

## Glenys Rowe

Ray Argall interviewed Glenys Rowe for australianscreen on 3 June 2009

Glenys 16A/00:38 OK, here's my clap. Yes, so, after, mmm, what, 20 years of being a film producer, sometime distributor, I've now discovered the world of commercialisation, and so, this is our new office - I've taken on a partner called Michael Lawrence, and we have two other directors of the company, who all have come from the commercial area, ... I'll start again, I haven't done that very well ...

Glenys 16A/01:15 Here's the clap - oh, you're rolling. So welcome to the world of Video Action Sports Entertainment, a rather strange digression for someone who's been a, more or less art house producer, and sometime distributor, but there's a plan. So I'm about to show you round. This is our brand new office - we're still moving in, and I'll take you through and show you what's going on. So, come in. Skateboard is relevant - it's actually being used as a door chock, but it's actually used. Come in. Now ... that's my partner Michael's surfboard, in the corner there, those towels are used - to dry people when they get wet coming through the car park. Come in, and I'll introduce you to the team, and what they do.

Glenys 16A/02:24 OK, here's the clap. Welcome to Video Action Sports Australia. Here's our brand new logo - temporary cardboard because we've just moved into the office, but come through and I'll introduce you - to the team. That's Michael's surfboard. Michael's my new partner. We've been courting in a business sense for about 12 years. I tried to dissuade him from being a film producer because I thought it was such a, oh, I don't know - tragically insecure life for someone with three children and he was a businessman, and - but I wasn't able to dissuade him. He's got the disease - filmmaking.

Our little boardroom, TV ready to go up, but come through and I'll introduce you to the people. So, what happens here is that this is the office from which Action Sports DVDs are sold to basically five market sectors - what we call big box retailers, that's sort of Kmart and ones who are in those shopping centres that look like big boxes - Kmart's and Targets; we sell to Surf Dive 'N' Ski-type mum and dad stores; the next tier of slightly larger store; we sell direct online, and we also sell through our own little outlets; we also have an office in New Zealand which we're just starting up. You're seeing the company in its third week of operation. We are trading ...

**So it's a shift - bit of a shift from what you've done before?**

Glenys 16A/04:09 It's a shift from what I've done before but it's not as big as a shift as it sounds like. I've had - I have the benefit of a partner who's a business brain, but for me, it's the same niche entrepreneurialism that I've always done. It's just a different niche. Before I operated in what I'd call snobby art house where I was happy to make work that only my peers saw - I pretended that I wanted everyone else to see, but really I was very happy - we used to talk about how many film festivals it had gone to and I was proud of that. Actually, I don't respect that anymore and so it's a different niche. The niche I'm operating now I suppose I would call men's world, not porn. That - I'll call it. So come through.

Glenys 16A/05:02 So this is the main office where work happens, and we might as well shoot Michael because he's never off the phone. We make jokes about him being paid by the word. So ... this is our Chief Executive Officer, Michael Lawrence, who's never off the phone, and Michael is really responsible for making the strategic partnerships that we engage with - people like Billabong, Quiksilver and what have you. Benny, who we'll just pass over - she's very busy at the moment organising the launch party with

MTV. Benny does all our marketing and graphic design. Down here is Loretta Grillino who works closely with the whole team across the range of activities, our Chief Operations Officer, Nicholas Cook - is essentially a business brain, and a sober antidote to Michael's exuberant business making - does that sound good? - so we're moving on now ... Adam is in touch with all of our retailers and is making sure that they get - and expanding the retail network as well - how many retailers would we have at the moment?

Adam                    16A/06:34 On our full database, we've got 2,700, but obviously they don't all buy through us, but a majority of them, you know, get emails and updates every month ...

Glenys    16A/06:42                    And we have currently 3,000 hours of Action Sports DVD material on offer. Elaine keeps all our - Leanne - keeps all of our books and accounts in order and makes sure our retailers give us the money they owe us. Thank you Leanne. And coming through here - well you don't really want to see the kitchen and the facilities - they're very basic. This is the packing room which turns into a - it's quiet now because the orders generally come in in the morning, and packing starts around midday, and in the normal run of events, we have one person packing for the afternoon, and couriers come at 4:30 and pick up all the goods, but this space here, which is kind of divided into skateboard, mountain board, snowboard, skiing, surfing, what we do is Action Sports, i.e. sports without a bat and ball. They're usually - it belongs to the sort of world of men pitting themselves against the elements. I'm sorry I sound a little cynical when I say it, but, after a while, you know, I don't get it a lot of the time. I don't actually understand why a man with three children would decide to canoe to New Zealand. You know, New Zealand's already been discovered. I don't actually - I don't particularly share that drive, but I have to say that a lot of people admire it and do, and they're principally the people who purchase this body of work.

**You were talking before about the strategic partners. Do you want to talk about how that works?**

Glenys 16A/08:47 Well, a strategic partner would never be a Government agency because a Government agency doesn't really have the business acumen, or people who work there don't aspire to have that business acumen, and no-one ever asks them to have that business acumen - not really. I mean in the commercial world, a strategic partner is someone who basically co-ventures with you in some way or another, by which you both make money, or some other advantage, by virtue of your joint efforts. I guess that's one way to talk about it, but really, for someone like me who essentially has been a film producer, what all this represents is what I call a distribution channel. This film, for instance, like, you know, *Yoga for Surfers*, which, you know, you can now buy at Target, Kmart, all the surf shops, whatever, what exists is a channel - the thing that goes down that channel is variable, and so when Michael and I are currently making a 12 by one hour drama series for SBS, and we own the DVD rights - the DVD distribution rights for that, that will go down the same channel, so in the VASE display box - I'll just get one for you, so when you go to Kmart or Dymocks - I'll destroy a box - when you go to Kmart or Dymocks, you will see a display stand that has - like that - that has the VASE product on it. You know, if we were doing for instance as we are this month, we're releasing a snow board film called *That's It, That's All*, so it'll be a big *That's It, That's All* poster here, and this rack will be full of them.

Glenys 16A/10:43 But equally, when we do *Dusty*, the 12 x one hour drama series for SBS, we will have, if we haven't acquired the SBS distribution rights, it will be their material by then, there will be a *Dusty* stand in each of the stores that we - that act as our retailers. So we have the channel and anything can go down it. So, in establishing the

Video Action Sports business, the end game is that we have a sufficiently large channel through which we can place our Australian productions. So it's really - I mean, everyone's into it, and they sell extremely well, and we'll make money, but at the end of it, there is a distribution channel through which anything else can go. And so that same channel's being used for my other production - not exactly the same channel, but nearly the same channel, which is just a CD production - the Jack Thompson - The Campfire Yarns of Henry Lawson. You would think, very niche, and when I told people I was releasing Jack Thompson, the Bush Poems of Banjo Paterson, you know, I could watch people's eyes glaze over - you know, so boring, why would you do that. So boring, but actually, I sold 12,500 copies in three weeks in December 2008. I have never sold that many copies of an Australian DVD. It's just - and the - the difference is not in the product. The difference is in the size and depth of the distribution channel.

**So, has it made you think about audience? Audience that's there and how you get to them?**

Glenys 16A/12:29 Well, I've always thought about audiences, and I think to some degree, that was not necessarily respected in the filmmaking community, that people were very happy to show their work just to their own peer group, and had - more or less, contempt existed for people in the outer suburbs or the general populace, and there wasn't respect for - there was too much respect for box office failure. I guess it's different to say there was no respect for box office success, but there was too much respect given to box office failure, which essentially I regard as failure of a product, to get it, you know, a work to get to its audience. So, in thinking about audience now, the - the - I feel like the penny really dropped for me when I saw how bottled water arrived on the scene, because I grew up in a world where there was no bottled water. When I grew up, if you wanted a drink of water, you went to the tap. And essentially, with bottled water - what is it you're getting?

It's the same water you get out of the tap - it comes from the same aquifers under the ground, which is the big pools of water that sit there. When bottled water hit the scene, they didn't do a lot of promotion for it. They didn't need to, because mostly - I don't know - well, it's your legal problem, what I'm going to say, I suppose, but mostly bottled water was a success because it was distributed by Coca Cola, so wherever Coca Cola had a fridge in a milk bar, or in a shop or in a convenience store, they just stuck bottled water in it. So it was sold mainly because of its availability - it was convenient, you could just grab a bottle, get a drink. It wasn't sold as, you know, you need to drink this water because it's got vitamins in it or better for you, or it's fresher water, or it's, you know, mineral spring, whatever. I mean, there was - the amount of marketing was nothing compared to the size of the distribution channel. The breadth of the channel and the depth of the channel. Wherever there was Coke, which it already had, you know, it's like 50 years of marketing, bottled water was just the next product to it. In the same way as a film like this will sell thousands because it's the best snowboard film in the world starring the best snowboarder, a film like that, which, you know, has had very little promotion, is probably, you know, I don't - it's not one that I'd even see, the mere fact of it being in the VASE display box next to the best film would - that film will sell more copies than the Australian - gorgeous Australian art house movie that is not in target. So it's actually the distribution channel that makes - makes, I think, for niche product, has more effect than the actual quality of the product itself.

Glenys 16A/15:40 So when we make extremely good films, they just don't get to their audiences because people are only thinking about column inches in newspapers - you know, the focus by film producers has been-ill directed, I think.

**When did you start taking an interest in publicity and I'm thinking again of identifying your audiences in your films because you've been involved in**

**publicity and ideas for a while, and when did you first start taking an interest in that and trying out things?**

Glenys 16A/16:23 Oh, gee. When I first left university, I'd got lucky. I got a job with the National Film Theatre of Australia, running the South Australian branch, with a man called Michael Zerman who was - had been a print journalist. And he knew how to lay up copy - I mean these skills have gone now in some ways, but he knew how to lay up copy for newspapers, and taught me how to write ads and stuff. And I suppose I - we were dealing with extremely niche material, and we would bring in seasons of - or we would show them in Adelaide - but have to find an audience for seasons of new German cinema, and there were about seven people in Adelaide who were interested in German cinema - in German language. And so that's when I started trying to figure out how to reach, not massive audiences, but collections of smaller audiences. I suppose that's the difference. Instead of trying to reach everybody, all at once, targeting specific interest groups to make a mass audience. And you can only do that - well, once upon a time, you could only do that I think in smaller environments. I mean, you reach - your expectations couldn't be that high, but the internet's changed all that. And so now you can reach niche audiences extremely easily. It's revolutionised it. So, when all my snobby film producer, film industry friends - when their eyes glazed over when I said what I was going to do - I was doing a CD of classic Australian poetry for sale, and they all just went, you know, I could see it, and they were so bored, but when I sold \$120,000 worth in three weeks - mmmmm, suddenly people got interested. Oh, maybe she's onto something. So - and it was the same thing. It wasn't - it was finding out who the audience was, and I was mistaken in the beginning. I thought the audience would be poetry lovers. Um um. The audience were people like me wanting to buy a gift item for their elderly fathers. So I did the work backwards, and found out who was buying it and why they were buying it, and that's who was buying it. And it sells - it doesn't sell at all the rest of the year.

