

1 I: Hello. So just for the camera could you please say your full name, and  
2 spell that for us?  
3  
4 JH: My name is Jeffrey Hooper, J-E-F-F-R-E-Y Hooper, H-O-O-P-E-R.  
5  
6 I: Hi, Jeff, is it all right if I call you Jeff?  
7  
8 JH: Absolutely.  
9  
10 I: [inaudible 00:24], but thanks so much for coming to see us today and  
11 speak to us about your time with Half Moon. So first of all could you tell us  
12 how you've been involved with the Half Moon?  
13  
14 JH: I arrived in London in the fall of 1971 as a student at Antioch College. I  
15 was a theatre student and came to London on a year abroad programme,  
16 and I'm afraid I probably wasn't a very good student because I wasn't very  
17 interested in my classes, we had classes three mornings a week and so I  
18 had a lot of time on my hands, and one of my assignments was to write a  
19 journal; and so I was kind of bored and looking for something to do and so  
20 as a theatre student I thought I would get involved in a theatre.  
21  
22 So I – I've got to think about it, I haven't done this in a while so I'm  
23 thinking now about how to phrase things – I was a bit bored and so I  
24 answered...I started looking in Time Out magazine and looking for theatre  
25 jobs, and started answering ads; and after one or two experiences, arrived  
26 at the Half Moon, and knocked on the door, and they had advertised for  
27 an assistant director for a production of In the Jungle of Cities, and they  
28 invited me in and gave me a tour of the old abandoned synagogue.  
29  
30 And at that time it had been converted into a living space but it had not  
31 been converted into a theatre, so when you walked into a foyer and then  
32 past the big stone set of stairs, and then into the synagogue which was a  
33 big square space three storeys high, and it had a balcony on two sides  
34 and in the back, and the altar place had been all disassembled; and  
35 Maurice Colbourne and Michael Irving were living in the theatre space and  
36 so they had taken the pieces of the old altar and they had used that with  
37 some glass that they had recovered from old building sites, and built  
38 walls, and they were living on the balconies on either side in the theatre  
39 space.  
40  
41 And it was still all decorated with the names of the people who had given  
42 money, in Hebrew script, and the amounts that they had given; so that  
43 was the sort of setting; and there were pews kind of scattered this way  
44 and that.  
45  
46 And so I was interviewed by Guy Sprung who was there, who had arrived  
47 on the scene and was going to direct this production of In the Jungle of  
48 Cities, and he told me I had the position of assistant director; which I was  
49 really pleased, and then found out a few weeks later that there were six  
50 people that had answered the ad and all six of them had been told that

51 they were the assistant director. So he just told everyone they had the job  
52 and then waited around to see what happened. And so because I didn't  
53 have much else to do and was very interested and really thought the  
54 theatre was exciting I started showing up every day. So I just, every day I  
55 came to the theatre at ten or 11 o'clock, and I worked until six or seven at  
56 night, and did that seven days a week until the theatre finally opened in  
57 January. So as it turned out I was the only person of the six people that  
58 responded that was that devoted.

59  
60 And a lot of the work that we did for the first couple of months – or for the  
61 first month, month and a half – was building work. And so we were  
62 building a box office and putting in fire doors, and painting and building  
63 risers for the pews; doing all of that kind of work.

64  
65 [04:51]

66  
67 As it turned out Michael and Maurice had moved into the building about a  
68 year before, or maybe nine months before, and they were there along with  
69 a couple of architects and the girlfriend of one of the architects. And so  
70 the other people lived in the space above the foyer, which was like  
71 sleeping rooms, and then, as I said, Michael and Maurice were there on  
72 the balcony; and then there was a kitchen in the basement, so everybody  
73 ate in the kitchen in the basement.

74  
75 And Michael and Maurice had dogs, and it was a crazy kind of  
76 environment. There were, like, neighbourhood kids that came in and just  
77 kind of hung out in the theatre, and it was fairly chaotic; and nobody really  
78 had any money. And the main source of money at that time was to go out  
79 at night and find abandoned factories and look for lead roofs, and then we  
80 would go out at night and strip the lead off the roofs and then throw it  
81 down into the street, and Maurice had a Mini and we would load the lead  
82 into the Mini and take it to the scrap metal dealer, and that's how we got  
83 the money to kind of start the theatre.

84  
85 But we also spent a lot of time just roaming through these old...the  
86 neighbourhood at that time was lots of abandoned factories, and so we  
87 would go out during the day and scout around and find...if we needed  
88 hardware or doors or glass, or all kinds of...just wood to build things, we  
89 would find it in these abandoned factories and then we would wait until  
90 night time and then load it up and bring it down to the street and load it up  
91 and bring it back to the theatre.

92  
93 So we spent a lot of time for six or seven weeks just working on the  
94 theatre and getting the theatre space ready to go; and then we started the  
95 production of *In the Jungle of Cities*; and the rehearsal period was about  
96 three weeks, four weeks, and so we rehearsed that; and the show opened  
97 on January 27th I think, 1972 – many years ago – and so anyway that's a  
98 really long answer to how did I get involved with the Half Moon.

99

100 I: No, that's great, that's absolutely great. So when you applied for this job  
101 did you have any idea that it was going to be that hands on in that sort  
102 of...you were going to be doing that many things?  
103

104 JH: No. I had no idea what I was getting into. But I did find that I had a really  
105 good rapport and really got along with Michael and Maurice and Guy. I  
106 always liked to work with my hands, I enjoy building, I had done a lot of  
107 set building, my dad was a building contractor; and so I had done a lot of  
108 building, so it was easy for me to fall into that. And they were also,  
109 Michael and Maurice especially were just very open and included me in  
110 things, and we would go down and have tea in the kitchen and in the  
111 afternoons, and it became just like a lifestyle almost, we were all kind of  
112 working together; it was a lot of fun.  
113

114 I: Yeah, it reminds me quite a lot of sort of like a student atmosphere or  
115 where everyone sort of clubs in together and sort of does their own little  
116 bit, it sounds like it was sort of like made the sort of a big family  
117 atmosphere almost.  
118

119 JH: Right. And then the interesting thing I think too that kind of happened  
120 during that period, of course here I am a student in London and I was  
121 going to the plays, and I would go and see a show and then they would  
122 ask you, they would want to know, well, what did I think; and they were  
123 really tough on me in a certain sense, they were just really tough on me,  
124 and they would ask me, well, okay, well, what was good about it, what  
125 didn't you like, what about this, what about the acting, what about the  
126 directing; and they kind of...it was difficult in a way, I mean I found myself  
127 to be inarticulate about those kinds of things, and so when I would go to  
128 plays I would sit there and take notes so that I would be able to speak  
129 intelligently to them about what I was actually seeing.  
130

131 [09:54]  
132

133 And I think in some ways that carried over into what I really remember  
134 about how the theatre ran, in the sense that at that time it was a very pure  
135 experience of what does a play...if we were, once we got Jungle of Cities  
136 open and we were thinking about, okay, now what are the other plays that  
137 we're going to do, it was all about what did the play have to say, who was  
138 the audience, how were we... It was all about the artistic qualities of what  
139 we were going to do, it wasn't about marketing it or it wasn't about trying  
140 to fit it into a mission that we had written down, or we weren't defining our  
141 criteria for success we were just really focused on the art of the  
142 enterprise. And I think that that was a pretty unusual thing. I mean I don't  
143 know that it was unusual in London at that time, I'm not really saying that,  
144 but I think that for me now, in having had a long career in theatre in  
145 America, I always have found that you end up spending a lot of time,  
146 whether it's fundraising, administering, writing mission statements, writing  
147 grand applications, and that really in some ways takes you away from the  
148 artistic core of why you maybe started to do things at the very beginning.

