances in so far as they were seen as being separated by a turning-point. For example, depending upon where people judged a turning-point to occur, it would be possible to draw conclusions about the relative values which had been given to different aspects of the narrative by different people.

For these reasons the question about turning-points was presented as an open question - without drawing attention to any particular part



of the programme - and those parts which were suggested as critical points in Sandra's life can be ranked in the following order. As in the earlier question about 'scenes which stuck in the mind' the most popular choice of a 'turning-point' has been given a score of 100 with the rest in proportion.

1. (100) Sandra's marriage and subsequent prostitution.
2. (58) Her scarring by Ian.
3. (42) Her introduction to drugs (by Charlie).
4. (27) Her sterilisation.
5. (19) Her return to the streets after her stay with the sister.  
The birth of the first baby.
6. (13) Sandra's discovery of husband with Cross-eyed Anne.  
Her fight with mother over Phil.  
Her divorce.  
Death of mother.  
Her 'rejection' by or of the social worker after the V.D. clinic scene.  
Motel incident.
7. (8) The stabbing (at the end of the film).
8. (6) The start of regular drinking by Sandra.  
Her relationship with Charlie.  
Her first job.

One or two people felt that there had been no real turning-point in the film as a whole, and the suggestion of the stabbing at the end of the programme as a turning-point is effectively implying the same thing. However, it is clear from these findings that it was the marriage and not the scarring which was generally seen as the critical event in Sandra's life. More accurately, it was the husband's subsequent use of Sandra as a prostitute which marked the major shift in the story for most people - as in this comment from a Bradford lady:



The marriage was the turning-point. When Sandra gave her whole self to her partner there was nothing she would not do for him to keep them together, so in my mind there was no hope for her once she got into this association, since he was ruthless to her for his own selfish ways.  
(LBY)

In looking at people's comments, Sandra's prostitution can be said to have been given a higher affective value than her 'physical and mental scarring' at the hands of her first boyfriend. This, however, is not to say that the events leading up to the marriage and the prostitution were seen as being in uniform contrast to the events which happened afterwards, nor is it the case that the sample itself uniformly opted for the marriage as the main turning-point. For example, most people net their comments in processual terms, often mentioning several different crises and arguing in effect that the marriage was not so much a turning-point as a significant tightening of a downward spiral in which Sandra was already locked:

The turning-point was when the boyfriend scarred her face. This led to a downhill slide which then took an even steeper dive with the pimp who cashed in on her body - the drugs being the final straw.  
(LBY)

Correlatively, it was the 'non-manual' people who tended to opt for the marriage, whereas the 'manual' people tended to go for Sandra's introduction to drugs and/or drink as the significant change in her circumstances. It is also worth noting that such judgements were mostly based upon a generalised understanding of content rather than form, since the scene which had really 'stuck in people's minds' - the motel scene - was not very often cited as being a major turning-point.



'Professional' understanding of the programme

In addition to the 'manual' and 'non-manual' groups, a third group of people had been organised in order to compare their views of the programme with those of the first two groups and the producer's intentions. I have put 'professional' in inverted commas because none of the members of this group were strictly-speaking practicing film or television producers, but all of them could demonstrate a professional interest in film or television. They had either taught film studies courses, had worked in television in the past, were currently engaged in postgraduate study of film or were professional writers or photographers. None of the members of this group were connected with my own university department, and none of them had seen DUNEY at the time of its original transmission.

It was likely that this group would be predisposed to enter into an 'in-depth' discussion of the programme, and they might have been expected to be more critical than the other two groups. However, the study was less concerned with the fact of such criticism than it was with the nature of people's observations and the reasons given for them.

Generally speaking, this group concurred that DUNEY was a true story of a girl for whom one was bound to feel sympathy, but they also constructed a 'professional distance' between themselves and the subject-matter. For instance, they were very much more inclined to see DUNEY as a television programme about a girl called Sandra than as a reconstruction of Sandra's life which



happened to be on television. As such the programme was not seen so much as a case of 'showing ourselves to ourselves' as a medium of the producer's intention to do so. The group's attention was consequently focussed upon the inclusion of cues and clues within the overall structure of the programme as a piece of television, which in particular instances led them towards a more accurate decoding of the message vis-a-vis the producer's original intention. Nevertheless, that same conscious search for 'markers' or signals of genre, narrative structure or character also led members of this group to read into the film a number of cues which were not really intended at all.

Here are two examples of what I mean. Both of the 'non-professional' discussion groups had seen the immediate motivation for the motel attack as being rooted in Sandra's intention to keep the 'neat man's' five-pound note. They had also sought an explanation for the attack itself in the man's mental imbalance and the fact that 'there's a lot of blokes walking around like that who would do a thing like that'. There was a tendency, therefore, for these people to refer to received stereotypes of the man as a 'whore-hater'; as the type of man who would attack someone like Sandra whatever the circumstances. They were, in other words, referring through codes operating in the programme to the rules of social life, which in this case state that being viciously attacked is an occupational hazard of being a prostitute. In comparison, the 'professional' group were more inclined to seek an explanation for the attack from within the film itself, and can be said to have arrived at an understanding of the scene which was more



congruent with that of the producer. Witness the following conversation from this third discussion group:

- 1st Man: I felt the (motel) scene went on too much. I could have just been given a hint about what happened instead of actually watching him continue to smash her up. I didn't look, in fact, for some of it.
- 2nd Man: There are two ways you can look at it - you can ask whether it was narratively unnecessary, or you can ask about the way it was shot. I mean whether it was Hitchcock or whatever. I would have cut out the second action, definitely, although I think the important thing about that scene was the way he went, in a flash, from being rational to...
- 1st Woman: I think the important thing was that she was only playing when she took the money; it wasn't a kind of deliberate stealing thing, and it was the complete misunderstanding between them over that which was important - that was one thing about her being deaf of course.

(Question: Why do you say she was only playing?)

- 1st Woman: Because of her expression, and the way she seemed to be going along with everything quite happily up to that point. We never thought before that she needed to take the money.
- 1st Man: Yes, and on reflection we were definitely expecting something to happen because of the build-up to that scene. At the time I was more interested in the social placing of the man. There was a very clear distinction between the first two men according to class, whereas the (motel) man elotted into not quite such a clear distinction - between working and middle class. It was an unknown situation for Sandra; I mean the drive out of Bradford was different for a start, so she might well have tried to be teasingly playful in order to feel her way (in this new situation).

Although this group spontaneously agreed that the motel scene had 'stuck in the mind' more than any other, they can also be said to have been more prepared for it as a crucial - if unspecified - event. This was because they recognised that the structure of the narrative was 'building up' to that scene and they may therefore have been forewarned to look for precise cues of motivation for any subsequent action. It remains a fact, for instance, that the lady in the above conversation was one of very few people in the



whole sample who specifically saw the immediate motivation for the attack as being rooted in the protagonists' misunderstanding of the situation - which was the preferred reading.

The kind of search for clues leading to such an understanding involved seeing the 'neat man' as an unknown quantity from Sandra's point of view, given the characterization of other men in the film rather than other men in society. It also involved an access to codes of time and distance such that the motel itself could be seen as being 'out' of Bradford (and away from Sandra's normal pitch). Indeed, as will be shown in a moment, the 'professional' group appeared to be able to decode indicators of time more accurately with respect to the producer's intentions, but then they also had a tendency to see symbolism where it was not intended. The following comment reveals an acute perception of a known difficulty in the film, but it also suggests that a potential answer to this was foreseen and forewarned within the narrative:

The problem which the film ran into, by equating (Sandra's) need to have affection with what conventional morality would call her 'loose sexuality', was evident. All the men are cast as villains on the whole; the women come out of it quite well, with one exception - the dark-haired one (Cross-eyed Anne). If there is an equation between her own affectionate nature and her loose sexuality this seemed to be resolved by the marriage. However, the marriage is introduced by the scene of her mother getting into shoes which are too tight. This means that the marriage is being signalled as being constraining. The marriage consolidates the equation rather than resolving it.

The point I am making with this quote is that the privileged access which a 'professional' viewer may have to many different films and their



modes of signification can equally well lead to 'aberrant decoding' as to an 'accurate reading' of the text. In this case, 'Mother's' difficulty with her shoes was intended to be simply a sign of her failing health - not a symbol of approaching restriction in the marriage.

The 'professional' groups apparent predisposition to see metaphorical symbolism in the film nevertheless led to a number of observations which can be directly related to those of the producer. For example:

I don't think the actual details of the film are that important, because the main idea is that (Sandra) just starts going down very fast. Exactly how she does is not that important. Having said that, the downhill thing was emphasized with the kind of shots themselves; particularly with her sister - where she couldn't stay. She left (her sister's house) and you actually see her walking off downhill. The next shot was in the pub again; she has literally gone downhill to it, past those dogs wandering about in shot - was that dog planted?

Well, the dog was certainly encouraged, but the idea of having the actress walk downhill was also a deliberate move on the producer's behalf, and it was evidently a move which was consciously recognized by this group as a sign of deterioration. Given the problem of verbalising such understandings one cannot say that the other groups had failed to see this sign, but the point still holds that the 'professional' group were specifically searching for such indicators in a way that the 'non-professionals' were not. Just as DUFFY's technicians felt that their reference-groups were other technicians, so the 'professional' viewers expected the film to follow certain rules of filmic logic. Having agreed between themselves that the motel scene had been 'overplayed', this third group also agreed that this was in fact necessary for the purposes of the narrative:



1st Man: I think the motel was a turning-point in a way. Even though she wasn't killed the build-up of expectation meant that something very important was going to happen. This was a justified expectation because her being attacked was what really caused her to stab the bloke at the end. Her expectations of other people, and particularly of men, were changed by that attack. The way you saw that flash of the first attacker at the end indicated that.

2nd Man: That was presumably the reason why it (the motel scene) was overplayed - so that it is set up ready to be recalled later. It's a question of structure really.

The first respondent's apparent surprise that Sandra was not killed in the motel stemmed in part from his understanding of the nature of the attack, but also from an initial predisposition to read a structural device in a particular way. As he said at a different point in the discussion:

The thing about the motel scene is that I originally assumed that she was going to be killed, and that was because the first scene had been a funeral. You obviously went back in time and so on, but I assumed that this was (Sandra's) funeral until you see that it was her mother's. I thought originally that this was posing a narrative riddle in a conventional way which was to be answered by the rest of the film - that is, how did Sandra actually die? This was evidently a red herring, or a deception on the part of the narrative; a kind of hook if you like.

After some reflection this man had recognised the opening scene for what it was intended to be; a kind of teaser to involve an audience from the start. It is nevertheless significant that he had also seen this opening as 'conventional', that is to say, like the kind of opening one might expect from another example of film or television drama. Once again, one's experience of these media could therefore work against a preferred decoding as well as vice-versa.



Despite such examples of 'misunderstanding' at a paradigmatic level, the 'professional' group generally decoded the syntagmatic components of the programme in the preferred way. On the question of time-scales, for instance, they suggested that part three of DUMBY had covered 'a month' or 'a few weeks', whereas the average duration of the story had been given in terms of years by the main sample. The reason given for this judgement was the relative continuity of part three:

There were not so many separate stages of her life, it was all a continuous series of scenes about a continuing situation.

Similarly, this third group appeared to be using the same edition of the codebook employed by the producer when dealing with specific markers like fade-to-black or dissolves between shots. For example,<sup>2</sup> they were invited to discuss that part of the film which follows the scarring and precedes Sandra's fight with her mother; a section which includes a fade-to-black after the sister has telephoned 'Ian' to find out why he had failed to appear. A fade-to-black is a fairly heavy instrument to use, since it presents the viewer (albeit momentarily) with a blank screen. It is often therefore used to indicate only quite large time-jumps or for specific punctuative purposes such as marking the end of a chapter; the end of a particular chain of events (or the beginning of a new section). In this case it was intended to mark the end of Sandra's relatively 'happy' period; almost the end of her age of innocence which had been physically ruptured by the scarring and consumed in her realisation that 'Ian' was not coming back - and that she was scarred for life. In fact,



the fade-to-black between the telephone scene and the scene where Sandra meets 'Phil' fulfilled an additional role. It both covered for and retained a trace of an entire scene which had been rejected during production. In the original script this scene was set in a T.V. factory, in which Sandra was to have been shown assembling components on a production line where she looked 'older' and 'coarsened' (according to the writer's directions). The scene would therefore have provided a cue for supposing that time had moved on (since the girl had evidently changed jobs) and a cue towards inferring that Sandra herself had changed. The scene had been modified during production for the practical reason of reducing the number of different locations to be found (it was re-located in the dry-cleaning factory), but was eventually rejected within the brief to lose running-time.

This left the producer with the option of a fade-to-black from the telephone scene, which was therefore intended to be an important piece of punctuation and which was also seen as such by the 'professional' group. Although I did not mention the fade as such, a member of this group had this to say:

After Joan rings Ian the fade to black was a definitive piece of punctuation. It meant 'into the abyss'. It does not matter whether it was a short time afterwards that we see her going into the pub - or a long time - because it is a new stage; a new world; a new part of the film. It was a narrative punctuation rather than an indicator of time passing, although a certain amount of time had in fact passed by.

As a result of the general agreement with this comment, the members of the 'professional' group decided that the scarring and its aftermath was the main turning-point of the film, as another member pointed out:



There were several turning-points, but I think there was a central turning-point really - back to her first relationship. After that she went back to set up with the black-jacketed gentleman (Phil) and it was very clear what was going to happen then. Once she was set up with the second guy she was marked down in my mind as a loser. I didn't know that before. It was if she had been lifted up a bit by the fact that she was getting on quite well with the middle-class boy, and then - bang - suddenly it all went wrong and that really triggered off the rest of it.

Seeing this area of the film as being the main turning-point (based upon a preferred reading of the fade-to-black, among other factors) can be compared with the majority of the main sample's view that it was Sandra's marriage which was the major turning-point (which was chosen because of Sandra's subsequent - or more accurately - consequent prostitution). The interesting fact about this comparison is that the former is in part a judgement about filmic structure whereas the latter is in part a judgement about social structure.