Hardly, you know, just a trickle. But as a gift item - so I'm doing another big push for Father's Day. I'm very proud of the material. It's - you know, it's beautifully read - beautiful classic work. But it is - and I have no shame about it - it is a gift item. So I put all my effort into the month before Father's Day, and the six weeks before Christmas, and make sure that it's available in every outlet that I can possibly get it into. And that's where it sells.

**How about some of the other films that you've been involved in, like *Idiot Box*, *Cane Toads*, there's a few that you've had - you've been really involved in how to try and find the audience.**

Glenys 16A/19:43 A lot of those films, um, probably could have a new audience now. The production contracts under which they were made with Government agencies are not conducive to doing the work that would find that new audience. And so, really, the model going into the future for me now is one where I only use our own finances for production, or private investment. I'm not interested in working with Government agencies any more. I don't actually think Government - this sounds terrible - sounds arrogant - but actually, I mean it's proven itself time and time again, you've only got to look at, you know, the CIA or - not the CIA - what do we call it here? - ASIO or you know the Department of Community Welfare - Oh my God, you know, would you let these people run anything? No, I don't think - Government is not a good place to run a film industry from. You need people who live or die by the decisions they make, and sorry, I don't think - I just don't think Government agencies and filmmaking work. There's a - and now here's a - I'm sorry, the history proves it, you know, like, they just don't make good decisions.

**That may be, but you've still been able to make films through that. So - and ... *Idiot Box* was a really interesting case, and also something that, you**



**know, in terms of - that wasn't - the audience was maybe not your traditional Australian art house audience, for want of ... How did you handle that in terms of - I guess - did you think early on, before you started, were you thinking about how you might present it? Sell it? Publicise it?**

Glenys 16A/21:34        Yeah, we knew it was an outlaw kind of film, but I don't think I was as sophisticated then as I am now, and in those days, the role of the producer was extremely different to what I would regard the role of the producer now. In those days, the role of the producer was more like, um, you had a little bit of activity as a muse for the director and the writer and you could make yourself useful. Um, I loved working with David Caesar - I loved his writing, but as a producer I don't think I was a particularly good producer and the way that the Australian industry was configured, that it didn't respect producers either, and so - sorry to say it to you because you're head of the Directors' Guild, but the director had maximum respect, and maximum power, and - which is not - not great for a producer who wants to be an entrepreneurial producer. And there was a - you know - that kind of a - the auteurism of it all meant that as a producer, you know, people were happy so long as you brought the film in on budget, but the kind of entrepreneurial work that's necessary to make a successful work, you need a much greater freedom and - you need to be running the show, not just providing resources to make a director make their heartfelt work. I say that with all respect for the directors, but the - a producer who does their job well, actually needs an employee director.

**But you were still, you know, getting - you were still working on those films after they were finished.**

Glenys 16A/23:17        All the time. I still, you know, yesterday I sold a copy of *Stepping Out*, which is the film my husband made 30 years ago. So yes, they hang around

for years, but I have to say, I regard my work as a producer then - I was considered a successful producer, but in my heart of hearts, I have to say that I don't believe I was one. I believe I am one now, and will be a much better one now because I've freed myself from the restraints of - I no longer think like a classic Australian producer, when - it's bad to say, but anyway, recently, a film did really well at Cannes, and the producer was impressed saying, I don't care how much money it makes, I just want people to respect the work. And I go, it's an incredible arrogance. And, you know, the films have to make money in order that producers go on, but I - I can - I was a successful Australian film producer. I have never made a cent of profit from any Australian film. The only money I've ever made from a film that was money outside of a very paltry fee which usually got put back into the movie anyway, was I think I made \$7,000 because I did - there was an advance for the soundtrack of *Dogs in Space* with Warner Brothers or something - someone like that, I don't know. But - so - the demands I make of myself as a producer are different now, and the demands I make of the work are different now. I got closer to it with *Feeling Sexy* than any other film, I feel, but - yeah, so - when people go, oh, you know, you're a successful Australian film producer, I don't - I actually regard it really differently now than I used to.

**I know what you mean, but I remember so well that there were postcard campaigns - you were very good on postcards. I used to get a postcard when you'd seen the film ... Communication was a really important part of that, both in your work I guess, as a broader filmmaker, but also when you're looking at, you know, items to put under people's noses so they would be aware of the films ...**

Glenys 16A/25:36      Yeah, I mean, that's always been a lot of fun for me. I've still got *Idiot Box* matches, and box of matches the - you know, the stuffed Cane Toads - all that stuff. That - you know - there's a lot of fun in that. Um, but equally, I'd never found a way to commercialise that, where ... and meeting Michael Lawrence, who's my partner

with all of this, has changed that. So whereas once I would give away a stuffed Cane Toad as part of the promotion of *Cane Toads* the movie, now I would have Cane - stuffed Cane Toads paper weights for sale in every shop. So it's a different way - and also I would have the director of the movie - like, with the drama series we're doing now, which will go on SBS, so that's a 12 hour drama series, set in Darwin, it's an extremely modern crime story. It's not like crime a week Australian crime drama - it's a very modern piece, but incorporated within that is the exploitation of every single person involved so that the writer, Phillip Gwynne - there won't just be the novelisation of the series, he's already been commissioned to write the diary of his experience of making it. There will be a picture book - a coffee table book, and all of these items will be sold as part - not - not as part of the campaign, but as part of the commercialisation around it. There'll be a Dusty clothing range. Michael's very good at all that. There'll be a Dusty sunglasses range. Diane, come in. Diane's our packer. We're in the way. We're going to have to move. Diane come in. .... Yes, Diane, you're on national television. So, Diane's come in - I'll just explain we're doing processes. Here, so these are the orders that have come in thus far this morning, and Diane will pack them up ready and a courier will come, who then gets them out to all the retailers and ships them out. So we will now leave because we're in Diane's space. ... And I'll just put *That's It That's All There Is* back on the pile.

**How are you going to adapt to the new era - the digital era for want of a better description?**

Glenys 16A/28:04 There's a future to that - these DVDs will not exist in seven years' time. And so part of the way of - the part of the thinking is the obsolescence of this, so you can now also download - very soon. You can't do it in Australia, but in other places you can download movies, and we are future proofed to that extent. And - but - I don't know how better - how to explain it, but essentially, it's just layers of availability.

So, yes, these are going out to retail stores that you can also go to a zillion different websites, and click on the VASE click button and buy these directly through your computer. So, yeah - the world - it's ...

**How do you think that's going to affect Australian films -  
Australian filmmakers?**

Glenys 16A/28:49 Look, the whole notion of Australian filmmaking I find kind of bizarre. You know, it's a location. It's a feeling, but a lot of the time when people are talking about Australian filmmaking, they're really just talking about me and my mates in Darlinghurst - me and my snobby private school mates. Sorry to sound so jaundiced, but I am, and they're gone nowhere. So, I have no interest - I don't come from that world, I'm really comfortable in a man's world - I've got three brothers, I can do a drop punt. This is a world I'm comfortable in, and we can use the channel to funnel Australian work down, but as far as making films and proud that they're on in three art houses and they take \$800,000 - I'm not interested. It is not a viable way to make a life for yourself.

**Do you think that there's a future in - particularly in ongoing  
technology - for those that pick it up? .... You've got *Dusty* going - that's obviously  
...**

Glenys 16A/29:45 Yeah, it's drama, but what it is is a boxed set. You know, like, I just can't wait. It's a boxed - it's been envisaged to be the - you know, it's - yes, it will go on TV and content will always be king somewhere, although when I turn on the TV now, I can't find anything to watch, it's so bad. But yeah, *Dusty* is a boxed set that will go down this channel.

**Yes. Very good. OK.**

Glenys 16A/30:36 I'm so jaundiced about it all now, Ray. I have such a poor opinion of my own ... work.

**So just going quickly onto the site, with the clips and are there any particular moments there that you can see that you remember - that call up memories for you ...?**

Glenys 16A/31:48 Well, the moment from *Feeling Sexy* - it, well, I'll go back a bit. So most people think about filmmaking as the bit where you're on set and people are calling action, and - but for the producer, the filmmaking - the actual bit where you shoot the film is like six weeks in 20 years. It's - it's the bit that I'm least interested in. I know you're meant to be, you know, fabulously interested in that bit, but I'm - I'm not, and I can't pretend to have been, and so where we are now, is where the final script of *Feeling Sexy* - Davida wrote for ten years before it started to even - before it started to look like a script. And the final script was actually made by laying out - if you can follow me - (that doesn't work) ... OK, I'll just stay here.

Glenys 16A/33:00 OK, well, I will try - I don't really want - the other films I have to say, have no (moves back to where she was) - but I really don't want to talk about those other films because they have no meaning for me anymore. I think of it as, like, the dark ages. And really the light bulb went on - I got excited about filmmaking when I was making *Feeling Sexy*. The rest of it had never excited me. I kind of just - did the best I could, having drifted into it, you know. A boy asked me to produce his movie, and because I was boy mad, I said yes. But it wasn't because I was driven to be a film producer, and so it really - the light only really went on for *Feeling Sexy*.

**So that moment is interesting. So why and how you got drawn into  
- why you got drawn into it.**

Glenys 16A/33:56 Well, it was - it was a strange event. As a film producer, you know, like every other Australian film producer, I made no money from making films, so I had a second life. I was running a successful commercials production company, and in between films, I would go and do other jobs that other people wanted me to do, and that, you know, one of those jobs was working at the Queensland Film Corporation, as it was called. I had a three week gig there to read and assess scripts. And, without being rude, it was one of the most boring times of my life. It was terrible. They put me up in a brick motel. I didn't know anyone in Brisbane. It was Brisbane before you could even get coffee. It was like a very dull place. And the weekends stretched before me like this sort of you know endless misery. Anyway, one afternoon this cowboy walked into the office and said, 'Oh, I'd like to make some films about my poems'. And I thought, 'Oh, my God, what's you know, what's this going to be'. Anyway, he turned out to be a rather eccentric poet and at the end of the meeting where I said that, 'No, I thought it was unlikely that he would be able to make a film out of his poems', he said, 'Would you like to come to the cricket at Ipswich on Sunday, and meet my sister-in-law?' And I was so desperate for something to do in Brisbane at the weekend where I knew no-one, I said, 'Sure, yeah, I'll come to Ipswich'.