149 And so that's what, for me, the Half Moon was that very pure artistic  
150 experience.

151  
152 I: Could you tell us a little bit more about the play itself?

153  
154 JH: About In the Jungle of Cities?

155  
156 I: Yes, please.

157  
158 JH: Sure, I mean, a little bit. Guy had arrived in London, he'd been in  
159 Germany, I think at the Schiller Theatre, so he was doing some kind of an  
160 internship there or something; and my understanding is that they had  
161 done a production of In the Jungle of Cities. So he arrived in London with  
162 this sort of vision of how he wanted to do In the Jungle of Cities and was  
163 looking for somewhere to do that; and he was kind of going around to  
164 different fringe theatres and had run into Michael and Maurice and the  
165 synagogue. And I think Michael and Maurice's original idea was just to  
166 make a space that would be a community gathering space, I'm not sure  
167 that they really had the idea that it was going to be a theatre as such but it  
168 would be a place where there would be art and music and drama, and it  
169 would be a general kind of thing.

170  
171 But once Guy arrived then the focus became putting on this particular  
172 show; and then I got there about two weeks after Guy. So it all kind of  
173 happened, came together really fairly quickly. In the Jungle of Cities: one  
174 of the key ideas that Guy brought to the project was the idea of the actors  
175 as animals. And I don't know if you know the play, In the Jungle of Cities,  
176 it's a boxing match between...I mean it's...Brecht frames it as a boxing  
177 match, so it's sort of a rich man and a worker, and they're in conflict; and  
178 the idea is that only by being in conflict and having a fight to the death can  
179 they really get to know each other, or come to a sense of togetherness.

180  
181 And so the stage was like a boxing arena and then it had a big metal, kind  
182 of corrugated metal on the back wall. And we did a lot of research going  
183 into the production about...there was a writer who was popular at the time  
184 named Desmond Morris who wrote about humans as animals; and so the  
185 idea was that everybody in the cast was a different animal. And we did  
186 improvisations – that I mean this is so '60s – but we did improvisations  
187 where people pretended that they were a particular animal, and did animal  
188 conflict and that kind of thing. And so that was sort of the basis for the  
189 approach to the production.

190  
191 I: So you mentioned that you were a student, and I was just wondering how  
192 that sort of all tied in together, because it sounds like you were so busy  
193 with the Half Moon.

194  
195 [14:54]

196  
197 JH: I don't really know how I juggled my student work with my theatre work, I  
198 do know that I had very tolerant professors who kind of when they saw

199 what I was doing they kind of let me go and let me do my own thing; and  
200 so when I started out at the beginning of the year I had to take three  
201 classes, and that was three mornings a week; and then the next term, in  
202 the winter, it was two mornings a week; and then the next term it was only  
203 one morning a week, and I just did everything; they would call it  
204 independent study. So I was just able to spend all my time at the theatre.  
205

206 And the model for the academic programme: the best example is we had  
207 a government class that was taught by a gentleman named Merlyn Rees  
208 who at the time was the shadow minister for Northern Ireland, which was,  
209 if you remember the '70s, a pretty intense time of conflict in Northern  
210 Ireland. So he was a Labour MP and was teaching his class, and he  
211 would come in and tell us what was going on in the government and sort  
212 of that inside view; and then we would try to explain American politics to  
213 him, which I don't think he probably ever really understood, but he wanted  
214 to know what was the difference between a Republican and a Democrat,  
215 and it was very difficult to explain.  
216

217 **[Inaudible 16:27]** when there were bombings in London, and open conflict  
218 in Ireland.  
219

220 M: Unbelievable.

221 JH: Yeah.

222 M: **[Inaudible 16:36]**.

223 I: Okay.

224 JH: Okay.

225 I: Were you cut off mid sentence, or...?

226 JH: What was that?

227 I: Was there anything else you wanted to say before you were cut off? No,  
228 you're all right.

229 JH: No, I'm good.

230 I: I was just wondering if you could tell us about other plays you were  
231 involved with by Half Moon.

232 JH: Well, once we did In the Jungle of Cities, then... Well, let's see, let's go  
233 back.

234 So we worked very closely together and we were all focused on getting In  
235 the Jungle of Cities opened; and there was no structure at that time. And  
236 then when we finally got In the Jungle of Cities open, then I don't know  
237 who, someone announced that it was a cooperative, I don't know how we  
238

249 came to that decision or how that worked, but we sort of talked about it as  
250 there being a management team, and [there were so 18:07], and in some  
251 ways to my surprise – but maybe not so much – I was part of the  
252 management team; so it was Michael and Maurice and Guy, and myself.  
253

254 And the way that we conceived of it, we each had a slot; so we would  
255 rotate through the four of us, and we would each get to either select the  
256 play and direct it ourselves, or we could select another director. And so  
257 we started to move forward, and I didn't know what play I wanted to direct,  
258 and so my choice, I had some different...no...and we... I mean strangely  
259 enough, when we opened In the Jungle of Cities we had no idea what we  
260 were going to do next, it was just we were so focused on that one  
261 production. And they turned to me and said, well, what do you want to  
262 direct, why don't you go next; and I really didn't have a good idea, and I  
263 put one idea up and they didn't like that, and they thought I wanted to do  
264 this play that was an adaptation of the Herman Melville novel, Billy Budd;  
265 and they hated that idea, they thought it was fascist, and I don't know, we  
266 had a huge political argument about the politics that was inherent in this  
267 play; and it was like, okay, well, no, that's not going to work. I thought it  
268 would be great to turn the inside of the theatre into a ship, but that was my  
269 concept. But at any rate that was rejected.  
270

271 And then Maurice had been working on a script for Alkestes, and then at  
272 the same time Guy had an idea to do a play about the Peasants' Revolt of  
273 1381, which is what became Will Wat If Not What Will. And so because  
274 Maurice was fairly far along with Alkestes and because I did have some  
275 school work I had to try to get done, and couldn't be there six days a week  
276 for a rehearsal all day, which just at that point was impossible. I did it for  
277 In the Jungle of Cities but I couldn't do it for that show.  
278

