

17:03:55	Interviewer: What is community video to you?
17:04:00	Jon Dovey: Well Community Video was for me um concerned with putting access to the means of media production into the hands of a wider group of people than currently had access to it in the 1970s. So it was about giving people the opportunity to make messages that were their own as opposed to having those messages mediated by other people.
17:04:41	How did you come to work with community video what were influences and what was your route in to filmmaking?
17:04:53	JD: I left university in 1978 having got really interested in image making actually I'd started to take a lot of photographs in my third year and watch a lot of movies. I was studying English, but I became quite obsessed with image making and had also picked up a video camera two or three times in the Oxford film workshop and had shot some gigs with um half inch reel-to-reel video in sort of '78. So I moved to London in '79 and tried ridiculously to set up a film co-op in Notting Hill with some people that I met. Um didn't know that Andy Porter was operating just round the corner with er in something called community video because I didn't even know that community video really existed. But on the other hand it was of the times and of the culture so it wasn't an entirely unexpected idea. Hence trying to set up a film co-op, you know let's have a film co-op. Let's make let's make films with the people for the people and for us and let's you know just very optimistic.
17:06:02	JD: And then um a job got advertised in Time Out to be a distribution coordinator for a community video operation called the Two Boroughs Video Project which was a small project that was funded by Wandsworth Council and Lambeth Council to set up a video access resource in South Londo and it was based at a place called Oval House which at that time was in Kennington it's just about to move to Brixton but it was it was located in Kennington and it had been run by a guy called Nick Fry for about three or f, three years maybe so I guess some sort of 75 to 78 something like that. He'd been kind of running this project with a little bit of money and some kit in the Oval and they wanted to appoint a distribution coordinator. So I applied for the job which was two days a week and 20 quid and that's how I started working in community video. I got the job.
17:07:00	Interviewer: So what was Oval video and what was your role there?
17:07:05	JD: At that time it was called Two Boroughs Video Project which I came in and said this is a really horrible name like this means nothing let's re-brand, although I didn't call it that in those days. So we re-named it Oval video because we were based at the Oval. And the err the project was to um make video equipment available to a range of community groups. Essentially it really was tech and access and the tech was actually about I think we had three or four National Panasonic reel-to-reel black and white kits. I don't know why we had Nat Pan because Nick Fry was kind of eccentric everybody else had Sony we had National Panasonic. And we also had a primitive editing system which was a reel-to-reel editing system. Um which he'd kind of hand built with a Chilean exile electronic engineer called Alvaro who had a workshop in the Oval at the same time.

17:08:02	<p>JD: And um in the original reel-to-reel edit suite edit-system you had to create a pre-roll by dropping a loop to the floor of equal distance on each side and setting the decks running at the same time so the loop took up, took up at the same time so that both machines met met the sync point at the right time. So it's a handmade and crazy. And Alvaro and Nick made a box that read the read pulses so you could actually go okay set this one to here, set this one to here, set them running, hit the button at this point and the edit will happen. So it was really primitive video editing with on with reel-to-reel decks. So we could, so that meant we could cut, that meant we could cut, we could cut film basically we could edit so that's what we were, that's what we were doing. So we were shooting with um at that time we would get a whole range of demands on our time I might just start that one again.</p>
17:09:02	<p>JD: So at that time in 1979 when I started working there, there was a whole wide range of demands on our resources. Holiday play groups come and do some video with children in the holiday time. Ah housing tenants groups involved in different kinds of dispute with local authorities. I used to call them the damp tapes because it was always about people complaining about damp in their flats, which they were always told was a lifestyle issue. Which meant that they cooked with the windows shut you know and caused condensation.</p>
17:09:44	<p>JD: And um some form some youth groups quite a lot of youth group stuff especially black youth groups in an around Brixton and I remember working with Abeng Centre or delivering equipment to Abeng Centre and working with Brixton young black family housing association and making projects with them. So the work was a range of can we hire some kit... Can we just take the kit away? Can you train us how to use the kit? Can you help us make a film? Those sort of three levels of just providing access, servicing equipment, making sure that it all stayed working, and then running schemes and short projects with people and then actually making making a film over a period of time with people.</p>
17:10:37	<p>JD: So yeah the groups are children's groups, youth groups, tenants groups, and then there was another whole strand at the oval which was really important actually in terms of the story that we want to cover in this conversation which was that because we were based at the oval which was a radical theatre we had a lot of work with radical theatre people, so as well as doing all of that stuff very quickly I was working with some some improvisational comics called Jim Sweeney and Steve Steen who, who used to make shows and Nick. Nick was a really close mates so we used to work with them putting on shows where they had monitors on stage. So this is really early on.</p>
17:11:19	<p>JD: This is as I say 1979/1980. They were doing shows with the kind of live feedback and images of themselves that were on monitors. They were talking to characters on monitors on stage and also doing improvisation with that kind of technology, or we were doing projections as part of the stage show, or we were recording theatre companies like...experimental theatre companies like IOU and Welfare State and Gay Sweatshop and Footsbarn and all those kinds of people that came out of that mid '70s radical theatre from hippie to gay, and across that spectrum because they came into the Oval, and because Nick had a lot of relationships with those people over time. He had been there kind of go to video guy from the mid seventies when he picked up a video camera kind of coming out of art school. He was at Croydon art school and he started doing video three or four years before me.</p>
17:12:11	<p>JD: So he...so he knew a lot of those people because were at The Oval. So there's a big part of our work that was actually creative work, and actually was doing work not that...not on...access issues or the politics, or political issues and community struggles, but was actually doing stuff with Gay Sweatshop or Footsbarn that was completely bonkers and crazy and interesting in a different kind of way to me, you know, so, those two things are a really important mix of the cultural creative and the political activist, and those two things that were what distinguished Oval video, a bit, from some of the other people in the in the community video workers group at that time.</p>