Glenys 16A/35:28 Anyway, that was how I met Davida Allen, because his sister-in-law was Davida Allen, and he took me to her house, which was a grey besser brick kind of barn in the middle of the bush, and I walked in and all around the walls were these big paintings - one of them is there. And they were the paintings of a woman's life, and they were narrative - there was a narrative, and they just spoke really loudly. There

was one, which Davida now tells me never existed, that I've actually produced it in my mind - but I do believe it did exist and she's burned it - well, she burns the work that she doesn't like - very brutal - and there was this - the painting that I remember most was a painting of these three little gorgeous girls with blond hair, playing on an idyllic beach - big thick paint like that - and then savage black writing across the sky that said "What if there's a shark?" And it just sort of summed up that whole, you know, the paranoia and pleasure all at once of motherhood. And all of these paintings were of Davida's life as a mother, artist, wife, and I just had a visceral response to the work - to the paintings - and then this very uncompromising woman said to me - 'I want to make a movie' and I said, 'Well, sure'. She didn't know anything about filmmaking - she was literally working at - she was a painter, but she worked as a receptionist in her husband's country doctor's surgery, and she knew nothing about the film industry. She just wanted to make a movie, and that was a 10 year process. So for 10 years, she wrote and wrote and wrote, and I tried to work with her to shape it into a film script. You know, it's a very different thing from someone who knows what a film script is and who writes in that grammar, but Davida could only write what had happened. She couldn't invent things. She only wrote - she could write ... if I said, 'Really the character needs to, uh, catch a train here' - Davida would say, 'But she never did. She only walked'. Because she could only write stuff that had happened, and so it was a very interesting period, and of course, the life that she was trying to capture didn't fit into the form of a film particularly well, and then when we finally did get it into a form, it was only 42 minutes long, and so that produced another set of challenges as a producer to try and get people to invest in a film that was 42 minutes long. We managed to do that by pretending that it was 90 minutes long in a way, treating it like a feature film from the beginning. But the script was actually made here - the final draft of the script was made with scissors, sticky tape. We cut up all the bits, and Davida, Chris and I lined them all up along this pathway, down the hallway, into the kitchen, and into the living room, and then changed all the pieces around, sticking them together, until we had the narrative working.

And that's how the final script was delivered.

Glenys 16A/39:05 Davida had, of course, already done a full storyboard - every single frame of the film in three big spirex books. So there's not - wasn't a question of a filmmaker not knowing what she wanted - she absolutely knew what she wanted - she could see it, but she saw it as paintings in her mind. And that's why the film has black spacing because it wasn't actually conceived in that film director way - it was conceived as a series of interlocking paintings, and until we put the black spacing in, it didn't really work.

Glenys 16A/39:37 When I saw the first cut. It was obvious - it was sort of obvious. That was another one of those penny drop moments. I said, actually, yeah. Try ... sometimes there's five seconds of black space between each scene.

**It's interesting because the style of the editing and construction is still very, I guess, current, you know, it still works quite well. In fact, it probably was against the techniques people were using back then. People hadn't really gone into jump cuts and all of that sort of you know, accelerated action or fantasy moments, you know, that are there. Was there a response from the industry? Working with an artist who'd never made a film?**

Glenys 16A/40:35 No, because the Australian film industry is very pro-brand new talent. They're endlessly trying to support brand new talent as opposed to people who have demonstrated that they've got talent. So no, it was actually - it wasn't hard to find the money. I mean, there was the usual bureaucratic nonsense, and I did end up investing quite a lot of money in it myself, which, ultimately, I think it was the AFC of the day said they wouldn't recognise it as an investment. I invested hard cash from the commercials I was



making - they wouldn't recognise the investment because I was a producer and I've never forgiven them for that, and I recall to the day the person who said no, at the AFC. But you know, I invested \$90,000 of hard earned bank commercials money, in the film, but it wasn't recognised as an investment. I have to say, I have quite a lot of jaundice about the way the Australian film industry has been managed.

**I was going to ask you ... because you've been involved in the industry since very early days - mid-'70's. What have we learned?**

Glenys 16A/41:57 I don't know that we've learned anything. I couldn't speak for everybody else. I've learned that the desire to be a filmmaker shouldn't be enough to guarantee a life as a filmmaker, and I think there are a lot of people now a part of that *Australian Idol* culture, who just sort of want to be a celebrity, and they like the look of the life, they're entranced by what appears to be, you know, sort of, becoming a name, but at the end of the day, I feel like I can still - I can feel who's actually got it, and there are people who are driven to make work and who cannot rest unless that work is exactly as it needs to be. And that - you know - that's true across various fields, and they are the people who should be making work, and often, I think that the film industry's support through the Government agencies, supports a different kind of - it's not conducive to supporting the people that need it. I mean, it does other things, but I don't think Government actually has a place in - in film industry. I don't believe it has been worthwhile.

**So on that point, do you want to talk about career sustainability and you were talking about commercials and so forth and how you've sustained yourself.**

Glenys 16A/43:42 As a film producer, if I had to look at where the money came

from and how I lived during that time, I always had a second stream of income. Mostly, that was making commercials. There was nine years of commercials making, which was extremely lucrative. It takes you away from the business of making films - mostly it takes you away from the discovery end, but it worked in that way that Australian film producers were encouraged to be kind of passive participants and second rung to the director. And that was very much the way the screen agencies saw things. And, after a while, you start to see yourself that way, and so, there's no - I find it ludicrous, but certainly, it's everywhere that the producer is the first person to give away their credit. No-one ever asks the director to share a credit. Everyone always asks the producer to share their credit. And that's indicative of the history. Similarly, I don't think I've ever made a film where I haven't put my fee in, to get the film made, and I have only made one film where the director thanked me. Which I also find interesting, whereas in every other business activity I have, there's a much greater - I suppose a mutuality. I think within the Australian industry, there's a - there has been - I don't know whether it still exists - but there has been a sense that the producer must serve the director, and I don't think that that's necessarily a good recipe.

**No, and I think there's a whole history ... working with directors from Melbourne that's the .... really fed that ....**

Glenys 16A/45:58 We don't seem to have been able to make room for the entrepreneurial Producer, who has the idea, who puts the team together, who exploits the idea, and everything about it, and commercialises everything. You know, that kind of American model has not been respected here by the agencies. In fact, I don't know that it's been intentional, but they're just, sort of a mindset exists and there's not - not commercialising things - there's a sort of 'dirtiness' about it. People didn't really want to sort of talk about those things. You were meant to be very happy. There was no deal making really - there was only one deal. You went to the agency and you had to accept

their deal. There was no true deal making, whereas in every business activity, you - you strived to make a deal that works for everybody. So there was no up skilling of producers, really, because at the end of the day, the prevailing ethos was you go to the agency for the money.

**So working on commercials, did that give you skills that you were able to use in filmmaking, or that were relevant?**

Glenys 16A/47:06          Commercials is different again, because you are in a more service role than ever. You're paid handsomely for it, but there's no question that you are - you know, the product is king, so to speak. No, I mean, the skills that I got from commercials were the joy of saying things like, well, let's get two helicopters in case the first one doesn't work. You know, like, there's a sort of joy and a skills base in handling that amount of money that quickly, or you know, like we would regularly have two generators on site in case one broke down, because - as they were always doing then. And so there was a kind of largesse, oh yes, get another car. And that was quite fun in - and useful in filmmaking because you could see that sometimes money does just solve things, and the idea that - I mean, the first film I made - I produced - when I had absolutely no idea how to produce a film at all, was a film called *Dogs in Space*, and I knew so little about the world of business that when I went to the investors, I said to them, well, the budget for the film is three million - no, the budget - I said the budget for the film is one million, but we could make it for less, if you want us to. You know, thinking we'd give up our fees - you know, you would do anything to get a film made, but of course, what I didn't understand about the world of investment was that the people who brought the investment together made their living from the percentage of money - percentage of the money that they raised. And so me saying to them, in that noble Australian film industry way - but we can do it for less - we'll work for less money - you know, they just thought that was ridiculous because

they wanted to make the film for as much money as possible because they were taking 7% - you know, the broker would get 7% for raising the money.

Glenys 16A/48:58 But - the industry had been brought up outside of a business model. We didn't know things like that. We thought it was noble to work for no money. We thought it was noble to be a starving artist in a garret. Producers thought it was noble to, you know, do everything they could to support the director's vision, even if it meant that they couldn't afford to exploit the film properly, you know, do everything they could to support the director's vision, even if it meant that they couldn't afford to exploit the film properly afterwards because there was no money to release it. But it was all about the artistic expression, or the political expression, but there was no - one was actively discouraged from bringing a kind of realism to the future scenario - the what if. Well, who is going to see it? Where is it going to go? We endlessly made films for which there was no release pattern.

**I don't know if that's a reflection of the sort of film, but it's obviously a reflection of your thinking about how am I going to get the film out there?**

Glenys 16A/50:12 Yes. No. Not the film out there, because I hadn't actually done anything to get the film out there except get it a distributor. What you're talking about, and there was a lot of it, was promotion - one particular stream of promotion, which was basically graphically based. Yes, I had the idea that we got a stencil of the title and we silk - spray painted silver *Dogs in Space* over everything. You know, we were being threatened by the traffic infringement bureau, all that, and that was enormous fun, and I do have a natural - it's true, I have a natural inclination to that kind of promotional idea, but I can't pretend now, 20 years later, that that was well directed and we made a pop star out of

Richard the director at a time - and it was just endless - we could pop star him massively, but whether or not that was good for his career, I don't know. It seemed great for *Dogs in Space* at the time, but press coverage did not an audience make. The film that people think of now - *Dogs in Space* as a cult hit, and it's true, you can buy - the posters are on eBay - you know, you can buy it for - it's \$345 last time I looked, and the film's coming out on DVD finally, but the film was not a commercial success. It took a million dollars at the box office. Slightly less, actually. So it looked like a commercial success because there was so much press for it, but in retrospect, we overhyped the movie, and I could easily do that, and I see that a lot of the time - a lot of films that people think - a lot of the Australian films that people think have been successful have merely had a lot of press coverage. And it - it's not the same.

