

CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

TC	Sync
00:00:07	<b>Interviewer:</b> Where did you grow up?
00:00:20	<b>Clive Scolley:</b> I grew up in Canberra. Which was an extraordinary frontier at the time when I grew up. My father migrated there from after being a prisoner of war in Germany for five years and um he was an architect and an artist. And I always spent my my life as a singer or being involved in the arts in my one way or another or student politics and student politics. Um I um ended up in the public service much against, after my graduation. I did a degree in politics and law and then I did a design graduate design diploma in which I did some field studies 16 mm. And made a film that won an AFI award in Australia with Ben Lewin who later went on to make some quite well-known films. And I found myself I was um drafted to go off to Vietnam but I had had a car accident when I was 17 so cutting a long story short I ended up not having to go to Vietnam and instead joined the public service. I had always thought of myself as being um in the media as a commentator on this side of the camera, because quite a few of my mates did become that. And um instead I ended um helping to set up the Australian Film, Radio and Television School which put me in touch with a whole swag of future policies for the development of cinema in Australia.
00:02:05]	<b>CS:</b> So I learned to do 16 millimeter production. In the great old days of celluloid and um but at the same time I started to read about the Challenge for Change programme in Canada run by George Stoney which was using video as a community development tool. Mostly with Inuits and North American Indians and I was I thought that I could find a way to apply that but I spent three years working as executive officer to set up the Australian Film, Radio and Television School and once Jerzi Toeplitz had been appointed the director of that school I left having got hold of the film rights to D.H. Lawrence's Kangaroo and I went to America and Los Angeles and New York and then to London to sell the D.H. Lawrence story. But on the way when I was in San Francisco staying with some friends a new stream opened which was closer to the um the um Challenge for Change stream. I ran into a bunch of guys run by um led by a guy named Michael Schönberg or Shonberg. They were the video the video freaks. And um they were going to the Democratic and Republican conventions to use video as a as a confrontational tool in the way but also a new production tool. And friends of mine were friends of theirs so I ended up going with them to, after I'd been to Hollywood and hadn't had a lot of success, and still on my way to New York, I took a side trip to Miami Beach and worked with them on the floor of the convention center using video. And we we were part of the whole hippy zippy yippy fraternity down in Flamingo Park later on. Who were there to support McGovern who was running against Nixon. And there were a lot of Australians tied up in that business but I learned a lot about un video as a production tool.
00:04:08	<b>CS:</b> I then travelled up to New York and went and met and stayed in Greenwich Village and met George Stonie and spent quite a lot of time with him talking about the underpinnings of the Challenge for Change programme and why it worked and what didn't work and why video was the right tool to use. Then I drove back down to Miami Beach for the Nixon re-election with a bunch of Vietnam Vets Against the War. So it was a pretty politically charged environment which I was very much a part of. And we once again we were part of the Flamingo Park crowd who were taking on Nixon and the anti, who were part of the anti-war movement.
00:04:50	And from there I flew to London. By then I was starting to run out of money for getting my production of D.H. Lawrence up but I had learned a whole lot of new skills along the way with video and I felt more at home in that video world that I certainly did in the offices of the production companies of Hollywood, or in New York. George Stoney was awesome I really enjoyed talking to him. So I was running out of money and I was walking down the mall one day to the, is it the ICA? The Institute of Contemporary Art? There was a placard outside there saying there was a big discussion about the future of video. So I said I know a bit about that I'll call in and I found myself sitting in the audience you know is was some kind of an open forum about discussing the future of video. And I kept found myself continually getting up and down and say well I don't think it's quite going to be like that. I think it's more like this and you know I've just come from America and this is what they're doing over there and I think it'll probably be, you know, go in this direction and at the end of that forum ED Berman walked over to me and said "Would you like a job?" and I said "What do you need?" He said well we've just commissioned a Mercedes Van and Big Red Media Van and we need a Captain Video to run it. You want to do that? Apply what you've learned in America. And I said "Well I wasn't exactly looking for a job but sure I'd like to do that" And so I became a member of InterAction.