17:13:47	Interviewer: What was the camera, sound, and editing technology and how did this inform the projects that you were able to work on and the types of projects in terms of peoples participation?
17:14:10	JD: Okay, so when...When I first started working in community video most people were still working on reel-to-reel, black and white Portapacks which was the technologies that had been around for 20 years from America but only really for about...slightly, slightly less than 10 years I suppose through the seventies in the UK. So you had a camera that was about this size, and had a trigger handle, had a handle with a trigger on it, and it had an eyepiece at the back end of the camera that you flipped up, you had a monitor with an eyepiece and a zoom lens, and a cable, a big thick cable that connected to a reel-to-reel tape recorder, effectively looked like a tape recorder, and it was in a...Had a shoulder strap so you wore it around your shoulder and carried it around and you shot 30 minute reels of black and white video. And as long as you didn't, as long as you didn't put, stand the, stand the case on its end. If you took a Sony Portapack and you stood the case on its end the take up spool got jammed. So when you opened the case it just was full of video tape that just went (makes explosive noise!), all over the place as it did once to me at Hyde Park. That was one lesson that you as a film maker, one of those lessons you only learn once, that was one of them. Never put a Sony Portapack on its bum when you're recording. But the National Panasonics you couldn't do that anyway because of a different shape.
17:15:47	JD: So, so then, so then you, you could then also use...you could also then use those reel-to-reel recorders as a playback machine. So you could plug the recorder into a monitor. I think always using the RF antenna input because the monitors only had radio RF antenna inputs. There was no other kind of input on the back of a television. So you used the so you had to have an RF adapter so the signal from the, the video signal was coming out of the tape deck could be adapted to an RF signal then you had to tune the monitoring into the right frequency cos it was an RF. So then you could get a signal to play it back. What that meant, and the whole mythology of Community Video, was what that meant was that you could record something and play it back straightaway to the people that you had recorded it with which in the history of moving image media was a revolutionary moment because you didn't have to send the film to the chemist, as Jeff Stow used to call it, the great thing about video is you don't have to send the film to the chemist. You didn't have to send a film to the lab so you could just play stuff back straight away so it was immediate feedback. That was a really massive thing in the 1970s because people had were not used to seeing themselves they, didn't know what they look like on television. They knew they knew what other people...how other people represented them, but actually that technology was...that accessibility of the image was unthinkable in todays times that actually because its, our own image making is ubiquitous now. So actually to be able to do that was, was amazing at that time.
17:17:19	JD: And actually quite a lot of the...so for instance when I was talking earlier on about doing stuff with children's groups or playgroups or youth groups. A lot of the time you just set the equipment up and let children see themselves on the monitor. And they would just, they would just pull faces because they had never seen themselves on television screen before ever. So the beginning of that was always just doing that really simple play activity with getting people used to seeing themselves and what they look like and then starting to think about what they could do. And because it was immediate you could always go, "So lets look at that back, lets see did that work."
17:17:58	JD: So I used to do, I used to do a gig every Wednesday night I used to go to the Woolworth, somewhere on the Woolworth estate and work with a group of disabled adults, or adults with learning difficulties as there would now be called, as a video as a video guy. And there was a...extremely...amazing young man who had an obsession with horror films.

17:18:22	<p>JD: So every Wednesday night I would make a horror film with a group of disabled adults in like an hour and a half, in a community centre in Woolworth, and he would...we would, we'd improvise the story and it was always this completely insane mixture of werewolves and Frankenstein and zombies and he had this he had this kind of autistically encyclopaedic knowledge of Hammer films, you know Hammer Horror films. So he would lead the group, and we'd all be crawling around, and running about, and making sets, and having fights because thats one of the things that always used to happen when you work with, especially young men with this kind of video, there would always have to be a fight scene. Or a fight sequence or a chase sequence. So it would be a big bundle on the floor, and then you play it back at the end of the evening they would have a massive laugh and everybody would go home happy. That was a classic kind of community video engagement for me. In those days.</p>
17:19:15	<p>JD: Then...so that was all about a live stuff, that was all about live stuff and feedback and that was what the technology could do it could be live, you could feedback on the day, you could shoot stuff, you could edit in camera, thats...you know sequence stuff in camera and kind of put together some kind of a story that the that the young people or the children found engaging and interesting.</p>
17:19:38	<p>JD: Then there was the kind of more longer term project where you were actually editing stuff and you were learning how to... For me I was learning to edit. I mean I'd never edited before, I had a kind of vague idea of what that might mean. So I was kind of learning to cut using this kind of technology.</p>
17:19:55	<p>JD: And they were...So the edit suite was. It was two...I'm trying to remember the manufacturer, I think they were also National Panasonic decks. There were decks, they were about that deep, and about that wide about that square. So yay big and they had, they had they were still half inch reels but they had, instead of the spool being sort of six inches, like that, they were bigger spools. They looked exactly like a like a classic old reel-to-reel tape recorder, they got a tape head but it was a whats called a helical scanner so instead of the, in a tape, in an audio tape recorder the tape goes over a magnetic head and the signal is transferred as the tape goes over, this had a thing called a helical scan which meant that as the tape went over the head it was actually being scanned down across across the width of the tape multiple times because, there was a thing called a...the head scanned the tape on a bar. There was a..there was a bar inside the machine that had got two scanning heads on that scanned the videotape, And it went round and so it was it was it was spinning at a enormous speed it was so. It was scanning the tape and then putting the signal on the tape as it as it went down the tape, like that. And the thing that used to go wrong with these machines was that the thing that would wear out was the heads, they would get clogged up and you'd have to clean the heads. You'd have to..alcohol. The thing that you always needed was alcohol in a squirter and a cotton bud to clean the heads because they would get very gungy, they would get grease on, the oxid sometimes come off the tapes and clog them up. So yeah, and changing the heads was the really expensive bit of maintenance too, changing the heads on the deck.</p>
17:21:43	<p>JD: So you got these machines that were...was these big machines that were scanning the tapes, and you had you had a I mean very much like in an edit suit now in some ways I guess, you had a field monitor you had a signal monitor. And you... you could.. It's very difficult for people to understand what this means... it's very difficult to understand what this means now because there was this concept of pre-roll, you don't have to have pre-roll now, but in the days of analogue tape you had to have pre-roll and pre-roll was this really weird thing that actually really messed you up and made it really hard to do what you wanted to do because actually in film you cut the film you splice it together that makes the film.</p>