**The other thing is that you brought in an actor - or as an actor, you brought in Michael Hutchence, who was actually in the music industry. Did that affect in any way the making of the film?**

Glenys 16A/52:18 Yes, it did. Well, yes, it was considered a coup and I learned a lot about high level negotiations in trying to get him, but in retrospect I have to say that Michael Hutchence was not an actor. And there is a craft to acting and if you put a lead character in a movie who does not have the craft to pull an audience in, basically we had a celebrity appearance by a big pop star, and the music was good, and he was a great singer and a great personality, but he was not an actor and when you look at the film now, I think one of the main reasons it was not a commercial success was because there was not an actor who pulled you in to the story. When I read the script for the first time, I thought it was hilarious. It was the funniest thing I'd ever read, but then I'd never read a script before. And so, you know, that was part of I think - Richard as a director possibly liked producers who didn't know enough because there was no challenge to his authority as a

director. I'm very fond of him but I think he - he's a director who would have been better off to have producers who knew more. I had not produced a film before and before I knew it, I was producing a three million dollar Australian feature film, which I did.

**Was there a particular ambience on set, given that there was a very young - well, it wasn't his first feature, but the crew was generally quite young.**

**Was there a particular energy?**

Glenys 16A/54:16 Well, you know, you're asking - in a way, you're asking the wrong person. I hated every minute of it. It was horrible. There were people - you know, there's a whole rock and roll - it was groovy to take drugs. It was - you know, I didn't understand why people behaved so badly. I was - I was naïve. I didn't know about drug taking. There was a lot of, you know, at one point, when someone told me - I actually put up a sign saying "No drug taking on set". I was serious. I was so naïve. I didn't know anything. Essentially, my skills were the skills of a salesman. I come from a family of people who market. They know how to do it. It's in - all of my family are marketers in one way or another, and that's what I knew how to do, so I could sell a film concept. I can bring in investment. I can turn Dennis O'Rourke's three months in Thailand with a handy cam into an \$800,000 feature documentary on Channel 4, because I do understand the - I believe - that's my one - the one thing I do know how to do. I do know how to sell. But, did I know how to produce a feature film? Did I know how to run a crew? I have the capacity to inspire when I believe in the work, but I was frightened by most of the people on *Dogs in Space*. Literally. I didn't understand why they behaved so badly. I didn't understand why I'd have to go and get actors out of bed, to turn up on set. And so, there's been a lot of myth making about the film, because it had elements of pop mythology about it, and now Michael Hutchence is dead. But did I enjoy the process of filmmaking? Was I engaged by the process of filmmaking? I did my best and I exploited the film to the best,

which is part of the gig of producer, but I can't pretend that I - that - I mean I think at that stage I didn't even know how the sound got on a movie. I mean, there I was producing a three million dollar feature film. I mean, that's terrifying. When you think about it, that is terrifying. I think I had to ask somebody how the sound ..... I thought the sound got put on afterwards, because I'd seen '30s Hollywood movies where they were revoicing.

Glenys 16A/56:42 Yeah, but you know, I mean the film happened. It's probably the best film Richard's made. It's the film that's - it's still extremely well known - I mean - and I've still got posters in the - under the house, which, I suppose, at some time when they cost \$1,000 on eBay I'll sell.

**Here you have a film that's made in inner city Melbourne, with a film crew, and you're actually starting to infringe on - you're moving into a person's area and you've got people around that are starting to watch the film - watch them making the film... behaviour. Were you sort of involved ...**

Glenys 16A/57:30 I was, but that's part of the selling as well, you know, like, if you, yeah. That - I can do that, so yes, we kept that tiny little street, and we completely invaded their space - it was very hard to keep them calm and not want to shut the movie down, because you know we were shooting all night - we were letting off firecrackers, there was explosions, there was all these odd, strange people, but in a way, the role of the producer, you know, at that time, it had to deliver everything so the director could have what he wanted and he wanted that house. It was the actual house that he'd lived in, and so, yes, I had to go to this family - I think they were university academics - and convince them with very little money - to leave their home, allow us to gut it, which included burning the inside of it, and then restore that house and give it back to them.

### **And you were able to do that?**

Glenys 16A/58:23 Yes. That's what I meant ... because I think the only skill I've got is the ability to sell. And part of that was selling the idea that - gee, it would be exciting for you to move your three children, and we'll put you up in some, you know, lesser house somewhere else, while we trash your house, alienate your neighbours - but there was - there was an ethos that, you know, I remember after *Dogs in Space*, Fred Schepisi asked me would I go and work for him as his assistant and I went, 'Oh, I don't know. Yeah, alright.' And - but really what he wanted me to do was - there was a telling moment because I only lasted about six hours, so he said, ah, could you book dinner - at this very zoozy Japanese restaurant that had just opened in the basement of the Regent Hotel, and he said, I need dinner for 10 - he had all these Americans coming out - and so I rang up the restaurant, and they said, oh, no, we're booked out. And so I said to Fred, no, they're booked out. And he said, something like, you know, when I want dinner .... And I said, um, Fred, sorry, you need a blond. I can't do that. You know, I just couldn't - it wasn't part of my - I just didn't care enough I suppose about - I wasn't invested with that desire to - for filmmaking at all ends. I could produce it when I needed to, but I never really believed it. And there was - the truth is I think that there was never enough coming back as a producer. So you'd do all this hard work and make it all happen, but at the end of the day, there was no real reward. There was certainly no money, and there was only the reward of getting it done, but really, you were producing for somebody else. And I - I had too much of an ego to do that endlessly, over and over for other directors. And it was only when - when I worked with Davida on *Feeling Sexy*, I felt there was a true partnership, and that was really the only thing that - it's the only one that ... I liked the other films, but as an experience, doing *Feeling Sexy*, I felt that I was working to my capacity as both a Producer and a person. And that made it worthwhile, but ... that was the last one.



**You've worked with a real diversity of people in your many years. I'm just interested in how you've come to make those choices. I'm thinking of Neil Armfield on *Castanet Club* and Davida ...**

Glenys 16A-17/01:25 Like, how did I make the choices? Let's think.

**Did you wait for them - they came to you?**

Glenys 16A-17/01:29 No, I was working in distribution with Ronan Films, with Andrew Pike, who's someone I respect enormously, and we had done the release of *Strikebound*, Richard's first feature film, and Richard had thought the promotion for that was good - again, the selling of it - and he asked me - that's when he asked me to produce *Dogs in Space*. I read the script - it was the first script I've ever read in my life. I thought it was extremely funny. And I thought, sure, that sounds interesting, and that was as much thought as it had. And then I had to find out how to do it. So, I can't pretend to have thought about a career in any measured way. It was really the search for - interesting days. Was no more than that. The funeral film, *Bodywork*, which was the beginning of my work with David Caesar, came about through a conversation. It was quite a rewarding film to make - conversation with a girlfriend. My grandmother had died, and I'd found the whole funeral thing very unsatisfying, I suppose is the word, that it didn't seem the measure of the woman, and I was talking to a girlfriend, Chris Pip, and she said, it's the big taboo now. Everyone's endlessly talking about sex, they go off, but no-one talks about death. Who even knows what happens when you die, you know, to your body and everything. And she was someone who also was not from the film industry, and I suppose - I think, looking back on working with Christine and then working with Davida, the connection was there that I actually prefer the view and the methodology of people who were not from the film industry so that we could invent it, and it worked better that way. And I - and so we came

up with the idea of making a film about the whole - the business of dying, and what happens to your body. And, you know, in retrospect, that film now is - I wouldn't make that film now because I'm older and more people are dying. I was young and hadn't had a direct experience with death except Nanna dying and I was a little more remote from it in that way when you're young.

Glenys 16A-17/04:00 And then I'd seen a terrific film at the Sydney Film Festival, I think, made by someone I didn't know called *Shoppingtown*, and it was a film that had just shots of alienating shopping centres out west - silent shots, and then a voiceover track of kids saying things like 'Dunno', 'Nup', 'Bored', 'Nup', 'Nothing', and it - it was enormously appealing to me, because I suppose in the old days at the NFT I'd been interested in experimental and avant garde cinema and it seemed like a fantastic thing. And I thought, gee, let's get that person to make that film, so I looked him up and rang up this guy called David Caesar, who was a student at the film school at the time, and said, would you like to make this film about death and dying? And that's when we started working together, and I suppose, there's a little more input from me on that than mostly. You know, it was - had been an idea that hadn't come from the director or the writer, and we worked it up together, and so I found that more satisfying than other projects. So that's how I came to work with David. And then he had an idea for a feature film ...

### **You did a few documentaries ...**

Glenys 16A-17/05:26 We did. The others were his ideas - *Carcrash*, but, yeah, I was quite involved in the talent finding for *Carcrash* and - shot a lot of the stills for it - he was very experimental in those days in terms of - it was shot in studio - wholly shot in studio, and we shot still backdrops, so, yeah, I enjoyed that more, and the difference between making a documentary and a feature film - I preferred documentaries because it

was more manageable, I suppose. And there was more to do. Yeah.

**Then you did two features - *Greenkeeping* and *Idiot Box*.**

Glenys 16A-17/06:19 And *Idiot Box*. *Idiot Box* was written because a fund became available - it was written to a budget, and I still find it very amusing as a film. And - but, you know, I - it's quite odd. I sort of feel guilty because I feel I've been a producer but I've been a sort of reluctant producer, and really the bits I like are bits at the beginning - the money raising - and the bits at the end, which is the exploitation of the film, so, *Idiot Box*, my proudest moment, is the poster. You know, I like - and the odd joke, which I can occasionally throw in - into a script.

**So when it comes to the poster, what are the elements that come in to that?**

Glenys 16A-17/07:02 Well, I inevitably - the *Feeling Sexy* poster up here is another one that I enjoyed doing - I always end up saying, make the title bigger, because everyone - on the - make the title bigger, have people on it as big as possible - these are just small rules I made for myself over the years. I don't know. I just enjoy that whole business. I started out at art school, so I enjoy - that kind of stuff.

**And so, with David -**

Glenys 16A-17/07:07:42 I don't know. Yeah, it worked. That's what I can do. You know, I'm better at that than I am at, um, I don't know - the other stuff. I think.

**You obviously get through it. I mean, some people would argue**

**that it's not rocket science and that if you can manage a team of people, which you've obviously been able to do, you get through it.**

Glenys 16A-17/08:14 See, I think it's too much for one person, and I think that's also where the Australian film industry's gone a bit haywire. The American model where you have four producers or five producers, and everyone's got their own bit to do, I think is far more realistic. I mean, at the end of a shoot, when you're on an Australian film, at the end of the shoot, you're exhausted as the producer. The director's exhausted, but the director can go and lie down for a while, but the producer has got to gear up again, and finding that energy is quite something, and so I - really now in the way that I'm moving forward with Michael is that he's going to actually do the physical producing, and I'm going to do the bit before and the bit after, which are the bits I like. I have no interest in being on set. I'd be perfectly fine if I never went on set ever again. I don't like it.

