

Barrie Schwartz – my fond memories of him

By David Rolfe



Left to right: David Rolfe, Barrie Schwartz, Paula Franklin, Rebecca & John Jackson.

Barrie got a very lucky break when chance made him one of two photographers to join STURP. It was also a lucky break for the Shroud. The other photographer chosen was Vern Miller. He was a professor at the Brooks Institute. This was a highly respected school for professional and, in particular, technical photography.

I had recently completed *The Silent Witness* as an independent producer.

A rare breed back then when the BBC and ITV made virtually all their own programmes except those purchased from the USA.

The BBC had recently appointed a new Head of Co-Production. The industry was becoming more competitive and wanted to find other English language broadcasters to partner with for larger scale productions. I was asked to accompany this new Head to Australia to assist him in these negotiations. My memory of them is scant. I do seem to remember that the producers we talked to were somewhat wary. They had had a great success with “Neighbours” – shown very successfully by the new Channel 4. My colleague addressed them as if they should be grateful that the BBC had “deigned” to come and visit, such was the then BBC’s imperial and imperious view of the world. We were given short shrift.

After our negotiations – such as they were – were complete, I decided to amend my ticket home to include a stop off in Santa Barbara in California to meet Vern and Barry personally. This was somewhat indulgent as my (then wife) was solely in charge of looking after our new-born daughter, Sophie. I did not make this situation any more acceptable to her when I took advantage of Vern’s offer to take me sailing and I called her at home from his ship-to-shore radio telephone when baby Sophie was having something of a hissy fit. On this occasion I thought it best not to extend my stay and visit Barrie as well. That would come several years later.

On a visit to John Jackson in Colorado he and I drove up to an old gold-mining town and met him for lunch and, on a later visit, I made the long drive up into the Rocky Mountains where I found him delightfully ensconced in a characterful and somewhat isolated wooden house where we spent a most pleasant evening chewing over our mutual interest in the Shroud and where I spent the night. I would have made that same trip again with a film crew for my most recent film had Covid not intervened.

Barrie got much pleasure from the apparent dichotomy of his Jewishness - of which he was justifiably proud - and his role as the most active disseminator of everything that would ever appear in any media on this subject. He will be much missed.