279 [20:16]

280  
281 So I started working with Guy on Will Wat, and we decided that we would  
282 brainstorm the ideas for what the show would be about or what the  
283 various scenes would be, and so we brought some actors together, some  
284 actors that were in Jungle of Cities, and then some new people, and we  
285 spent a lot of time sitting around and assigned specific aspects of the  
286 history of the Peasants' Revolt to various people and started doing  
287 research. And that was also when Steve Gooch was brought in as the  
288 writer.  
289

290 And I was sent to the library at the British Museum and started going  
291 through these chronicles from the thirteen hundreds to look at these, this  
292 original history, to find scene ideas or to find out what the timeline was  
293 and that kind of thing. And this was also a really important just a new way  
294 of working for me, in the sense that I think that in America we have a  
295 tradition – and maybe it's here in England too, I don't know – that the  
296 writer is the person who is the sole visionary artist, and that a writer goes  
297 off to their attic room somewhere with a candle and creates the play and

298 then brings it out, and it's like, here's the work, you know, to give to the  
299 world.

300  
301 And this was a completely different way of working, we were all doing  
302 research and everyone was improvising; and so we would have  
303 rehearsals where scenes would be improvised, and in what later in some  
304 ways was sort of made famous by Nicholas Nickleby I suppose. And then  
305 Steve would watch all of that and then go away, and take lots of notes and  
306 then come back with scenes. And so that was a bit how Will Wat was  
307 created. So then I worked with – again as the assistant director or  
308 whatever – on Will Wat, and that was the next show that I worked on.

309  
310 Then – I'll probably get my chronology wrong – but I think the next one  
311 after that was Dan Dare. Are you familiar with Dan Dare?

312  
313 I: I'm not. No.

314  
315 JH: Dan Dare was a comic book that was very popular when Michael was  
316 growing up, so he wanted to do a play that was based on this comic book;  
317 and it had a character called the Mekon which was this evil little guy with a  
318 giant head – sort of like Marie Antoinette shape, you know, great big bald  
319 head – that flew around on a little flying saucer; and so he was the bad  
320 guy. I can't remember at all what the story was, but so Michael decided he  
321 was going to adapt Dan Dare into a play. And we turned the theatre into a  
322 space ship, and because there was only one door into the theatre, and  
323 one door in and one door out, and we wanted – I don't know how, but you  
324 couldn't really get away with this today – but we decided we would let...all  
325 the audience came in and then we had...we took a vacuum cleaner motor  
326 and a piece of plastic, and made this little like a blind, that went up and  
327 down electrically.

328  
329 So the audience would come in and we would push the button and the  
330 door would go down, so they were sealed into the space ship, and then  
331 we had all this sound of the space ship taking off. And then we did this  
332 really – I would say now, I would say we did this really cheesy space walk  
333 where we all moved in slow motion, like because we were all in space –  
334 so Mary Sheen played the Mekon in this green outfit, this green, great big  
335 green head, and green makeup, and she was sitting on this little flying  
336 saucer, and it was on a barrel, we had got a great big barrel that was  
337 about four feet tall, and there was somebody inside the barrel, we had to,  
338 like, tip the barrel over, they got inside, it was on rollers, and then it  
339 was...I forget, it was covered in black fabric or something like that and  
340 then there was a little saucer on top with Mary sitting on top. And so that  
341 person was moving with their feet and pushing the barrel around the  
342 room, and so that was the Mekon flying around. It must have been really  
343 pretty comical.

344  
345 [25:31]

346

347 And Maurice was in also some big green outfit. And the reason that I  
348 remember that is that we were in the middle of a performance once and  
349 Maurice was standing right behind Mary, so he was in a place where he  
350 couldn't really be seen by the audience. And I was in the show, it was the  
351 only show I ever appeared in at the Half Moon, because there was one  
352 American character, and so I was the designated American. So since I  
353 couldn't do an English accent and was not drama school trained, that was  
354 it for me, I couldn't be in any shows; but that one I was in.

355  
356 And so Michael and I were standing there, and Maurice was standing  
357 behind Mary, and he pulls a pickle out of his pocket and is eating this  
358 pickle, and of course we just lost it, were laughing. And later, and Michael  
359 was so mad at Maurice and he said, why did you do that; and he said,  
360 well, how do you think I get to be so green – because he was all in green  
361 makeup – so that was a little joke that he played.

362  
363 But anyway we had a lot of fun with that, it was pretty...yeah, it was a  
364 show, it's like for kids, but it was for...it was very humorous. Anyway we  
365 had a lot of fun with that.

366  
367 Then the next show after that was The Dragon, which was the show that I  
368 directed, which was a 1940 play by a guy named Yevgeny Schwartz, and  
369 it was basically a commentary on Stalin, but it was a story of a dragon and  
370 a knight, and a dragon that is terrorising a town and demands the sacrifice  
371 of a young girl every year, and about the town, a knight comes along to  
372 defeat the dragon so that a young girl doesn't have to be sacrificed.

373  
374 So that was the initial, that was kind of like the first year, or into the fall.  
375 And then I went back to America, I thought, well, I need to continue my  
376 university career; and I came back to the States and was there until the  
377 following summer; and then the following summer I thought, well, I'm  
378 going to go back; and I had stayed in touch with everybody, and I came  
379 back.

380  
381 And lots had happened while I was away, I mean in some ways it was just  
382 the same, it was still everything was still working on a shoestring and  
383 there really wasn't a lot more money. But when I arrived back, that kind of  
384 threw everything into chaos in terms of the management, because  
385 Michael was ready to bring...and I mean and I was back, as far as I was  
386 concerned, permanently, in other words I was just going to...I don't know  
387 what, how I thought I was going to stay in England, I had no papers or  
388 anything, I was coming back on a student visa, but in my mind at least I  
389 was coming back to stay at the theatre.

390  
391 And so I arrived back, Michael was ready to let me back in, or put me right  
392 back in the management team. Guy was against it, and Maurice was on  
393 the fence. And so I didn't want a lot of conflict and I said, well, let's just let  
394 things settle out and see and, you know, I'll come back in, start working.  
395 And I immediately started working on Dick, this play, another play by



396 Steve Gooch, which was a musical about Dick Turpin; and so I directed  
397 that show.  
398

399 And at the end of that, then we had a big meeting and Maurice decided,  
400 no, that I wouldn't come back in as part of the management team. I think  
401 that one of the things that happened at the Half Moon – and I've seen it in  
402 other organisations since then – is that when we started the company it  
403 was very difficult to get people to come and work, I mean we didn't have  
404 any money, the little money that we were making from our ticket sales  
405 was going to the four of us instead of the actors, so when we would ask  
406 an actor to come and be in a show we would say, well, if there's anything  
407 left over you will get some of the money; but that was usually little or  
408 nothing, it might be enough to pay for their Tube journeys or something.  
409