**Well, how about working with Neil.**

Glenys 16A-17/09:13 Neil's a joy. We were both kind of brought into it. That was the most fun experience I've ever had on a film. I did like that one, but then, the shoot was only two nights long. So, you know, it suited me perfectly. More like a TV commercial. Neil and I were really brought in to make that film. It was Hilary Linstead's baby. She was the Castanets agent at the time, and, yeah, I laughed a lot. It was enormous fun to make. Very good crew, and Neil was - yeah, he's a good - he's a good film director. He's a very busy man, and so a lot of the time he was off doing an opera by the time, you know, when we were cutting the finished film. And it's only - mmmm - two months since I sat in our lounge room downstairs - we recorded the audio commentary for the DVD. Very Castanets style, with the TV on, turned down low, and us talking over the top, me having set up my own little sound recorder - we recorded into there. So typical Castanets style.

Very funny. Because there's no money.

**So your involvement in the release of that ... someone else is releasing it? I mean, you have rights there? ...**

Glenys 16A-17/10:33 Andrew Pike's releasing it.

**So you're providing the - those elements ... the sustainability issue.**

Glenys 16A-17/10:47 Yes. The sustainability - *Castanets Club* was never a sustainable film. It never - it didn't cost much money - never made much money, but even now when you look at it, it's still extremely funny, and I had a great time ... doing it. That's the only one I can say I actually enjoyed the shoot. Yeah, it was. It was perfect. Yeah, it was good.

**With Davida, you've gone through the history of that. How was that on set? And I'm also interested in the post-production ...**

Glenys 16A-17/11:26 On set - well, we were in Brisbane, and Davida is an extraordinary personality and had that capacity to bring everyone along behind her. Everyone wanted to help her - she didn't pretend to know what she didn't know, and she was unashamed and unembarrassed to ask for help when she needed it. There are only a couple of sticky moments early when I think the first AD assumed Davida knew more than she did, but the vision was so crystal clear, everybody saw what was coming out, and the moment the rushes were there, everybody kind of got it, because it didn't look like every other movie. There were no establishing shots - I mean, you've got, you know - but everyone could see, and the power of Davida's communication and her extreme generosity

with people - it was joyous. It was - there was no - um, Davida's a charismatic person, and an unusual communicator, but people learned her language very quickly.

**During the editing, what was the process there? Generally, in the editing room, it's a different pressure than on set.**

Glenys 16A-17/13:11 Yes. No, the - the worst moment was when, after a week of cutting, Davida said, we've finished. And called me over and showed me a 94 minute version, at which point I thought I'd have to sack the editor. How could they let her even think for a minute that it was finished, because all that had happened was the outtakes had been taken out. But she loved every frame, and so that was - that wasn't a good moment, because I didn't know how to - I didn't really have the - I didn't want to break her heart and say, no, because, you know, she loved every moment - every - they were pictures to her. Anyway, but, you know, that - we worked through that, and I - so ... in my heart, knew the film was about 40 - probably a 40, if I was lucky, 45 minutes long, because the script was only 40 pages. And so, I said, 'I'll come in again once you've got it down to 50 minutes'. And then Marin Palowski, at Showtime, who are one of the investors, she was very good in the cutting room, and helped - I guess, there, but you know, we did get down to things like, well, we need something in here. What have we got left, because we didn't have many shots. And so, the story was reconfigured in the cutting room as it so often is, but it was literally counting what shots can we use. What have we got left? And there was like two shots that - ah, we can put the phone in there and put a different sound over it. And so, Davida became a filmmaker. She got it like that, in the cutting room. It was really fantastic.

Glenys 16A-17/15:07 So, because the film was only a 43 minute film, and it had been shot in these sort of, you know, the camera would be set up - I mean, there was

camera movement. I don't want to make it sound too static, and Garry Phillips was the perfect DOP for Davida, and he was a Queenslander - he had five daughters, you know, he just sort of knew the terrain. But we didn't have many shots to play with and so when it got down to the end trying to make the finished film, we were literally saying, 'Which of the three shots can we make work here?' You know, because we only had that many and there was no possibility that we could shoot any more, and Davida got the filmmaking process - how the film was remade in the cutting room, so we started with that one thing, and it became something else, and because we'd treated it like a feature film, we gave it all the same things that a feature film would have, and we never ever told anyone how long it was, we just - people treated it like a feature film. It had a theatrical release - it was as successful as any of the other features that I've made.

**So, releasing it - how did that go because - with 42 minutes?**

Glenys 16A-17/16:28 We didn't tell anybody. I know it sounds funny, but we just didn't mention it. When you look at the poster, it looks just like a feature film poster, and we didn't tell anyone how long it was, and nobody ever came out going, oh, that was so short. I don't think - same as on DVD - I don't think anyone has realised that it's not a feature.

**Was it married with another film?**

Glenys 16A-17/16:53 Um, we put a short on with it. I never wanted to, but sometimes it's showed with a short. Sometimes it didn't. It was perfectly fine without a short. No-one felt duded of their money because the film works. If it had been a dud film, then they might have, but it actually, you know, it's the - it's the film that I feel - delivers. And there was a lot of - good - there's a lot of good energy around it. Davida

had a very nice art dealer at the time, and she made these beautiful hand painted ties that were given away to critics, and we had *Feeling Sexy* underpants. We had *Feeling Sexy* - you know, there was a lot of - lot of merchandise for such ... you know, it looked like a feature film. There was the - I think the script was published, or the book was published at the same time, and there were multiple postcard editions sold through bookshops and - yeah. It looked like a feature film. It had all the trappings - it had all the trappings of a feature film.

**Do you think all of those elements really did help make - get the film - make the film more successful in terms - you know, those publicity, merchandising aspects help the film, or did ...**

Glenys 16A-17/18:23 I don't think it helped the film in a box office sense. Well, I suppose it couldn't have hurt it. It just provided pleasure. They were appropriate items to build the pleasure around the film, so there was a great sense of pleasure about it, as opposed to most Australian films where there's a great deal of misery and pain and everyone loves to, you know, make films about poor people living in the suburbs, and someone dying, or some, you know, drug addict .... You know, it was a film that had pleasure at its centre, and so, having fun things - I can't remember where I was the other day - somewhere, and some - somewhere that I didn't, you know, that I've never been before, and someone at that place had a framed - they'd framed Davida Allen necktie - this man's tie, that someone - you know, they'd - I don't know where they'd got it from, but it was on a wall, and I thought ... and it was a very beautiful thing, and so, something to do with - about the amount of pleasure within the film, was somehow recaptured in all the objects around it. It was more like an artwork than a ... anything else I suppose.

**It did work. I mean, you know it worked and - I think, on that**



**level.**

Glenys 16A-17/19:43 And it had that big, symphony orchestra soundtrack. That was the other great thing that you don't usually get on a 42 minute film. It had a full orchestra, fully composed, soundtrack. That was quite a - that was another small coup.

Glenys 16A-17/20:00 Yeah. And I had to bribe - it was a bribe - I had to hand over cash - because they were very - symphony orchestras are very snooty and they don't like to play trash. And we had a specially composed score with - there was some scheme going on about, you know, orchestral music, and training up young composers that we got onto, but Davida and I knew we wanted to have Que Sera Sera as the final track over the end credits - walk out music, which is something Andrew Pike taught me, and this symphony orchestra was not going to play Que Sera Sera. They don't do that kind of thing, I was very snootily informed. But I also knew that they were poor. And ... literally on the day, where they're - they recorded the score - they'd finished, and they were not going to play Que Sera Sera - they just refused. No, that's not what we're here for. That's not what we do. We're young talented composers from every - and musicians from every private school in Sydney. We don't do trash. And so, that's when - yeah. I got to do a bit of producing in the old fashioned way. I said, 'Well, what's it going to cost?'. And so, I think it was \$8,000. Absolute highway robbery, but it would have cost me more money to - maybe it was only five. I can't remember. Anyway, it was just ludicrous and it was just sheer cultural snobbery on their part. So, I hope I haven't defamed anybody, but ...

**It's there in the film.**

Glenys 16A-17/21:31 Que Sera Sera is there in the film. They played it. Yep. They played it and they played it for money, which is what you'd have to say - you know,

how do you explain that to people. We - it wasn't that we loved the rest of the soundtrack - the composed score, but we needed Que Sera Sera to - for the walkout music. We wanted it, and we were the filmmakers and there was this kind of weird cultural snobbery which I'm afraid invests a lot of the arts in Australia, but yes, so - it was done. And I'd, you know, I'd gone and got an arrangement from the guy who ran the school eisteddfods, so - what, you know, the first of all they said, 'No we can't do it, we don't have an arrangement', so I - he lived at Caringbah, and I'd gone out, and he was about 70. He was a fabulous old man who'd also done the musical arrangement for a British film called *Joanna* in the '60s that I'd seen. He's dead now, but - so he turned the arrangement around in three days whilst this orchestra was saying, 'No, we can't do it, and anyway, we haven't got the arrangement'. So on the day when they said we haven't got the arrangement, I said 'Here it is'.

**You sort of evolved or moved into a Government bureaucracy, SBS, moved into becoming a commissioning editor.**

Glenys 16A-17/23:20 I stopped making films. I decided that I didn't want to do it anymore. That *Feeling Sexy* was great and it was enough, and that I would do something else, and at the time I decided that, Westpac also took over the Bank of Melbourne. The Bank of Melbourne had been my cash cow for nine years, so I'd made all the television commercials with Bank of Melbourne - all our friends had jobs, we used to love it - you know, it was - it was a really great gig, I enjoyed the world of advertising, I could - I got it, you know, it's just one of those things, so - but then Westpac took over the Bank and - no more bank ads were needed. So, things looked weird, and - and then the job at SBS came up, and I thought, oh well, that would be a way of being able to get good work made, but I wouldn't actually have to make it myself - I could do the before bit, making it happen - and the afterwards bit, getting it out there without having to actually go on set. And I loved it. I

loved making so much - being involved in so much, sort of, creative decision making all at once, but without having to actually sit in a cutting room very often.