	<p>In video you do not cut the video. You move the signal, you copy the signal from one video taped to another. And to be able to copy the signal the video tape has to be running at a certain speed you can't just go 'on', 'copy', because it takes five seconds for the signal to stabilise. Because if you turn a real to real video deck on this five seconds it's just going (<i>makes whirring noise</i>) and the pictures all over the place, so you don't get a stable signal for five seconds. So you have to have this five second running time so you have, you want that picture at that frame to move to that other tape to copy across at that precise moment, but you've got to have both machines running for five seconds before and, so that was really complex that's what you had to have a loop on the floor to create five seconds of pre-roll, or a loop somewhere. You had to.</p>
<p>17:23:20</p>	<p>JD: So that by the time that loop had taken up it was running and that was when measuring time. But then we began to get...a then we began to invent these technologies to make that sync up, and 'Hoppy' John Hopkins who you probably have already heard of at 'Fantasy Factory' up in Theobalds Road in Holborn, who was a, who was a hippy video person from the '60s. Would work with Pink Floyd and then got into video and all that stuff. He was a very important part of our history because he had invented..He'd built the first automated reel-to-reel edit suite in his facility. And so what we were doing was kind of copying something and making something of our own in the Oval that allowed us to be able to edit.</p>
<p>17:23:59</p>	<p>JD: So then you can edit a film the sound and..you could insert picture you could separate picture and sound. You could do a sound only insert or a picture only insert. And you could, so the deck that was your master deck that you were copying all the signals over to or in the right order, that would become your master tape, and then you would make copies from the master tape. But of course the quality was horrible. I mean the resolution of the cameras in the first place was pretty low and they used, they didn't use chips or anything like that, they used these tubes. They use cathode ray tubes, but inversely in the way that televisions used them. So you would get lots and lots of signal on the on the lens, on the tube rather than the lens, you'd get these traces, if you pointed the camera a bright light you would either burn a tube irrevocably, or it would leave a trace, so a lot of those early Black and White films you see they've got these weird traces on the picture which are from the tube technology, and the resolution and the contrast ratio was really poor. I mean their tolerance to different kinds of light levels is really really poor.</p>
<p>17:25:21</p>	<p>JD: We did have lighting. We learned pretty early on that actually they quite a lot of light. So we had we had fairly early on a kind of red head kit as a basic part of the tool kit that you took out if you, if you were doing a proper film, if you were making a film project with somebody or working with theatre companies, you took out, you took out a red heads. But there were pretty lousy cameras. So you didn't get a really brilliant signal. And by the time you'd then copied it you couldn't..making multiple multiple copies was really hard. I mean you had to do it in real time, one at a time and actually most of the time you didn't really need multiple copies because the most you needed was like half a dozen copies, because the distribution network was it was for the people that you were working with to use in their own world. Of course half the time they didn't have any means of actually showing it in their own world. So you had to go and help them show the film because there was no technology for them to show the film that they'd made. So you had to be production unit and distribution unit. So another reason you didn't need multiple copies, because actually you had to arrive with a with a tape deck and a monitor and the tape to show the tape anyway so because they didn't have it themselves. That was a bit about technology. ...it was completely bonkers actually.</p>
<p>17:26:45</p>	<p>JD: I mean think about it now. I mean I can't it's really interesting talking about it because I'm remembering, 'oh my god', that was so laborious and so time consuming and so random. And how did you ever make a cut? How did you ever learn anything about editing when the chances of actually getting the cut in the right place was sort of 50/50 at best? You know. (<i>Sips tea</i>)</p>

17:27:20	Interviewer: I'm interested in the projects and the communities that you were able to reach out to because of that technology. What kind of groups and community did you work with, and what did this technology and this technical knowledge and experience that you gained enable you to do and work on? Well try to remember some other.
17:27:53	JD: This is very early this is early days. I mean the other thing the other thing that I'm trying to get a timescale around this because things changed as technology changed over quite a short period of time. Sort of between 1979 and 1982, which is when I was working in this field. Things changed pretty fast and I came in at the end of the black and white reel-to-reel moment and actually moved through into then, into the colour three tube camera and pneumatic period and then into actually shortly after that VHS as a system. So things became a lot better quality and also they'd be, they were in colour and...You could do a lot more over a very short period of time really at the beginning of the 1980s. And that changed the kind of thing we could do and who we could work with and where that work went quite a lot.
17:28:55	JD: So if I was to try and think about who we work with and what we did over that period of time. First of all there were the community groups and young people's groups, children's groups, youth groups. I think the 'Brixton young family housing association' I referred to earlier on, that was a film that we made with them about trying to find a way to live and moving out of home and those kinds of issues. The first film that I ever made, when I worked at Oval, was called 'Fight the Cuts' and it was about cuts and it was a film that I could have made every two years since. Because it was a film about the impact of cuts on local authority services. And I can remember being in nurseries and in schools and in libraries and outside health centres and doing voxpop interviews with people and talking to activists and going to rallies and just documenting this process. And I remember at the beginning of the film was an interview clip from Panorama between Margaret Thatcher and Robin Day, that was that that was how the film opened, was Margaret Thatcher saying something preposterous which went on to become a dominant theme of the rest of my career.
17:30:23	JD: So it's extraordinary that I did that. That was a first...that was the first sequence of the first film I ever made. And that was about a 20 minute film or so. And that was shown that was designed to be shown a campaign meetings, It was a kind of solid..It was essentially what I would call a solidarity film so that was a kind of category of film that you made to show to campaign meetings to help build movements and build solidarity between groups and allow people to express what they were feeling and show what was going on and show that there was resistance and there was action there was organisation going on around these kinds of issues and that actually something that was going on in one bit of the borough or one bit of town was relevant to something that was going on in another bit of town. So doing that kind of connection around local media, letting people understand what was going on in different places. But of course the whole thing took months to make and by the time it got out it was kind of, you know, things change. It wasn't exactly TV news schedules.
17:31:22	JD: And then there were groups of, as I said early on, lots of stuff about housing, there were some trade union work, there was some kind of employment rights work and then there was lots of stuff with bands, there's loads of stuff with bands and music as the equipment got better and as people understood to what music promo was there was massive demand for music, which you have to resist a bit because it kind of wasn't what we were briefed and funded to do. But there was also a way of making money if you needed to make some money you could probably get some money by getting a band to pay you to do a gig, or to record gigs, then there was also the theatre world that was involved with.