410 [30:08]

411  
412 But as the theatre became more and more successful, and particularly  
413 with really actually starting right with Jungle of Cities, but there's a review  
414 of Will Wat, but it was written by John Mortimer, where he even says at  
415 the end of the review, if you're having trouble finding them here's their  
416 phone number; kind of put that right in the review. But it was interesting  
417 how...so as the theatre became better known, then other better known  
418 people wanted to come and work.  
419

420 And I think there were...I was more...well, I would say Michael was more  
421 in the camp of to say, hey, this is the people that got us to where we are  
422 today, let's stick with them, you know, we're doing pretty well. And there  
423 were other people, and I would put Guy more in this camp, where he  
424 would say, wait a minute, this person's done X, Y and Z, and they're a lot  
425 better known than we are, let's bring them in.  
426

427 So there was a big conflict about, wait a minute, if this big-time director  
428 wants to come and direct a show at the Half Moon, well, we'll, you know,  
429 great, let's let them come.  
430

431 So there was conflict in that way. And so we got in a huge fight and  
432 Michael was the keeper of the cheque book, and Michael got so mad one  
433 day he just was disgusted and he said, that's it, I'm done, here's the  
434 cheque book, I'm going to turn it over to you; and he threw away the  
435 cheque book and gave it to Guy. And about three hours later, thought  
436 better of it, and went back to Guy and said, okay, look, I know I was being  
437 stupid; and Guy said, no, you are gone, that is it. And they wouldn't let him  
438 come back.  
439

440 And so at that point I was out, and Michael was out, and it was Maurice  
441 and Guy. And so we had one slot that was allocated to Michael, and we  
442 argued with them about what play to put in there, and we wanted to do  
443 something different, we told them we'd do one thing, then we wanted to  
444 do another; and they just said, no, you're done. So we were gone.  
445

446 And so Michael continued to live in the theatre for a couple of years after  
447 that, but not work there. And I went back to the United States, and that's  
448 where I've spent my career.

449  
450 I: That brings me nicely onto my next question. So how has the Half Moon  
451 influenced your practice in your career?

452  
453 JH: Well, I think one big influence of the Half Moon is the role of the writer in  
454 the theatre. I think from my experience working on Will Wat I came to see  
455 the writer as a member of the team, of the artistic team, that has a  
456 particular skill, which is the writing; but that that skill does not necessarily  
457 need to be...that that can work as a complement to the other people,  
458 whether it's the designers, the actors, the director; all those people can  
459 make valuable contributions to making the play.

460  
461 And when I came back to America I became a playwright myself, and  
462 when I go out and teach in schools I always talk about the origin of the  
463 word playwright and that the idea of the word W-R-I-G-H-T is to make  
464 something, in particular to make a tool; so I guess I always think in terms  
465 of making plays, as opposed to writing plays; it's not about the act of  
466 writing. In fact the word wright – I don't know if you know this – comes  
467 from a completely different source, comes from a Germanic word which  
468 means to carve something in stone; and so the word W-R-I-G-H-T is an  
469 Indo-European word and it's the idea of making a tool. So that became a  
470 defining thing for me in my career.

471  
472 Another thing is the idea that after I left the Half Moon I think I became...I  
473 was interested in theatres that created plays that were for a particular  
474 community, and so as I went back to the United States and looked for  
475 work I was attracted to theatres that made plays about their own  
476 community.

477  
478 [34:59]

479  
480 I worked in a theatre in San Francisco that was creating new plays that  
481 were about California. I moved to Eastern Kentucky to a very rural  
482 mountain area, a coal mining area, and where the theatre was making  
483 plays that were about coal mining and the history of the area. And then  
484 ultimately decided to move back to the area where I had grown up in  
485 Ohio, and make plays about Ohio was my original idea, and started with  
486 storytelling plays and interviewing people, and then moved on to doing  
487 musical plays that were based on history, and broadened it out a little bit  
488 more to being of American history.

489  
490 So I think that that all, for me, really began at the Half Moon, the idea of  
491 making plays that were for a particular community.

492  
493 I: Sorry, I'm just going to sort of backtrack a little bit.

494  
495 JH: Absolutely.

496  
497 I: I was wondering if you could tell us a bit about what sort of the political  
498 state of theatre in Britain in the '70s was.  
499

500 JH: That is a really hard question, I don't know that I'm qualified to answer  
501 that. I don't know that when I was working at the Half Moon...that I was  
502 certainly aware of politically what was going on in the country, but at the  
503 same time...and I think that the work of the Half Moon reflected that, but I  
504 don't know that I know enough about that to say how that fit into the larger  
505 political climate; I just I don't think that I can answer that question.  
506

507 I: Okay. That's absolutely fine.  
508

509 JH: I mean I will say, when the Half Moon came into being it was at a time  
510 when there was, I think, a flowering of the fringe theatre movement across  
511 the whole city, there were lots of theatres that were popping up. And the  
512 Half Moon in particular by being in the East End, by doing plays that were  
513 about the lives of ordinary people, and particularly tying that into history, I  
514 think that that contributed to an idea of equality and the importance of  
515 working people, and the idea that the arts should be for everyone, that if  
516 the art was...or that art was not, or theatre was not, something for an elite,  
517 it was something that ordinary people should enjoy.  
518

519 And certainly there was lots and lots of interchange with people in the  
520 community. And although where Alie Street is now has been  
521 overwhelmed by development and it's nothing like what it was like; but at  
522 that time, I mean at that time Brick Lane was largely a Pakistani area; the  
523 area around the theatre was largely Pakistani and African, and it had not  
524 been redeveloped, there were lots of narrow little streets with old  
525 tenements that were...you know, that have since then been knocked  
526 down and they've put up big council towers and things like that. But it was  
527 much more, it was definitely a poor neighbourhood; so the idea that you  
528 would go and you would start a theatre – there was Stratford East, there  
529 was that – but this was another example of starting a theatre in an area  
530 that was not served by theatre, and trying to find shows and plays that  
531 would speak to those people. And certainly the audiences were a mixture  
532 of people from the neighbourhood and people that were coming from all  
533 over London; so in that sense I think that's where I see it fitting into the  
534 overall political scene in the city.  
535

536 I: That's lovely. Thank you so much. Could you describe – this might be a  
537 bit abstract – could you describe your strongest memory at the Half  
538 Moon?  
539

540 [40:07]  
541

542 JH: It just depends on... Well, yeah, there are so many things that I remember  
543 about it. I told you a little bit about how we got the money for the theatre  
544 and how we would go out into factories and that kind of thing. And mostly  
545 we went into abandoned factories, and as the theatre, as the...after In the

546 Jungle of Cities, and as the time was going on during that particular  
547 period, the area right behind the theatre was being redeveloped; so where  
548 the theatre faced onto Alie Street, and right behind the theatre was what I  
549 remember as the umbrella factory, there was a factory, and it was a lower  
550 roof than our roof, so we could go up onto our roof and we could jump  
551 down onto the umbrella factory roof, and then we went across the  
552 umbrella factory roof, and then there was a bunch, a row of houses, and  
553 there was a garden, you know, the houses had a small garden behind  
554 them, and we had planks that we would put across the garden so we  
555 could go across from the umbrella factory roof into the abandoned  
556 houses, and we would go down the abandoned houses and then we could  
557 go across the street, and there was a big factory, it was being knocked  
558 down, or a big building, like five- or six-storey office building that was  
559 being knocked down over there.