Another indicator of time used in the programme was the inclusion of a number of period-specific songs. These were always used as part of the action, being actually performed by 'Ian's' group or played on record-players by the characters (rather than being used as atmosphere tracks), but they had also been chosen as 'reminders' of period. The 'professional' discussion group were nevertheless the only people covered by the study who specifically mentioned the songs. In fact, one member of the group referred to them as 'the major indicators of period'. This does not imply that other groups had not been subconsciously aware of such indicators, but it does



show that the third group had attached some importance to them as a technique. Similarly, they were less concerned with the potential indexicality of locations than they were with the balance of one type of location with another. By this I mean that the 'professional' group were less concerned with how the different locations might relate to actuality than they were concerned with the relationships of different locations with each other. Indeed, one member felt that the locations had been 'a bit of a pastiche', having been chosen for the purposes of the film rather than the purposes of strict documentarism:

I felt the film's position was between a particular view of the middle-class and a particular view of the working-class; the ruling and lumpenproletariat. Structurally the film was poised - held in a position like that, so the question of whether it was real in a sense doesn't arise. It works in terms of the balance. The locations were not, for example, done in great detail. I noticed that a 50's van had been carefully placed in position in one shot, but the actual houses didn't seem to have anything of that sort of Hovis-ad exactness about them. The important thing was the contrast between them - between Ian's place and here for instance.

Once again, the film is being regarded in its own terms here, as realism rather than reality and as a construct rather than an object trouvé. The 'professional' group's willing suspension of disbelief can therefore be said to have been less successfully suspended in this case, but the reason given is very interesting. The respondent's referent for his comments about the locations was not 'reality' but another form of realism as incorporated in the Hovis television commercials. The 'exactness' of these commercials' representation of



predominantly north-country period locations is, one might safely guess, massively contrived and designed to induce waves of nostalgia for people and places which most of us have never experienced. By contrast, DUFFY's locations were intended to stand for themselves, even though the producer also wanted his audience to distinguish different types of housing, and respondents in the 'non-professional' categories do seem to have taken this for granted more than the 'professional' people.

This leads into a lengthy discussion which the 'professional' group generated on the subject of the programme's overall form and authenticity, but before examining that I would like to deal with some specific points of detail raised by this group. Firstly, they picked out various aspects of the programme which had seemed to be less than totally convincing in themselves. Like the other two discussion groups, for instance, this one concurred that the scarring scene had been the source of some confusion. They were admittedly asked about this in a rather direct way (i.e. 'Did you find the scarring scene credible?') but the answer was clearly and generally 'No'. One member continued:

I could see the boy was asserting his property rights over Sandra - this comes from his basis as being in a different world, and also from the filmic notion of adventure/romance - but it was a filmic device, a bit of a cliché, and not very well done.

The laundry scene was also picked out again as not having 'rung true', with members of the 'professional' group expressing similar misgivings about the foreman as those given earlier by the 'non-professional' people. A member of this third group also mentioned



one of the early scenes in the school as striking a false note, although they were unable to say exactly why:

Where the girl was being taught in the school; particularly where she was supposed to make the 'long S on the snake' - that didn't ring true to me at all. I don't know why, I haven't got any information about teaching the deaf, it just didn't seem right to me somehow.

Well, the common factor here is that both the foreman and the teacher were genuine, although to what degree an audience could detect the difference between an actor and someone playing themselves is a question which opens up different areas of research into acting codes and their perception.

One other point which was picked up by both the 'professional' and 'non-professional' people was the extent of Sandra's recovery after the motel attack. That is to say, members of all three groups were surprised at how well she had recovered given the viciousness of the attack. In no case was this observation found to diminish the impact of the motel scene, and where her recovery was mentioned it was often used as evidence for seeing a lengthy time-jump between the end of part two and the beginning of part three. However, as a point of authenticity, people clearly expected Sandra to have sustained considerably more physical damage. Indeed, the real girl had received serious facial and other injuries, including a broken nose, but having the actress wear a prosthetic nose for the whole of part three had proved to be impractical for the purposes of production.



In moving away from specific criticisms the 'professional' group generally decoded the programme in the preferred manner. One member's initial reaction was:

Horrifying. I felt I was being sucked in all the time. I felt so sympathetic and so involved although I was trying to distance myself. I wanted to get away from it.

Apart from the question of sympathy, this group had been asked to respond to other points from the main questionnaire for purposes of comparison. They had given the scarring scene as the main turning-point, for instance, and in addition they concurred with the producer's point of view that the West Indian man was 'not exploitative'. In fact they thought that this man was 'stupid and slow-witted', observing that he had probably therefore sunk to the same level as Sandra had done through being deaf in a hostile world. As much they were almost kindred spirits, so Sandra would not have been afraid of him. This group also saw the stabbing at the end of the programme as the producer would have wanted them to. I asked about the stabbed man's attitude towards the girl before the stab itself, and one respondent said:

Well, you didn't really know who he was. He hadn't really emerged as a person at all. I thought he was almost an accidental victim. He wasn't going to attack her - he was almost ambivalent towards her; just being humanly attentive. He was also drunk, and Sandra obviously thought that this was going to be a repeat of the motel thing.

As regards the overall message of the programme, the following member of the group appears to concur with the idea that it carried the documentary aspiration to show ourselves to ourselves:



I think he (the producer) was trying to show what it is like to go down this sort of conveyor belt, where once you've gone so far it is almost inevitable that you are going to go all the way.

However, this respondent added:

I probably wouldn't have watched this sort of play if I'd seen a little trailer for it, because I would have known what was going to happen. It's another Cathy come home or Edna the inebriate woman.

The reference to DUSKY as a 'play' and the respondent's evident past experience of avowedly similar productions raises perhaps the most important point of the 'professional' group's discussion. This was their depreciation of the documentary aspect of the programme. Members of this group identified part three of the film as being 'more documentary-like' and spontaneously suggested that this was because it was more continuous, with the camera seeming to 'follow Sandra around'. They also spontaneously observed that there were more close-ups in part three than in the other two parts, and used this as an indicator of its documentarism. If the reference to the camera following Sandra is taken as a reference to actual camera-movement, then all of these comments are accurate. So the fact that there was more camera-movement, temporal and physical continuity plus a greater use of the close-up in part three indicates that these aspects were being used by both the producer and the 'professional' viewers as a code of documentarism.

As far as the rest of the programme was concerned, however, it was literally another story. I asked whether members of the group would have made any major changes had they been making DUSKY themselves, and received the following views:



1st Man: I don't think the documentary aspects were particularly underlined. They came through the use of titles at the beginning and at the end, but other than that it was a good story and it worked as a story. The scenes which worked as a documentary most of all were probably those with the younger Sandras. After those had passed there was very little that looked like documentary except perhaps at the end. It looked like conventional realist television drama. In that sense I suppose more could have been done with the documentary aspects; in a sense I feel when the final title comes up - saying she has done her time in prison and is now on report - that this is nudging me to make another response after the drama has already done its work. The title makes me feel certain things and gives me certain responses which in a way I feel is cheating in so far as it re-introduces that aspect.

(Question: Would it have made a difference to the way you approached the programme had that last caption not been there?)

1st Man: I don't think that would have altered the way the programme was experienced in terms of its narrative flow, but it would alter the way I then thought back about it and what the programme was trying to do. The caption was trying to make me realise something about the real world which wasn't necessarily there otherwise.

2nd Man: I find myself being really quite dismissive about the producer's motives, because it really was quite sensational. It might have had a bit of a social message, but it was such a banal social message if there was one. It was just very obvious do-gooding. All that going down and down just made me feel a bit sick. This took the film into places where much more could have been done - socially - with disadvantaged, disadvantaged people. Down-and-outs. A whole world of social concern could have been opened up. It (the film) really was a caricature in a way in order to maintain the sympathy for Sandra. In that sense it missed out a great deal.

(Question: You mention 'caricature', and someone else mentioned 'repetition' in the film - do you mean this to be a criticism of the film as a drama-documentary?).

2nd Man: Well, I'd like to have seen how she coped with the rest of her life. You didn't see how she coped with the social system; government agencies who would presumably have had some contact with her. There was that brief mention of the social worker, and you see a bit of her coping when she was working in the factory, but the film just accelerated after that. The time-scale was reduced and the film just concentrated on these horrible relationships which she had with men.



(Question: Would you say that the social worker was badly drawn in terms of the film, or was he being drawn as ineffectual in terms of the narrative?)

2nd Man: It was almost as if she was being drawn like a train. She was ploughing along and he (the social worker) was just flipped aside. He had hardly any impact at all.

Some of these comments equivocate between a disbelief in DUFFY as a programme and DUFFY as a record of actual events. One of the reasons why the film concentrated upon Sandra's 'horrible relationships' was because she did. On the other hand, the fact of her degradation certainly made a good story and was one of the reasons for making the film in the first place. However, the charge of Sandra being a caricature is more serious and linked to this and the other groups' occasional fear that not enough was revealed of the girl's inner being. This, as I mentioned earlier, was of central concern to the producer and remains a problem for any deaf person who happens to be called 'DUFFY'. The key point here is that the programme looked like 'conventional realist television drama' to members of the 'professional' group. Unlike the 'non-professional' people, they did not extract DUFFY from the normal pattern of television programming in as much as it was not seen as being 'different' or unconventional. There are, however, two separate orders of understanding at work here. While the 'professional' group saw the programme as one of several examples of realist film-making, the 'non-professionals' tended to see the programme as maintaining a different perspective on reality. The 'professional' group had a pretty clear idea of what conventions were being used, and employed



this knowledge to explicate not only specific points of detail in the film, but also its underlying structure. This was precisely what the film needed to disguise in order to represent itself as an objective 'unstructured copy' of events in Sandra's life; its audience needed to be those who would see it as an impression of reality, not an impression of realism. Although it was the 'professional' group who seem to have most consistently decoded the programme in the preferred way in terms of the intended content, it was therefore this same group for whom the producer least wanted to produce his programme.



**SECTION FIVE**

**Conclusion**



It was necessary to write this thesis because without such a study it would have been very difficult to describe in any detail how a programme like DUMMY comes to be made. It might have been possible to piece together a likely model of such a process of production by looking at books written by professional producers, critics or media scholars, but one would have searched in vain for another descriptive study which presented a systematic analysis of a particular case of cultural production in the form of a comprehensive, point-by-point critical narrative.

The point of recording all the minutiae of a given case of television production, and the point of asking someone else to wade through it all, was therefore to produce a clear contribution to our stock of knowledge in the form of a descriptive document. This chronicle of events can then be regarded as an historical document; an exercise in contemporary archaeology which provides a detailed source of material for use in an integrated programme of comparative research.

The study nevertheless aims to do more than simply record a series of events. It has also been used as a tool for analysing a particular mode of production in a precise way. In looking at a drama-documentary, it has not sought to explicate the construction of a realist form through an examination of the product, but has attempted to do so through an examination of its means of production.



In this respect the study stems from and relates to a programme of media research which was carried out in association with the Council of Europe during the early seventies. This programme was concerned with the problems of understanding television language, and it culminated in a report from the Centre for Mass Communication Research at Leicester University and a colloquy held in Copenhagen in 1976. The work provided a number of important cues for the present study because the meetings which took place between both researchers and broadcasters in Copenhagen and Leicester opened up new areas of discussion and paved the way towards a greater degree of access by 'academia' to the 'professionals'. The meetings can, indeed, be said to have opened up a means of extending both broadcaster's and researcher's own perspectives on themselves.

In practical terms, this extension of access was framed as a plea to the broadcasters to allow a researcher to observe an entire process of production. The request was honoured, and this study is the result of the almost unprecedented level of access which was offered.

In terms of policy and the development of mutual understanding, the Copenhagen discussions also opened up the possibility that researchers could begin to do for broadcasters what they often say they do for us as viewers, that is, to 'show ourselves to ourselves'. At Copenhagen, the gauntlet had been thrown down for the broadcasters to have the camera turned upon themselves.



In picking up that challenge and some of the weapons provided by the Leicester report, this study did not, however, use the same camera. It took the cue from the previous research of making a move away from the elitist approach of conscious or otherwise collusion with the interests of broadcasters in helping them to get their messages across. It moved, instead, towards the critical approach of making explicit the otherwise implicit structures within which those messages are constructed. The study consequently sought to map out a range of different sub-cultures and to determine the significance of a range of operating sub-codes within a whole process from the inside. It did not try to advise about the relative value of alternatives within a given universe of discourse because to do so would presuppose either the superiority of that universe or my own.

Given the fact of my early entry into the process of making DUMMY, it was possible to apprehend a very wide range of operating constraints, but it was also possible to seek an answer to the question 'How are a producer's original intentions translated into a film through the organisation of production?'. In approaching this question, the study sought to penetrate the frames of meaning which were employed at each moment of reification in the process from the inception of the original idea for the programme right through to its reception by an audience, and it has tried to explicate these frameworks, not simply as placing restrictions upon people's capacity for interpretation, but also as providing the source of our capacity for understanding.



The study has not, therefore, assumed the existence of a conspiratorial system. It has not assumed that television producers are becalmed in a sea of sterile structural restraints. What it does assume is that even to work within the mode of news broadcasting is to appeal to a preferential version of reality, and the study found that in this case of drama-documentary production this version was systematically distorted by a range of demonstrable working conditions. The journey through the description of the process enables one to conclude that every single stage of the production was subject to construction in one form or another. The scope of that journey nevertheless enables one to conclude, in addition, that if the operating constraints are examined in context they can also be seen to be negotiable within what is in fact a fluid, interlocking system, and not a system which is necessarily fixed or linear. Even the apparently rigid restraints of a limited budget or production schedule can, for instance, be looked upon as being positive aids to a creative, radical venture. So although they may be imposed for purely economic purposes, they can actually be used for the purposes of generating a creative discipline. These and all the other circumstances in which a film is made consequently need to have been recorded in depth, but to allow them to be taken into account during the course of an holistic, pandectic analysis, and not to enable them to be used inductively as evidence for unbridled determinism.