17:31:59	<p>JD: So doing that was, that was very frequently doing promo work for theatre people, so actually realising that the first thing that happened there was well we can record shows great we can record the whole show. No one wants to sit through two and a half hours of your Fringe show actually that a useless video tape but, actually an edit of that, or thats five minutes might get me up to Edinburgh or even better a, adaptation of certain scenes where you actually adapt the theatre show, so you actually break the fourth wall and you start to block it. You start to direct it, and "hey you're making a movie in the studio". That was what, that was what my role, my pathway was was sort of going from just sticking a camera up and recording something to actually saying 'this is rubbish. No one wants to see this', let's actually block it, direct it, frame it you know, make a five minute piece that actually will be your calling card for your tour or the thing you want to do, or be a be an advertising thing for this show you know. So we did quite a lot of that kind of work as well.</p>
17:33:03	<p>JD: As well as working with artists that was also part of the picture. I remember there was performance art and video had quite a strong relationship from the early days. So there was a sort of steady trickle of performance artists who wanted to work with video because video had a role in live art from quite early on in the 1970s. Live artists and performance artists were quite interested in video so I can remember working with some live artists. I can remember filling the upstairs studio at Oval house with barbed wire and working with a performance artist from Northern Ireland. Because at that time of course there was a massive war going on in the north of Ireland and that was very present in our lives actually in those days in London. (Waves to someone) We were busy making this piece upstairs in the studio where this woman picked her way through this barbed wire while all these lights played across it and all her legs got horribly scratched and it was really kind of visceral piece of work that was kinda like working with perform, with performance art, as opposed to theatre people.</p>
17:34:11	<p>JD: So there was kind of community work, solidarity work, servicing community groups, hiring equipment and it was all across a range from, from music to performance art to theatre to community activism and these things was just kind of part of the spectrum which we sort of balanced and juggled as we went along according to a pretty sort of loose editorial plan really. I hesitate to call it a Plan because we didn't have one, we did what came along.</p>
17:34:50	<p>JD: But then when, when the tech got better things got a lot more organised so you could start to do different things, right? So. People began to understand what the language of filmmaking was and what the language of media was. I mean I think this is quite an important thing archiveally to record was that in the seventies. In the 70s the kind of groups that created community videos as a notion were arguing that media was important channel through which politics and resistance and activism and culture could be conducted. And was the first time this channel had been established theoretically and technologically. The theory didn't exist, the technology didn't exist.</p>
17:35:32	<p>JD: The first meeting of the London community video workers collective as it was known that I went to, and I was young, because they're all a bit older than me. So I went along with this fresh faced University graduate and they were all sitting around and we were recommended to read Hans Magnus Enzensberger's 'Theory for the Constituents of the Media' as a set text for this meeting. And I thought oh my goodness what's going on here. I've just come out of university and I hadn't come across the Frankfurt School at all, I mean I went to a very traditional university wasn't allowed to have critical theory in my world. 'What's this about!?. I thought this is about a thought about making films and being creative', and here they are sitting around really this really challenging complex text. And it wasn't till, I guess about 20 years later that I realised how interesting and how important that was. That that collection of people, Andy Porter, Tony Dowmont, and a few other people and a few of the people had decided that they wanted to do some self education around the theory of what it was that they were doing, they'd also all kind of fallen into the technology and the potential of the technology. But this was a kind of theoretical justification.</p>

17:36:40	<p>JD: So in the 1970s the idea that media was important at all as a as a cultural political site was new. By the time you got to 1981, 1982, 1983 it was becoming much more understood a much more part of everyday culture and lived culture. So the ideas that you could exchange with people and what you could do started to change. So for instance some time around 1982/3 I guess, the funding structure started to change because started to apply for more money. So although I was brought into that group to actually apply to organise, distribution I mean actually I finished up applying for money to do work and make work because, Organising distribution was kind of, putting a monitor in the back of a van and taking it deck to somewhere showing a film. That's what distribution was because there was no other way of doing it. It was literally. And also once you'd shown that film to the relevant groups once or twice it was dead, they didn't want to see it again because it wasn't good enough. It didn't have a life beyond the immediate group. Beyond that kind of function and structure it was made for we didn't really have a life. So I started to be part of a... I mean look up a little bit and think about, well, 'how can we make work that gets a bit further and has a bit more of a life and it has a bit of a general richness and of a better quality'. So I applying for funding and started to apply for money for this and that and the other, and having to organise the funding end of the operation and things like that.</p>
17:38:18	<p>JD: So we started to get more equipment, we started to get colour equipment, people started to understand the language more, have better ideas. So a key, a key film was a film called 'Watch out, There's a Queer about', which is on, which I've got a clip of on this piece of pneumatic tape here which is my showreel from before I went to Australia so this is 1982 this is showreel from 1982 and it's got, it's got part of 'Watch Out there's a Queer about' on it. And I don't know where the rest of that film is. I hope we can find it for this archive process.</p>
17:38:41	<p>JD: 'Watch Out there's a Queer About' was a really interesting idea that came from that kind of mixture of activism and creativity that I was talking about earlier on. So a guy called Andy Lippman was part of "Gay Sweatshop" but he was also a lawyer that worked in a law centre in that Deptford. And is a gay activist. And he got hold of the law as it stood in relation to policing the gay community in London in 1981 or 2 and got hold of the legal textbooks that were taught to cops up at Hendon, and took all of the passages that were about actually how you police gay, the gay community and turned it into a script for a spoof documentary that was made as a police training film where the cast was entirely gay or very queer and err but was made as if it was for the police. So it was a really interesting ironic taking a piss funny hilarious politically charged educational. It told you about your rights, it told you that if, you know, if the police bust your nightclub and come and come kick the door down this is what you need to know what is going on you know. And it and it mobilised the whole community of people around that issue and it became quite successful so it's quite a scene.</p>
17:40:11	<p>JD: So it's quite a sophisticated project you know it's it's because it's fictionalizing something which is documentary content. It's using using a lot of creative um resources that came from the theatre world including costume and design and mise en scene and all those kinds of things and music you know as well as it as well as mobilizing that creative community um to actually make a very very pointed political argument.</p>
17:40:42	<p>JD: So that was very very different to the film that would have been made two or three or four years before which would have been a very boring set of talking heads in grey on grey black and white talking about that about what your rights are if you're gay and you happened to be arrested in a nightclub or whatever it would have been extremely dull whereas this was actually frankly hilarious. So so that represents a kind of shift which is both a cultural shift and a technological split between the late 70s and the early 80s as people became more aware of what media could do and how you could work with it and what resources you could bring to bear.</p>
17:41:15	<p>Interviewer: And what was your role with that film or was that something that was more an inspiration to you?</p>