560  
561 So that was one of our main sources of materials. And then as that  
562 building was torn down, eventually they got down, there was nothing left.  
563 And then they started to bring new lumber and new materials, and it was  
564 right where we had always...it was like if your hardware store that you  
565 always went to suddenly had new things; and so it's not really anything to  
566 be proud of but it certainly is a strong memory. So we would go down in  
567 the umbrella factory and, you know, go through the building, and we  
568 would...started to take a few things from the building site; I mean they had  
569 great big piles of plywood and all kinds of things, and we were only taking  
570 a little bit.

571  
572 So then I think that they must have realised that things were disappearing,  
573 because they built a big fence around the whole thing; so then we would  
574 have to jump over the fence to get in there. And then I do remember one  
575 night in particular, I've mentioned that Michael and Maurice had dogs and  
576 they would go out and walk their dogs and stuff like that; so we went out  
577 one night with the dogs, but we jumped over the fence and we were in the  
578 building site; and they had security people that came along, and a security  
579 man came along and stopped; and they had a dog, you know, like a  
580 German Shepherd, that they would let go into the building site, so if you  
581 were down in there it was dangerous, you didn't want to be in there. And  
582 so we hear the guy pull up and let the dog go, and we're inside the  
583 building site, and we thought, man, we'd better get out of here; and we  
584 jumped over the fence on the other side and got out. But then, I could not  
585 believe it, Michael kind of led us around, there were a couple of us, and  
586 we went up to the guard and said, oh, what's going on in there; he said,  
587 oh, I think somebody is in there stealing things; and we were like, oh  
588 really, are you having a problem with that; and he's like, yeah, yeah,  
589 we've been having things disappear or whatever; well, gee, I hope  
590 you...you know, good luck with that. And here it was us.

591  
592 So then, again as time went on they started to tear down all of the row  
593 houses that were between the umbrella factory and the building site; I  
594 mean they were just ready to be knocked down, so they started knocking  
595 those down; and once they'd knocked those down then that made it so

596 that there were people that lived in flats at the end of the street that could  
597 see down the street; before it had always been blocked by these houses.  
598 And so once they tore those down we couldn't go over the roofs any  
599 more, we had to go around on the street; we could still put things up onto  
600 the umbrella factory roof.

601  
602 So we were in there one night and – oh, and this was when I was directing  
603 The Dragon – so I was about three days, maybe, before the show  
604 opened; and we needed a couple of sheets of plywood and a couple of  
605 other things, and we went over to the building site and we got them, and  
606 we had loaded them over the fence; and I was at the end of the street  
607 right by Half Moon Passage. And I was in the street and I was lifting them  
608 up onto the umbrella factory roof, and Michael and Maurice were up on  
609 the roof and they were taking the things up there.

610  
611 [45:12]

612  
613 And that street back there was a dead-end street. And I looked down the  
614 street and all of a sudden a car comes around that street going 20 miles  
615 an hour, I mean just really fast right around the corner; and I thought, oh,  
616 this is trouble, and I panicked and I ran; so I ran down through the Half  
617 Moon Passage, I...and it was the police. And I ran down to the door of the  
618 theatre thinking that I could escape into the theatre, and the theatre door  
619 was locked, and I was like leaning up against the door, the theatre,  
620 knocking on the door, trying to be as flat as I could, and I see the  
621 policeman run out into the street; and they see me, and by the time  
622 someone came and let me in they were right behind me. And I think I just  
623 got ten or 15 feet into the theatre, and they came in the theatre and they  
624 grabbed me. And they took me out, ironically enough, right past a great  
625 big pile of lead that was sitting in the foyer ready to go to the scrap metal  
626 merchant; they ignored that and they took me out, and they took me back.  
627 Now I was a 20-year-old American naïve kid, I mean I didn't know  
628 what...you know, I'd never been arrested before; but they took me and  
629 they got me in the back of a car, and they had my hair, you know, had my  
630 head by my hair, and they pushed my face down against the floor of the  
631 car, and they started...they said, what did you do; they didn't even know  
632 actually what I had done; and like a dummy I confessed, or, you know, I  
633 said, uh, I was taking wood from the building site. Oh, you know, then they  
634 looked over, they saw the wood that was stacked up, and so they had me  
635 at that point.

636  
637 So they took me to the police station which was around the corner, put me  
638 in a little cell, and it had a little tiny door, about that big, and by that time I  
639 was starting to regain my composure and the American in me was coming  
640 out, so I was starting to say, well, wait a minute, shouldn't I...I should be  
641 allowed to call a lawyer, I should be able to speak to somebody; and I see  
642 them and they're out there, they've just locked me in this cell, and I start  
643 yelling at them and saying, hey, hey, I want to make a phone call, or  
644 whatever. And they just came over and shut this little door, on that...they  
645 just shut me in there.

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And then after that a really nice policeman came in and he's like, now, look, just tell us what you did and, you know, everything's going to be fine. Well, by that point I was just like, no, I'm not talking to anybody. So of course Michael and Maurice had observed all of this, and they bailed me out, and so I'm bailed out and I had to come back and go to court the next morning. And there were about 30 drunks and a couple of guys who had been arrested for beating up a Pakistani guy in a Tube station, and me. And they went through absolutely everybody, and I was the very last one; and the judge said – and I had had this, you know, kind of had come up with a plan with this...I was actually that summer with a BBC film director person that I knew who was older and the voice of experience, and he said, well what...I said, what shall I tell them; and he said, just tell them you had never done anything like this in your life, you were under a lot of pressure because your show was going on, and you just went crazy and stole this stuff, and because the stores were closed, and you'll never do it again, just tell them that.

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So I went up there to the judge, and the judge said, what happened; and I told my story. And he looked at me and he said, now come on, you know, now what really happened; and I told my story again. And he just got more irritated and he said, Mr Hooper, I want to know what makes you tick, why did you steal that wood; and I said, oh, just I was under so much pressure and I just went crazy. And he said, I see no reason to distinguish you from any other common criminal; and gave me a £50 fine and let me go. And I thought I was going to be...I thought...I had this vision of being deported three days before my show was going to open, I thought it was going to be horrible, ruin my life, but as it turned out I paid the fine. And what I found out later was that Michael and Maurice, who were up on the roof watching all of this, well, when they...with the policeman, there was this big stack of lumber sitting there, and the policeman had looked at it, and they didn't have a big enough vehicle to take the lumber as evidence, so they left to go get a van, and when they came back with the van all the wood was gone, so they had no evidence; or I think maybe they left a few things there, and the amount was so trivial it didn't really matter. So we got away with that, and three days later I got to open the show, and it was fine. So that's a pretty vivid memory.

