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Rodrigo Vazquez's *Inside Hamas* story was the result of a four-week shoot and unprecedented access to one Gaza police unit

## Unique event honours freelance camera spirit

### Rory Peck Awards

By George Jarrett

For every European free to bemoan the social ravages of the credit crunch, there are hundreds of trapped, desperate people in Zimbabwe, Palestine, Somalia, Afghanistan, North Korea, Tibet, Pakistan, and the Congo who, every day, face the death crunch.

They might be ethnically cleansed, starved to death, caught in a suicide bomb blast, shot, or burnt to death. They know that schedule so much better than us, despite the fact that we get to see everything grim, cruel and unjust on TV.

For those not wholly involved in the 24/7 TV news business and its obsessive hunt for headline stories, this is the type of accumulative impact you might get from attending The Rory Peck Awards. The 2008 version attracted 41 entries from 36 sources, and the three winners produced exceptional stories



Farah Duguf's *Two Weeks in Mogadishu* mixed street battles and civil war deprivation images

concerning the wars in Afghanistan and Somalia, and the plight of petrified North Koreans bidding for freedom by crossing the Tumen River into China.

The honour of hosting the awards night fell to Fionnula Sweeney of CNN International, who reminded her audience that, "This is a unique occasion with the reputation for rewarding the essence of the freelance spirit." She went on to promise compelling and disturbing pictures,

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## Hi from slo-motion

### Sports OB

Slo-motion is an integral part of any sports broadcast, and frame-rates are increasing all the time. **Andy Stout** went to Twickenham to see Arri's impressive Hi-Motion camera in action at the international rugby arena

Twickenham, Saturday 15 November, and things are not going well for the England rugby team in their match against Australia. Sitting in Telegenic's brand-new triple-expanding T16 truck, 11 VT operators drive the battery of EVS XT[2] production and playout servers that a modern sports OB relies on and all wince as one as England Fly Half Danny Cipriani is poleaxed by a crunching Australian tackle. "I've got it on Hi-Motion," shouts VT Op Martin Cracknell, and the next moment the point of impact is played out to the world feed at a smooth and all too visceral 200fps. If the tackle looked painful before, thanks to Arri's Hi-Motion camera, it now looks considerably more so.

"We thought we knew all about slo-mos, but the Arri camera shows us a world that we had never seen before, such as the moment of impact," comments Martin Turner, match director and executive producer-rugby at Sky Sports. "It's that 'Wow moment' that Hi-Motion gives us, though you have to be careful to use it at the right editorial moment, of course."

Suffice to say that the Arri Hi-Motion camera is providing more and more 'wow moments' for sports broadcasters world-



"We thought we knew all about slo-mos, but the Arri camera shows us a world that we had never seen before," says Sky Director Martin Turner



Intrepid reporter Andy Stout (far right) covers the action for TVBEurope

wide. From the initial prototype unit that was deployed in 2006, there are now 17 units of the camera working worldwide, with 10 being supplied out of Arri's UK headquarters in Uxbridge. Seven alone were deployed out in Beijing over the summer covering an impressively diverse range of Olympic sports.

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### Acquisition Special

TVBEurope is the only trade media to systematically track new developments in the acquisition space each year. Part One of our annual Acquisition Special looks at all types of cameras plus monitors and prompting systems – *Fergal Ringrose*  
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# Hi from slo-motion

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The camera's genesis lies with Japanese high speed camera specialist, NAC, which was fulfilling a specific brief for NHK — namely to develop a high speed digital camera for capturing high-speed action for TV drama. This led to a partnership with Arri Media to develop a production model, which was achieved using a combination of specially developed components and software and off-the-shelf parts from the likes of Panasonic and Fujinon. The result is a super slo-motion camera that runs at between 12-300fps, making it handily adaptable from fast moving sports to slower ones (though it also now boasts an extreme top-end 600fps capture option).

"It's a very robust unit," comments Arri Digital High-Speed Manager Andy Hayford. "In two and a half years of operation we've only had one failure, and that was heat-related due to the camera sweating inside a cover at the cycling time-trials in Beijing where its temperature climbed to 60°."