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

00:06:28	<p>And then the funny thing was that I was taken almost straight away to the InterAction warehouse up in Kentish Town. Where I'm, the first person I met was an Australian who was the son of a friend of mine, one of the Burns family and er his mother was working with Gough Whitlam, as Gough Whitlam was private secretary in Canberra. So there was an immediate Australian connection and I said is this okay this organisation to work for? He said it was so you know I'm sure you know about InterAction it had 70 members of, it was made up of a range of politically motivated artists and performers and filmmakers and video makers and so on. The whole organisation cohered around the Ed Birman game method which was a really useful tool for brokering discussions. It was a way in which you could walk into any context and in two hours have a creative output by a group of people. Any type of people from kids to policemen to executives to community um members of community organisations. And so we lived and worked, I think we paid ourselves a pound a day, but all everything else was provided in the way of food and accommodation in squats in Kentish Town. And the project that I was in charge of the Media Van had been funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain. We were the extension arm of an exhibition no one even in those days the word environment was just not known. No one knew what we were talking about how to play the environment game.</p>
00:08:22	<p>So there were some fairly politically astute people in InterAction and I recruited a few others who had come from various political backgrounds and we were a team of five or six travelling. We er we began our work commissioning the van I suppose in the East End, in er Docklands. We ran the Docklands, we were working with the Docklands campaign and we were their, their back up if you like. We introduced video into situations that gave them an opportunity to interview um councillors and people living in housing you know a lot of walk-up two story walk-ups and very very old established families working class you know a friend of mine described it as the last victims of the British Empire all lived in the East End. And I felt quite at home you know because they speak a language close to mine and I took I had my guitar with me wherever I went, we used to do a lot of singing. And so we we provided our our knowledge of video and other production tools. Now I need to explain that the Media Van was a big red Mercedes van that was fitted, we had PortaPaks, a couple of PortaPaks that we could take out of the van. But we had some playback decks in the van. We're talking a half inch black and white video here. So those playback on the side of the van from the outside there were two screens so you could, they were fitted so that the sun didn't shine on the screens and the pub and you could set it up in a park or on the side of a road and the public could come along and watch a video which was being played from the machines inside.</p>
00:10:21	<p>We also had a 16 millimeter projector and you could open up the two back doors and put a roof over the back doors and project rear projection, project movies so that once again you could put on a show at night. Preferably at night was it worked best then but we could do it during the day as well. So we went to festivals and events and hard core political action, activities.</p>
00:10:51	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you know how ED go the initial idea of the van?</p>
00:11:05	<p>CS: I think he and Audrey Bernstein. Audrey had been working had heard about video and had started to do some video production and I think it was bringing together what um InterAction was very good at which was street, working in the streets. They had done a lot of street theatre and street performers so they were, this was a tool that added another dimension by using the latest technology. It was meant to be a public instrument that could be played by the public and accessed by the public much as you would do street theatre except that you could show movies and video and use that contemporary technology. It also had a printing press so you could run off leaflets. There were all the tools you need for a rally, for a demo, for you know to get people behind the cause. So what we were doing in East End was rallying people behind the Docklands campaign and essentially the idea was to try and keep the middle class out of their yachting Marinas out of the East End and to try and I think the bottom line was to keep mixed housing. In the East End rather than as was planned to remove everybody who'd lived in a horizontal landscape if you like in those houses of the East End to be replaced by vertical tower blocks and the occupants of those horizontal villages were being moved to the absolute extreme suburbs of outer areas of London to live in tower blocks. We took our cameras and went and saw where some of these people were being moved to and interviewed them and saw what the what how much they hated that kind of life and we recorded how rich the life was and did a lot of hard core interviews and this was led by the Docklands campaign.</p>

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

00:12:56	And then we would go and to festivals and events and by the side of the street to get petitions signed and to get people on board and to back the campaign to to keep the Docklands with its own culture. And we did that for I don't know maybe a few months as our first hard core activity working in the community. We also did a few fun things with the van like street theatre and we'd do the roof of the media van with reinforced so it could be a stage. I play the guitar and we had members of the Dog's Troop and other street theater people come on gigs with us and we'd perform and do street theatre shows for kids and that sort of stuff. There's an ironic twist in this story um I always wondered how effective that Docklands campaign had been because you know the Docklands is obviously a place that now has been the heart of the banking industry for Europe and you know at the Canary Wharf and you know all of that populist kind of middle class activity that goes on in there now.
00:14:13	My current partner has a brother who lives on the Isle of Dogs. He's a film animator and when I first met her I said he is exactly the kind of guy that we were trying to keep out of there. You know this is just a little joke I had with her. And then we went to visit him in the Isle of Dogs and he is a film animator and I'll explain what he does in a minute but it turned out that he is married to one of the families who lived in one of the original walk-ups that we worked to save. And it's wonderful I'm going to be staying there tonight. I'm going to stay there and in amongst all of these tower blocks those old three or four story walk-ups are still there, with the same families that were there you know have been there for generations. So Ralph Ralph's wife, and her mother and family prior to that had lived there for before he came along. So it is amazing to experience something that was a positive outcome from that campaign. I mean obviously dead Docklands are a sitting duck for development and they've been developing, but that campaign actually did make sure that the East End has got integrated housing and that there is some of the old culture there that there is some of the old vibe and feeling of the East End and so and I have experienced that in my own life many years later. So that campaign I know it did work.
00:15:51	And they were really committed hardworking people and I wish I could remember the names of the leaders of that group. But I will tell you one funny story. We we gave our services to festivals and events and on one occasion we were booked by the E1 festival, which was to raise funds for the E1 football club. And the guy that was running the whole event whole festival was an Irishman. And a nice fella, got to know him quite well, and er I'm just a simple naive bloke from Australia who's working in the arts and you know doing good, working with this media in community development, community work, community arts. And we had our vans set up and as we did with all of these festivals we had trained a group of young fellas from that place to run the van and we just supervised. And they'd made a film about their youth activities or the youth hall that they worked in and you know how important it was to them and music and stuff. And they had control of the van so I was just there supervising. With I think one other interaction member and an old former interaction girl came over and said I've just been in the toilets and I've overheard a conversation there's a rival gang that are going to come and smash your van. And I'm thinking not while I'm on the watch and so I went to the guy who is running the festival the Irishman and he said "well Clive" he said "It's time the vale struck from your eyes" he said "You need to understand who this festival is for, this is very the East End and the chairman of the festival committee is none other than Mr. Kray himself. You've heard of the Kray brothers?" he said "He does not want any trouble on his patch I'll be takin care of it for yer" Okay so just go back to the van things'll settle down in a few minutes so I went back into the van and I'm standing there. And this guy comes up behind me and taps me on the shoulder. And I turn round and I know I'm looking into the steely blue eyes of a professional killer. This guy says to me "I understand you're having no trouble mate" And I said "Yeah but maybe not that much trouble" he said "Don't worry about fmg I've got my little shooter in here, if there's any more trouble, if there's any trouble I'll be shooting a few kneecaps off and I'll be staying here for the rest of the afternoon. The Boss don't like any trouble on his patch right"
00:18:38	And I'm thinking oh my god this is you know we came to the arts in a community context and when it comes down to it the real issue is that you know a place where the East End is expressing itself in its own way. And so I got to know those guys after that and they at the end of that festival we went to the Australian Cricketers Arms ironically which is a pub nearby where I met the man himself and the boss of the festival. And um it was an interesting time.
00:19:12	<b>Interviewer:</b> And you went outside London as well with the van?