As I argued in the introductory section, this kind of analysis is necessary because no form of cultural production is susceptible to absolute criticism. It is only subject to criticism when this is part of a process of demystification or explication of the conditions in which meaning is sustained. The aim of this study was to find out what these conditions were in a given case and to find out how far they either constrained a producer's agency or enabled it to exist.

In looking back to the introductory argument it can also be emphasised that it is necessary to carry out such examinations, not because the noblesse oblige of individual producers needs to be policed, but because their privilege entails the responsibility of others to examine and report it. Not all producers have access to each part of a process of television production, and both producers and their audiences should have access to, or an understanding of the means of different types of production. Such access is necessary if one is to work towards the gradual reduction of the opposition between truth and consensus in any sphere, but in this particular case it is merely incumbent upon the sociologist to examine the conditions in which a challenge is made to existing divisions between fact and fiction in a particular type of television programme, and to do so through actual observation in the field.

Having done this, it is now possible to extrapolate from the detailed observation and set down a number of conclusions about the main issues which have been raised. The first of these must be



concerned with DUMMY's status as a construction, and its need to deny this as a realist film.

The construction of realism in DUMMY

I suggested in the introduction that even the most unfathomable predilections which a producer exhibits in making a film can sometimes be explained in terms of a number of 'upper range' constraints rather than in terms of purely personal whim. DUMMY's producer, for example, abhorred the imposition of symmetry in the composure of cinematographic shots, and part of the overall look of the film was therefore influenced by this apparently inexplicable preference. A preference for asymmetry can, however, be seen as part of a tradition of preference; a tenet of contemporary realism. In this context it was being exercised for this purpose rather than for reasons of personal preference or, strictly speaking, for the purposes of naturalism, since the state in which objects were actually found was sometimes altered in order to make it seem more 'real'. In other words, the existing state of genuine pubs or private interiors often prompted comments like 'It looks too much like a set', and objects would then be moved about in order to specifically avoid an unnatural-looking order or regularity.

The point here is that the desire to make a realist film is also the desire to manipulate 'reality' and the tacit or otherwise acceptance of certain codes of practice; codes which I have



attempted to excavate. For example, the current codes of realism dictate that representations of the world should not be composed in the way that Victorian genre paintings were. They should not, indeed, appear to have been composed at all, and one way of achieving this illusion is to remove traditional forms of closure such as the use of conspicuous framing.

The argument is that the real world is not composed of self-contained images, neatly packaged and bordered, so neither should representations of that world be closed-off or framed. The realist painter or film-maker will often then attempt to subvert his or her physical point of view by creating the illusion that the eye or the camera was either absent or set in only an indirect relationship with the subject. The image which happens to have been captured within the physical frame of the lens or the artist's field of view can then be seen as being only a part of a greater whole; a whole which could have existed in reality.

The fact that such a field of view has not been chosen at random was disguised in several different ways in 'DUMMY'. Objects within the frame were consciously arranged in order to imply a lack of deliberate composure, and the framing symmetry of trees or buildings on either side of the image was avoided. Similarly, the use of two-shots was generally limited to that of establishing the relationship between speakers who were subsequently shot in close-up. This code of practice was used because a sustained two-shot may have the effect of foreclosing the boundaries of the image by identifying the position of the camera, whereas in a cutaway to one



of the speakers, the object of that speaker's dialogue or line of sight is beyond the physical frame; beyond the reach of the camera, but within the 'reality' of the subject.

Contrary to the idea that realism consists in exact representation, it can now be seen that one of its devices is to show only just enough to enable a viewer to reconstruct those parts of a complete background which are missing. In allowing a character to refer to people or objects beyond the immediate field of view, a film-maker is connoting the arbitrariness of his or her own choice of frame and shifting the responsibility of making a closure to the audience. Paradoxically, the same effect can be achieved by widening the field of view to include what appears to be a surfeit of information. For example, the photographer Cartier-Bresson almost always uses the comparatively wide 50mm lens and says that he never crops a picture. The reason given is that he wants to situate people in their environments, which is the same argument as that used by the cameraman on DUMMY in support of his use of wide-angle lenses in this production and in films made with directors like Ken Loach. A typical fly-on-the-wall, wide-angle shot for Loach might then be illustrating a contratemps between a married couple, but it may also include in the frame an unconnected argument which is going on between their children in the foreground. The point of such a shot may then be to give context to the central action, or to draw a dramatic metaphor, but it also requires the viewer to do his or her own editing; it requires one to discriminate or close-off distinct areas of the image from one



another in the same way that one might do so during a real encounter. Once again, the physical frame of the picture can then be broken down by the work which the film-maker is asking the audience to do. Instead of asking the viewer to reconstruct the reality of the space beyond the immediate frame, in this case the film-maker is asking the viewer to make closures within the physical frame. In both cases the illusion is that it is the viewer, rather than the director, who is selecting information from a complete, real world; it is the viewer who seems to be supplying the frame. Indeed, as soon as the film begins to look like a film, or as soon as the director's framing becomes obvious, the illusion fails and the realism fades.

An analysis of such subversion of those boundaries which distinguish a picture of a world from the world which is presumed to have a continuity beyond that picture can also be applied to whole films. Audiences now seem to have accepted the code which caused a lot of irritation in the sixties, the code which stated that 'true-life' programmes such as the Play for Today series should always end inconclusively. The fashion for excluding a denouement can nevertheless be seen to be a deliberate ploy of the realists rather than a passing foible of lazy playwrights. In DUMMY, for instance, the narrative deliberately begs questions at the end, and even starts half-way through an action when it opens in the middle of a funeral. The fact that one can presume that the action was half-way completed is, however, very important, since the audience is



being nudged towards the belief that such a scene had a continuity beyond the boundaries of its representation.

Since the final closure then appears to have been left with the audience, the theory is that everything contained within the actual running-time of the film can then more easily acquire the semblance of reality for each viewer. However, a producer does not necessarily want each member of the audience to mark off his or her private reality; as a realist the film-maker must also attempt to foreclose the range of possible interpretations which can be made. He or she must therefore introduce a number of markers or signposts within the film itself in order to ensure that it is read as intended. The producer must, in other words, work within his or her own understanding of the definitions of contemporary realism.

The general, if unconscious recognition of the existence of such constraints is evident in people's ability to discriminate between different types of production. For example, a colleague once overheard a conversation between two elderly ladies who were queueing up to see Loach's film *FAMILY LIFE*. They were not quite sure whether they wanted to see it as it was 'one of them real films', but whether this eventually put them off is less interesting in the present context than the fact that they had categorised the film in this way. If a judgement of this nature was based upon more than expectation of probable content, (that, for instance, the film was going to be about an issue of current social concern) it may also have been based upon past experience of



other such films which these ladies had seen in the cinema or on television.

In addition to such 'negative' cues as the absence of neat endings or incidental music, I found that a number of more 'positive' cues were deliberately incorporated in 'DUMMY'. The need to deny the film's status as a construction placed a number of additional constraints upon the way it was actually shot. I have mentioned a preference for using wide-angle lenses, but in addition to this the camera was also kept firmly fixed to the tripod during much of the shooting. In fact, the camera maintains a fixed position in relation to the background in nearly three-quarters of the finished film, and there is only one zoom shot in the whole programme. One of the reasons for this lack of camera-movement is that large-scale pans or zooms are cinematographic rather than 'natural' movements. While people may physically perform whip-pans in surveying some new surroundings or in following a movement, the tendency is to take in information in discrete blocks, so in an analogue of reality this tendency was acknowledged by restricting the activity of the camera. If a realist film-maker specifically avoids the kind of 'unnatural' shot which a director like Hitchcock will employ for effect, this does not mean that such technique is entirely absent in films like DUMMY. Indeed, the unintended consequences of other types of filming was elevated into a specific style for the purposes of realism in this case. The circumstances in which straight documentaries or news programmes are filmed may dictate that a cameraman simply does not have time to set the camera up on a tripod.



In trying to capture a rapidly developing situation a cameraman may even fail to make the correct adjustments to the apperture. The resulting footage may then be less than perfect, but it is often the imperfections of jolts, wobbles and changing light which help to imply that the scene being filmed was real. A deliberate down-grading of the technical quality of the image as a technique could therefore have the same effect during the course of a dramatised, pre-constructed documentary. In this case the suggestion of shooting the whole programme in black-and-white for the purposes of realism was rejected, but several of the later sequences were deliberately shot in 'Wobblyscope' - that is, with a hand-held camera - precisely in order to achieve a documentary, news-like effect.

A similar theory underpinned the decision to use real locations in DUMMY. Although he regretted it at times, the producer specifically wanted to use existing locations rather than sets so that his choice of shots would be constrained by real obstacles. While the lack of 'floating walls' or completely controllable lighting can be seen as being straightforward technical restraints upon the production process, the acceptance of such impositions can therefore be regarded as being consistent with a realist theory too. This is because the limitations imposed upon the placing of the camera, and the possibility of cheating a shot, would then be comparable to those which influence the way a real event is filmed. The same goes for sound; a lack of apparent control over extraneous noises like passing cars or the sound of children playing in a street



outside can bolster the hypothesis that a scene has not been staged for the camera. Some of these noises will actually have been added later in the dubbing process, but the presence of natural 'roomtone' or an unexpectedly creaky door on DUMMY's original soundtrack was often saved as a sign that a shot was not composed in a studio.

The choice of actors who could play themselves was also guided by such lines of thought in this production. Tony Garnett has said that one should not make an actor's job more difficult than it already is by shooting in pre-built sets in a studio, but when it is an actor's job to behave naturally, the director can also make his job a lot easier by choosing actors who will not so much act, as be the characters required. Any actor aims to become totally immersed in a part, but if a prospect for the part of, say, a working-class Yorkshireman actually is a working-class Yorkshireman, then the likelihood is that he will be able to draw upon special resources in making a portrayal that much more true-to-life (even more so if you place him in an appropriate, and genuine context). Choosing local actors can be counter-productive if they are overwhelmed by the process of film production, but such actors will also be relatively unknown to the general public, in which case people might be more willing to identify them as discrete characters, rather than as actors who have played several different roles in other productions.

Most of the actors in DUMMY were in fact hired from that part of the country in which the film was set; few of them had received



widespread exposure on television and some of them were not even professional actors. The first three versions of 'Sandra', for instance, were all played by genuinely deaf children who were therefore 'playing themselves' to an unusually high degree. Of the remaining members of the cast, many were also picked for having genuine local accents, so in combining this factor with that of working with authentic dialogue, the producer was hoping to enhance the realism of the film as a whole. Since an exploration of the ways in which DUMFY was designed to 'ring true' was a primary objective of this study, the processes involved in developing such an apparently authentic script were also of central interest. In addition to monitoring the manipulation of objects, recording equipment and actors, the study consequently records many of the changes which were introduced in order to make different lines of dialogue 'work' or resonate with what was taken to be a natural way of speaking.

#### Operating Constraints in 'DUMFY'

Before the film ever reached the stage of being scripted, the producer's understanding of its potential value would alter and be altered by the conditions of its existence. In trying to understand the genesis of such a production one must therefore have been able to take into account a greater range of constraints or operating conditions beyond those which can be seen to be associated with the production of the film as a realist form.



This study catalogues such a range of constraints as they operated in a given case. As a professional film-maker it was found that the producer was working within the constraints which define the nature of a 'good story'. DUMMY, in fact, was already a story by the time the producer found it, since the circumstances of the real girl's life had been written up as being of 'human interest' in an article in the DAILY MIRROR. Thus it had already acquired a number of news values in being both entertaining and informative, even if a great deal more could then be pegged onto these basic values through the process of transforming a simple newspaper article into a ninety-minute film. Part of the value of the girl's life as a story therefore consisted in its potential as a commodity. Jeremy Isaacs has stated bluntly, if honestly, that the two main aims of television are to entertain and to inform, but to do so in such a way that the biggest audience possible will be attracted in order to satisfy (in ITV's case) the investment of the advertisers. Similarly, the producer in this case was looking for a means of conveying information which would also be entertaining, and which, by being sold to a suitable outlet, would satisfy his investment.

That investment nevertheless represented more than a number of hours of work which needed to be paid for; it also represented a future career and a set of personal commitments. The producer was, in a sense, constrained to choose this story because he saw it as a 'great symbol' - the sort of story which he was looking for as a vehicle for his personal convictions. He was also constrained



to see it in terms of being a vehicle for his professional advancement, since as an established documentary-maker he was relatively secure, and yet unhappy with the prospect of remaining in that field forever. Another young director, Michael Radford, has pointed out that television documentaries provide 'the likeliest area of employment', but he also voiced the fear that 'even here I feel that I'm becoming a conniver rather than a creator'. Similarly, DUMFY's producer had perhaps begun to feel that he was simply going through the motions, or that he was merely upholding a conventional code of practice in making straight documentaries. He was certainly looking for an opportunity to become more creative, or more openly manipulative in his work.

A dramatised documentary could therefore provide a means to an end by enabling one to build upon existing skills in foregrounding the role of Director. Instead of denying this role in the making of traditional, observational documentaries, the producer could then use a drama-documentary as a bridge across to the more overtly creative pastures of the feature film industry. The original idea of making a programme of this nature did not, therefore, come out of the blue; it was rooted in a set of strongly-held socio-political theories and a number of premises about the institutional structures of broadcasting and, indeed, of the feature film industry.

However, in order to reach the goal of becoming a feature director, it is clear that DUMFY's producer still had to work within, as well as take advantage of such structural conditions. For example, once



the programme's format had been decided upon, it is evident that the producer's personal track-record became an important factor in the process of actually selling it to a prospective backer. It is notoriously difficult to get a new project off the ground in television without having first established a 'name'; if only because there is nearly always a great deal of money riding on any given production. Although the monetary risk involved in backing a new venture may be high, it can therefore be reduced by recruiting personnel from a very limited pool of known talent; a pool in which an individual's track-record becomes his or her meal-ticket.