17:41:29	<p>JD: So on 'Watch Out! There's a Queer About' I was the link to the video resource so I was like the video producer. Andy was the director/producer and wrote the whole thing and it was his it was his project. He was the auteur, it was his baby but he then went with a whole load of other people. And I was working I was kind of the of producer from the video end. So actually I shot lots of it. I was camera operator for lots of it. I also set up and supervised a lot of the editing, I did some of the editing. So I don't know what I was. I was a facilitator. I was a facilitator is kind of what I was and I did whatever was needed as a facilitator to make sure that project happened with the people who had ownership of it. So it wasn't my project but it was, I was the kinda lead tech facilitator on it.</p>
17:42:22	<p>Interviewer: That really shows the development of ideas and technology. Are there any other stand out films or projects Jon?</p>
17:42:40	<p>JD: Well the... The stand out projects for me that I remember most are all the ones that came after we started working with colour and after we started working with Numatic and after we started working with with better equipment and after we'd kind of scaled ourselves up a little bit which didn't take very long. As I say I was only in that unit for three years but over that three years things changed all the time so it's more towards the back end of that period that are the projects I remember.</p>
17:43:01	<p>JD: So Watch Out There's a Queer About I've talked about. There was also a film called Go For It which was a kind of youth training film which is which was which was used a mixture of dramatic reconstruction it was about training young people in interview techniques so it used dramatic interview setups and told a little story about being jobless. It was the beginning of the 80s and unemployment was suddenly a huge issue. So job training and how people could could how young people could find their way into employment was a really major issue. And that was quite a sophisticated production compared to the level of what we'd done before.</p>
17:43:36	<p>JD: And the other film that really sticks in my mind as being formative for me... was a documentation, a documentary that we made about a theatre company called Footsbarn and Footsbarn were an amazing bunch of hippies who came out of Cornwall and did theatre in tents and toured all over England and Wales and Ireland and Scotland and then moved to France. Eventually they moved to Europe in the mid 80s because England became not a congenial place. They are the forerunners of Kneehigh theatre actually and there were kind of the original original crazy theatre company here. They did a lot of Shakespeare did a lot of adaptations of Shakespeare they made Shakespeare really popular and they were very funny and they did theatre in tents. And they would pack out all over the West Country they'd go to little villages and festivals. So they were always at Glastonbury all through the early years of Glastonbury they were always there and all through the West Country people knew them and they were a very popular kind of form of theatre. And Nick Fry who was the who who I was kind of apprenticed to effectively, he was the person who formed the unit had a longstanding relationship with them. And they were touring Europe and one year they were touring Europe and they were in Portugal and Nick and I went to Portugal to make a film about their tour and about what they were doing and about their lives on the road in Europe.</p>
17:44:53	<p>JD: So we travelled to Portugal and we made this documentary on location with them and it was exciting and romantic and beautiful and picturesque and stimulating and exciting for me and all those things so that's a film that really stands out in my mind because again that was a film where I learnt a lot about filmmaking actually about making a documentary on the fly with a moving with lots of, lots of movement and lots of things developing and not knowing what you were going to get before you get not knowing what you were going to do before you got there. So I learned quite a lot about filmmaking at that point and why it was really bad idea to carry a big 3 tube camera in a bicycle basket up a hill in a track in Portugal.</p>

17:45:37	Interviewer: You spoke earlier a lot about how you were connected with other groups, other video groups with people who'd been adapting cameras and editing equipment and sound equipment themselves and learning from different people how interconnected were different community groups and the larger video community at that time?
17:46:06	JD: Well the community video network... The community video network in London when I entered into about 1978 in 1979 was pretty well developed I think. My sense of it was that I got to know a lot of people in a really short space of time in places that I had never heard of before like Deptford. And um. In particular there was was the Albany outfit down in Deptford and then there was the West London group which Andy Porter was part of um and Ken Lineham. And then there was Hoppy's group in in Holborn and then there was Oval video. And then there was Islington Bus Company who had a video outfit and they were quite important too. They did, they had quite a highly developed video practice and then there was Interaction Arts up in Kentish town and they again had been doing video for quite a long time and had a highly developed video outfit and quite a slick operation actually.
17:47:13	JD: So there were a five or six centres across London and that probably sounds like absolutely nothing but we were in pretty good contact and especially Deptford, especially the Albany and the Oval and West London. There was quite a lot of his historical connection there and as things went along you know because you got equipment people got to know you pretty soon. So you know one of my oldest friends who now lives down in Somerset here who's been you know we've been friends for 40 years. He first met me because he came to get some equipment what he wanted to get some kit. He needed to get his hands. He wanted to some hands on some video kit. So we met because I had access to resource. There's another guy here in Bristol now whose name is Simon Bright who runs the Africa Eye Black film festival. He's a Zimbabwean guy who I met in London at that time who used to also come and hire equipment from us and he told me recently. He used to. I used to say to him "So have you got transport for this you got a van? It's all sign this off, it'll be safe and he just used to take it around the corner and get on his moped and strap it onto his moped and wobble off from from Brixton to West London you know across town which is where he would be working with it you know with a monitor strapped to the back of the bike you know. And he only told me that in the last year or so. So.
17:48:34	JD: So people were pretty well connected and have stayed well connected is the point that I want to make. You know that actually some of those connections, equipment was very was scarce so if you were in the community and you wanted to get hold of something you know you knew where to get it because because there wasn't a lot of it around so that's why people were. Scarcity produced a strong network.
17:48:53	JD: I suppose at the same time there was also the London filmmakers co-op which is where most of the story gets written in most of the history is written around the London Filmmakers co-op and the kinds of work that was going on at the London filmmakers co-op and they didn't really do video very much, they thought it was the work of the devil essentially.
17:49:09	JD: So there was some crossover too between that community and our community. For instance Derek Jarman came down to the Oval to buy some footage from us that we had of the Lewisham riots because Nick was at the Lewisham riots when that happened and he wanted some footage when he was working with Marianne Faithfull to begin with on her first video pop promo. So theres some fit footage that Nick shot of the Lewisham riot in Marianne Faithfull's first video promo that she made with Derek Jarman and so Derek was from that kind of film experimental film world. So there was a little bit of cross over between that and the community video world though not much actually because we sort of spoke a slightly different language. There were there were sort of in next door rooms if you like. You know, we knew they were there and they knew we were there. We crossed over if we needed something but our mission was slightly different I think.