"It's a nice camera to operate," says Bob Blockley, senior



cameraman behind the lens at Twickenham and one of the most highly regarded slo-mo camera operators in the country. "The pictures we get out of it are really good quality and it also has one of the few colour LCD panel viewfinders that's genuinely crisp and sharp."

The camera records in native HD using three 2.2 megapixel CMOS sensors. Pictures are recorded directly as uncompressed RGB in the camera head onto 48GB of RAM, providing 22 seconds of slo-mo at 300fps and 11 seconds at its maximum capture rate of 600fps. This is piped using industry-standard SMTPE hybrid fibre to the CCU and then onwards to air, HD EVS or HD VTR.

Typically in sports OB, it records to an EVS XT[2], using one channel for record and one for replay. Once the operator sees

something interesting happen on the pitch, they hit search on the Hi-Motion control panel which takes the RAM recorder out of record and jumps straight to a cue point. They then hit play and the previous 22 seconds, or part thereof, is played back at 25fps straight from the CCU base station and into one channel of the EVS.

The operator marks in and out points on the EVS panel and clips up the slowed down event. Impressively, within six frames of the XT[2] channel going into record the item can go out to air, making it often the first replay after an incident to be aired. Alternatively the clip can just be held on the EVS network for use in analysis, highlights, or closer or title sequences. Once safely recorded, the Hi-Motion is switched back into record mode and the whole process starts again.

## Unique event honours freelance camera spirit

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the first storyline in a stunning set of clips featuring a man who had just spent 10 million Zimbabwean dollars on a cabbage. Bigger ones would have cost him 20-25 million dollars.

The Rory Peck Award for Features saw Vaughan Smith's *Grenadiers Fighting in Helmand* and Rodrigo Vazquez's *Inside Hamas* lose out to Tim Hetherington's *The Other War*. Hetherington was embedded with soldiers from the second platoon of the 173rd Airborne division in the Korengal Valley, and his report includes a Taliban ambush in which two American scouts are killed and a distraught friend is only allowed a few seconds to grieve. The judges praised the fact that Hetherington had kept shooting in extreme conditions and managed to produce a filmic quality to his pictures.

In partnership with Sebastian Younger, Hetherington shot 140 hours on location and under Taliban attack, plus 100 hours of interviews with soldiers. His intention is to produce a feature length documentary.

"What you saw was front line grief. That valley where I spent the last year going in and out of experienced 80% of all the fighting in Afghanistan; and it is where 70% of American munitions are dropped," he said.

"When that incident happened I was 80m away taking fire from two sides. The Taliban overran the lines and those people were shot dead from 20ft."

A tall man, Hetherington is honest enough to say he stoops behind the shortest guy in the field.

"In my work I always seem to be embedded. I seek to be emotionally embedded with my subjects as well as physically embedded, because I want viewers as close as I can get them to the nuanced, emotional experience of any story," he said.

He was not really covering the war as a journalist, because long projects are his driver. Hetherington is also an anomaly in that he contributes to *Vanity Fair* magazine, but the broadcast work was commissioned and part financed by ABC.

Vazquez's story — the legislative council of Hamas pitched violently against the Palestinian people — was the result of a four-week shoot and unprecedented access to one Gaza police unit.

## Running from bullets

In a final contest between a Kenyan, Nepali and Somali, Abdullahi Farah Duguf's *Two Weeks in Mogadishu* took the Rory Peck Award for News ahead of Subina Shrestha's *Down the Irrawaddy Delta* (after Cyclone Nargis had wreaked havoc) and Clifford Derrick's *Kibera Slum*.

Duguf's story mixes street battles with images of the deprivation caused by civil war. A cameraman

with 15 years' experience, he was able to swap between the warring sides running street battles.

"If you are working as a cameraman in Mogadishu you are always in danger, so you must stay away from your family," he said. "I sent them to Djibouti."

"It is usual that both sides will have some kind of animosity, so I just try to hide as much as I can," he added. "There are no more journalists left behind. Everyone was running away from the bullets, but a few brave cameramen remained. I was one of them, and I decided to show the international community what was going on. A woman even asked me to film her starving children."

Duguf intends to continue with his job until dead, but he may move from news to documentaries. Talking of the local broadcaster who fed his images to ITN/C4, he said: "Whatever he broadcasts, somebody will be unhappy and they will attack. Whatever you broadcast, you create your own enemy."