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[50:34]

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I: Yeah. It sounds like [inaudible 50:36] adventure [inaudible 50:37] crazy.

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JH: Another really fun time, though, that I had as well, also around at the time of The Dragon; a lot of times what happened with the shows at the Half Moon is we would have a big opening and lots of people would come to the opening, and then the next Thursday night, or whenever, and when it would get to be the next weekend we would have five or six people, you know, we always had a rule, and this is where I learned the rule that you don't perform for less people than are in the cast; so that was our rule, if

695 we had five people in the cast, if there were less than five people in the  
696 audience then we wouldn't do the show.  
697

698 So when we opened *The Dragon*, like many of the others before it we  
699 didn't have...our audiences were terrible, and we had a nice opening, we  
700 got some nice reviews, but then nobody was coming. And so I thought,  
701 well, it would be fun to get a group of kids to come, you know, I mean I  
702 was sort of casting around for some way to get more people in. And there  
703 were some people that were working with kids on the docks, and that was  
704 really interesting because I imagine that there were places where this is  
705 still true, but at that time there were miles and miles of abandoned, what  
706 would you call them, like tunnels, under the docks, where they used to  
707 store things, great big brick arched areas; and the kids would go down  
708 there with bicycles, and they were the only ones that knew all these  
709 tunnels, and so they would ride up and down the dock area, underground  
710 in these tunnels.  
711

712 And so there was this one group in particular that worked with these kids.  
713 And so we said, well, why don't they come, we'll bring them to the show  
714 one night. And so they brought a group of 40 or 50 kids to see *The  
715 Dragon* one night. And *The Dragon*...and I think that they didn't know,  
716 they had never been to a play before, I don't think they really knew what  
717 the etiquette of coming to a play, that they had to be quiet; it was pretty  
718 unruly and they would shout out and participate and things like that. And  
719 then it got very close to the end of the play and there's a moment at the  
720 end of the play where this main character Lancelot sits down and he says  
721 – and there's a woman, I think, there – and he says, let me tell you a  
722 story. And when these kids heard that they just immediately were like, oh;  
723 and they all came on stage, it was just like the whole stage was  
724 completely flooded with kids, they all sat down on the stage, like, you  
725 know, okay, tell us the story. And that was it, it was kind of like...well, he  
726 told the story and he said, and that's the end of the play, you know, we  
727 knew he would never get them back into their seats; and so the play  
728 ended. But it was a lot of fun and it was a really fun moment.  
729

730 I: Yeah, it sounds it.  
731

732 M: Can you ask a little bit about that type of audience? Because that's a  
733 strand we're trying to explore about why, what the people like those young  
734 people, their impression of theatre was and the impact that's had on you  
735 as well. Is that all right, something like that?  
736

737 I: Yeah.  
738

739 JH: Sure.  
740

741 I: Yeah, so just following on from that; do you think...or why do you think  
742 theatre is so important for young people, and how that it impacts them?  
743

744 JH: Well, one of the things that I think was important about the kinds of plays  
745 that were done at the Half Moon at that time was that I think that people  
746 have an inherent interest in knowing something about where they come  
747 from and their own neighbourhood and their own history. And so that was  
748 a major technique, you might say, for reaching out to the community.

749  
750 [55:04]

751  
752 And a big part of that reaching out to the community was involving the  
753 kids that were, the young people that were in the neighbourhood. There  
754 was one family in particular that used to spend...a group of about six or  
755 eight kids, all brothers and sisters, all...some were from...I think they all  
756 had the same mother but different fathers, and some of them were brown  
757 and some of them were red haired and fair, and they were all very  
758 different looking. But they spent a lot of time in the theatre, they were just  
759 running in and out all the time, running up...we just gave them the run of  
760 the theatre, they would come down into the kitchen, they would put on  
761 little shows for us, you know, sing pop songs and do that kind of thing;  
762 and I think in some ways they were...they became part of the way that we  
763 reached out into the neighbourhood and tried to invite people of all kinds  
764 into the theatre. And I don't know if that answers your question or not.

765  
766 I: Yeah. Yeah, it does.

767  
768 JH: I mean one thing, one funny thing that happened. So these kids were  
769 around all the time, and one time we made the mistake of leaving the box  
770 office money, we left the box office money in the box office, you know, it's  
771 just a little metal thing; and they found it, and they took it immediately; and  
772 they all, they went to Battersea into the amusement park, and they spent  
773 the whole day at the amusement park, they spend all the money; and then  
774 they came back to the theatre the next day. And Michael, he was really  
775 good at dealing with them and talking to them, and he immediately knew  
776 what had happened and wouldn't let them off the hook, and immediately  
777 got them to confess. And they could not imagine why we were so angry at  
778 them, it was kind of like, well, you left the money there, what did you  
779 expect us to do, it was right there, of course we would take it. And they  
780 were banned from the theatre for, I think, two weeks, which just about  
781 killed them, they hated it. But we were sort of their social centre so they  
782 were there every day.

783  
784 I: Yeah, that kind of leads to what I was going to say actually. So you  
785 mentioned these children, sort of they're very different looking and they  
786 spent a lot of time with you; so did you feel that the theatre really  
787 influenced them and maybe changed them, or gave them something that  
788 maybe they might not have?

789  
790 JH: I think that's very difficult to say. I don't think that when we...I mean, and  
791 speaking as someone who has spent his career doing a lot of work with  
792 youth, I don't think we know what that moment is or who that  
793 person...well, you know, which child if when you work with them you're



794 giving them a different idea of how their life could be different, you don't  
795 know; and yet every once in a while you will meet someone who will say,  
796 yeah, that made such a difference to me. So I would like to think that it  
797 made a difference, did it mean that they grew up to be an actor, or a  
798 director, or something like that; not necessarily, but certainly I would  
799 imagine that it made them have a different sort of life than they would  
800 have had had they not had any contact with the theatre.

801  
802 Another story I could tell you, which I think also just relates to the way  
803 things were at the theatre, and I don't know, it's another good memory  
804 that I have, was because we didn't have a workshop all we had was the  
805 theatre and the foyer, that was it. So I used to sometimes take things out  
806 onto the street and work on the street, you know, it's I'd have lumber out  
807 there; and I was building something one day and there was a kind of  
808 crippled older man – crippled is probably not a politically correct word –  
809 but, you know, a disabled man; and I had gone back into the theatre, and I  
810 came back out and I noticed he's about 50 feet down the street carrying  
811 one of my pieces of wood; and I'm like, what are you doing. And I of  
812 course hurried down the street, and I stopped him and I said, what are  
813 you doing, why have you taken this piece of wood; and he explained that  
814 he had a space in his flat, in his bed, between his mattress and his  
815 headboard, and his pillow kept going down in the space; and he just was  
816 beside himself, it was just horrible, and he just needed a piece of wood to  
817 go on this headboard to stop his pillow.