17:50:25	Interviewer: I suppose also somewhat later on those that cross over in to broadcast. So how were you viewed by groups such as broadcast TV and film how was video viewed at that moment?
17:50:59	JD: So the video movement and the community video movement especially was I think massively disregarded and was on the lowest rung of the me... media ladder at the time that I encountered it first in the 1970s. We couldn't get access to film funds or film subsidy if we wanted to apply for instance to what was then called Greater London Arts Association. We had to go under the Community Arts banner. We weren't allowed to go under the film banner because we weren't 'proper filmmakers' and 'proper filmmakers' were mainly, there was an artists led film movement for public subsidy in the seventies. So um and the artists didn't really understand or relate very much to what we were doing. So I can remember actually going to a demonstration in St. James' Park which was outside where the Arts Council used to have their headquarters to support Community Arts and all the community video makers and the collective were there with our banners our... in St. James' Park cos the windows in Piccadilly where they had their... That's where their buildings were demonstrating outside that building.
17:52:25	JD: So we were very much put into the Community Art banner and the Community Art movement. And and and were and it had hardly any other connection with filmmakers at one level, in one sense.
17:52:44	The broadcast broadcasters had no relationship with that form of video whatsoever unless you got some footage that they wanted. Broadcasters position was that. We can't have a relationship with this form of video because the technology is not good enough the picture quality and the resolution is so poor we can't possibly broadcast it. But then of course every time you got some footage that they wanted, that position was overturned because they would just put it out, they would just bash it up to one inch and put it out and put a put a caption on saying you know this is out this is poor quality because it came from here. So um. So there was a certain sense of that we had of exclusion from those kinds of worlds those existing worlds of moving image media. On the one hand broadcast on the other hand cinema. That began to change as the equipment got better, as the tech quality got better and as the language and the culture got better and we began to understand what we're doing more.
17:53:45	JD: And then um there was of course um a great deal of lobbying that went on through the back end of the '70s and the early 1980s around for instance the Peacock Report and the idea that there should be a fourth channel and what that fourth channel should be for in British Television and the Independent Filmmakers Association which was a group that had been formed in the 1970s as a kind of um you know post '68 radical film movement was very heavily involved in that lobbying around what Channel 4 should become and around the time that the Independent Film Association and the workshop agreement got formulated um there was... video was then included in the IFA. So the IFA because the IFVA the Independent Film and Video Makers Association so video got included.
17:54:39	So actually Channel 4 kind of made it possible for the film makers and the video makers to start to talk to each other in a way that was interesting. And the workshop movement kind of marked a step whereby some of those formal distinctions and technological distinctions began to be broken down. So you would have workshops who worked in film and video and ex... and began to exchange them a bit more and began to see them as being interchangeable. And in fact of course what happened very quickly was the video completely took over because film was far too expensive, video was really cheap, it was accessible, it was acceptable to broadcasters. So very quickly in the workshop movement as such from 83/4/5/6 everyone was shooting on video and film disappeared almost entirely as a medium in a in a in those times.

17:55:34	<p>JD: The community video movement got variously kind of some of it got absorbed into that Channel 4 workshop movement um site. I think um The Albany video group was the only group with roots in Community Video that got a franchise, and that got recognized. None of the other workshops had their roots in Community Video action. I think I'm right in saying so the Albany then became a kind of coordinating conversation and site for some of the things that had been going on in the Oval and some of the things that had been going on in West London and some of the things that had been going on across the rest of London because they got access to broadcast so they started started to curate and coordinate some of the community video culture and network as it as far as interfaced with broadcast television. And they began to ramp up their own operation to be able to do that a bit more. But that was the only place that Community Video as such was represented in the workshop movement. There were no other workshops that were based in community video. They were based in a certain form of revolutionary filmmaking like Trade and Amber for instance, you know, there's a certain kind of idea about class in involved in those kinds of filmmaking groups where actually gender, race and sexuality which is what we were dealing with all the time was less of a concern to some of those other kinds of film workshops up in the north of England.</p>
17:57:15	<p>JD: And then there were the black workshops like Sankofa and Black Audio Film Collective in London who were mixing film and video in really interesting ways and actually starting to deal with a whole range of issues in really new ways that nobody had quite done before from anywhere. And they had some roots in community but they didn't have roots in community video as such. Though it has to be put on record that Isaac Julien's first film was a community video piece that he made when he was at Central Saint Martins. Who Killed Colin Roach which is a classic piece of community video documentation about a campaign to um hold the police accountable for a death in custody a man called Colin Roach that hapenned in Stoke Newington police station sometime in the early 80s I suppose. I'm not exactly sure what the date was but it was a classic piece of community video. He went on to do all sorts of other things after that as we know.</p>
17:58:41	<p>Interviewer: So this job brought you in to contact lots of different groups and issues and different people. I'm interested in you actually John. Did you grow up in south London? Had you had access to these different community groups previous to this group? As a University educated young man how did you get there?</p>
17:58:59	<p>JD: My own trajectory into community video comes from um beginning to be really err dissatisfied with with media and mediation and politics of media. When I was at university I suppose my theory is that.</p>
17:59:26	<p>Interviewer: (filming interruptions & directions)</p>
17:59:37	<p>JD: So my own route into community video comes from I suppose um well I'm a I'm a I'm a kind of grammar school boy with an Oxford education. You know I came from a kind of a really ordinary working background. My dad was a printer my mum worked in a post office. I was brought up on the Wednesday Play in the 1960s. I was born on the day that commercial television started in this country. So I mean television was part of my education it was a really big part of my young life as a new medium and um I learnt a lot about the world from television. I talked politics and television all the time in my family with my dad and my mum, especially my dad. So I came... Then I went to Oxford to read English and became really interested in image making and in um ideas around image making but completely outside of my course and unsupported by my course. And started thinking about making photographs and making, making film and picking up a video camera for the first time.</p>

18:00:48	<p>JD: So I knew when I left university that I was interested in working in the media. Um though that's not what I called it at the time because I don't think we even used the word media properly at that point. Um. Lots of my contemporaries were going off to being interviewed by the BBC or into news into news journalism and so on and that was a kind of a route that I tried to follow and checked out. And actually had three interviews at the BBC got to final boards at the BBC three times. And each time finished up saying but what you put on television is rubbish. It's terrible. We've got to change how television works it's not good enough and realised eventually that that probably wasn't the best way to get a job working at the BBC um in those days.</p>
18:01:35	<p>JD: And so so so I was looking for opportunities. So actually in a way the video access movement was also my access movement to video until it's actually becoming a film maker and being able to learn about film and it was my own apprenticeship. It was my postgraduate education it was what was what. I didn't do an MA or anything like that. I just went straight into this world and just started learning in this really amazing meilleur that I I was lucky enough to land in. So um and it it really sort of spoke to me you know it stuck. It worked for me because it was about actually giving voice. And it was about making critical content and it was also about having fun as a filmmaker and doing all the fun things that I thought filmmaking would unlock for me as well. So so yeah that was kind of my own my own journey into it.</p>
18:02:32	<p>Interviewer: Those issues and the groups. Did you interact with these groups? And did they expose you to new issues and ways of thinking about race or gender or sexuality or were you already involved in that political realm?</p>
18:03:08	<p>JD: Well um working at Oval Video was this incredible experience of not having a postgraduate education but having a massive postgraduate experience in life and learning about lots of people and lots of ways of being and lots of ways of living that I really had never had any contact with I was pretty sheltered. But the late 70s was a very political time, I was involved in politics, I'd been involved in politics from school onwards you know and I'd been involved in political issues and thinking politically and being politically active and I had thought that maybe um at one point that a life in politics was perhaps what lay ahead of me but in fact I got sort of seduced by aesthetics. You know by wanting to make lovely things as opposed to just activist things somewhere along along my journey.</p>
18:04:06	<p>JD: So I was aware of certain sorts of political issues but I hadn't had any experience and I mean I was barely able to hold the ring in the conversation to hold the conversation to go into a trade union meeting or a black group. Or to go into a room where I was the only white person was a challenging experience for me at the age of 22 you know to go into a room of to be working with with the kind of gay groups that I was working with as a straight man at that point was a challenging experience for me at the age of 22. So that was all really really challenging and exciting and difficult and fun and amazing. So I look back on it and I think how did I get away with it. How did they put up with me. What must those people have thought about this young lad because of course I look at people now who are 22 and just think babies! What must they have thought you know of this young young guy coming along saying let's do this or how can we do this? Or I think we should do this or what about you know how about approaching it like this.</p>
18:05:18	<p>JD: I mean I think I was I was not I wasn't stupid enough to think that I knew what was going on and I allowed other people to lead the conversation most of the time I was learning and watching and facilitating you know a lot of the time. So yeah it was challenging for me personally but really amazing too.</p>