One result of this is that television as an institution tends to be a very incestuous business - everyone knows everybody else. An individual producer can therefore forecast the relative value of his or her track-record to an employer with some accuracy, but it is also possible to tailor the outline of a programme idea to fit a privileged reading of a particular cultural milieu. In other words, both the format and the content of a proposed programme may be formulated by a producer as a member of a cultural elite which is not representative of society at large (in the same way that the Arts Council appears to formulate manifestos of taste which fail to have any relevance for the greater bulk of the population).

There are loopholes in such a system. The study demonstrates that if the producer is a freelance, it is also possible to take advantage of an organisational diversification or competitiveness



which can exist within the institution of television as a whole.

He or she can then promote a programme idea in different ways to different companies, or circumvent the editorial ideology of individual organisations by simply shopping around. In this case the producer had in fact approached the BBC first, but had then gone to ATV when the corporation rejected the proposal. Had he been an employee of the BBC, DUMNEY may never have been made.

As a freelance, DUMNEY's producer had also been in a position to complete much of the groundwork for the programme before he even attempted to sell it to a production company. Because he was able to work in his own time he was therefore able to pre-empt one of the objections which such a company might have seen as a stumbling block - the fact that they would normally have had to pay for a period of research. In point of fact, the amount of money involved might not have bankrupted a prospective backer (Jeremy Sandford, after all, only received £600 for researching and writing CATHY COME HOME), but this factor formed part of a total package for the buyer which in this case also included a good professional track-record, a practical idea for an entertaining, informative programme and a potential pay-off in terms of organisational prestige, since DUMNEY could, and was used to demonstrate a company's willingness to back such an investigation of sensitive social issues.

Having negotiated all the hurdles involved in putting together a saleable package like this, a producer would then have to come to terms with a further range of constraints in making the programme



itself. It is evident, for example, that there is a strain towards satisfying one's professional peers and colleagues in pursuing certain levels of technical excellence. Other professionals are generally regarded as being the most astute critics, and as DUMMY's producer put it, there is a tendency to try to bake bread for bakers rather than for people who do not get bread very often. As a result, there is an obligation to strive for an aesthetic unity in a film as a whole or to adopt specific rhythms in the editing of different parts of it, and 'unprofessional' practices (such as allowing boom shadows or camera-shake to mar the image) are avoided.

Another obvious constraint which operates throughout the industry is that of the time/money axis. Both airtime and production time are exceedingly - not to say excessively - expensive and thus relatively inflexible, so the prescribed running-time of a programme, the production schedule and the overall budget must all be regarded as major constraints. While a limitless budget or transmission slot can prove to be counter-productive (as in the whole-evening-of-David-Frost syndrome), the common strictures on expenditure can also, therefore, affect a producer's original intentions for a programme. To take just one example, the sheer cost of filmstock and processing, together with the minute-by-minute costs of shooting with a large crew on location can limit the number of takes that one can do for any one shot. While this can impose a certain discipline, a businesslike approach to film wastage ratios may not apply when one



is trying to obtain specific reactions from non-actors or children - and particularly from genuinely deaf youngsters.

Similarly, the imposition of a specified slot can help a producer to structure a film, but it can also force him or her to cut out useful pieces of information or to artificially extend (and perhaps alter the meaning of) individual sections of a programme. The rigidity of transmission slots is common throughout broadcasting, but running-times are particularly inflexible in ITV's case because the network has to allow for a combination of nationally-shown programmes and regional opt-outs (including pre-set advertising slots in which each region can transmit its own commercials). To comply with this, DUMPTY therefore had to run for an exact period of time, and in order to reduce the 112 minutes of the original rough-cut to the predetermined 78 minutes of the slot a great deal of juggling of shots and scenes had to be performed. In fact, a number of completed scenes had to be cut out altogether because of the pressures of time, and the eventual number of scenes in the film is something under a half of that specified in the original draft script. The rigidity of the slot therefore had a direct effect upon the film in this case.

An inter-relationship between the constraints of time, money and professionalism is likely to affect the existence of a film as a whole, but it is also likely to affect a producer's choice in specific areas such as the recruitment of production personnel. For instance, it is cheaper in the long run to hire an experienced cameraman because you are not, in theory, going to have to retake so



many shots, and such a technician may also be able to double as a lighting cameraman or second-unit director. In addition, a well-known cameraman may lend some professional élan to a production, but all these considerations may fall by the wayside if he or she happens to be unavailable at the required time. In this case the chosen cameraman was actually booked-up for other productions during the period in which DUMMY was originally going to be shot, and this is one of the reasons why shooting was put back a few weeks. At the very least, this meant that DUMMY was shot at a slightly different time of the year than had been intended, and it was therefore a different film to the extent that subtle changes in natural light would have occurred between the planned and the actual shooting dates.

Another reason for putting back the shooting schedule can be found when examining the organisational constraints under which the producer was working. As a straight documentarist he had been used to working with minimal crews, and wanted to use a small crew on this production too. In the event, the forces of unionization dictated otherwise, and the associated negotiations about the size of the crew became another factor in delaying the start of the shoot. In having to take on a much larger crew than had been anticipated, the producer was also somewhat thwarted in his attempt to maintain a low profile when shooting in real locations, and it must be said that the well-intentioned rules of demarcation which operate within a large crew occasionally led to less than fully productive delays and confusion.



Such constraints upon the process of actually filming DUMMY were accompanied by a number of formal technico-legal restrictions. Any film-maker has to abide by the laws of libel, trespass and straightforward highway legislation. He or she cannot, for instance, film without permission in private property, or park equipment vans on double yellow lines without resorting to speed or subterfuge. In addition, there may also be special restrictions such as the old fourteen-day rule on reporting parliamentary affairs or the various sections of the Official Secrets Act.

In DUMMY's case, the production study shows that a great deal of negotiation with public bodies preceded the gaining of permission to film in a school and in several hospitals, and that people's real names were changed throughout the film - not only to protect their privacy, but also for fear of legal reprisals. The study also records the existence of direct or auto-censorship within the production process itself, the former being exercised firmly - if gently - in respect of three of the original scenes, and the latter being exercised in varying forms from the personal intervention of the producer to the latent or manifest dissension of the crew.

Beyond such forms of control, a number of purely technical constraints abound in film-making and in television in particular, even if they can often be turned into techniques in their own right. We have perhaps come a long way since the early days of television when the possibilities of showing continuous action through a fade were limited by the fact that each fade took about eight seconds on the early electronic equipment. On the even earlier Baird equipment, plays



were specifically chosen for their lack of action because the cameras were fixed, and profile shots had to be avoided because the slow-scanning machinery tended to elongate people's noses. Nowadays the equipment is very much more flexible - partly because it is far more compact and portable - and it is therefore more suitable for use under the inflexible conditions which are sometimes dictated by real locations. The development of the lightweight, but high-quality 16mm film camera can, indeed, be closely associated with the development of filmed drama on television, and it can be linked even more accurately with the rise of 'fly-on-the-wall' documentarism. Film as a medium nevertheless imposes limits upon the range of subject which can be recorded. Certain types of movement in a subject fail to register because of the rate at which film normally passes through a camera's gate. A moving tennis ball does not, for instance, show up very well on film, whereas it would on a live transmission or on videotape because the equivalent 'scan-rate' is much higher.

Film also requires more light than the human eye in order to register an image, so a director is often forced to supplement natural light with various forms of artificial illumination. This is particularly true where focus is critical throughout a deep background (as in Welles' use of deep focus in parts of *CITIZEN KANE*, where vast amounts of light were required), or where the 'natural' light is supposed to be coming from normal domestic lightbulbs. Obviously, the careful use of artificial lighting and/or high speed film is also required when shooting at night, and since there were a great



many dimly-lit interiors and night scenes in DUMMY, the study has documented some of the difficulties involved. Such problems included the possibility that the physical presence of lighting equipment can begin to restrict actors' movements, and that its use can be subject to the availability of adequate local power supplies or to the physical restrictions of small rooms or public places. In addition, there is a very real danger of attracting unwanted spectators with a mass of highly visible equipment when shooting in the open.

Special problems can arise when shooting outside the studio for either television or the cinema. Technical or logistic constraints which can occur in both media include those associated with the obduracy of inanimate objects or the difficulty of getting everybody and everything in the right place at the right time. Some of these constraints were welcomed by DUMMY's producer for the purposes of realism, but others were not. For example, it was found that locations usually need to be available at predetermined points in the shooting schedule to enable the appropriate actors or special equipment to be rostered economically. It is also generally preferable to book locations such that scenes can be shot in the approximate order in which they will appear in the finished film. In this case, however, the late start of the shoot meant that one of the later, more difficult scenes had to be shot during the first few days, simply because it was set in a fairground, and the fair itself was only to be in Bradford for that particular week.



Being able to adapt to such external constraints is a useful attribute for a film-maker, but he or she will sometimes have to completely alter a plan of action in order to accommodate them. For example, during the filming of the BBC series SECRET ARMY, the script called for several people to bale out of an aeroplane. For the purposes of the following action, all these people then needed to be together on the ground. Unfortunately, if a number of people jump out at intervals from a moving 'plane they will not all land in the same place, so in order to ensure that they remained together the director decided to have the aircraft crash with everyone still on board.

Modifications of this nature, although not of the same magnitude, also occurred in DUMMY. A scene inside a female V.D. clinic might have been lost because the women's section simply happened to be exceptionally busy on the day allocated for shooting. In this case the producer renegotiated for permission to film in the less busy male section of the clinic, and had all the identifying posters and signs changed accordingly. On the other hand, a scene inside a social security office had to be scrapped altogether; firstly because permission to film there had not been granted, and secondly because an attempt to carry on filming with a concealed camera failed for technical reasons.

In filming for either television or the cinema, a producer will normally obey basic rules of filmic logic. The respect of continuity, characters' eyelines and rules such as those which govern the placing



of the camera in relation to a given action in different shots are all recorded in this study. In particular, the study documents those occasions when such rules forced the producer to make adaptive decision or to change tack in some way.

Straightforward mistakes can also occur during the course of any process of production, and the results of such errors can foreclose a range of options just as surely as any of the other constraints mentioned above. During the first few days of shooting for this production there was some confusion over the use of a particular viewfinder in the camera, and to illustrate my point, this resulted in some less than perfect framing and a consequent reduction in the choice of useable takes which were then available during the editing process.

One last category of technical constraints which has been explained in this study is that related to the special problems of producing for television as opposed to the cinema. The cinema is generally regarded by professionals as being a 'quality' medium because the canvas is that much larger; it enables one to produce images of high definition with a very wide range of texture and depth. Television, by contrast, cannot resolve an image with such clarity, and it also forces one to make special allowances in areas such as sound control. When making programmes for television, a producer must therefore remember that it is often difficult to pick out a particular face from a crowd on a small screen, or that it may be hard to read important pieces of information such as shop-signs or



car registration numbers. He or she is therefore constrained to use more close-ups in television than would be necessary in the cinema, and extreme long-shots are often specifically avoided. A good test of this argument is to imagine how the average television programme would look on a cinema screen. Alternatively, it can be argued that a cinema film with a high proportion of long-shots (such as DEATH IN VENICE) loses a great deal when shown on the box.

The quality of sound reproduction is also limited by the average domestic TV set's speaker, so a producer may be forced to manipulate his or her soundtrack accordingly. A very high-pitched scream may not, for example, come across very well, and the sound of a 'practical' television set or a radio which actually appears in a television programme will sometimes need to be artificially downgraded in quality in order to maintain a contrast. In fact, while DUMMY was dubbed with the use of high-quality monitor speakers, the dubbing mixer would often switch the signal through to a domestic-type speaker precisely in order to check just how much of the soundtrack was likely to be picked up by a normal set. A final constraint which can be cited here also concerns the soundtrack - some of the IBA's automatic transmitters will apparently throw up a 'fault' card if there is a loss of signal for more than a predetermined period, so if a producer wants to deliberately lose the sound for very long (as in this case, where he wanted to emphasise 'Sandra's' deafness) he can't.



DUMMY and its audience

The evidence of the production study leads to the conclusion that producers are likely to trust in a consensual ideology - the culturally constructed symbolic activity of realism in this case - which is then worked out on the ground within a set of operating codes of practice. The fact that it is worked out, and that the codes of practice actually enable a producer to work at all, also leads to the conclusion that such a process is a medium of practical activity. It is the result of reciprocation between both structurally-constituted action and action-constituted structures, and not merely a static process in which specific ideologies are simply reproduced.

Having carried out the logical, yet surprisingly rare follow-through of producing a complimentary study of part of DUMMY's audience, one can also conclude that the product itself acted as a medium of practical activity for them too. Different members of an audience were found to have perceived meaning in the film, and according to the theoretical position which was worked out in the introductory section, they must therefore be posited as being active rather than passive recipients of a 'message'. They must, in other words, have drawn upon their capacity for objectification rather than their supposed status as objects of a producer's agency.

Since different members of a sample audience also derived the same meaning from the film on different occasions, it was unlikely that they did so at random. Indeed, they must have known, in principle,



how to look for it, or to put it another way, they must have been looking for information according to principles which they already held. The hypothesis that producers have to power to tackle audiences with all their defences down can therefore be abandoned and replaced with the conclusion that it is people's 'defences' which enable them to understand a programme in the first place.

The focus of attention must then be shifted towards an examination of these defences, principles or meaning systems. The audience study found that the typifications employed by the producer were capable of sustaining more than one meaning, but not an infinite set of meanings within the scope of the questions asked. There were in fact clusters of similar responses which could be related to known variable such as the social class or the professional experience of the respondents.

People can then be said to be predisposed to look for meaningful relations between symbols in a message-vehicle like DUMMY, and the way these relations are formed can be seen to depend upon the availability of a number of different meaning systems. As action-constituted structures these then enable structurally-constituted action, and thus communication, to exist. The conclusion is that communication actually depends upon the possibility fo there being a range of different structurally-constituted interpretive actions, because without such a range of potential 'decode variance' we would not be able to distinguish any meaningful relations, and



without some form of systemic decode variance we would be able to distinguish too many. A television programme therefore needs to be able to sustain more than one meaning.