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819 [1:00:30]

820  
821 And I said, okay, well, I'll just come and I will fix your headboard, but I  
822 need that piece of wood. And I arranged the next day and got his address  
823 and went over to his flat with a piece of wood, and screwed a piece of  
824 wood onto his headboard and fixed his headboard. But that was just like  
825 somebody walking by and here we were and, you know. But it was, you  
826 know, that I think that our experience at the theatre was just made richer  
827 by all the people that we encountered on the street.

828  
829 One of the other places that I spent a lot of time was the Indian restaurant  
830 that was kind of right across the street from the theatre. I used to go there  
831 every day to eat supper because I could get a meal for 50 pence, I could  
832 get vegetable curry and naan, and I could fill myself up, and since I had  
833 very little money that was a great way to survive.

834  
835 I: I've just got another question here.

836  
837 JH: Yeah, go ahead.

838  
839 I: Do you think your life would be different if you'd stayed on at Half Moon?

840  
841 JH: Oh, undoubtedly my life would have been different if I had stayed, but it  
842 was not what was meant to be. Michael and I had a wonderful idea for  
843 another show, that would have been amazing; but there are many ideas

844 and many directions to go in. So it's just what happened. Yeah. I don't  
845 know how my life would have been different had I stayed.

846  
847 I think that there's a big difference...there was a big difference in my life  
848 to...there would have been, between staying in a place like London, which  
849 is such a centre for theatre in the world, and going off into the wilderness  
850 of America and creating plays.

851  
852 But another thing that really influenced me at the Half Moon was that – I  
853 think that some Americans would disagree – but I think that there are  
854 things that the English can do better than anyone, Shakespeare being  
855 number one, and Restoration comedy. It's very difficult for American  
856 actors, without the training, the drama school training, and that kind of  
857 thing, to do those kinds of plays; and so I think I left the Half Moon with  
858 the idea thinking that I wanted to do something that I could do better than  
859 anyone in the world, so I can't do what I could do with the Half Moon but  
860 what I could do is plays that were very much about America and that  
861 relied on American idioms and folk traditions and music. And so in a  
862 sense, maybe in reaction to what I did at the Half Moon, but also in a  
863 similar vein but in a very different way, that was the thing that I have spent  
864 my career doing is creating plays, you know, again about my own  
865 particular place that I grew up, but also something that it would be very  
866 difficult for actors in London to ever do because the background and  
867 everything is so different.

868  
869 Another thing I could mention was that after several months we were  
870 bringing in enough money that we could start to pay ourselves a little bit,  
871 and we paid ourselves £10 a week, and we were able to live – more or  
872 less – on £10 a week. And that I remember it was really a time in Britain  
873 where Britain was making a transition from a low-wage economy to a  
874 high-wage economy, and there were lots of things like bread and paraffin  
875 that were subsidised, so in some ways you could live on a lot less money.  
876 And I do remember at that same time seeing advertisements on the Tube  
877 for if you wanted to be a motor man or a conductor or something on the  
878 Tube you would get a salary of £15 a week. So the idea that we were  
879 paying £10 a week sounds like a pitiful amount in today's economy, but at  
880 that time it was enough money that you could survive.

881  
882 [1:05:18]

883  
884 But also another thing was that at that time that I was at the Half Moon,  
885 squatting was very, very common and accepted; and actually when I  
886 came back after I'd been in America, and returned and directed Dick I  
887 moved into the Half Moon Passage building and I lived on the top floor of  
888 the Half Moon Passage building, and then ate all my meals in the kitchen  
889 at the theatre. But that was a squat, and that building at that time it was I  
890 think Guy was living there, there were other theatre people that were living  
891 in that building. So we kind of took it over as an annexe to the theatre.

892

893 I: Yeah, it sounds like you sort of had to live, breathe, and everything was  
894 sort of Half Moon.  
895  
896 JH: Pretty much.  
897  
898 I: Yeah, I can imagine that I guess it must have got tense at times maybe if  
899 you'd been working on something and then you'd want to relax, but it  
900 would still all be going round in your mind and you'd be with the people  
901 that you were working with, and those sort of lines between sort of home  
902 life and work life just get blurred.  
903  
904 JH: Right. In my experience theatre people are very passionate, and nothing  
905 can get people going than whether it's the right song in the right place, or  
906 if this particular scene is working. And haven't you, I mean certain and  
907 many times I have come to blows almost with people about something like  
908 that. I remember we had a huge argument when we were doing the play  
909 Dick, where Steve Gooch wanted a particular song, and the composer  
910 didn't really care, and the cast and I kind of wanted a different song; and  
911 we just...it was horrible, and we had this huge blow up and all this bad  
912 feeling. And in the end Steve was the writer and so he got his way, but I  
913 look back on that now and I think, why were we so...we were just...it was  
914 the end of the world for us, if we couldn't get the song changed it just  
915 wasn't [inaudible 1:07:43] the play, it wouldn't work, it just wasn't. But  
916 that's theatre for you, isn't it?  
917  
918 I: [Inaudible 1:07:49]. So are you still in contact with any of those people?  
919  
920 JH: I'm still in contact with...I have remained in contact with Michael all these  
921 years, and seen him only occasionally, maybe every six of seven or  
922 sometimes maybe ten years would go by; and we would get back  
923 together. I've seen Richard Naylor, who is one of the architects, and he  
924 was the last person living at the Half Moon; so he was staying in the  
925 theatre, and at the very end he was the one that they eventually bought  
926 out, and then he took that money and bought another place that was a bit  
927 further East.  
928  
929 And I just recently was back in contact with Yvonne Gilan who was an  
930 actress who was at the theatre at that time, and was somebody I had lived  
931 in her home; it was her husband that was the BBC film producer, and she  
932 was in a lot of shows at the Half Moon; and so I recently got together with  
933 her, I hadn't seen here since 1974, so however many years that is, 40-  
934 some, and it was wonderful to see her.  
935  
936 I: Yeah, I'm sure it was.  
937  
938 JH: Yeah.  
939  
940 I: So obviously this building is completely different to the one that you  
941 associated with the Half Moon.  
942