"This is the most difficult time that I have experienced in Mogadishu. It is a close call all the time," he added.

The Sony sponsored Impact Award — for a news story that changes policy or exposes something that was not previously known — was collected by the South Korean journalists Jung In Taek and Han Yong Ho for their 10-month project *Korea: Out of the North*. A mixed media project created by the Chosunilbo Daily, which has aspirations to run a TV

For studio work, meanwhile, once the director has shouted 'Cut!' the sequence can be instantly reviewed in HD from the Hi-Motion, and can be played out to a deck such as the Sony SRW-1 HDCAM SR portable VTR. If progressive recording is required rather than interlace, using the dual-link HD-SDI outputs from the Hi-Motion the production can record straight onto the SRW-1 and tape.

fantastic, but the speed in rugby is generally only about 15-20mph, 30 or 40mph at the most for a really snapped pass, so only 300fps is ever really needed.

"It's perhaps in the fine detail analysis where it really makes the difference," he continues. "Also, rugby is a game part-verified by a video referee, so to have a tool like this that he can use can prove invaluable in helping him make the right decision."

**"Rugby is a game part-verified by a video referee, so to have a tool like this that he can use can prove invaluable in helping to make the right decision" – Martin Turner**

## Scrumming down

It's worth pointing out that the Hi-Motion is far more than just a gimmicky device. During the England vs Australia match, Turner used Hi-Motion replays three times in the first five minutes alone.

"We have three replay modes now," he says. "Normal slo-mo, the Sony HD Tri-Motion cameras [two were used in the corners at Twickenham], which provide fantastic quality but only slow you down to a certain level, and then the extremely high quality of the Hi-Motion. A great reaction shot is great in slo-mo, but it's even better in Hi-Mo. You need to use its highest speeds for the right sort of action though. Cricket at 600fps is

So, from 0 to 17 in just over two and a half years. Where does Hayford see the camera going next? More units are an obvious possibility in the future — though he's at pains to point out that Arri has no plans to manufacture and sell the camera — but for the meantime he sees a tighter integration with EVS on the cards. "One area we are examining in particular is integrating the two systems much more tightly so that the operators are only using one panel, rather than ours and EVS' as they have to do now. Both companies are working on that at the moment and, when we crack that, that should improve an already efficient workflow."



**For *The Other War*, Tim Hetherington kept shooting in extreme conditions and managed to produce a filmic quality to his pictures**

station, it required the camera team to risk arrest by the Chinese and sit hidden through all weathers.

They tracked some of the thousands of refugees who flee the North, the most compelling images being infrared shots of people carrying their clothes to keep them dry as they tiptoe over a frozen Tumen River.

Jung and Han shot almost 300 hours of footage, and sent their rushes back to South Korea by many routes. They beat Jezza Neumann's *Undercover in Tibet* and 'D' and Ginny Stein's *Mugabe's Calling Card*.

The Martin Adler Prize, honouring a freelancer who has told, or played a vital part in telling a signif-

icant news story, was collected by another hero of the Zimbabwean media community — Mike Saburi — for his Reuters story *Zimbabwe: What the future holds*. Unlike 'D' he can work openly.

## Something lower cost

Sony had entered another three-year event sponsorship term with the Peck Trust, and Naomi Climer, VP of Sony Europe, was quick to compare the early days when it thought sponsorship was 'the right thing to do' to the deeper sophistication of today.

"I feel that the relationship is deeper than just sponsoring the awards. I really feel that we are wrapped up with the Trust in some way," she said. "In the early days when we worked together it was very much global, but on the other hand, even in Europe, we felt the coverage was not as broad as we would both like; there were parts of the world that we were not getting good representation in."

Entries from Argentina, Mexico and the US suggest that the awards are boosting awareness.

"We and the Trust have done a lot of work to try and bring in more nationalities, and one way of doing that is to invite different nationality judges," said Climer. "The Trust's intention is to make sure every freelancer knows they are here, and that people who need help can get it, no matter where they are. We get incredibly rich feedback from the freelancers, and obviously they are always asking for something lower cost."