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

00:19:15	<p>CS: Well the van was booked to travel with the ED had funded the van through the Arts Council of Great Britain to be an attachment to an exhibition called 'How to Play the Environment Game'. So having cut our teeth in the East End we were um to hit the road to travel to Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle upon Tyne, Liverpool, Bristol and Southampton where this exhibition was in the regional gallery of each of those major cities and we were the living extension of the exhibition. So it was left up to us pretty much to define what we would do and what it meant to be the action end of that exhibition. And so we we developed it pretty much along the lines of what we'd been doing in the East End and the way we did it was that I went ahead of the, you know I forget what time frame, but like a month ahead, to each city and I would contact all of the action groups in those, in the city. In Birmingham and all sorts of different action groups who were a lot of a lot of what was happening in Britain at that time was what to do with housing and housing estates that were being demolished and new housing being built and tenants associations and tenants rights and a lot of that those kind of action groups. Along with some black guys who had race issues that they were dealing with in Liverpool. Along with some people in Birmingham who were fighting to an endless and infinite battle to give the Gypsies, the Travellers a voice. And a few other sort of a mixed bag of organisations but a lot of housing associations and tenants associations, tenants groups.</p>
00:21:19	<p>So I would go ahead, meet the various action groups, maybe arts organisations and meet the museum or art gallery where the exhibition was going to be. And then at the time that the exhibition was opening in each place we would arrive set up and spend six weeks or three months I forget now exactly what period of time, we were on the road for two years. So it could have been six months, when I think about it. Maybe three to four months in each case 24 months that'd be right. And in that four months we would, we learned very quickly that in a lot of cases when we were working with local organisations we didn't tell them we had a media van. We'd introduce ourselves through the local action group as a group of production people who were making our resource available, our video resource available. We sometimes used the game method to get a group of people feeling comfortable with each other and us, and get them up to a particular creative level so they felt like they could produce something. In other cases we simply were an extension of some campaign that was already in place. And so over those months we would slowly evolve. We talk, we'd get a production done and then we talk through with the group and say now who are you making this video for? Where do you want to show it? And what sort of context?</p>
00:22:52	<p>And they'd say oh we want to take it to this market but how would we do that? And then we'd say well we just happen to have a media van that might it's got the capacity to play back videos and show films and things and we can even run off leaflets to tell people where it's on or what that sort of thing. But we didn't sort of rush in with this big red van and say hey look we've got the answer to the way things are or to be.</p>
00:23:18	<p>Um so we worked with quite a few groups. The Brumm gypsies was an interesting one. We um not unlike working with Aboriginal people, which I've been doing ever since then with media in Australia, but the gypsies were they were under pressure as they are everywhere. They set up in a cul-de-sac or in a little siding somewhere or whatever and we would spend the night with a group of people who are sitting around fires and singing and you know this full Gypsy strength of their culture and we'd record that. And then the next day that the Brumm Council would move in with graders and bulldozers and pull em out. And what I did notice was that no you know you had this fantastic sense of of a gypsy culture while we were there at night and we went to quite a few Gypsy weddings and things and filmed the weddings to give them some documentation of their own processes. But when it came to the confrontations the next day no gypsy went to the aid of another Gypsy. Each Gypsy simply looked after his own family and his own unit. And we worked out in discussion with them that if they ever did go to the assistance of each other they'd be seen to be an army or they'd be a threat like they'd be a gang or some sort of a major threat anyway. So we helped them to present their case to the court and and to raise awareness about the age old you know Birmingham's the age old cross over for Gypsies going north south east and west and it's a perennial problem that's been there for centuries. So I don't think anybody had any expectation there'd be any change but it was, they thought it was worthwhile and the group that was supporting them thought it was worthwhile to at least present a new point of view.</p>
00:25:22	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> And where were those videos seen?</p>