If decode variance is not only normal but necessary, the question of whether it is possible for a producer to put over a specific message to large numbers of people comes to the fore. I argued in section one that this would depend upon an audience's agency being oriented, not only by its own meaning systems, but also by that system of meaning within which the producer's 'speech acts' were originally constituted. To begin to understand, rather than merely decode a producer's utterances through a programme, it was argued that an audience would need to have access to both the means of decoding any message and the means of decoding particular messages in terms which were mutually corrigible with those of the producer.

The producer cannot, however, guarantee such corrigibility, even with the kind of wide-ranging audience feedback which is in any case lacking in broadcasting. Neither can a third party such as a sociological researcher discover the exact nature of any mutual knowledge which existed between a broadcaster and his or her audience because of the problems of inference. However, you could posit the existence of mutual knowledge insofar as it can be linked to perceptible conventions of objectivity. You could compare a producer's sense of what is common (through an examination of the way in which a programme is constructed for public use) with that of an audience (insofar as their commonsense is seen to be



represented in that programme). In this case the conventions of objectivity were represented by that series of factual beliefs which constitutes and is constituted by a programme's realism. So if the realism worked, or appeared to have been unstructured or 'true to life', then the frequency with which this happened for different members of an audience would indicate the degree of a programme's success as a means of communication. The audience study confirms that DUMMY did work in this respect, but it remains subject to criticism in the sense that the film's ontological status was governed by its structuration by different meaning systems rather than be reality itself. As such an audience can be invited and enabled to read the work anew through the provision of an explication of the structure which orientate both production and reception.

Part of DUMMY's *raison d'être* was, of course, to do just this in the sense that its producer wanted his audience to inspect their own prejudices through the medium of an accessibly realistic account of the life of the film's central character. The question therefore arises as to whether the programme afforded any basis for enhancing understanding in general. The key to answering this, as I suggested in the introduction, was not to simply ask whether a programme enabled mutually recognisable characterisations to be generated, but whether it enabled the generation of such characterisations which could also be instrumental in the expansion of what has been called the rational autonomy of action rather than the consolidation of a status quo.



DUMMY's producer tried to achieve this by exploring a set of propositions which were known to be prejudicial to such expansion by virtue of at least their logical falsity. It is not, for instance, valid to induce that all people like 'Sandra' are stupid because some people who have difficulty understanding others are mentally defective, nor is true to say that her crimes were without defence simply because some crimes are indefensible. 'Sandra' herself nevertheless represented a most unsympathetic set of stereotypes - that of the deaf, and therefore possibly dumb, down-and-out, promiscuous youngster who, to cap it all, was a pill-popping prostitute and a murderer. If these aspects could be introduced into the programme, and yet still be seen as being stereotypes (i.e. as only partial descriptions of 'Sandra'), then it could be argued that some degree of expansion of the 'margins of tolerance' had been achieved.

The audience study shows that the mode of interpretation used - a dramatised documentary - could indeed engage different audiences in such a way that people like 'Sandra' could be approached with sympathy rather than intolerance. The results were not uniform, and some evidence can be offered for a theory of 'Pantographic perception', where a parallel shift of plane relative to the producer's intentions could be detected between the responses of 'working class' and 'middle class' people in respect of their sympathy to the central character. In other words, the more 'working class' people tended to be rather less sympathetic than the more 'middle class' sample, but the important point is that both sectors remained



sympathetic within the terms of the questions. Different respondents had therefore produced different understandings of the programme on the basis of meaning systems which in this case could be identified with social class, but the range of those understandings was still within that which could be recognised by the producer as a preferable range (and one which was also expansionist in a rational sense). These understandings could therefore be said to have described different pictures, on different materials, which nonetheless remained linked - as in a pantograph - to the picture held by the producer. Unlike the producer's original set of propositions, the frameworks which forged such links were not, however, logical but social. DUMMY may in fact have made its subject matter newly accessible, but it did so because it was already a structured interpretation of reality. The fact of its construction at every level from its choice as a 'story' to its passage through the process of editing is evident, so if it enabled people to examine their prejudices or to frame questions about how reality is socially constructed, it did so, not by copying reality or even by telling the truth in any absolute sense, but by offering up another form of reality's symbolic expression.

Any process of bearing witness to the structure of a social situation in which the negotiation of meaning takes place reveals the inevitability of interpretation. DUMMY's producer chose to dramatise 'Sandra's' life as a way of interpreting it; I have chosen to interpret that process sociologically. I cannot therefore usurp the right to criticise the fact of the programme's



construction any more than critics of the drama-documentary as a form can presuppose that there is a clear division between 'factual' and 'fictional' television. It can, for instance, be argued that drama-documentary is the logical outcome of the nature of television news coverage and that it merely extends the inevitable dramatisation of events involved in the television medium. The principle subject of criticism is that the same modes of interpretation which could be instrumental in an expansion of the rational autonomy of action in DUMMY could equally have had the potential of being instruments of domination. Since these modes were not locked to a truly objective reality, it is therefore the self-denial of the programme's construction as a piece of realism which should be criticised through an explication of its means of production. This is what I have set out to do in this study in the hope that an institutionally-enshrined concept of objectivity will eventually be abandoned. A reduction in the number of obstacles between the two 'sides' of the communicative process and some further breakthroughs in understanding may then be achieved, not by diminishing the number of available views, but by encouraging their expansion.

#### Some implications of the research

It is the nature of a case study that most of the conclusions will be implicit in the body of the text. The conclusion that making a major drama-documentary is an extraordinarily complex process is, for instance, implicit in the descriptive section of this study.



Similarly, it is implicit in the audience section that the subtleties of individual's understandings need to be interpreted with great care.

The study nevertheless contains several implications for both programme makers and media researchers which could be restated here. Not the least of these is the intimation that since programme-making does involve a complicated set of inter-relationships, its study should not be carried out in a piecemeal fashion. Likewise, it is foolish to think that one is ever going to distil an audience's understanding of a programme simply through the use of a structured questionnaire.

The major implication for programme makers is also implicit in the existence of the study as a whole. That is that they should read it. Few programme makers will have experienced the luxury of being able to watch their colleagues at work for any length of time, and while making their own programmes they are unlikely to have been able to monitor the range of events which I have attempted to record here. It is only a very few people in the industry who have access to an entire process of production in any case, so this study and others like it may give practitioners some insight into areas which they would not otherwise have encountered.

The study specifically represents a plea for a self-reflection of methods and interests within the industry, and it carries the particular implication that continuous self-examination is necessary during the process of negotiating agreements about what stands for



truth. This applies as well to news programming as it does to drama-documentaries, and the point is made after having demonstrated a range of operating constraints which can affect such negotiations. Individual programme-makers should carry the responsibility for their own decisions, not necessarily as the result of the removal of constraints like direct censorship, but as the result of making the fact of such constraints known.

Television programmes are not susceptible to absolute criticism, but every debate or dialogue has terms and it is these which can be constructively criticised, providing that we know what they are. It is therefore to the broadcasters' advantage, as well as everyone else's, to allow the terms of their work and their working environment to be examined. This means extending the possibility of gaining access to different processes of production and to a wider range of different aspects of production. There has not, for example, been an over-willingness to allow access to the boardrooms or to the meetings between different programme-controllers. This type of access may have been restricted for obvious reasons, some might say, but it could be negotiated if, for instance, researchers were willing to contract to temporary embargoes on publishing dates. Researchers are dependent upon broadcasters for gaining access, but they are particularly dependent upon them for gaining access at the right time. I was almost uniquely fortunate in becoming involved with DUMY at a very early stage in its development, and the implication is that we need notice of forthcoming productions if they are to be studied adequately. In becoming involved from an



out in different genres and integrated within a programme of research. We need a continuous programme of investigative documentation in this field. News production has already received a lot of attention, partly because it is relatively accessible, but we still need a full-length study of the making of a straight documentary or one of the programmes which are beginning to experiment with incoming technological advancements in video. In particular, we need a study of the making of a programme which did not 'work' in some respect. It so happened that DUMMY was a successful film, both as assessed by internal criteria and by the criterion of being expensive in the pursuit of understanding. It would be valuable to trace the course of a programme which was eventually shelved, and to ask why it was; or to examine the making of a transmitted programme which nonetheless proved to have failed to make any breakthroughs in making its subject 'newly accessible' to its audience.

There is also a great deal more work to be done on what might be called the production of production. The setting-up of two new regional companies and two new channels in this country provides a golden opportunity to carry out case-studies of the process of commissioning and organising a range of individual productions.

The accessibility of a programme to its audience was examined in this study, and one of its implications is that we still need to obtain a positive re-admission of society-as-audience to society-as-source through improved modes of feedback. In fact, an underlying conclusion from the audience study is that group discussions are in



themselves valuable (and seen as such by participants) in encouraging people to engage with each other in discussing what they have seen and to think through its implications for their own lives. The results of such discussions are, however, rarely made available to those broadcasters who already find themselves relying on professional meta-audiences in the absence of very much interpretive audience research. Future research might therefore expand this area of study and make sure that the results are passed on to programme-makers. One particular aspect of my own audience study which I should like to have pursued more deeply concerns the perception of acting codes. The way in which DUMMY's cast attempted to 'play it for real' was examined in some detail, but there is still room for a body of work to be completed on an audience's perception of the differences between real people and actors playing real people on screen.

Another aspect of the work which clearly needs to be followed up is an examination of the effects a film like DUMMY has on the real people about whom it was made. I specifically avoided many of the questions raised here because my brief was to look at the production of the film. In addition, I felt that any further intrusions into the original 'Sandra's' life would be unwarranted at that time. However, the public documentation of private individual's lives, albeit for morally defensible reasons, must be subject to examination, and very little work has been done in this area.

The participant observation of such an experience would be an ideal way of coming to grips with the problems involved, and I commend



this method in any study of social activity whenever it is possible to use it. To become involved in a subject without being taken over by it is nevertheless fraught with difficulties, so having emerged relatively unscarred from this form of 'sociological voyeurism', it is worth concluding with a little self reflection on my own methods and interests.

My major interest was in trying to grasp how this particular world looked from the point of view of those I was studying, as well as from my own point of view as an 'objective' observer. The limitations of this approach are nonetheless manifold since it is impossible to grasp exactly how anyone else views the world. However, the method of participant observation can enable one to move in quite closely, and its enormous advantage is that it allows an observer to react to what an actor would call 'Major stimulus'. In other words, unexpected events can trigger an avenue of enquiry which one would not otherwise have been able to follow up. Someone may, for example, rationalise a course of action which he is reporting to you after the event; an event which, had one been present, might have been based on anything but rational action. No form of post hoc analysis can reconstruct the minutiae of a social transaction as it actually happened, so if one wants to find out how a process of, in this case, television production works, you must observe it in situ. You cannot rely upon the perspicacity of an analyst to reconstruct the conditions which operate on the ground solely through an examination of the product.



You must, however, first negotiate access to the ground upon which the game is to be played, and having gained that access you must preserve it. As I pointed out earlier, this involved a constant struggle to balance the need for information against the need to retain access to that information. This balance was achieved here largely because of the patience of the crew, but also because I had to learn very quickly when to back off. It is as well to remember that the right of freedom of access to the source of mass communications implies the right of individual mass communicators to tell you to bugger off in certain circumstances. One does not, for example, interview actors between takes, because they will be concentrating on the preservation of their characters for the next take. Similarly, one should not voice one's criticisms on the floor of the set, because this can easily rupture the very authority of a director which you are supposed to be studying.

This does not mean that a participant observer necessarily has to be passive, indulging in only 'minimal clarifying interaction'. Indeed, the fact that I was absorbed into the production by being asked to hold lights or help with crowd control, quite apart from acting as a mediator in certain respects, was of positive benefit to the research. Without this interaction I would not have been volunteered much of the information which I received. A related point is that I came forearmed with a personal interest in filmmaking and its associated technology. I could therefore speak the same language in many respects, and could therefore cut through



a lot of the natural reserve or even patronization which can mar the relationship between the observer and the observed.

Lastly, the reason why I put 'objective' in inverted commas just now was because I was not, of course, an entirely objective observer. Nobody ever is. I attempted to be objective in recording the events to which I bore witness because I wanted the people involved to be able to recognise themselves from another perspective; another form of reality's symbolic expression, but in studying the making of DUTTY I was about as much a fly on the wall as the film crew.



**PAGE**  
**NUMBERING**  
**AS ORIGINAL**



## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire documentation

1. Preliminary letter
2. Secondary letter
3. Questionnaire



## Centre for Mass Communication Research



Telephone  
Leicester 28437

104 Regent Road  
Leicester LE1 7LT

Director: Professor J. D. Halloran

1st November 1977

Dear

At the Centre for Mass Communication Research one of our main aims is that research, carried out in cooperation with the broadcasting companies, will lead to an all round improvement in television programmes. In this work we need your help and cooperation, for it is important for us to know what you think about the programmes that are being shown.

If you would like to help us in one of our current projects please watch all the programmes on ITV (ITV, NOT BBC) between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, 9th NOVEMBER 1977. The day after this (THURSDAY, 10th NOVEMBER) you should receive a questionnaire from us in which you will be asked some questions about what you saw on ITV on the Wednesday night. We would be very grateful if you would answer these questions and return the questionnaire to us in the stamped, addressed envelope which will, of course, be provided.

Your name has been chosen at random from the electoral register and any information you provide in answering the questions will be treated in the utmost confidence and used only for the purposes of this research. Names will not be quoted or used in any way whatsoever.

I do hope that we can look forward to your help and to receiving your completed questionnaire after 10th November.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Flower  
Researcher



## Centre for Mass Communication Research



Telephone  
Leicester 28437

104 Regent Road  
Leicester LE1 7LT

Director: Professor J. D. Halloran

9 November 1977

Dear

We wrote to you last week asking if you would be kind enough to help us with one of our research projects. We asked if you would watch television on ITV between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Wednesday, November 9th. One of the programmes shown during that period was called DUMMY and we would be most grateful if you watched any of this programme if you would answer some questions about it on the enclosed questionnaire and then return it to us in the stamped, addressed envelope.

