

# HARD ROCK



Eight novice teenage climbers take on the challenge of a lifetime as they attempt to scale some of the toughest peaks in the shadow of Mt. Everest in the Himalayas.

3 x 25 mins documentary  
(could be packaged as 3 minute shorts)

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The Himalayan mountain range is one of the most dramatic and dangerous locations on earth. As the home of Mt. Everest - the world's tallest peak - this region of Nepal has taken on an almost mythical status.

It is into this spectacular environment that eight British teenagers are transported with the aim of reaching the summit of Island Peak (6,250m high and often used as a preparation climb for scaling Mt. Everest).

This is a monumental challenge, with the genuine risk of injury and even death hanging over the brave participants. Without a doubt this adventure will teach these teens the true meaning of 'Hard Rock'!

We have exclusive access to approximately **40 hours** of HDV footage which was funded by the British Armed Forces. Scott White would act as Executive Producer for SWPictures. He would work alongside the two awarding winning filmmakers Claudio von Planta and Simon Atkins (see later for credits) to create this compelling three-part documentary.

## The Team:

**Hard Rock** is the story of eight sixteen-year-olds (7 boys and one girl!) who were chosen to participate in a high altitude mountaineering exercise.

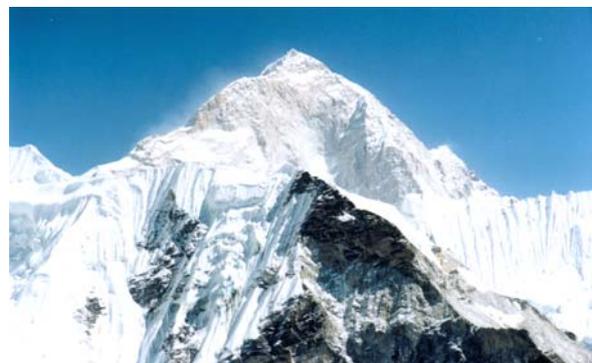


Some of these young people had never been outside the UK nor even been in a plane!

The members of the team were selected from junior soldiers who started at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate in Sept 05. Each of them aspires to careers in the army but none of them has been challenged to this degree in their lives.

## The Goal:

The Team's expedition lasted four weeks with the main goal being an attempt on the summit of Island Peak. Renamed Imja Tse, this 6,250m Himalayan mountain was first climbed in 1953 by a team preparing to scale Everest.



The Team were give a secondary goal of reaching the summit of Kala Pattar. This is another very challenging climb in the Himalayan range with issues of extreme weather and altitude being a constant threat.



## The Documentary

### Episode 1 - The Selection Process:

The first part of the film will focus on the tough Army **selection process** in the UK.



Major Graham Carter who is responsible for Army adventure training chooses eight candidates from a pool of 800 new students at the Army Foundation College. (10 years ago he was involved in a Channel 4 *Cutting Edge* documentary about the training of para-troopers) Major Carter is not only a highly skilled mountaineer but as well a specialist in education and his comments about his selection are intriguing and revealing. As the leader of the expedition he is a key figure in the story.

Major Carter is totally relaxed in front of he camera and is frank and self-critical enough to review his choice of the eight candidates at the end of the expedition admitting where he felt he made mistakes.

### Episode 2 - Team Building & Training:

The central part of the film will focus on the characters of the chosen teenagers and their team dynamic. At its heart this is a character driven story. We discover how each individual deals with the culture shock in Kathmandu and how they cope with increasing fatigue and strain in higher altitudes. Some of them end up with serious chest infections and have to bail out. However, they never loose their humour and some of them get immensely inspired by the thrills of mountaineering, the beautiful scenery and the culture of the Nepali Sherpas. Perhaps the hardest lesson they learn is to acknowledge their physical and mental limits - the point at which they have to stop and give up.



### Episode 3 - On Top Of The World?:

At the end of the story a three-day snow blizzard brings the expedition to an unforeseen halt. Further ascent of the 6200m Island Peak becomes impossible and avalanche risk forces everybody to return.



All participants struggle to accept this difficult decision but it's an important part of the learning process. Back in Kathmandu Major Carter analyses the experience with the whole group and we learn how mountaineering can change people forever.

### **The Documentary Team:**

The documentary was shot by two highly experienced and award-winning documentary film makers:



**Claudio von Planta** has over 20 years experience as a news and documentary filmmaker. One of his most recent high profile assignments was to film Ewan McGregor and Charlie Boreman's motorbike expedition – *Long Way Round*. Claudio also shot several episodes of *Rooted* the BAFTA nominated series for Five. Claudio is used to shooting in hostile environments having been on assignment in The Congo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Sierra Leone.

**Simon Atkins** has been making documentaries in challenging environments for many years. His credits include *Living With Refugees* (shot in Darfur for Dispatches), *Going To Extremes* (in which he joined a trans-Atlantic sailing team) and Simon also shot the highly acclaimed One Life documentary *Dying To Live* about a family living with cancer.

### **Background On The Expedition:**

In 1976 two British soldiers forced their way to the highest point on earth – the summit of Mt Everest. In order to achieve their goal they had to push themselves to the limits of their physical and mental endurance. Having been forced to spend a night camping on the South Summit the two men lost 19 toes between them!

To mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this historic climb, Army Physical Training Officer Dave Bunting began plans for a new ascent of Everest in May 2003. His ambitious aim was to conquer the treacherous West Ridge of the mountain.

Three teams were recruited to take part in the expedition:

- **The Main Team** whose goal was to reach the summit of Mt Everest
- **The Development Team** whose goal was to reach the summits of Lhakpa Ri and Changzeng.
- **The Junior Team** whose goal was to reach the summit of Island Peak

The progress of all these expeditions was tracked via the 'Army on Everest' website which included podcasts, daily updates, blogs and many other features.