**And just, some of the shows that you really enjoyed being part of, and that you've seen, and some of them still running now.**

Glenys 16A-17/25:00 The ones I - the ones I most enjoyed being part of - *Rockwiz* was enormously fun, you know and I quite like to have fun. *East West 101*, even though I hated the title, it wasn't originally called that, it was - I had a better title - *Major Crime* I think - I liked that a lot. I like genre work, you know, it was a way of getting the SBS, um, message about multiculturalism into a popular form. You know, it was a detective show, a crime story, it was, you know, it was great. And, you know, then, you know, there was the opportunity to do, um, you know, what I think of as important work - the Rachel Perkins, Darren Dale, *First Australians* - that was extremely rewarding to - you know, I just - I feel proud to have, you know, even touched on that in the smallest way. I think that's something that, you know, it's inexplicable that it wasn't done 50 years earlier. So, yeah, I enjoyed - I enjoyed the audience focus in television. It's very instant. You see what works and what doesn't work, so I loved the constant audience factor, so it became less about making and more about the delivery, and the cutting of, um, promos and - I liked the world of TV because it was so busy. I was - you know, it was quite - over a long period, you know. My day would start at 7 - I would watch two shows as I had a cup of tea for breakfast. I'd go into the network, I'd come back home, I'd watch another four shows, because at that time, it was a bit mad, but I never let anything go to air without actually seeing it. Which, you know, was quite mad in terms of the time commitment, but, you know, things get through that - if you don't do that.

**So how much of a relationship did you have with the filmmakers?**

**Take *Rockwiz* for example. A totally different sort of show than what you've been involved with before.**

Glenys 16A-17/27:11 Yeah. It wasn't filmmaking - it was television. And I wanted it to be television. I would love television to be better than it is - it seems - you know, TV's got worse. I mean, it's a fantastic medium and I didn't understand - again, I didn't understand the snobbery of filmmakers who often would rather not work than make good television, and I think we've got the television we deserve. I found it very bizarre that lots of filmmakers would turn their nose up at TV, and TV suffered for it, and presumably so did they. So, I didn't want to make films to try - I didn't want to try and make films work on TV, because they don't. I wanted to make better quality television. Interesting TV that I wanted to watch. I don't watch it now, because I can't find anything I like. It's really bizarre, but - so, no, I liked the whole business of TV. I loved the, you know, seeing things happen, like, um, waiting for the Pope to die. That was one of the funniest things on earth, because - I mean, it's a shocking thing to say, but everyone knew the Pope was ill, and everyone at - television networks all around the world were sharing programs, you know, this is the Pope's garden, this is the Pope's favourite recipe, the Pope's ... all this Pope stuff, and there was enough to cover, you know, about a week of TV - specials concentrating on the Pope, you know. All TV schedules would be full of Pope stories. And then the Pope took longer than a week to die, and there was this kind of frantic rescheduling all the time, thinking, ah, he'll die tonight. And people - you know, literally - I quite enjoyed being around all that, and so people, you know, would be watching - it was not my area, but, you know, watching *Friends* - other people with the network, you know, ringing Canada - 'Have you got anything else on the Pope?', you know, 'Have you got the Pope's clothing budget film? Or the Pope's, you know, favourite candle maker film?'. They were - it was quite - that sort of the way television can be captured by something and - and the World Cup, and all the - the meetings to commission programs from people to go

on air two years later. I loved that part of it.

**From an editorial point of view, you're commissioning, and then you're seeing it through to when it's being cut, or before it goes ... how is the - working with people involved ... you're sort of in a sense maybe one step removed from the producer.**

Glenys 16A-17/30:04 You are, but you are purchaser. It's a different relationship, and I think a lot of the time, that's one of the problems Australian filmmakers had with TV is that they were still trying to make artist films without understanding that television was like the retail environment and so if the film - if the film actually did have to be 52 minutes long - it couldn't be 52 minutes 40 - it needed to be 52 because there were 8 minutes of other material that had to be fitted in, and - that was interesting. It took me a while to get that, because I'd come from the filmmaking background, but towards the end I understood that better, and there were people who were better at making work for television than others and people who saw that the medium itself was of interest and could be exploited. John Safran's a perfect example. His work is television. You know, it could only be television.

**You also brought your skills to play in the overall organisation in terms of publicising SBSi as a brand if you like, and I remember the 10 year anniversary where you got the then Arts Minister along. You obviously had - you involved politicians in your work ...**

Glenys 16A-17/31:34 Brand - look, it's kind of odd - I'm wary of something, you know, within the *australianscreen* website - it's starting to sound like some mad, you know, advertising guru. Branding's really important, and um, for SBSi, branding was extremely important because it was dependent on Government funds for it's continued

existence. And so, the actual brand SBSi on something came to mean something outside the actual product, that you knew it was going to be a kind of - there would be a seriousness of intent, there would be, hopefully, innovation - it wouldn't just be boring old TV, you know. If it was going to be a crime series, it would be an interesting crime series. It wouldn't just be crime a week - *The Bill*. And so the SBSi brand was very important. It became too important for the network because, I believe, I think to some the SBSi brand overtook the SBS brand, and that's not desirable, so it was good I left when I did because I think they've stopped the brand now.

**I was interested in particular characters - theatre actors, it could be or in documentary, that you've come across, in particular, that you recall ...**

Glenys 16A-17/33:46 It's odd who you do recall. I mean, mostly my relationship has been with directors, and there's nothing more joyous than working with a director at the top of their game, when, you know, when everything's working well and you see fantastic results come, and I had that experience a lot with Davida. Um, I've had that experience working with Jack Thompson, who is just a remarkable craftsman, so - and other odd people - not odd people, but I remember a location manager in Queensland called Harry Yates who was an ex-policeman, who just had the charm of the gods really - he was amazing, and, uh, but, you know, I don't find the process of making films particularly rewarding for relationships. It seems to - you know, there's a euphoric short term moment where you love everybody and they love you, and then it's over and you can barely remember their name, kind of thing. I think, that's also true. I mean, it's not true for me in my relationship with the directors, which I'm pleased to say, are all continuing in one way or another. I'm - but, no, I don't - I may be a too super - too superficial a person, but as a producer, you're not actually on set all the time, so I've never formed a relationship with an actor except for Jack and we work closely - we have the company together. Fine Poets,

you know, it's a company that Jack and I have together. So - it's ... so, the pleasure in working with someone like Jack is also partly to do with the - yeah, pleasure's the word for it, but mixed in with the respect for watching someone whose craft skills are just so far and beyond anyone else. Even, you know, when we used to make bank commercials together, because Jack was the figurehead for the Bank of Melbourne - he used to do the famous cut - Bank of Melbourne cuts the cost of banking, which, you know, all of Victoria knew. But, to watch someone like Jack work, I mean, this is, you know, is a very poor example of his craft, but, you know, we would have to make a 30 second commercial - has to be 30 on the knocker. Scripts would be written that were not always that long, and you could say to Jack - Jack, can you do it, but could it be, um, a second and a half shorter, and he'd go, sure. And then he would do it. On the knocker. It was breathtaking, and so that - that kind of thing - you know, I remember that sort of craft, I suppose, and the pleasure of that.

Glenys 16A-17/36:41 There was also a wonderful character who passed out while we were shooting at Waverley Cemetery. He was a grave digger, and he'd just, I think, got overcome with nervousness, and so he'd deliver this classic line - he'd said something like - this was for the David Caesar film *Bodywork* - he'd said, you know, you front up at their house - he worked as a funeral, um, director's driver, I suppose, and he said, 'You know, you front up to their house, and you don't know what to say. You say g'day, but it's not a good day is it? Someone's died.' And he was on this sort of roll, it was a very amusing, as well as serious commentary on that awkwardness about how you deal - you know, people are dealing with grief. And - should I do that again because of the noise - yes. So this man was, you know, having a serious - making a serious comment about the nature of grief and how you deal with it - what'll I do? Change position?

<building noises>

**What do you think, Richard?**

Glenys 16A-17/38:16 OK. So, this man who worked for the funeral parlour who was talking about the moment where you turn up at a house to collect the deceased, and he said, 'You know, and you say, g'day, but of course, it's not a good day, is it, because someone's just died - that they love has just died', and he was on this roll, and it was a very amusing, um, (laughs) - keep talking ... I'll talk up shall I?

**Well, you'll probably be OK.**

Glenys 16A-17/38:53 OK, anyway, it was a very amusing little speech, and it was also quite serious, and then, I saw the colour drain from his face, and he just passed out. In front of us. And subsequently, that became one - I mean, I liked him a lot. He was a lovely man, but subsequently, it became one of those moral issues in the film. It was a great shot - this man talking about dying, and then passing out. It would have worked brilliantly in the film, but it wouldn't have been so good for him, and so we actually had one of those filmmaker moral questions - what do we do? Do we use it, and it would also be kind of funny if he passed out as well, but it would make him look a little weak or foolish, so we cut it out, but I remember the moment - mostly because of its graphic quality - red faced man, literally, like, colour drained from his face like they say. It was very - that was a moment.

**Have there been any mentors? Or people that you feel have been important on the way?**

Glenys 16A-17/40:05 Yep. Mentors. Yes, many of them. Now, they're all quite odd things, and none of them have to do with filmmaking, which probably - not much to do



with filmmaking. First mentor I had, I suppose, was my father, who was a gun marketing person, and he once did a campaign that I remember now, because it was such a good one, for, um, a product called Carbon Black, which was a derivative of rubber - oh, no, it was an oil derivative that they used in rubber, and he did a campaign for Time Magazine, and it was just a square of colour on a - on the page - so it was a glossy square of colour that - was a red one, and then further down in the magazine, there was blue, and then there was yellow and there was green - and it just said - 'Red - post office boxes, fire alarms, fire trucks, and la la' and all these red things. And then it said - 'Think red', and it listed all these red things, and while you're looking at the square of red, and it said, 'But when you think of black, think of us - Australian Carbon Black.' And it was - just this really simple, well executed advertising campaign, and I'm just sort of - and I loved that, and so there was this - some combination of graphics and words that worked for me. So, Dad knew - Dad had that skill and somehow I've - you know, the rest of the family, kind of, picked up on that.

Glenys 16A-17/41:31 And then, Michael Zerman in Adelaide who was the print journalist, but knew how to actually put a newspaper together. He'd worked on one of the - I think there was a - was there a newspaper called *Go Set*? Was that a newspaper? OK. So he'd been an editor of that, and he taught me how to mark up copy for publication, which was a skill that I've used over and over again. You no longer use - it's all done on a computer now, but the same sort of skills of how to make a page of copy look good is something that I learned from him as well as brevity in advertising - to go for a kind of elegance, I suppose - uh, an elegance of form through brevity. So I'm grateful to him for that.