If you think that the questions do not give you enough scope to say all you want about the programme, please write down just what you would like to say either next to the question concerned or at the end of the questionnaire. You can be assured that the information you provide will be treated confidentially and used only for research purposes. Names will not be quoted or used in any way whatsoever.

I do hope that you will be able to help us in this work, the main aim of which is better television.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Flower  
Researcher



Tabulated results:

Questionnaire and discussion groups. ( Closed questions only )

Key: BM= Bradford Manual, BNM= Bradford Non-manual, LM= Leicester Manual, LMN= Leicester Non-manual, MG= Manual group discussion, NMG= Non-manual group discussion. All figures expressed as percentages.

#### Question Four

Would you say that on the whole the story was mainly a true story about something that had actually happened?

	Yes	No	D/K
BM	100	0	0
BNM	90	5	5
LM	85	7	8
LMN	100	0	0
All	94	3	3

#### Question Seven

Did you learn anything NEW from the programme?

	Yes	No	D/K
BM	29	64	7
BNM	18	76	6
LM	8	75	17
LMN	27	68	5
All	21	71	8

#### Question Eight

Would you say that the programme

(a) Was different from most other programmes on television?

	Yes	No	D/K
BM	87	13	0
BNM	84	10	6
LM	92	8	0
LMN	87	13	0
All	88	11	1

(b) Was shocking?

	Yes	No	D/K
BM	27	67	6
BNM	53	42	5
LM	15	85	0
LMN	56	39	5
All	38	58	4

(c) Made you angry?

	Yes	No	D/K
BM	27	67	6
BNM	53	42	5
LM	15	77	8
LMN	52	48	0
All	37	59	4



(d) Made you want to do something?

	Yes	No	D/K
BM	29	50	21
BNM	28	50	22
LM	46	46	8
LN	39	48	13
All	36	49	15

### Question Ten

In general would you say the programme was ( Good, bad or indifferent )

	Gd	Bd	Id
BM	86	14	0
BNM	78	17	5
LM	85	7	8
LN	87	9	4
All	84	10	6

### Question Eleven

Some people have written that although the programme was a good one with an important message, there was too much unnecessary violence.

Please state whether you agree or disagree with this statement.

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	43	50	7
BNM	42	58	0
LM	31	69	0
LN	35	61	4
All	38	60	2

### Question Thirteen

As far as Sandra, the girl in the programme, is concerned, would you say:-

(a) She got what she deserved

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	33	53	14
BNM	11	68	21
LM	23	62	15
LN	9	83	8
All	19	67	14
MG	30	70	0
NMG	0	85	15

(b) What happened was more the fault of society than Sandra's fault.

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	53	47	0
BNM	47	37	16
LM	85	0	15
LN	70	17	13
All	64	25	11
MG	85	0	15
NMG	70	15	15



(c) She was more to be pitied than condemned.

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	66	20	14
BNM	74	11	15
LM	77	15	8
LN	91	5	4
All	77	13	10
MG	85	0	15
NMG	70	15	15

(d) She was an intelligent girl.

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	53	33	14
BNM	37	42	21
LM	85	15	0
LN	70	26	4
All	61	29	10
MG	70	30	0
NMG	60	0	40

(e) She had a good sense of humour.

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	73	13	14
BNM	58	21	21
LM	69	8	23
LN	74	22	4
All	69	16	15
MG	60	40	0
NMG	85	15	0

(f) People like Sandra just don't exist.

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	20	73	7
BNM	11	84	5
LM	31	69	0
LN	5	91	4
All	17	79	4
MG	0	100	0
NMG	0	100	0

(g) She was very weak-willed

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	66	20	14
BNM	68	21	11
LM	69	31	0
LN	57	39	4
All	65	28	7
MG	70	15	15
NMG	30	40	30



(h) She was really quite likeable.

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	66	20	14
BNM	63	11	26
LM	85	8	7
LNm	78	13	9
All	73	13	14
MG	100	0	0
NMG	100	0	0

(i) She never took drugs.

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	13	73	14
BNM	5	74	21
LM	15	77	8
LNm	0	78	22
All	8	76	16
MG	0	85	15
NMG	0	100	0

#### Question Fourteen

All groups ranked the statements about Sandra in the following order:

1. Sandra was completely deaf
2. Sandra was a common prostitute
3. Sandra was a delinquent or criminal
4. Sandra was mentally deficient.

All groups were within 4% of each other in the percentage of people placing 'Completely deaf' first, with the exception of Bradford Manuals who placed this description first in 79% of cases as compared with 93% for the other three groups in the survey. Manual groups, especially the manual discussion group, tended to place 'Mentally deficient' higher in the ranking than other choices.

#### Question Fifteen

The average age given for Sandra at the end of each of the three parts of the film were:

End of part One - 16.5 years  
 End of part Two - 21.4 years  
 End of part Three 26.4 years

Both Manual groups in the survey tended to place the terminal age higher, and the gap between Sandra's age at the end of part two and the beginning of part three was larger for both manual groups ( especially so with the Bardford Manual group at over six years )

#### Question Sixteen

The date given for the Motel scene was, on average, 1970, with a range between 1952 and 1976.



Question Twenty

(a) Sandra provoked the man in the motel into attacking her

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	33	60	7
BNM	21	53	26
LM	66	23	11
LNМ	36	50	14
All	39	47	14
MG	55	30	15
NMG	15	85	0

(b) The man in the motel was mentally disturbed

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	47	26	27
BNM	47	26	27
LM	54	15	31
LNМ	73	13	14
All	55	20	14
MG	70	15	15
NMG	100	0	0

(c) Sandra was afraid of the big West Indian

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	13	73	13
BNM	11	74	15
LM	8	77	15
LNМ	9	81	10
All	10	76	14
MG	15	70	15
NMG	0	100	0

(d) Sandra agreed to be sterilised

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	0	87	13
BNM	5	65	30
LM	0	77	23
LNМ	0	86	14
All	1	79	20
MG	0	70	30
NMG	0	100	0

(e) When Sandra stabs the man towards the end of the film she does so because he is definitely going to attack her

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	7	73	20
BNM	6	67	27
LM	23	54	23
LNМ	27	50	23
All	16	61	23
MG	0	70	30
NMG	0	85	15



(f) The man Sandra stabbed was severely wounded, but eventually recovers

	Agree	D/agree	D/K
BM	7	80	13
BNM	0	89	11
LM	0	85	15
LNK	<u>5</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>13</u>
All	3	85	13
MG	0	100	0
NMG	0	100	0



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- a. Production studies
- b. Studies relating to production
- c. Content and form studies
- d. Audience studies and related material
- e. Broadcaster's attitudes, policy and organisation
- f. Technical theory
- g. History
- h. Criticism
- i. Specific studies of documentary and Drama-documentary
- j. General reference

Mb. CMCR - Centre for Mass Communications  
 Research, Leicester University  
 WPCS - Working papers in cultural  
 studies  
 CPCS - Centre for contemporary cultural  
 studies



(a) Production Studies

ANDERSON, Lindsay

(1952) Making a film/London  
-observer's diary of the making of "The secret people"

BBC

(1977) Behind the scenes  
-television series on the making of "The secret Army"

BLAKE, Edith

(1975) The making of the movie Jaws/N.Y. Ballantine

BROWNLOW, K.

(1968) How it happened here/London  
-the making of an amateur film about Nazi occupation in England.BUCCOMBE, E. &  
ALVARADO, M.(1978) Hazell - the making of a TV series/BFI/Latimer

COCTEAU, Jean

(1950) Diary of a film/London  
-Director's production notes on "La Belle et La Bête"

ELLIOT, J.

(1970) Mogul: the making of a myth/London, Barrie & Jenkins  
-Author of some of the "Mogul" TV series' scripts writes.

ELLIOTT, P.

(1972) The making of a TV series/Constable  
-about "The nature of prejudice". Review by G.S. Goldie Listener 19.10.72 and reply by Croll & Golding 26.10.72

FLAMINI, R.

(1976) Scarlott, Rhett and a cast of thousands/Deutsch  
-the filming of "Gone with the wind"

GOLDING, P.

(1973) The making of Open Night/CHEK AEROX

GOLDNER, O. &amp; TURNER, G.

(1975) The making of King Kong/Ballantine

GOODE, J.

(1963) The story of the Misfits/N.Y.

GOTTLIEB, C.

(1975) The Jaws Log/N.Y. Dell



GRIFFITH, R.

- (1959) Anatomy of a motion picture  
/N.Y.  
-about Preminger's 'Anatomy  
of a murder'.

KAEI, P.

- (1966) The Citizen Kane book  
(1968) Kiss, Kiss, Bang, Bang/N.Y.  
-The making of "The Group"

MACLIANE.OIR, H.

- (1952) Put money in thy purse/  
London  
-An actor writes about the  
making of O. Welles'  
"Othello"

MILLER, M. &amp; RHODES, E.

- (1964) Only you Dick darling/N.Y.  
William Sloan Assoc.  
-the death of a projected  
series 'by a thousand cuts'

OPEN UNIVERSITY

- (1977) Television series for Mass  
Communications and society  
course on the making of  
"The spy who loved me" see  
also MOORE, Roger; Roger  
Moore as James Bond CO/  
Jan, 1973 - the actors  
"Own account" of the  
making of Live and let die.

ROSS, Lillian

- (1952) Picture, Gollancz  
-The making of Huston's  
'Red Badge of Courage'

SCHARY, D.

- (1950) Case history of a movie,  
N.Y. Random House.  
-the making of 'The next  
voice you hear' by the  
producer.

TAYLOR, C.

- (1970) Making a television play,  
Oriel Press  
-the making of his play  
"Charles and Cromwell"  
(30 minute theatre  
production)

TAYLOR, J.R.

- (1962) Anatomy of a television  
play, Wiedenfield and  
Nicholson (About two  
armchair theatre plays)

WHITFIELD, S.E. &  
HODDINBERRY

- (1963) The making of Star Trek,  
NY Ballantine  
-the producer's account.

(b) Studies relating to production

BARR, C.

- (1975) Upstairs downstairs,  
Movie (21)  
-about the TV series



CANTOR, M.

ELLIOTT, P.

ELLIOTT, F. &amp; CHANEY, D.

ELLIS, J.

FISCHER, H-D.(ed)

FLOWER, T.

GLASGOW UNIV. MEDIA GROUP

HALLORAN, J.D. et al

HALLORAN, J.D.

ITZIN, Catherine

MURDOCK, G.

SCHLESINGER, P.

SHAUGHNESSY, A.

(1978) Public hearing, Television  
programme about the making  
of 'Hospital' and 'Target'  
11.12.78

(1975) Looking at documentary,  
Television series examining  
the machinations of production

(1971) The Hollywood film producer,  
NY Basic Books

(1970) Selection and communication  
in a TV production in Tunstall  
J.(ed) Media sociology.

(1969) A sociological framework  
for the study of TV  
production, in sociological  
review monograph (17)

(1975) Made in Ealing, Screen,  
(Spring '75)

(1978) Entertainment television,  
NY Hastings House

(1975) Television and sociocultural  
articulation  
Unpub. M.A. thesis; study  
of regional news production

(1976) Bad News, Routledge and  
Kegan Paul  
(plus More Bad News, Really  
Bad News; forthcoming)

(1970) Demonstrations and  
communication, Penguin

(1977) Organisation and structure  
of fiction production in  
television, Torino,  
edizioni Radiotelevisione  
Italiana.

(1972) Upstairs, downstairs,  
article in Theatre July  
July 72.

(1977) Fabricating fictions  
'approaches to the study  
of TV drama production'  
CMCR.

(1978) Putting reality together :  
BBC News, Constable

(1978) Both sides of the candle,  
London, Peter Owen (Incl.  
ref. to his position as  
scriptwriter on 'Upstairs  
downstairs')



SHUBIK, I.

(1975) Play for today, Davis  
Joynter  
Ref. to many plays in the  
series by the producer

TILSEY, V. &amp; SANDFORD, J.

(1967) Cathy - article referring  
to the making of 'Cathy  
come home' in Script,  
spring '67.

TRACEY, M.

(1977) The production of  
political television, RKP

(c) Television content and form studies

BAGGALEY, J.

(1976) The imagery of television,  
paper read to the British  
Psychological Society

BAGGALEY, J. &amp; DUCK, S.

(1977) Dynamics of television,  
Saxon House

BLACK, F.

(1972) The mirror in the corner

BOND, E.

(1978) On public language in  
plays - article in  
The Guardian 13.1.78

BRUNT, R.

(1972) The spectacular world of  
Chicker, WCS (3) pp6-32

BUECCOMBE, E.

(1976) The Sweeney - better than  
nothing? screen ed. (20)  
pp6-9

" (Ed)

(1975) Football on television,  
BFI

CHALFEN, R.

(1974) Film as visual  
communication. A  
sociovisual study in  
filmmaking. PhD  
Dissertation, Univ.  
Pennsylvania.

COLLINS, R.

(1976) Television news, BFI

DOUGLAS

(1975) Television today, Caproy

ECO, U.

(1965) Towards a semiotic  
enquiry into the TV  
message (Reprinted in  
WCS (3) pp 103-21)

FIGKE, J.

(1977) Television: The flow and  
the text (a cultural  
analysis of one evening's  
viewing) in Madog (1)  
pp7-14.