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

00:25:24	<p>We played them in the Bullring, in public venues and um we also did I think, I think in Birmingham we worked with a couple of housing associations and we would we would work with the tenants association who had specific concerns about their places being demolished, or their places requiring maintenance or whatever and we would film the tenants and the circumstances in which we lived and then they would come with the video to go and see the corpie so we'd be in the corpie's offices and go [sound] and the group would be saying these are our demands, this is what we're here for, here are the circumstances and here's my uncle to introduce the video. And in those days no one had any idea about you know the corpies were taken completely by surprise they had no idea that this tool was there and able to be instantaneous. We talked to him in the morning and here he is in the afternoon sitting on the table with the chief executive of the corpie with a list of demands. So people were able to articulate their case and you know the outcomes were whatever those outcomes were, it was a political process. But it was a very potent tool and a way in which the tenants had a feeling at least of some strength when they were in a negotiating situation that they had the real issues on camera being expressed.</p>
00:26:58	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Just so I'm sure about this, is the 'corpies' like an Australian term?</p>
	<p>CS: The corpie, we learnt that not he road I don't remember if it was in Liverpool or Birmingham or Newcastle no it's not Australian.</p>
	<p>CS: So the initial crew was a guy named George and er a couple of other people and I um recruited a girl named Yvonne. A woman named Lisa Wood, you should interview Lisa she. After she was with the interaction she became the political writer for The Financial Times, did that for 20 or 30 years. I think she's now retired from that but she was she really was understanding the politics. I think I think Lisa joined us from Bristol or maybe from Liverpool I forget. I should really have a record of it but. Um and Nick Sharman certainly joined us somewhere in there um he had he had it he'd been I think university in Newcastle and er The London School of Economics and he had a degree in town planning. So he was useful in terms of talking to you know talking through planning issues with people, he had an understanding but he had not spent much time in the streets and hadn't spent much time with people on the ground so you know there was an opportunity to engage his skill and our skill with. People who were living the real issues.</p>
	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If there's one kind of thing that you think from those years on the van that you remember especially is there one thing you remember as demonstrating the value of that work?</p>
	<p>Well as I've mentioned the East End story is proof that that kind of action did have an outcome. You know what's interesting is that it was the lowest probably the end position that people would like to take. They obviously didn't want any of that development to happen. But then the negotiated process and having those video tools in there was very much a part of the development and I think that was the case with video wherever we went. That video did play a quite important role in giving people a voice. Certainly you were able to demonstrate the things that were being talked about and the people who are being affected by whatever was happening in the way of development or re re, demolition. In Liverpool we worked with the Byker war with the people who were about to be they were building the Byker wall which has now been socially was seen as the great new way to build um community housing. And it's ended up as quite a disaster in terms of people that live there now. As you know it's turned into a place where. It was absolutely cutting edge technology and cutting edge design Swedish architects and um. So we were working with people that were going to be moving into there or were opposed to the wall being built.</p>
	<p>So you I think it's that the immediate nature of video and the fact that we were able to capitalize on the passion that people had and take it into a situation often of confrontation to a degree. But I think it did play a part in positive outcomes or in outcomes that were under the control of the people who produced it. So I think that would be one thing that I would note from all of that time together, all together in those various cities.</p>
	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> So after you'd finished with the van what did you do then?</p>
	<p>Are we um when the tour came to an end um Audrey and Ed had got a contract to install um oh what was it called? Cable TV in Milton Keynes. We'd we done the contract in some they had a some association while we were on the road with another place in the southwest. And we so we went and stayed in Milt, camped in Milton Keynes. So Nick and I stayed in Milton Keynes in the new City of Milton Keynes which back then was nothing was no city at all. It was just a whole series of medieval villages that were being unified into this future design city. Which fascinated Nick because he had done quite a lot of work on studying planned cities like the one I grew up in which was Canberra and a couple of other places in the world. So it was quite interesting to be there on the ground floor. We were we were we did quite a lot of community arts work in Milton Keynes.</p>