Glenys 16A-17/42:25 Andrew Pike taught me a bit about showmanship, mostly by historical reference to people like - who's the famous filmmaker? Ken - Ken Hall, who

used to sort of march up and down with a sandwich board advertising the films on at the cinema, and stuff like that, and just as a way of doing business with people. I enjoyed - I learned a lot from Andrew about that, and how to sort of run with something, and he was very supportive.

Glenys 16A-17/42:57 And Davida taught me a lot about generosity of spirit and how, you know, how ludicrous all these people are who, you know, quibble about - I don't know - she was very gen - you know, I learned generosity of spirit from Davida in a way that it could be present in a film industry in a way that I'd not experienced it myself as a producer, and ... Yes.

Glenys 16A-17/43:30 And I suppose I've been mentored in another way by my husband. He wouldn't describe it as mentoring, but by example. He's a very driven person with enormous respect for craft and that to know that, you know, good enough is not good enough, and the pursuit of excellence across - yeah - the filmmaking sphere. And to - you know, to respect that nagging thing that keeps you awake at 2 am and not think, 'Oh, what's it matter?'. Yeah. You know, I care about fonts. That kind of thing, and, you know, just recently, we changed the track order on the new Henry Lawson CD, at enormous expense, but I just - I just - Jack knew it too, I knew it. We knew we should have put this one particular track as the first track that would be better, and that we'd gone to press and everything. It was stupid, but at the end of the day, the work - I suppose in a way, yeah - that's another big penny drop moment - that there were - after a while, the work dictates to you. You are not in charge of it, and that's why all this flurrying around - who's got final cut, whatever - if you are open to it, the work tells you what it needs. It is not you telling it what it should be. And so, even just in that small way, we really knew, even though we'd gone to print and spent the money. We had to ring up the CD replicator and say, 'Stop the presses! We're changing the order.' So we had to change track order,

which means all the embedded codes change, got to change the print, but it's - it was the right thing to do and now everyone could sleep peacefully at night. So, you know, so, yes, there're some of my mentors.

**Do you want to talk about being a Hollywood wife.**

Glenys 16A-17/45:41 Ah, yes, I enjoyed that. Yes, I can talk about being a Hollywood wife. I did all of the things that you do as a Hollywood wife. I saw all of the excesses. I saw all of the hilariousnesses. I saw how sick it could make you, and I came to admire the Hollywood mode of many producers. Even though it could drive a director nuts, but I could see how it was a better life than trying to do everything yourself, and allowed for greater reflection, um, allows you to step back a bit. Allows you to take more craft skills from, you know, other people, where they're available. And um, yeah, I was a wife for a year. And I didn't do much. I went to the gym, and I supported my husband and, uh, you know, helped him when he was trying to figure out how to make the film work against all these other people who were trying not to make it work, and, yeah, I enjoyed the experience enormously.

**Can you give an example of a partnership ...?**

Glenys 16A-17/47:00 Yeah. I run our company, I suppose. That's the other side of it, and so, I'm involved in the negotiations for Chris' services. I read all the scripts and all that sort of thing. But, um, yeah, Hollywood wife to - I could see it - you know, it's quite a good gig, really, and I enjoy - I like going to live in other countries. Yeah, and it's nice to see - it's nice to be part of a - oh, not that I was part of it, but to witness a big machine in operation. I loved all of that. I loved the scale of that. I still - I can still get excited. When I see - even things like, um, you know, a big arena show, or watching the

World Cup being shot, I can get excited at the sight of a cameraman up the top of a crane swinging across a crowd. I mean, I just - I love it. I don't want to be it - I don't want to do it anymore, but I find the - I find scale quite exciting. And, you know, the idea that - having to put together coverage for the Olympics - that sort of stuff, I can really get very excited about.

**I guess it's one of those things that as a Hollywood wife, you can watch and appreciate without actually having to ...**

Glenys 16A-17/48:28 Yeah. No, no, and it - you know, it's true. Stars are special. I loved meeting the stars. They are special people. They have a luminosity about them. Renee Zellweger - you know, she must be, like, 4 foot 6 tall. She's, you know, as thin as a wafer, and I - I loved that whole proximity, you know. I can be a groupie too. I loved going to the gym with Renee. I loved watching whether she actually ate two courses at any one meal, you know, it was very - it must be horrible for her. You know, I found out stuff like, you know, she couldn't go shopping. They had to open up stores for her at, you know, midnight so she could go in unmolested. You know, the amount - their lives. I loved - you know, being there and going to parties in these kind of palatial, you know, extraordinary places where, you know, no-one, everyone, where the men had facelifts. You know, I found it exotic. I loved it. It was like going to a foreign country. So that was - yeah, that was exciting. I could take any amount of that. Because, you know, at the back of it, there's, you know, an Australian filmmaker with a slightly cynical look on her face, even though I enjoyed it. You know, I could do Hollywood wifedom as well. You know, I could play that role. It was no problem.

Glenys 16A-17/49:52 Got to get the plug in for *Fine Poets*. (laughs)

Glenys 16A-17/50:06 Just a brief - a brief segue. So, OK, here we are. Here we are - we're here at Coogee, which is where I live - downstairs. And this is the office where we run Fine Poets - we being myself, Jack Thompson who's not with us, Susie Gahl, who's got a cold and sitting in the corner and hoping we don't film her. And so this, this used to be the production office for Binnaburra Films, but, um, then it metamorphosed and family took over, then it's metamorphosed back again, and now that Film Poets is up and running, we do all the marketing of Fine Poets from here. It's a very comfortable situation I think. I love working from home. You know, if I could do it all the time I would. It's very nice to be able to all day, nick downstairs and put the dinner on, then come back and do another hour's work. Suits my life, working from home. So, really ...

**Give us a quick idea what Fine Poets is.**

Glenys 16A-17/51:04 Fine Poets is a marketing and distribution company. We record - we publish - we're publishers as well - we publish CDs of the world's most famous actors reading the world's most famous poets, and so in Australia, that means Jack Thompson reading Banjo Paterson, and Jack Thompson reading Henry Lawson. I don't - the essence of it is the classic nature of the work. We're not doing any modern work. We're not doing anything particularly adventurous, but we hope in time to own online poetry. So that's what we do.

**Different to filmmaking ...**

Glenys 16A-17/51:50 Much more manageable than filmmaking and very - something I can do the recording of and the actual entrepreneuring of it nearly - it's much more - it's much smaller and I can do it nearly by myself in a way. It got too big to do by myself, which is when - the first one happened - Banjo - so I had the idea, and naively

thought, 'Well I'll just do a press campaign and I'll sell it from home, and it'll be a nice little business - it'll see me through to retirement.' And then, 12,500 sold in three weeks, and I had neighbours, friends, everyone wrapping parcels in the lounge room, the living room, the bedroom, everywhere. It was just impossible, so I learned a big lesson about, um, the need for what we call a pick, pack and shipper. And then Susie came on to help with the marketing and the retail aspects and the customer relationships, which - and so it's pretty well - it's working nicely now. Doesn't - it requires, you know, the entrepreneurial - the selection of the work and the recording of it and the making nice, and we use Australian artists. This - ah - I haven't got a copy of the new one here because it's at the replicator, but, ah, the new Henry Lawson CD has a painting by Jenny Sages and each subsequent CD will have a major Australian artist who provides the painted backdrop to the CD, so that's another small thing that we can sell as well.

**Excellent. Now, we want to see the connection with Davida as far as - when you work with an artist, in a sense their work is ongoing ...**

Glenys 16A-17/53:52 Paintings. Well, the legacy of Davida, apart from an ongoing friendship with her which I value enormously, is also her children. So Davida has four daughters, all of whom I have relationships with. One of them, who's just about to have her first baby, works as a carer for my mother a couple of days a week, and so there's been an enmeshing of family, work and endeavour. Um, we have paintings by Davida - this is - one of the classic paintings. Um, basically, um, it's a sex scene, but the main focus, and you know, it's partly - I think it's mostly to do with the - well, for me, I read it as something to do with the fragility of female sexuality and arousal. There's a couple coupling, and all she can see is this green chair. She's noticing the green chair, because it's, you know, you know, there's a fabulous ... But, you know, Davida's - I don't know, I love that painting, but usually - we move it around. It hangs in the bathroom a lot of the

time, but her work - you know, the other one I remember most of all is called 'Woman Shaving Her Legs in the Bath', and it's full of, um, potential danger. You just think any minute the razor's going to slip and the other one is called 'What if there's a Shark?' about the kids on the beach. And so, her work, somehow - I feel it's all around us. She sends funny things in the mail, and - I don't know, so, that's the legacy of working with Davida, and this floor that you see here, is where the script was finally put together. So all the way down here, follow me if you will. All the way down here, all the way down these stairs, Chris, Davida and I were with scissors and sticky tape, cutting and pasting literally the script until it worked. And we didn't - I think it was 3 am in the morning by the time we finished, but it went all the way down, and scene one commenced here, at the back door, and we just kept on going. We just kept on going, cut and pasting until we knew it was right. We had all the elements there - we just couldn't figure out the - the right order, but we just thought, OK, we're going to just do it. So we did, and that's how it finished up. And then, the job came of actually getting all these bits of paper and sticky taping them together into a proper script, but it worked.

Glenys 16A-17/56:41 So, you know, the work and the life is enmeshed. Out here is - well, slightly embarrassing. This is Chris' office, which is sort of, you know, shows a life that is often lived elsewhere. It looks a bit empty at the moment because actually he's chosen to work in the hallway. I don't know, but, um, yeah, this looks empty, more or less, but current files - *Miss Potter* waiting to be sorted. There's *Babe* - this was on the wall - the house in *Babe* - it's embroidered and then been soaked in tea. You know, like, we live in an archive as well. It's sort of bizarre, like, as soon as I move it out of the house, more stuff comes back in.

**So that's really about how you balance life and work**

Glenys 16A-17/57:39 There's no balance. It's completely enmeshed, I have to say. And, you know, I really, you know, in nominal terms, only work four days - four weekdays a week because I look after my mother on Wednesdays as well, but of course, what it means is I'm working nights and weekends, but we actually - there are no borders any more. We once tried to corral personal time, but it - there just is none. It's all enmeshed. This was the actual - this is embarrassing and Davida would kill me if she saw the condition this is in because it's been in the rain. But this is actually the title frame for *Feeling Sexy*. Typical, very Davida style. Great thick paint. And this made frame. But, I don't know, we just thought it looked good there.