- PIERCE, J. & HARTLEY, J. (1977) Myth-representation, a cultural reading of news at Ten, in Communications studies bulletin No. 2  
Sheffield City Polytechnic
- (1978) Reading television, Methuen
- FRANK, R. (1974) Message dimensions of TV news
- GABRIEL, J. (1973) Thinking about TV OUP
- GESSNER, R. (1968) The moving image : a guide to cinematic literacy
- HALL, S. et al. (1976) The 'Unity' of current affairs TV, WGS (9) pp.51-94 (Textual study of 'Panorama' programme
- HEARST, S. (1977) (section of article about the bias against understanding in TV) Listener 20.10.77
- HEATH, S. (1977) JAWS : Ideology and film theory, Times literary supplement
- INGLIS, R. ( - ) The semiotics of TV drama - Ongoing project at Polytechnic of Central London school of communication
- McARTHUR, C. (1978) Television and history, BFI
- METZ, C. (1974) Film language : A semiotics of the Cinema Our Trans. Taylor, M.  
(1974) Language and Cinema, The Hague, Mouton.  
See also Screen (14) (1&2 '73) - entire issue devoted to Metz.
- MIERLY, D. ( - ) Decoding current affairs TV (CCOS Ongoing)
- MILLER, G.A. (1968) The Psychology of communication, Penguin
- POWDERMAKER, Hortense (1950) Hollywood, the dream factory



- SEGGAR, J. & WHEELER, P. (1973) The world of work on TV - ethnic and sex representation in television drama. Jnl. of Broadcasting (17) pp207-14
- SILVERSTONE, R. (1975) Structural analysis of the TV message, paper given at SEFT conference, Birkbeck college 75 in screen, summer '76.
- SMALL, W.J. (1970) To kill a messenger : TV news and the real world NY
- STEPHENSON, R. & DEBRIK, J.R. (1965) Cinema as art, Penguin
- STEWART, J. (1977) Report on SEFT weekend school 'Understanding popular TV' in screen (25) winter 77/78
- TUDOR, A. (1970) Film, communication and content, in Tunstall J. (ed) Media Sociology Constable.
- COLLEN, P. (1969) Sign and meaning in the cinema, Becker and Warburg
- " (ed) (1969) Working papers on the cinema : sociology and semiology, BFI
- (d) Television: Audience studies and related material
- BBC (1975) The family - AR report on the series about the day to day life of a 'real' family.
- (1976) Annual report of research findings No 3 (Incl. section on Play for Today)
- (1976) Audience research methods and services
- BELSON, W.A. (1967) The impact of tv - methods and findings
- CARVER, Mary. (1967) The critical evaluation of films by repertory grid. PhD thesis Univ. of London
- CATTON, W.R. (1960) Changing cognitive structure as a basis for sleeper effect



CIRLIN, B.D. &  
PETERMAN, J.H.

(1947) Pre-testing a motion picture - a case history  
Jnl. of social issues  
(3) (39)

DIMBO, R. & MCKEN, R.

(1973) Social mapping and media use CMCR

ELLIOTT, P.

(1974) Uses and gratifications research: a critique and sociological alternatives, in Blumler and Katz the Uses of Mass Communication  
vol 3.

ELLIOTT, P. & BROWN, R.

(1970) Men against cancer, CMCR

GOODHARDT, G.J. et al.

(1975) The TV audience: patterns of viewing, Saxon House

GREENBERG, B. &  
TANNENBAUM, P.

(1962) Communication performance under cognitive stress  
Journalism quarterly  
(39) pp167-78

HALLORAN, J.D.

(1970) The effects of Television, Panther

(1977) Mass media effects - a sociological approach  
C.U. course material  
DE353 unit 7)

" et al.

(1977) Understanding television: an exploratory study in three countries, CMCR

HOWITT, D. &  
CUMBERBATCH, G.

(1974) Audience perceptions of violent TV content,  
Communication research

ITA

(1966) A survey of attitudes towards current affairs programmes on TV, (Sales research services Ltd)

JOHNSTONE, J.W.

(1959) Social context and Mass media reception, studies in public communication  
(2) pp25-30

LINNE, O. & HAROSI, K.

(1976) Understanding television, Danmarks Radio

MACCOBY, E. & WILSON, E.

(1957) Identification and observational learning from films, Jnl. of abnormal and social psychology (55)  
pp76-87



- McCRON, R. (1976) The Uses and gratifications approach to the study of mass media audiences, CPCR
- McQUAIL, D. (1977) The influence and effects of mass media - in Mass Communications + Society CU header.
- McQUAIL, D. (1970) The audience for TV plays, in Tunstall, J. Media Sociology, Constable
- Opinion research Centre (1971) News and current affairs (incl. some comprehensibility tests.)
- PIEPER, A. et al. (1975) Television and the working class, Saxon House
- PIETILLA, K. (1975) A study in the methodology of consciousness research, Tampere University Press
- STEINER, G. (1963) The people look at TV, NY Knopf.
- (e) Television: Broadcaster's attitudes, policy and organisation
- ADAMS, A.A. (1972) Broadcaster's attitudes towards public responsibility. An Ohio case study. Jnl. of Broadcasting Fall '72.
- ANNAN, Lord (1977) The Annan report on the future of broadcasting HMSO
- ATV (1977) Yearbook & Company report 76/77 (& 77/78)
- BAKEWELL, J. & GARRHAM, H. (1970) The new priesthood Allen Lane
- BLUMLER, J.G. (1969) Producer's attitudes towards TV coverage of an election campaign. Sociological Review 13
- BROADCAST (1976) 21 years of independent television 1955-76 (Broadcast magazine special)
- BROWN, L. (1971) TV: the business behind the box



- BURNS, T. (1977) The BBC : Public institution and private world MacMillan
- CCTV (1960) TV, responsibility and response, Central committee for TV viewing
- COHEN, D. (1977) (Article about the intrusion of film into privacy) Broadcast '77  
(1971) The actor and his world, New Society, 29.6.71
- COONS, J.E. (Ed) (1961) Freedom and responsibility in Broadcasting
- CURRIAN, G.J. (1971) Our proper concern, BBC  
(1971) Broadcasting and society, BBC  
(1972) The BBC in the eighties, BBC  
(1971) In the public interest, BBC
- DARLOW, N. (1977) Television: Middle age without maturity, sight and sound winter 77/78  
(About the '77 Edinburgh Festival)
- GANS, H. (1967) Creator-audience relationship in the Mass Media in Rosenberg & White Mass Culture, Free Press
- GERBNER, G. (1969) Institutional pressures upon Mass Communicators in Sociological review March. (13)
- GUREVITCH, M. & ELLIOTT, F. (1973) Communication technologies and the future of the broadcasting professions in Gerbner et al. (eds) Understanding the new cultural revolution
- HALLICRAH, J.D. (1969) The communicator in Mass Communications Research In Sociological review March. (13)
- HOOD, S. (1967) A survey of Television, Heinemann



POTTER, D.

(1978) 'Left bank show'  
interview with Potter  
about attitudes in  
accepting plays for  
transmission.

KUEHL, J.

(1978) (Review of McArthur's  
TV and History from  
broadcaster's point of  
view) Broadcast 1.5.78

ELMAR, K.

(1975) Holding the middle  
ground, Sociology 75  
(About the BBC)

LEVELLER, Magazine

(1978) Who writes this crap?  
Leveler Jan. '78 - notes  
on BBC policy etc.

LEWIS, C.

(1968) The TV/director/interpreter

MADDEN, P. (Ed)

(1976) British television drama  
1959-75, BFI

MURDOCK, G. & GOLDING, P.

(1972) The ownership and  
control of the mass media  
in contemporary Britain.  
CHURCH

McQUAIL, D.

(1969) Uncertainty about the  
audience and the organiza-  
tion of mass communica-  
tions in sociological  
Review March. (73)

RADEFORD, M. et al.

(1977) (Various articles on the  
opportunities for young  
directors in TV) Sight  
and Sound Autumn '77

SHAUGHNESSY, A.

(1978) Both ends of the candle.  
Peter Owen, a TV script-  
writer's autobiog.

SHUBIK, I.

(1975) Play for today, Davis  
Loynter - producer's view  
of the TV series.

SMITH, A.

(1973) The shadow in the cave,  
George Allen and Unwin

TRODD, K.

(1978) Blue pencil and scissors  
show, Broadcast 18.9.78  
(Censorship)

WILLIAMS, Patricia &  
GRIFFIN-BEALE, C.

(1978) Bright lights and brave  
words broadcast 11.9.78  
-report on '78 Edinburgh  
Television festival



WINDLEHAM, Lord

(1969) Creativity and control, in sociological review  
Magph. (13)(f) Television: Technical theory

ARIJON, D.

(1976) The grammar of the film language. Focal press

ARMSTRONG, B.

(1976) The glossary of TV terms,  
Barries and Jenkins

BALCON, M.

(1950) Film production and management, London

BETTETINI, G.

(1923) The language and technique of the film  
The Hague, Mouton.

BLAKELOCK, D.

(1958) Advice to a player, London

BLUM, A.

(1965) Documentary in American TV - form, function  
method, MI Hastings House

CAWSTON, R.

(1972) Principles and practice in documentary programmes  
ABCCOLE, T. & CHINYO, H. (eds) (1970) Actors on acting, NY Crown

DAVIS, D.

(1960) The grammar of television production

DUNLOP, O.E.

(1948) Understanding TV, NY.

HILLIARD, R.L. (Ed)

(1964) Understanding TV.

HOWKINS, J.

(1976) Understanding TV, Dundial

LINDER, C.

(1976) Filmmaking: a practical guide, Prentice-Hall

MILLERSON, G.

(1966) The technique of television production,  
Focal

SKILBECK, O.

(1960) ABC of film and TV working terms, Focal

SWALLO, N.

(1966) Factual TV, Focal press(g) Film & TV history

BRIGGS, A.

(1961, 65 & 70) History of broadcasting in the UK  
(Vol 1, 2 and 3)



BROWNLOW, K.

(1963) The parades gone by,  
Secker and Warburg

FIELDING, R.

(1967) A technological history  
of motion pictures and  
television, California,  
Berkeley

FISCHER, E.

(1960) The screen arts - a guide

FRIENDLY, F.

(1967) Due to circumstances  
beyond our control

ITV

(1977) The ITV story-television  
programme. 7.7.77

SCHICKEL, R.

(1977) The men who made the  
movies, U.S. Elm tree  
books

WILLIAMS, R.

(1961) The long Revolution,  
Penguin(1974) Television, technology  
and cultural form, Fontana

WORSLEY, T.C.

(1970) TV; the ephemeral art

WRIGHT, B.

(1974) The long view, Palladin(h) Television and film: Criticism

ANDREW, J.D.

(1976) The major film theories,  
CUP

BAZIN, A.

(1967) What is cinema? California,  
Univ. of California Press.  
(Vol 1)(1971) What is cinema? (Vol 2)

BENNETT, Susan

(1977) A television documentary  
course, in Screen ed. (25)

FADIMAN, W.

(1965) But compared to the  
original, Films and  
filming (11) pp21-3

FELL, J.L.

(1975) Film: an introduction,  
Nelson

GIDAL, P.

(1976) Structural film  
anthology, BFI

HALLORAN, J.D.

(1973) Training in the critical  
reading of TV language  
Crick

HOGKINSON, T.

(1965) Teaching the screen  
language, SEFT Yearbook,  
75



JOHNSON, H.

(1970) How to talk back to your TV set, Boston

KRACAUER, S.

(1960) Theory of film: The redemption of physical reality, NY OUP.

MCDONNELL, K.

(1973) Saturday night heaver, an A-zzzzzz of film theorists, Leveiler (18)

(1) Approaches to understanding the Television documentary and drama-documentary

ABELMAN, F.

(1972) Edna and Sheila : Two kinds of truth (illusion and reality in Drama) Theatre Stly. (2) (7)  
see also Sandford, J's reply in Theatre Stly. (2) (10)

ARNES, R.

(1974) Film and reality, Penguin

BARNOUW, F.

(1975) Documentary: a history of the non-fiction film OUP

BBC

(1978) 'Tonight' television programme discusses dramatic truth in Scum Feb. '78

(1978) 'Arena Television' television programme - when is a play not a play April '78

(1978) 'Public hearing' television programme about authenticity in the Hospital series.

(1977) 'Late night line up' special. Television programme about the evolution of TV drama, Aug. 77

(1975) 'Looking at documentary' Television series about documentary technique.

(1978) 'Before Hindsight' Television programme discussing balance etc. in Documentary, with Dibleby, J. and Elstein, D's. comments Feb. 78

(1977) 'The Editors' Television series discussing machinations of the industry, esp. 28.9.77 edition - the ethics of the documentary-maker.



- COYNIK, D. (1977) Film real to reel,  
Harper and Row.
- GARNETT, T. & GOULD, J. (1972) Television in Britain  
in Theatre etly. (11)
- GARNHAM, H. (1972) TV documentary and  
ideology, Screen (13)  
(2) plus reply by  
Parker, C. Screen (13)  
(4)
- HARDY, F. (ed) (1964) Grierson on documentary,  
William Collins
- HOLDEN, D. (1969) (BBC 'One pair of eyes'  
programmes by Holden on  
how camera-presence etc.  
shifts points of view)
- HUDSON, R. (1972) TV in Britain,  
description and dissent,  
Theatre etly. (11) -  
Interviews with Garnett,  
Gould etc.
- JACOBS, L. (1971) The documentary tradition  
from Nanook to Woodstock,  
NY Hopkinson & Blake
- LEVIN, G. (1972) Documentary explorations,  
NY Doubleday (Interviews  
with 15 Documentary-  
makers)
- MacDONALD, G. (1977) Edinburgh Television  
Festival - digest of press  
reports etc. Broadcast  
magazine Supp.
- McGRATH, J. (1976) TV Drama - the case against  
naturalism. Edited trans-  
cript of his 1976  
Edinburgh festival  
James McTaggart memorial  
lecture
- ROTHA, P. (1964) Documentary film. Faber  
and Faber
- ROBINSON, D. (1977) Violence, realism and  
naturalism in sight and  
sound Spring '77
- ROSENTHAL (1971) The new documentary in  
action - a casebook in  
filmmaking, Berkely,  
Univ. of California Press  
(Interviews with 22 TV  
documentarists)



SMYTHE, D.W.

(1954) Reality as presented by TV. P.O.U. (18) (2)

STEVENS, T.

(1978) Reading the realist film, screen (26)

STOTT, W.