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

	<p>A community arts officer at the time was a guy named Nick Waterlow and I met the mother of my first son in Milton Keynes she was a photographer who Nick brought along to, we were doing a medieval festival, some kind of medieval festival and our van was used to spruik the festival and play music on the loudspeakers and I was playing my guitar and singing silly songs and dressed in a silly costume and and so were quite a lot of other people. So we did a lot of that community arts stuff but also finding ways in which this cable television network would be useful.</p>
	<p>It's an interesting process when you're working with people who are moving you know. We live in and at that time we live now in a state of change. But in those days there were quite radical changes happening for people post Second World War. It had taken you know the 20 years since the 30 years since the Second World War for the momentum of redesigning cities and redesigning peoples lives. And so people that were being affected by this new city they were going to be demolishing the places that they lived in and knew. The new Milton Keynes was being built. And then in Milton Keynes Corporation was attempting, to be fair to the Milton Keynes corporation, to be involved in a process of consultation. I don't think they quite expected it to go as hard as we did in some cases with people who had genuine cases. That they wanted to present of what was what were the outcomes of being.</p>
	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> So you were still with the van then but you also generating material for Channel 40 is that right?</p>
	<p>It may have been used when... Carrie was we met Carrie and first of all in Sheffield when we were there in um she was with another company um back then and we had quite we did quite a few gigs with as I said with the Dog Troupe and Street Theatre and things and we worked with the theatre company in she's in Sheffield that she was a part of and she she started using video in an active way and that dovetailed together when we were in Milton Keynes. I don't recall where else specifically we worked together but she was always there at InterAction headquarters and you know they would come along with us on some gigs and join in. I got to know Carrie very well.</p>
	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> She's got an interview on the site so very nice. So then after Milton Keynes?</p>
	<p>I went back to Australia.</p>
	<p>Why did you decide to do that?</p>
	<p>Just felt right um I've been here for three years and I wanted to go home and see if there was anything that I'd learned that was applicable in Australia. Interestingly when I got back there there was a video movement that had started in Australia with the video centres in quite a few places in Sydney and places where there were fixed video centres where video is being used as a community tool. In a location like Marrickville or which is an inner Sydney City suburb. To do a bit like what we had been doing. So I threw my lot in with a few people that were doing that stuff and helped out a bit in some production work and then I ran into an old friend. From my days at uni who had a radio program in um well no sorry.</p>
	<p>One of the things that I was conscious of while I was working all over the place in the East End I used to run into lots of people in the East End who used to say "mate what you should be doing with all the people here is encouraging them to migrate to Australia cos there's no future for them, these people in the East End that were being shifted willy nilly against their will. Tell them to move to Australia they might have a future" And I thought about what that really means and I also thought about along the way started to get people asking me questions about Aboriginal culture. And I didn't feel that I could answer those questions about the country I live in but I had had actually probably more experience than a lot of people with Aboriginal people because my father who had been an arch, was an architect and artist had worked with the Aboriginal community at on the south coast. But that is very much a New South Wales culture it's been damaged by the white fellas for some time. Whereas I wanted to try and understand the essence of the culture.</p>
	<p>My father had said to me when I was growing up he'd migrated to Australia and I was one and a half when I moved there. He said Son we're never going to be comfortable in this country until we understand the people that have been here before us. And adopt into our culture the things that are right for us and can progress that culture and you know maybe you should be finding out about it and seeing what you can do to assist. I never took that seriously you know but then while I was here I was thinking you know, here I am working with the last victims of the British Empire in the East End, as my mate said. And working on you know the role of change in a in British society at that particular time and getting a big snapshot of it right round the country. Maybe I should be thinking about how what I'm doing here can apply in Australia.</p>

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

So I went back and I you know tinkering around the edges of the video movement and then this mate of mine who was doing what I always wanted to do was to be in the media. He had his own radio show and he was blowing the whistle on asbestosis on asbestos. And anyway he had a some half hour program and I ran into him in William Street in Sydney I said I've got a studio over here come over and I'll do an interview with you because whatever you been doing in England it sounds really interesting. So I went over and we had a chat, half hour talk and I talked about what we'd been doing in England.

And er Matt Peacock his name was Matt. And at the end of the interview all these telephones lit up on the desk you know these incoming calls and I got about five offers of work right there. You know I hadn't I'd only come back and I'd only been there for a matter of weeks and one of those calls came from Darwin and it just this is in March early March when Cyclone Tracy had happened in December just before that. So they were looking there was no communications system in the city of Darwin. Television, radio and everything had been blown away and it and many of the occupants of Darwin, all the women and children had been evacuated.

And so this guy who was running the Darwin disaster welfare council for NT council of social services was really interested in setting up an internal communications system where people could talk to each other. The Department of Social Services had devised this system where all the men that were left behind in the city of Darwin after the disaster could go into a department of social services office and record or get hold of a video camera and a crew go out to the house that they were rebuilding record it what their work was and take it back to the DSS and it would be distributed down to wherever their wife and children had been sent. Who could in turn go into a DSS office in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide and watch the videos.

So I helped with that system but I also helped in a more informal system of communication internally in Darwin with families that were still there who really needed a bit of spirit lifting and a bit of um you know entertainment. And so we used to bootleg or I'd go to Sydney and places like that and bootleg concerts on video. I recorded er what's his name not Cat Stevens, Donovan in Darwin and nearly got bashed up by his manager because I was sitting there with the camera hidden in the audience and recording it all. I did J.J. Cale and I did um illegally all of them just with a video camera in my lap. Phil'd get a seat near the front and have kept the power pack under the bench had to change the reels. A whole gang of us were doing that. And then I'd take em back up to Darwin and show them.

