

A Himalayan expedition with 16-year-old junior soldiers of the British Army

A documentary of 50 minutes or 3 x 20 minutes

Nicky O'Hanlon a producer from the advertising agency PCI Fitch is looking for an independent TV production company to sell and exec produce a documentary based on footage shot by the two award winning filmmakers Claudio von Planta (www.vonplanta.net) and Simon Atkins (www.simonatkins.com). As a two-person team they filmed a British Army expedition in the Himalayas. This isn't a macho army hard men adventure - the story is about 8 sixteen-year-old junior soldiers (7 boys and one girl) who were chosen to participate in a high altitude mountaineering exercise in Nepal. Some of these kids have never been outside the UK nor been in a plane!

A major part of our work was to produce short video clips in the field which were uploaded to the expedition website by a satellite link. These give a good flavour of the characters and style of shooting and can be viewed on the following link:

<http://www.armyoneverest.mod.uk/Gallery/Video/ExpeditionFootage/ExpeditionFootage.htm> -

Scroll to the bottom of the page and start looking at the clips from 1st April – anything with JT (Junior Team) in the name is material of our expedition.

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 8 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. He is totally relaxed with us and is frank and self-critical enough to review his choice of the 8 candidates at the end of the expedition admitting where he felt he made mistakes.

The central part of the film will focus on the characters of the junior soldiers and their team dynamic. At heart this is a character driven story. We discover how they deal 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 lose 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.

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.

We have about 40 hours of HDV footage and the programme could work either for a youth audience or in an educational / adventure slot. Either Simon or Claudio could direct the edit.

If you are interested to sell and post-produce this project please contact:

Nicky O'Hanlon, Producer, PCI Fitch, G4 Harbour Yard, Chelsea Harbour, London SW10 0XD
Mobile: +44(7768)178 301, Direct: +44 (0) 20 7544 7571, Email: nicky.ohanlon@pcfitch.com