943 JH: Sure.  
944  
945 I: So I'm just wondering what you think of it? We've obviously had a lovely  
946 renovation recently, so yeah, how different this must be to what you were  
947 used to, by the sounds of things.  
948  
949 JH: Absolutely. And it's wonderful, I think that I like the combination of the  
950 history that's inherent in the building, with the more modern facilities and  
951 the idea of a flexible space; it is great.  
952  
953 [1:09:54]  
954  
955 I do think, one thing I think about the old Half Moon is that I am a strong  
956 believer in the idea that there are certain spaces that are just there's  
957 something about them that makes them attractive and makes theatre work  
958 in them; and the Half Moon space, that synagogue space was one of  
959 those, it was very tall because you had the ground floor and then you had  
960 the balcony level, and then above that was a skylight which was almost  
961 like a third storey. So it was small and felt very intimate, but at the same  
962 time had a lot of height. And I think that a lot of the things that were there  
963 worked because of the way that the space was used, and it just had this  
964 great feeling of history and stuff.  
965  
966 But, you know, there were funny things about the building too, like the fact  
967 that in the men's room was a tub, and that's where, you know, that's  
968 where everybody would take their baths; and so when you would come to  
969 the theatre it would be here you'd go into the rest room and then here was  
970 this giant tub; it was very odd, I'm sure, for people that were coming at the  
971 time, but very warm and friendly.  
972  
973 I: Yes.  
974  
975 JH: So does that answer your question?  
976  
977 I: Yeah, that's lovely. Yeah, I think that's everything we'd like to ask you.  
978 Thank you so much.  
979  
980 JH: Okay. Sure.  
981  
982 I: [Voices overlap 1:11:33].  
983  
984 JH: Yeah. Great. Okay. There, you're past your time a little bit.  
985  
986 M: Is there anything, Jeff, that you would like to talk about? Because  
987 obviously in these long interviews you've covered a lot, but anything that  
988 we haven't asked [inaudible 1:11:51] would like to ask about that.  
989  
990 I: [Voices overlap 1:11:53] like me to ask you?  
991  
992 M: [Inaudible 1:11:57].

993  
994 JH: And one of them, I mean this is not... One of the things that amazes me,  
995 when I met up with Yvonne the other day and she gave me a bunch of  
996 clippings, that she gave me a group of clippings, and I was really struck  
997 reading through some of the clippings about how various reviewers talked  
998 about the impact of the Half Moon. And also I know that the...in In the  
999 Jungle of Cities Michael played one of the leading roles, and the other one  
1000 was this guy – Peter Gordon I think was his name – he immediately, after  
1001 being in that show got a contract at the National Theatre.  
1002

1003 That's another thing I suppose about that particular time in London, I don't  
1004 know if it's this way now but we were able to call up agents and get  
1005 people to come down that were working in film and television but also  
1006 working at the National Theatre, working at the RSC, working at Bristol  
1007 Old Vic; I mean people that had amazing credits, that maybe just found  
1008 themselves at a time when they were between jobs, you know, maybe  
1009 they were... There was one actor that was in my show that had just  
1010 finished a show at Bristol Old Vic and had a contract at the National, but  
1011 he had eight weeks and he wasn't doing anything else and so when I  
1012 pitched him on the idea that, hey, why don't you come and be in this  
1013 show, he thought, oh, sure, I'll do that, you know, it was no big deal.  
1014

1015 So I think that that ability to use people of that calibre, even though we  
1016 had no money; I would be surprised if that was the case now. In fact one  
1017 of the things...another thing that happened, one day the actor, the  
1018 Hollywood actor Donald Sutherland came to the theatre, I don't know how,  
1019 Guy had some connection with him, knew him; and so Donald Sutherland  
1020 came, and his main question for us was, how could we use all these  
1021 people that were union actors in this non-union situation. I mean he was  
1022 much more used to the United States where those lines between the  
1023 union and non-union actors were very strictly enforced. And so we tried to  
1024 explain, you know, that it's just...I mean and there's nothing to explain  
1025 really, except that the rules were more loose at the time.  
1026

1027 And then he did magic tricks for us, sat there and did card tricks, which  
1028 was funny. So my one brush with Hollywood was Donald Sutherland  
1029 doing magic tricks at the Half Moon.  
1030

1031 [1:14:52]

1032  
1033 And I should say another really brief story was that, so years later I was  
1034 working at my theatre company in Ohio, called Mad River Theatre Works,  
1035 and we had a site visitor, someone who came to evaluate our theatre,  
1036 who was a New York theatre director named David Petrarca who's now  
1037 gone on to become a big television director; and he came and he said, oh,  
1038 I see you have the Half Moon on your résumé; and I said, yeah; and he  
1039 said, you know, the Half Moon Theatre saved my life, or changed my life;  
1040 and I said, well, how did it change your life; well, he had come to London  
1041 and gone to see a Dario Fo play at the Half Moon, and it just knocked him  
1042 out and he really wanted to take this play and take it back to America and

1043 direct it in America. And so he asked them if he could get a script, and  
1044 they said no, they wouldn't give him a script.  
1045

1046 And he was just [inaudible 1:15:59] and this must have been at the space  
1047 on Mile End Road – I was never there so I don't know what it was like –  
1048 but somehow he starts wandering around and he wanders back into a  
1049 dressing room and he sees a script, and he picked it up and he stole it  
1050 and took it, and took it back to America, and ended up producing it, and it  
1051 was a big deal for him when he was able to produce it. And so I kind of  
1052 thought that there was some ironic connection there with the fact that the  
1053 theatre had started with all this sort of nefarious stealing of wood, and  
1054 here he had stolen a script, so they all now kind of fit together.  
1055

1056 I: Yeah, I was going to say that sounds a bit reminiscent of something.  
1057

1058 JH: Yes, exactly. But I just thought that that was so funny. Yeah.  
1059

1060 M: I think that's probably enough, and I need to get that down. Well, thank  
1061 you so much.  
1062

1063 JH: It's okay.  
1064

1065 M: Which is great. Thank you. That's great. [Inaudible 1:16:58] that's  
1066 fantastic. Thank you so much.  
1067

1068 JH: You bet.  
1069

1070 M: What I did miss was the name of that person, the last person there.  
1071

1072 JH: I think his name was David Petrarca.  
1073

1074 M: David Petrarca.  
1075

1076 JH: I mean it maybe is not saying it quite correctly. I see him pop up as a  
1077 director on HBO all the time. Who knows.  
1078

1079 I: That was so interesting, I felt [voices overlap 1:17:23] you know when  
1080 someone, if you sort of sit with [inaudible 1:17:27] and you haven't spoken  
1081 for years and they'll just talk at you, and it's just so lovely.  
1082

1083 JH: Oh, okay.  
1084

1085 I: And the imagery was brilliant, I definitely feel like I've got what you were  
1086 saying.  
1087

1088 JH: Oh, that's cool.  
1089

1090 I: That's lovely.  
1091

1092 JH: Yeah.

1093  
1094 I: So interesting.  
1095  
1096 JH: Okay. Well, good.  
1097  
1098 I: Cool.  
1099  
1100 JH: Yes, I'm sure I'll remember more, but...  
1101  
1102 I: Yeah, it's always the same.  
1103  
1104 M: What play was the Dario Fo play? Was it the...?  
1105  
1106 JH: I'm not really sure.  
1107  
1108 **End of transcript**