**A note from the director on the making of *The Family*:**

Even though I spent only a week in Atlantis – with the protection of a crew of three – it was for me the most intimidating project of my career. Never before or since did a crew of mine spend every night after work arguing about the merits and demerits of the situation. After 30 years, tears still come to my eyes at the Becky scene.The sound man and the sparks wanted to go back and burn the place down. I challenged them to make their drunken objections in person, to Jenny. We went back late at night; they bravely said their say and the following morning Jenny and co. had decamped to the island to which we followed them. Jenny blamed her ‘tribe’ for letting her down i.e. not defending her against my crew’s accusations.

Weeks before, the night I arrived alone on a ‘recce’ I saw a 9-year-old being given the treatment. I realised I was being invited to involve myself in defending the child – which under other circumstances I certainly would. But I was here to recce a film: the idiocy of professionalism stayed my hand. I was given a bed in the house but ran away in the middle of the night and spent hours in a B&B summing up the pros and cons. The following morning I went back and gave an ultimatum: I would do the film only if there was a guarantee my crew would not be pressurisedin the same way as I had been. Snowy went ballistic. Jenny, deadly calm as ever, gave her word and kept it.

Ultimately I was so shocked by the set up that I realised I would be incapable of writing an objective narrative i.e. editorialise or judge the situation. I still wanted to do the film. In fact I was intrigued by Jenny – her power, personality and especially her certainties. I could not imagine how anybody could be so sure of their ground (right or wrong). I believe this was her great talent and undoing – as T.S. Eliot put it: “eyes assured of certain certainties”. Hitler had the same. So had Ghaddafi (whom I met in 1988). There is a thin line between control and sadism.  That’s why I got her to introduce her ‘tribe’. Jenny was not, as she described it, “wishy-washy”. However I went out of my way to gently warn the film editor in Dublin about the possible manipulations of Jenny when she arrived unannounced with Becky to see how we were cutting it.

I showed the film late one night in Dublin (by special permission of RTÉ), got a hardline feminist, Nell McCafferty, to introduce it. When she asked what it was about I said: “Ballbusters”. She went on stage and introduced it by saying: “A woman’s got to do what a woman’s got to do.”

The American who was at Atlantis – in a state of terror – I caught running away. He was penniless, having given over his money and credit cards to Snowy. I gave him enough to get to the American embassy in Dublin. Sadly, what he told us on film, was not recorded by my sound recordist – I think he was also so traumatised that he made a once in a lifetime technical error.

But I wanted to make a feature length documentary from the material. RTÉ refused to show this, the short version – “too disturbing”, they said – they agreed I could own the original negative. Unfortunately the Lab had already cut the negative so it was useless and I never did it. Pity.

Anyway, it’s all water under the bridge.

**Bob Quinn**