(1976) Documentary expression and 30's America OUP

TILSEY, V. & SANDFORD, J.

(1967) (Discussion about Cathy Come Home) in Script Spring '67)

TUCHMAN, Gayo

(1973) The technology of objectivity, in Urban life and culture (2)  
(1) Sage

TURNER, E.S.

(1977) The truth, the partial truth and something added to the truth Punch 20.4.77  
(About dramatised reconstructions)

VAUGHAN, D.

(1976) TV documentary usage  
IFI

WILLIAMS, R.

(1977) A lecture on realism, screen, summer '77

GRANT, Felicity

(1978) (Review of Michael Whyte's 'Billy') in Broadcast  
23.1.78

(j) General reference

AUSTIN, J.L.

(1961) Philosophical papers  
Clarendon Press

AYER, Sir A.J.

(1956) The problem of knowledge  
Penguin

(1971) Language truth and logic  
Penguin

BARKER, P. (Ed)

(1977) Arts in society, Fontana

BARTHES, R.

(1968) Elements of semiology  
Cape

(1971) The rhetoric of the image,  
PES (1) pp37-51

(1973) Mythologies, Paladin

(1977) Image, music, text, Fontana

BAUMAN, Z.

(1978) Hermeneutics and social science, Hutchinson

BECKER, H.

(1970) Problems of inference and proof in participant observation, in Sociological Methods Ed. DENZIN, H.,  
Aldine.



BENJAMIN, W.

- (1970) The author as reader  
 (1970) The work of art in an age of mechanical reproduction, in CURRAN, J. et. al (eds) Mass communication and society (1977)

BERGER, J.

- (1972) Mythical speech, in New Society (19) p407  
 (1972) Ways of seeing, Penguin (And BBC TV series)

BERGER, P. & LUCKMANN, T.

- (1967) The social construction of reality. Allen Lane.

BERNSTEIN, B.

- (1958) Some sociological determinants of perception (BJE 9)  
 (1973) Class, codes and control, (1) Faladin

BLUMLER, J. & KATZ, E.

- (1974) The uses of mass communication, Sage  
 (1975) The uses and gratifications approach to communications research, Sage

BOURDIEU, L.

- (1977) Reproduction in education, society and culture, Sage (Trans. Nice, B)

BREED, W.

- (1964) Mass communications and sociocultural integration (in Dexter and White)

BURGELIN, O.

- (1968) Structural analysis and mass communications in McQUAIL, D. The sociology of mass communications, Penguin

BURNS, E. & T.

- (1973) The sociology of literature and drama, Penguin

CAREY, J.W.

- (1969) The communications revolution and the professional communicator, in Sociological Review monograph 13

CARPENTER, E.

- (1976) Oh what a blow the phantom gave me, Faladin

CHAMBERS, I.

- (1974) Roland Barthes structuralism/semiotics, WPCS (6)

CHANEY, D.

- (1977) Fictions in mass entertainment, in CURRAN et al Ed. Mass communication and society



- CICOUREL, A.V. (1973) Cognitive sociology, Penguin
- COHEN, S. (1968) Modern social theory, Heinemann
- COHEN, S. & YOUNG, J. (Eds) (1973) The manufacture of news, deviance, social problems and the mass media, Constable
- COMBS, J. & MANSFIELD, M. (eds) (1976) Drama in life: The world of communication in society, Hastings house.
- CONNERTON, P. (Ed) (1976) Critical sociology, Penguin
- CULLER, J. (1976) Saussure, Fontana
- CURRAN, J. et al (eds) (1977) Mass communication and society, Arnold
- DeFLEUR, H. (1966) Theories of mass communication, McKay
- DEXTER, L.A. & WHITE (Eds) (1964) People, society and mass communications, Free Press
- DOUGLAS, J. (1971) Understanding everyday life, Har
- DOUGLAS, M. (Ed) (1973) Rules and meanings, Penguin
- EAGLETON, T. (1976) Marxism and literary criticism, Methuen
- ECO, U. (1976) A theory of semiotics, Indiana Univ. Press
- EDELSTEIN, A. (1966) Perspectives in mass communications
- (1971) The TV research imagination BLED
- ELLIOTT, P. (1970) Chance, creativity and confidence, UNCR
- (1977) Media organisations and occupations, an overview, in CURRAN et al. Op. cit.
- FEYERBEND, R.K. (1967) The theatre as an instrument for the criticism of ideologies, in Inquiry (10) pp.298-312
- FILMER, et al. (1972) New directions in sociological theory, Collier Macmillan.
- FLEW, A. (Ed) (1966) Essays in conceptual analysis, Macmillan (Especially articles by Strawson and Hospers).



- ECUCAULT, M. (1972) The archaeology of knowledge, Tavistock
- FUCHS, P. (1978) Who knows what the hell is going on around here, in Broadcast, 16.1.78 - radical theory explained.
- GADAMER, H-G. (1975) Truth and method, Sheed and Ward. (Trans. BURDEN, G. & CUMING, J.)
- GANS, H. (1973) The famine in mass communications research AJS (4) pp 697-705.
- GARNHAM, N. (1973) Structures of television, BFI
- GELLNER, E. (1968) Words and things, Penguin
- GERBNER, G. et al. (1969) The analysis of communication content Wiley.  
(1973) Communication technology and social policy, Wiley
- GIDDENS, A. (1976) New rules of sociological method, Hutchinson
- GIGLIOLI, P. (Ed) (1972) Language and social context, Penguin
- GOLDING, P. (1974) The mass media, Longmans
- GOLDING, P. & MURDOCK, G. (1972) The ownership and control of the mass media in contemporary Britain. CMCR  
(1973) For a political economy of mass communications, socialist register.  
(1978) Ideology and the mass media, problems of research and theory (Paper given to BAA conference, Sussex, 1978 CMCR.
- GOLLMANN, L. (1967) The sociology of literature, in Intl. Social Science Jnl. (19)  
(1975) Towards a sociology of the novel, Tavistock (Trans. SHARIDAN, A.)
- GOODLAD, P. (1971) The sociology of popular drama, Heinemann
- GROOMBRIDGE, B. (1972) Television and the people, Penguin



GUIRAUD, P.

(1975) Sociology, RKF

HABERMAS, J.

(1972) Knowledge and human interests, Heinemann  
Trans. SHAPIRO, J.

HALL, S.

- a(1972) The limitations of broadcasting, in the Listener, 16.3.72
- b(1972) External influences on Broadcasting, BBC
- a(1973) The 'structured' communication of events
- b(1973) Determination of news photographs, in COMEL & YOUNG
- c(1973) Encoding and decoding in the television discourse, in Training in the critical reading of television language, UNESCO.
- (1977) Culture, the media and the 'ideological effect' in CURRAN et al.

HALLORAN, J.D.

- (1973) Understanding Television: some comments on the role of Mass communication research, CNCR
- (1974) Mass media and society: the challenge Leicester University Press
- a(1977) Understanding Television and relevance for cultural policies, Council of Europe CES/DD(77)56
- b(1977) Understanding Television, research and the broadcaster. Co-operation - Conflict - Compromise Council of Europe
- (TVRO) (1966) Problems of television research - a progress report, Leicester University Press
- (IANCR) (1978) Mass media and man's view of society - report of IANCR conference at Leicester 1976

HALLORAN, J.D. &  
GUREVITCH, M.(1970) Broadcaster/researcher co-operation in mass communication research. CNCR.

HARLYN, D.W.

(1970) The theory of knowledge, Macmillan



- HALKES, T. (1977) Structuralism and semiotics, Methuen
- HEIDEGGER, H. (1959) An introduction to metaphysics, Yale University Press (Trans. Mannheim, H.)
- HOOGART, R. (1959) The uses of literacy, Penguin
- HUACO, G.A. (1965) The sociology of film art, Basic books
- HYMES, D. (1970) The anthropology of communication, in Human communication theory, ed. DANCE Rinehart and Winston
- IBA (1973) An experimental warning symbol (Press notice, July) -about the introduction of the warning square as used in DUMNY.
- JARVIE, I. (1970) Towards a sociology of the cinema, RKP
- KANT, I. (1929) Critique of pure reason (Trans. KANT-SMITH, H. - various editions)
- KLAFFER, T. (1961) The effects of mass media, Free Press
- KUHN, T.S. (1962) The structure of scientific revolutions University of Chicago Press
- LEAT, D. (1972) Misunderstanding verstehen, in Sociological Review.
- LEYMORE, V.L. (1975) Hidden myth, structure and symbolism in advertising, Heinemann
- LOVALL, T. (1972) Sociology of aesthetic structures and contextualism, in McQUAIL, D. qv.
- LUKACS, G. (1971) The theory of the novel, Merlin
- MCCOMBER, M. & SHAW, D.L. (1972) The agenda-setting function of mass communications, in Public Opinion Qrtly. 36
- MCDONALD, D. (1971) Is objectivity possible? in Center (4) pp.23-43



MANNHEIM, K.

(1936) Ideology and Utopia,  
Routledge(1952) Essays on the sociology  
of knowledge, RKP

MARCUSE, K.

(1964) One dimensional man, RKP

MARTIN, H.

(1974) Understanding and  
participant observation  
in PAUL, H. : Verstehen:  
subjective understanding  
in the social sciences,  
Addison Wesley

MEAD, G.H.

(1934) Mind, self and society,  
Chicago Univ. Press

MENNELL, S.

(1973) Ethnomethodology and the  
new methodenstroik in  
MILLS, D. New directions  
in sociology David and  
Charles.

MERTON, R.K.

(1957) The sociology of knowledge  
and mass communications,  
in Social theory and social  
structures.

MESSENGER, S.L.

(1962) Life as theatre: some notes  
on the dramaturgic approach  
to social reality, in  
Sociometry (25)

MILLER, J.

(1971) McLuhan, Fontana

MORIN, E.

(1968) New trends in the study of  
mass communications. CUBS

MOER, C.

(1958) Survey methods in social  
investigation, Heinemann

MURDOCK, G.

(1974) Mass communication and  
the construction of  
meaning, in ARMBRISTAD, H.  
(ed) Reconstructing social  
psychology, Penguin

NORDENSTROM, K.

(1973) General conditions for  
understanding TV Programmes  
(1974) From mass media to mass  
consciousness UNCK

OUTHWAITE, W.

(1975) Understanding social life,  
Allen & Unwin

OFFENHEIM, C.

(1966) Questionnaire design and  
attitude measurement,  
Heinemann.



- PANOFSEY, E. (1957) Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism, Meridian
- PARKIN, P. (1972) Class Inequality and political order, Paladin
- PATEMAN, T. (1975) Language truth and politics, Stroud and Pateman
- PEARS, D. (1971) Wittgenstein, Fontana
- PEIRCE, C.S. (1930) Collected papers, Harvard University Press
- PIETILLA, K. (1975) A study in the methodology of consciousness research, Tampere Univ.
- POPPER, Sir K. (1947) The open society and its enemies, Routledge  
 (1959) The logic of scientific discovery, Mutchinson  
 (1964) The poverty of historicism, Routledge.  
 a(1972) Conjectures and refutations, Routledge  
 b(1972) Objective knowledge, Clarendon Press
- QUINE, W.V. (1964) Word and object, M.I.T. Press
- RICOEUR, P. (1974) The conflict of interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics, N.W. Univ. Press (Trans. McLAUGHLIN, K.)
- ROCHE, N. (1973) Phenomenology, Language and the social sciences, RKP
- SCHRAMM, W. (Ed) & ROBERTS, D.F. (1960) Mass Communications, Univ. of Illinois  
 (1971) The process and effects of mass communication, Univ. of Illinois Press
- SCHUTZ, A. (1967) Collected papers, Martinus Nijhoff
- SEARLE, J. (1969) Speech acts, Cambridge University Press  
 (1971) The philosophy of language, CUP
- SMART, B. (1976) Sociology, phenomenology and Marxian analysis, RKP



MONTAG, S.

(1967) Against interpretation,  
Lyre and Spottiswood

STARK, W.

(1958) The sociology of knowledge,  
RKP

STEINER, G.

(1978) Heidegger, Fontana

STRAWSON, P.F.

(1959) Individuals, Methuen

(1970) Meaning and truth, OUP

TOULMIN, S.

(1972) Human understanding OUP

TRACEY, M.

(1976) Observing the broad-  
caster - words from an  
ivory tower. in Television  
(1) 3.

TUNSTALL, J. (Ed)

(1970) Media sociology, Constable

TURNER, R. (Ed)

(1974) Ethnomethodology, Penguin

VOLOSINOV, V.N.

(1972) Marxism and the philosophy  
of language, N.Y. Seminar  
press.

WESTLEY, B.H. & MACLEAN, M.

(1957) A conceptual model for  
communications research  
in Journalism Quarterly,  
Vol 34 No. 1.

WHITE, D.

(1978) Art and the social  
scientists, in New Society  
21.9.78

WHORF, B.L.

(1956) Language, thought and  
reality. MIT press

WILLIAMS, R.

(1962) Communications, Penguin

(1975) Drama in a dramatised  
society, Cambridge Univ.  
press.

(1977) Marxism and literature, OUP

WINCH, P.

(1958) The idea of a social science,  
Routledge

WINOGRAD, T.

(1973) A procedural model of  
language understanding  
in SCHANK & COLBY (Eds)  
Computer models of thought  
and language

WITTGENSTEIN, L.

(1923) Tractatus logico

philosophicus, Kegan Paul

(1953) Philosophical investigations  
Blackwells

(1975) Blue and brown books,  
blackwells



MOLLEN, P. (Ed)

(1969) Sociology and semiology,  
BFI

WOOLFE, J.

(1976) Hermeneutics and art,  
in CONNERTON (Ed)

(1975) Hermeneutics and the  
critique of ideology in  
Sociological Review (23) 4.

WRIGHT, C.W.

(1959) Mass communications: a  
sociological perspective  
(1975 edtn. by Random  
House)

WRIGHT, G.H. Van

(1971) Explanation and  
understanding, RKP

ZIFF, P.

(1972) Understanding Understanding,  
Cornell Univ.