We set up um er a playback system in the park in central Darwin so people would come and have the evening's entertainment and watch the latest stuff from J.J. Cale or whatever. Yeah it was interesting and then. So that was about a little bit about a town rebuilding itself or a city rebuilding itself and in the process of that I had a production studio next door to.

**Interviewer:** Interruptions for Noise.

I had a production an editing suite right next door to the Aboriginal Cultural Foundation. Whose job it was to keep to sp. We had a board of elders across northern Australia from the Kimberley's to Arnhem Land and into north Queensland to keep traditional Aboriginal culture strong. And over a period of time I build a relationship with them and did some quite groundbreaking work with them using video to support their cultural endeavours. We recorded, they did some very big festivals as a form of cultural expression and I helped to film those.

I had met up as I said in Milton Keynes with Penny Tweedie who was became my partner and the mother of my son Ben and she and I had gone to Australia together. And she and I lived in Darwin and we went, she was photographing and I was doing videos and we we ended up as creative arts fellows at the Australian National University. Joint creative arts fellows and we worked on a film, a new media kind of production using stills and and Super 8 movie that so that it kind of animated the stills. There was a new supersonic sound er mixing system at the time Electrasonic. I think it was called so you could dissolve two cameras, two projectors and a third projector into one as you projected it. And so we did. I was commissioned by the Aboriginal arts board to make a film about Aboriginal video about Aboriginal well a film cos they used Super 8 and video about Aboriginal bark painters and we did a story for National Geographic magazine, The American one, and we did, Penny did a book, several books so our output was quite strong.

And we did spent quite a lot of time working with Aborigine giving Aboriginal people the opportunity to produce their own stuff. Either in Darwin or out in Arnhem Land and we lived, we had a studio in Canberra from 1978 and '79 and but worked in Arnhem Land and lived extensively in Arnhem Land working on productions and got to know quite a few people lived in, living on outstations, total traditional culture.

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

In 1979 we organised the first exhibition of bark painting ever in an Australian gallery at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Ironically Nick Waterlow who had been the arts officer in Milton Keynes had become the director of the Biennale in Sydney and so he commissioned us. The mutual connection was Penny whose best friend was Nick MoWaterlow's wide wife and so we had talked a bit over a period of time and Nick had had a lot of demand to get Aboriginal out into the biennale that year. It was called European dialogue. But there are a lot of European artists coming to Australia who all wanted to engage with Aboriginal art. So Nick organised for us to bring down these artists and some huge bark paintings and we also produced a film which was shown so the artists felt comfortable when they came down from Arnhem Land they would sit in this theatre as this film was shown taking them back to their country. They feel comfortable enough to enter into a dialogue with people. So that was all part of a package.

But in that year too there was a huge conference at the AIATSTS the Australian Indigenous Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra. They had an ethnographic filmmakers conference a group of you know all the best filmmakers from all over the world. It was an international conference and Penny and I and some of our Aboriginal friends from Arnhem Land and a couple of other filmmakers went deliberately to be provocative and I found myself in a situation not unlike it had been at the ICA. Here were all these, many years before here were all these big shot fantastic filmmakers and we were taking our position from having been in Arnhem Land saying "Isn't it time that you were putting your cameras in the hands of the people you're filming? You know you are wonderful filmmakers and you're telling you're opening the world to stories from Africa and India and you know Aboriginal Australia and the Arctic and Antarctic and whatever but you're telling the stories about people rather than putting the cameras in their hands. Isn't it time that they told their own stories and in their own way?" Um so we were a bit provocative at that conference.

I was about nearly a year later I was had just finished, Penny had gone back to England and we'd sort of split up she moved back here with Ben and um I was thinking I really wanted to go find out about the desert, immerse myself in the desert, and I just finished the text for the last final edit for the National Geographic story and I got a phone call. And this woman rings me up and says "Hello I'm Petronella Wayfair and I'm at the Institute of Aboriginal development in Alice Springs and I'm wondering if you'd like to put the words that you were speaking at the ethnographic filmmakers conference into action? There are some Aboriginal people here who want to start a radio station. Would you like to come and be their consultant? They've got enough money to employ you for a couple of months and so I was on the next plane and out of that process um CAAMA was established the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association.

I was their first trainer, their first consultant, their first. We bought the first lot of equipment and one of the things that I did first of all was to take the CAAMA committee, the future committee, on a road trip to see television stations and radio stations around Australia. And we had lined up in Sydney, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide for people to see commercial stations and ABC and community stations and there was no other Aboriginal media in Australia, this was the first.