18:05:36	<p>JD: I think the other thing that happened to me as a result of those experiences was that I got quite I got really interested in documentary and documentary practice and what it's like to be a documentary maker and what the ethics of documentary are. And I started to understand myself as a documentarist you know I was starting to understand myself as a documentary filmmaker cos that's kind of what I was doing. I was going into communities and forming relationships and finding stories and then representing those stories and editing them and help and doing distribution all that work of documentary. So I began to identify quite strongly. So by the end of that time I mean I began to understand myself I suppose as a kind of documentarist and I'd kind of done my post-graduate training and I knew you know what I knew enough about what I was about to go off into the world and do other things.</p>
18:06:34	<p>Interviewer: How did your experience then, making community videos at that time, the early 80s. How did that influence your work up to now?</p>
18:07:11	<p>JD: I need to think about that without just making it a litany of events. And I'm just thinking about it.</p>
18:07:18	<p>Interviewer: Well if there specific things that were influenced or weren't, then do reference them.</p>
18:07:36	<p>JD: I think the time that I spent working in Community Video around those early years in the 1980s was absolutely constitutive for me and formative for me and really influential for me. The idea fundamentally that a mediated world is a site of political and cultural importance and that as many people as possible should be given access to that mediated world is really really fundamental to everything I've done ever since. To all of my work. So I'd say it was incredibly formative. I mean I think I went into it with some hazy notions and came out of it with a bit of a manifesto and a sense of sense of a praxis that I could carry forward. So I say it was really really important.</p>
18:08:25	<p>JD: I left the Oval and went to Australia. And in Australia I worked in a place called Open Channel in Melbourne which was a much better equipped open access resource because they had proper money and they had proper equipment and I learnt how to start to work for broadcast. I made work which is again about giving voice to points of view that I didn't think were getting voiced. Actually the experiences of young men and the experiences of older people in that case in Australia was mainly most of two of the films that I worked on.</p>
18:09:02	<p>JD: And then I came back and really took it to a different direction and got involved in much more radical video art work and was part of... formed a whole new wave of people around the idea of scratch video. But that was deeply technologically informed by the notion of video and by the aesthetic of video and by what video was about as a technological form. So I mean I think that early experience of actually having to deal hands on with this equipment and with signals and with sync pulses and with the idea of electronic images and that as a, that as being the my technological matter, and the form that I work with that was very very important in that moment of scratch video and thinking about the aesthetics of scratch and what it could do in video what technology could do. And then also what you could do with that politically because that allowed me to unlock some some voices into the public sphere in a way that actually, nobody had done quite before because we were able to take video and make people say things that they hadn't ever said and do things that they hadn't ever done and we were allowed to use video editing as this form of manipulation and politics and political art in a way that nobody had done before. And we were able to get it on television which was ridiculous and amazing and fantastic.</p>
18:10:21	<p>JD: So so it was very it fed in to that as well. For instance I mean that was the mid '80s but then 10 years later int he mid '90s I'm in Bristol and I'm I produce a series of films around a project called 'Who's Language is it anyway?' Which was about different kinds of migrant groups in Bristol and a series of short films about the experience of different migrant groups and we worked with writers who had been working with those different groups and so we, I produced a series of short films 10 years later.</p>

18:10:57	<p>JD: And then 10 years after that, 20 years after that in fact. I've just recently finished working on a university-led research project called Creative Citizens which is about er how digital technologies empower people in their communities to do different kinds of cultural and activist and political work. And I worked on a project with a guy, and a group down in St Pauls in Bristol called South-Blessed and Vince the guy I was working with is a community video activist, or was a community video activist, except that these days he was doing lots and lots of music stuff as well as news stuff he had everything on a website, he had his a whole community video network and I worked with him because I was interested in that as a site. So actually it's gone through my life in various kinds of projects, it's continued to inform my work.</p>
18:11:57	<p>JD: I also think that one of the things that happened to me as I became an academic sort of from the mid '90s on and started to think about the impact of digital. I was still thinking about access, I was still thinking about who gets to speak. What voices are being empowered? What voices are being mobilised here? Who gets to have a voice? How does technology impact upon what it is that people are able to say? What's the role of technology?</p> <p>And if I was able to um try to compress all of my academic research interests I mean really I'm interested in the relationship between technology and cultural form. That's what, that's my academic track. I wouldn't be interested in technology and cultural form if I hadn't fallen in to Community Video in 1979 and picked this new technology and been at the cutting edge of new technology in 1979 and continued then to be interested in what's happening with video, what's happening with digital, what's a CD Rom, what's a web server, oh my god there's this thing called email. All the way through I've been really interested in technology and what technology enables people to do and I think that comes from that and being immersed in that world um so I think it was very important to me yeah.</p>
18:13:20	<p>Interviewer: How participatory really was community video?</p>
18:14:14	<p>JD: When you talk about Community Video the first thing to respond to that is to say well there were many different practices under that umbrella. It was a heterogeneous field of different things going on so there wasn't one method or one approach and to think of it as being a unified approach is a mistake.</p>
18:14:38	<p>JD: And within that there were many different levels of participation. There was here, here's the kit take it away do your thing bring it back next week, I don't care what you're doing. Then there was here take the kit bring it back next week because I really care what you're doing and I want to make sure you're working on the right side and I want to control the output of what you do but actually once you've got it take it away. And then there was um kind of err you want to express yourself or you want to say something or you've got something you need to communicate to a group of councillors or to the wider world or to some specific other community but you don't want to learn to become filmmakers actually you want us to help you communicate that message but we're facilitators, you don't want to make film, um you can look through the view finder and you can look at the rushes straight away afterwards and say oh that bit but not that bit and that's really good and we'll go away and do the rest. Then there was another level we're going to teach you how to do the whole thing yourself, and you can actually run the whole process and partici... and actually do everything. That was very very rare that actually people had complete control of the means of production, because they didn't want it! What they actually if they had something that they wanted to communicate more often than not they wanted you as a group of facilitators to actually run that process and manage that process and make those voices heard for them and on their behalf. So there was always mediation, there was always the politics of participation involved in that process. There's no pure space of that kind of participatory cultural work it's always mediated and there's always issues of control going on.</p>