Glenys 17A-18/01:12 Alright. Well, so we've just come out of Chris' office that he's not actually using at the moment. Basically, I'm trying to think what happened, because we went and lived in London for a while, and so really, and, of course, there's been so much travelling backwards and forwards, we haven't really fully moved back in yet, and that was a year and a half ago, so it's pretty bad. This picture is actually the, um, opening frame of *Feeling Sexy*. Davida hand painted all the title cards, and she would kill me because it's been rain affected, but I can't bear to throw it away, so anyway, it's just - leading outside the office.

**Is there any personality trait or something that makes you really - that you've got - that makes you really good at what you do?**

Glenys 17A-18/02:05 Well, the big leap there is I don't know that I am very good at what I do, so I couldn't answer that one. Anyway, here we go. Are we shooting? Alright. So this is my epiphyllum collection. Rare plants. They - they flower for one day - once a year.



**So that was another question I was going to ask you is - what do you do when you're not making films - or not involved in film or distribution?**

Glenys 17A-18/02:42 I'm a pretty keen homemaker, you know, I like to cook, sew, garden. This is - ow - don't hit your head. This is the under the house - what we call under the house, and this is where - I mean, thank god for the National Film and Sound Archive, because if it wasn't for the National Film and Sound Archive, everything'd be under here, and at the moment, actually, only some stuff is here. And so there are boxes called "Old photos and negs" that are from films. <fixes mike> So, there are boxes - you know, oh, yes - mind your head. OK, you have to bend down because, you know, it's fine for me, actually, I can fit under it, but anyone taller can't. So, basically, there's just all this stuff you do have to keep when you're a film Producer, and it's great that there's a National Film and Sound Archive, but they don't take everything. There are some things you just need. And things like *Dogs in Space*, I'm always being asked for photographs, transparencies, from just, you know, quite bizarre sources. Anyway, you end up keeping everything, so here we have a box that contains, nicely labelled, I'm glad to say - OK, so in this box we have *Dogs in Space* colour proofs, press clippings, the completion guarantee, because who knows who's going to sue us 30 years later. *God's Girls*, which is a film I made for the Everyman Series on the BBC, directed by Cherie Nowlan, about a convent at Singleton - we actually went and stayed in a convent for three weeks. Mandy Walker shot it. It was - it was lovely thing to do, but - so, all the black and white stills and transparencies in there - all the legals, because, you know, we were dealing with the Catholic Church; *Fences*, distribution; *Carcrash*, colour trannies, proofs, black and white stills, colour dupes, all the distribution correspondence. It's all got to be kept. And one runs - one literally runs out of household space and the cost of keeping that much storage, so, really, I'm lucky I've got un - you know, "under the house".

Glenys 17A-18/05:07 Also kept down here are all the - might as well go though - and when you think about it, all this stuff. Sometimes I feel like I would drown in it, and so the truth is when I decided to give up film production, I got rid of a lot of stuff. Now, of course, I need it all, but ... Also, this is the kind of display materials we use for Fine Poets, so there's a lot of retail kind of stuff. I don't know - really - but this is a stand - so whenever Jack's making a public appearance, I can't pull it all up, because it's six foot tall, but one of these goes up, and there's one of those for each of the CDs, along with ... I don't know whether you can see. Anyway, it's six foot tall, and wherever there's an event on to promote Fine Poets where we're selling CDs, you know, that could be a poetry festival, or a store signing - he does lots of that kind of work, or he's reading from Henry Lawson at the State Library on Henry Lawson's - not birthday - on the anniversary of his death. And so we organise things like that because they're good for promoting the work, but also, you know, come with the painting. So we own a tent. We own a tarpaulin. We own, you know, all these things that - this poster. And they all get stored under the house, along with, let's see, what's here.

Glenys 17A-18/06:49 *Bodywork*, so the original 16mm prints. Print number two. I dare not throw these away because someone, sometime is going to want a 16mm print. I mean, it's hard to believe, but they, you know, people just turn up, saying, 'Have you got that? Can we have this?' Here, I think, the original - this should be wrapped up. I don't know - somebody's unwrapped it. Mr Nobody. The original British poster, I think that is, for *Dogs in Space*. Um, there's a Japanese one somewhere because it was sold to Japan, and I'm embarrassed to say that that's not wrapped up, so I will have to come down here again and wrap it. It's been unwrapped ... Something else - what's this one? That's the Australian - having to dodge the central heating tubes here, but that's the Australian *Idiot Box* poster, which I'm very fond of. I love that, and we did - I think we did two versions - one in blue and one in pink. We also manufactured these t-shirts that said "Get a Dob" -

“Get a Dog Up Ya”, which is a very horrible thing. I don’t know what that means, but it was something that someone from AC/DC said once. There was also one that said “Bon Scott RIP” that was very popular with young men. So, the - the reason - these have to be wrapped, partly because of termites. They - because they’re made of wood. Can’t sit on the ground, but there’s just a myriad of stuff. I - sometimes, I feel I’m drowning in it. These are *Babe* posters from all around the world. You know, there’s Slovakian *Babe* posters - there’s the - you know, I don’t know why we keep them. Sometimes we put them on the wall for the first you know, six weeks, but then, you just don’t want to look at them any more. But one feels compelled to keep them a bit. I don’t think the National Film and Sound Archive wants the Slovakian *Babe* poster or the Japanese *Miss Potter*. And, you know, there are - when Chris makes a film, there seems to be always soft toys. And so, we’ve got - I mean, I give them away as fast as they come in, but even now, I think that there’s still a Peter Rabbit sitting inside the back door on the table that no-one’s moved, which is a limited edition Japanese Peter Rabbit, and they call him Peter Rabito.

Glenys 17A-18/09:32 Anyway, there’s just stuff. Too much stuff. All of these boxes, all of these things wrapped up, are the work of a film producer, and keeping them is also the work of a film producer. Is it rewarding to keep them? No. Do I feel compelled to keep them? Yes. Do I regret the stuff that I’ve thrown away? A little bit, but I literally have no more room. It’s just - there’s just too much stuff, and I’ve produced too much stuff. Be better to be a less entrepreneurial film producer and produce less, because really, if I get the - you know, there’s - inside one of these boxes, there are *Dogs in Space* metal badges. There are *Feeling Sexy* t-shirts and underpants. You know, but, occasionally I just rashly give the last one away. You know, I’ve just given away the last, um, R-rated *Feeling Sexy* tea towel, which - which had this really very kind of risqué thing written on it. When my mother came to visit, we sort of had to hide the tea towel in case she found it because she would hate it so much. And I think I did give the last one of that away to a

fan. And I sort of regret it, but then I think, how much stuff can a life hold?

**If you were young again and living through that, what - is there any - what would you do differently?**

Glenys 17A-18/11:08 Probably would have ... I probably would have been a director. I mean, you know, I grew up thinking, you know, I grew up in the western suburbs. I would have been lucky to be a hairdresser, so it's all, kind of, been very, um, you know, haphazard and accidental, and I - you know, I don't have regrets, but I would have done it differently. I would have been a more - I would have concentrated more on loving a wider audience and not falling victim to the prevailing ethos and myth that it's - that it was actually sufficient to make work for your peers. I think it's kind of arrogant.

**If you were giving advice for young people now ... what would you be telling them ... in this industry?**

Glenys 17A-18/12:14 I'd say, have something to fall back on. Just like your mother says. Yeah, practice your typing. Yeah, I think - I couldn't have done it if I didn't work in other ways, you know, like, without the odd teaching gig, or - so you do need to have other skills and you need to stay flexible and agile. And even more so now, so try - yeah. I'd probably advise against it. I mean, it's very exciting and it's great work and it probably beats working in a bank, but I don't know that it's a better life. You know, there are a lot of pitfalls along the way. A lot of people have fallen down, you know. I've given up twice. And I have to give up now because I can't bend over any more. Mind your head. Do you want to see more stuff?

**Only if you can get out some photos or anything like that ...**

Glenys 17A-18/13:15 Yeah, sure. *Dogs in Space*. Let me see what I've got before ... They're probably all too small, aren't they?

Glenys 17A-18/14:07 *Feeling Sexy* 35mm prints - two boxes of those. Um, *Feeling Sexy* master file. Dupe colour and black and white prints. What's that? Oh, I don't know, Ray, I think it is all too - it's all too dirty and dusty and revolting. Yeah. No, I think ... I can probably find ... no, it's not ... it's all too - too deep within. It's all - I know it's all here, but it would have to be more than ... ah, you know, there'd probably have to be money at the end of it to pull it out. As you can see, it's all very - well, it's grubby on top. There are - this is quite a lot of *Dogs in Space* memorabilia. I know that, but to get to it. These are all the old posters. Nicely wrapped in plastic. Plastic's a wee bit dirty, but ... so I'll see if I can find a Japanese *Dogs in Space* for you. That's a good one. Oh, no, that's - uh, that's a Japanese - no, Korean - that's a Korean *Babe*. The question is how much stuff should one keep. I thought - yeah. Um ... this is ... what's this? You can see, you know, the potential for becoming this sort of funny old lady with a whole lot of stuff, and pulling it out on rainy afternoons. I mean, I have absolutely no intention of becoming that. I'd rather burn it all, but right now, I'm just... It's like a treasure hunt. Oh, that's - that's - OK, that's - that's - we had the idea we wanted to remake *Knife in the Head*. That's an English movie that - and someone's given us an original poster - the American producer. Anyway, so there's a whole lot of stuff. Some stuff's ours, some stuff's just, I don't know. One keeps it all. Anyway, so that's under the house.

Glenys 17A-18/17:10 Sorry, you're just going to hit your head on that thing. So these are the colour proofs. That was one of the sign writings on the road that were all over Melbourne. Michael, in character. Don't know who those people are. An actor called Nique Needles. Name - mmm - not sure what happened to Nique. But this - I mean - this

is all - there are large prints of these somewhere at the bottom of - of the file, but the - the photographer for most of this was a guy called Steve Pike who went on to become - or was at that time, quite a big rock and roll photographer. So a lot of them have that rock and roll look. If I'd been a more experienced producer, I'd probably - it would have been good to do a book of the photographs because he became a name and we had Michael, but, you know, I was not - it was my first film and I really have to say I didn't know what I was doing. But that was always a good shot. Mmmm That one. That was one of the key ... that became used as key art, and that shot - a version of that shot appeared on a number of the international posters. Yeah. It's nice to see them again. See, as try as hard as I might, I can't actually, you know, divorce myself from it all. I'd quite like to. I'd like ...

END TRANSCRIPT

Glenys Rowe interviewed by  
Ray Argall, 3 June 2009, for  
australianscreen online