And so they the interesting thing was that the man who had the vision for this radio station was Johnny Macumba supported by Philip Battie. Macumber was an extremely intelligent guy an aboriginal man but he had a disability, he had M.S. very badly, so when he walked he looked like a drunk man. But once he was in a place he could he was a very clever negotiator and a very clever articulate speaker but you know getting him there was a bit of a problem and I thought a lot about how what we how we could get him into situations without everyone being a bit embarrassed because in an instant response from most people would be oh look there's a drunken Aboriginal I didn't want that to be happening. So I contacted each of the places we were going to asked them if they had a boardroom could we meet go to the board room and our little group of six or five or six people, seven people. Go and sit in a boardroom and then maybe the production staff could come and talk to them. So this was the future board of karma who had experience all the way round Australia of sitting in the boardroom and the production staff coming to them asking them questions about what their job was and what their role was and so on and then being taken by those production staff. To show them the facilities so that they were right from the very beginning in control if you like.

It even worked that way in Parliament House in Canberra. We went to meet the Minister for Communications Tony Staley and we got a committee room in Parliament House and all the politicians that wanted to come and see us came and saw us. So we were there sitting in control and they came and saw us and Tony Staley actually offered the delegation the premises the old Telstra premises in Alice Springs and Gap road which became the studios headquarters for CAAMA for some time.

And we also when we went to Melbourne we had enough we had a small grant from the films commission which to buy some equipment. So we we bought a couple of roving recording microphones and recording tapes and a mixing desk. And it was just amazing the name of the mixing desk that we bought in Melbourne was The Alice. Fancy there being a mixing desk called The Alice to go to ALice. And one of the first things that...

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

After my the consultancy money ran out I had to keep going. So a friend of mine from D.A a Department of Aboriginal Affairs Ronnie Little contacted me and said "oh look Eartha Kitt is going to be in Alice Springs would and it would be fantastic if you could document her visit. Would you mind filming it and her visit? She's going out to Papunya and visiting some communities in Alice." And I said sure but don't pay me, pay CAAMA and so we went out to the few communities and things and at the end of the day they did pay me and I discovered towards the end of the trip that Earth Kitt was this huge role model for a lot of the black women, Aboriginal women because there were no other role models of highly successful black face a black woman. And here she was in their presence so one of the members of the board was Barbie Shure who was a really articulate, very smart woman who had been in the health service but to her Earth Kitt was a goddess.

So I said well this is your opportunity to test your skills as an interviewer. You do the interview with Eartha Kitt and Barbie was then absolutely petrified but she did it really brilliantly. So one of the first ever interviews done on the new equipment that was played dead on the half hour radio program that they had on a commercial station and then on ABC Radio, and then on 8 Triple C and it followed a whole suite of carriers until it got to CAAMA's own label and its own radio station and such.

So Eartha Kitt was one of the first people and they still talk about how she was the first person to give them some money, some commercial money.

To finish Jim Downing was the head of the Institute of Aboriginal Development and a pastor in the Uniting Church who had fought hard for Aboriginal land rights and he was leaving Central Australia to move to Darwin. He asked me to go with him to film his last journey through all the Pitchenjarra communities. And I thought if media is ever going to be useful in a remote context it would be a good idea to understand that remote contexts not just in Alice Springs. So I went with Jim and made a film called Nora Welcher which was about his saying goodbye to all these traditional elders and while I was on that trip I got to town, a place called Armita where there was a position as a community advisor available and I said to Jim I wouldn't mind trying that. And he said you know it'll make you or break you, it's a pretty tough town. So I decided that I would take on that job and I did.

And ultimately that leads to where I am now because Armita was a place with 10000 head of cattle and four or five hundred Aboriginal people and an arts centre. And I got a mate of mine and Peter Yates to come and run the arts centre. And we went in 1981 with a tent over to the foot of the climb at Uluru with a group of 20 artists or so and sat there for a week where they made their art. So we'd heard that there was going to be this thing called tourism and we wanted to find out whether we would be could be part of it. And so we sat there and the artists made their artifacts and wood carving and then did traditional dance at night. And then Peter Yates and his wife Pat Tarango worked for the next few years from Armita regularly visiting Uluru and created another more formal tent and eventually in 1984 they were given the old hotel which had been a visitor's centre in in the old Ayres Rock campground when Ulara village opened and that's where we are now as Maracu. So I'm now the general manager of Maracu living in that, working out of that warehouse in Wadajulu community at the foot of Uluru.

And working in the remote community of Arbirer in 1984 I went back to CAAMA to help the bid for the satellite which led to Imparja television and also to set up the brax system which was an attempt on the government's behalf to try and kill off Umabella video and TV. There were two um production units that were quite an annoyance to the government because they were self-funding and they were, you know, seemed to be a threat of revolution. There was a production unit in a community Pitjantjatjara community called Umabella and it was EVTVE have another place called Yundumu and they had um Wildpre media in both of those organisations where independent broadcasters. So they thought they could bury those two by creating a Brax system so they funded what later became quite a potent production tool because the Brax I think went into 22 communities around Australia and I put together the training manual and did the training of the initial people that worked in those communities. Community members who are running their own satellite television and in the process of that we also.