18:16:34	JD: So there were lots of different modes of participation and lots of different kinds of relationship I guess is what I'd say and they weren't always clear. And the the manifesto, the propaganda and the pitch didn't always match the reality of what was going on on the ground.
18:16:53	JD: There were disagreements massively within the group you know. So Interaction Arts in Kentish Town I mean they had a way of doing things and you didn't do things that wasn't their way if you worked for them. The West London group and the Albany group had a particular kind of politics that they were really trying to work out on the ground. You know that was a proper praxis in action kind of struggling with it and trying to make it happen with a political programme hence reading Hans Magnus Enzenberger for fun.
18:17:26	JD: But then the group that I was with you know actually we actually just used to just do stuff because we thought it was beautiful pretty or interesting or exciting or because we thought it would be fun to go to Copenhagen and work on the festival of falls for a week and work with a whole load of performers on the dock side you know. We had a very different kind of, we had a, we didn't always we didn't always privilege participation or the purity of that kind of ethic in what we did you know we had a kind of different mix going on so there were a lot of different kinds of ways of doing that.
18:18:12	JD: I think if we were to talk about what the impact of that movement was and of that moment. Um I guess you can begin to think about a number of different ways of talking about that. One is that actually... Somebody said something to me about this kind of form of participatory video that I think is really important. You can never take a good experience away from somebody. If you give somebody a good experience they have that for life you can never take that away from them. So if we the people involved in working with those in those groups had a good experience that changed them in some way, that offered them something you don't know exactly what that means in someones life or where it goes or how it plays out in future years or what it does you don't always know.
18:19:00	Sometimes it's giving a young woman the confidence to register for a nursery nurse training programme from being completely on the out of her whole life at the age of 16 you know. She's not going to become a filmmaker but she's finding a life you know. Sometimes it means er somebody meeting somebody that actually changes their life because they have another kind of relationship. Sometimes it means somebody changing what they do in terms of the way they communicate themselves with the world or how they feel about themselves. You know there's all kinds of effects that participatory cultural experience have on people that aren't to do with everyone becoming a filmmaker. So there are those level of impacts that are unknown and unmeasured by and large because we weren't called upon to measure more or less anything! Mainly what we were called upon to measure was actually what I remember what I remember having to record for our funding bids was number of hires, number of people that had hired the equipment number of people that used the equipment and the range of groups that used the equipment. So our metrics were flow of people through the door and breadth of spread those were our metrics that gave us our funding that's what I remember having to keep records of all the time um.
18:20:17	Interviewer: Where did your funding come from?

<p>18:20:20</p>	<p>JD: Our funding came from (coughs) the 2 local councils. We got funding from Wandsworth Borough Council and Lambeth Borough Council and it came through various kinds of libraries, leisure, culture kind of committees. It was a tiny amount of money really that we got. Then we would, we tried to apply then for community arts money, GL... London Arts Board Money. I think we tried to apply to the Gulbenkian Foundation and different kinds of trusts like that. And then we were sort of in to looking for film and television money as I remember it. I can't really... I mean I remember writing funding bids all the time I'm not sure I can remember who for. Mainly our core funding was from the local councils and then also ILEA. There was a thing called ILEA Inner London Education Authority it was a cross London education authority they were quite big in our game, they they had money for what would now be called informal educational initiatives and youth work so there was money in those kinds of spaces as well.</p>
<p>18:21:32</p>	<p>JD: But to go back to the question about impact and empowerment and so on so there was a whole lot of impacts upon individuals that happened that are a bit unknown. But then there was also a kind of more generalised kind of media literacy impact that actually people were learning about mediation through this time in preparation for the '80s. The '80s became this mediated decade, everybody suddenly went media, everybody understood media, media was everywhere, media studies courses exploded everywhere, people wanted to learn about media, that hadn't happened before. So it was really at the vanguard of that moment that produced this kinda consciousness of what media was, which was this generalised form of social media literacy and actually the community video people were right in there with that I think at the very beginning. I mean that's not to say they invented it because they were building on some historical roots and antecedents and stuff that came from America and so on and so on. But I think they were a very important step on that route to a sort of generalised media literacy that exploded in the 1980s.</p>
<p>18:22:38</p>	<p>JD: And then again there were the impacts that happened with specific people and specific groups around specific campaigns and specific struggles and specific attempts to get that zebra crossing changed or you know to change that situation for housing or to get the those housing conditions there are all those kind of impacts that you could look back on I mean all those micro stories of community action and community struggle. But there was never a pure place of participatory empowerment and there never has been and never will be in any form of mediated production.</p>
<p>18:23:17</p>	<p>(JD & Interviewer have brief discussion about modern apps and mediation on interfaces like Snapchat and filters on Instagram etc.)</p>
<p>18:23:52</p>	<p>JD: One of the things that I was um I mean... The first book that I made was a book made in 1995 or 6 called Fractal Dreams and it was about the politics of new media and it was a book of essays and it was about challenging utopian aspirations for technology and mediation. And so I have been kind of both seduced by the power of technology and the force of technology and also critical of it in equal measure since my early days of working with this kind of with media technologies you know. I'm very kind of um excited by what you can do with technology and thinking about digital technology in particular it's clear that there was a lot of rhetoric about empowerment and people being able to do what they want and say what they want but at the same time it's become clear I think especially in the last 3 or 4 years that actually er it's a much darker, more constrained, more controlled world than a world of free expression so actually this is this kind of essential conflict around the politics of technology that goes back to thinking about those days and those early experiences that's been throughout my whole career. And also I think is very relevant when thinking about the politics of participation and digital technologies now I mean I think all those debates are really really relevant about who gets to say what to whom with what and how all those questions seem important you know still, so, it doesn't go away.</p>
<p>18:25:30</p>	<p>(Brief discussion about some video tapes & Jon put on his glasses)</p>

Jon Dovey - LCVA transcript

18:26:11	JD: The one thing about community video that you really need to record is that most of it was fantastically boring! It's very important to remember that it was really dull so as a mass media movement it had a very limited trajectory because it was only really interesting to the people that were producing this very specific things.
18:26:45	(JD looking at some video tapes - mainly Carol's tapes)
18:28:00	END of clip