In the process of that we also made a um a film about um er we travelled with Warumpi Band through Arnhem Land and the Kimberleys and put together a film with leaders in those communities talking about their need to have communication. The wellspring for all of that at the time was that um I think people saw it as an opportunity for television to be um well for the Brax system to fight the inroads of television and then once once impartial was in place it was an opportunity for Aboriginal people to be expressing themselves on television. You know to fight the forces of television. Ironically Imperja is now a standard television production comp... er television channel that has the same commercial. It has the same commercials and the same kind of programming as any other because it's got quite a big footprint and beyond the Aboriginal communities and demand in those communities nowadays is for mainstream television although in keeping with television everywhere the medium is dying it's harder to attract advertisers than previously. And so um you know there isn't a lot of advertising but there are a lot of, ironically there are a lot of community service now commercials because they have access in the absence of other high paying television advertisers.

I really don't know what the future of Imperja will be. Mean the television industry is going through all kinds of shake outs and in the face of new media and you know online and all that sort of stuff. But I think you know it's it's probably going through quite a big change.

Aboriginal affairs in the meantime has been... I've been living in communities and working either in the media for much of the last 30 years and I think one of the things that's happened is that there is a fast pace of change being delivered by television and now by the mobile phone and mobile media that's having quite serious impact on the next generation the younger generation to pay more attention to which way round their basketball caps should be than listening to their grandfathers' with traditional culture.

That's not to say that the traditional culture is not still strong in places and in the Pitjantjatjara lands it's particularly strong but it's under attack from ironically from the media that is delivering the alternative, you know the mainstream American lifestyle that the whole world is taking on. In the meantime also there's been of course the intervention it was launched in the place where we live in Motojulu. It was launched there with a lot of lies and some media manipulation that ironically was, it was pretty much launched by media programme called Lateline which alleged that there was a ring of pedophiles living in Motojulu a ring of paedophiles this been proven or anybody charged.

It was led by a paid employee of the then minister for the Aboriginal Affairs who masqueraded as a youth worker on television had himself filmed in silhouette wearing a hat and pretended that he was a youth worker and had you know telling terrible tales about the situation of it. It was using the media to launch a campaign which has had you know in Motojulu you know it's essentially created in that community it's created a group of men who feel embittered and put upon and blamed for something that was not happening and therefore it's disempowered people.

The whole intervention has created a lot of opportunities for bureaucrats and white Toyotas driven by bureaucrats and you know more government control than was intended. It's never been a bottom up process. There is still strong debate about the value of the card the basics card which was introduced as part of the intervention. The basics card is about using a portion of people's income from their benefits social benefits is quarantined cannot be spent on alcohol or cigarettes or a certain number of things that are itemised it can only be spent on food that.

The jury is still out in those communities about, some people think it has been effective and there was a paper published only last week that claims that a study that's been done over the past few years in Yellowta and someone else actually shows that the majority, 60 percent I think, of the people that have part of that experiment believed that it was beneficial. But then I read a counter view that said that they hadn't really captured the all of the information so it's difficult. But the intervention has certainly not, I think, really contributed to Aboriginal authority or decision making.

When you look back on Brax and EVTV do you think any of the sort of promise of that sort of self-determined media is still there and still viable?

Well it's interesting that the guy that was running wild free media is now the chairman of the Central Land Council and he cut his teeth and gave this confidence and understanding of, and his media savvy, from the years that he was running wild free media there was probably always a strong personality but he had I think that additional layer of experience through wild free media that gave him the capacity that the Central Land Council is a pretty important organization for access to land. And um there have been a few vestige Brax stations sort of continue to exist in a few remote communities.

## CLIVE SCOLLAY LCVA TRANSCRIPT

They were, they lasted a surprisingly long time on pretty cheap equipment. They were never given adequate equipment or adequate facilities so it was bound, they were bound to fail after a certain period of time and they've never been replaced or renewed but they have a limited radius FM broadcasting capacity. And I think you know there was a time maybe for 10 years where that Brax system had real potency in those communities it did a lot of people were telling their own stories and dancing their own dances and showing them on local media and not watching mainstream television. But I think those days are fairly well gone. But it was a good um it was a good attempt.

CAAMA is still strong although it's pretty much become a DJ's delight. You know it's not. It has news and comment commentary in language several different language groups from Central Australia but it's mainly guys playing hip hop and latest music, or retro whatever they're into. It's interestingly used as a code of community, however it is used in a very Aboriginal way to for people to continually keep reminding each other that they're around. There's a sing out now for the family at haas bluff and sing out now the Jones family in such and such. So there's constantly names being you know people sending messages to each other via that medium but it's not you know it's going through a state of flux not just the media is.

So I think you know the social tools for the future are definitely going to be the tools that are in, contained online. I mean what are we looking at? You use your mobile phone. But it is this you know when I first started we thought video was completely unique and a great production tool. This is everything. This is the telephone. This is the entire world. This is a production tool. This is everything in one. And I think understanding how to use that and social media nowadays is probably where things are headed. The effective use of social media and there are you know I think there are people around that are working hard in that area.

**Interviewer:** That's really interesting thanks I'm fine with that. It's great, really interesting.