



DOP

Mark Hamilton

From joining a photography club at school to pestering ex-BBC DPs to take him out on film shoots, Mark became a 'camera runner' or 'camera trainee' and essentially worked for, and learnt from, the Clapper Loader. Then at Northbrook College in West Sussex he studied for a Higher National Diploma in Audio Visual production. "I got my hands on video cameras, Super8 and 16mm film cameras and made lots of short films; some good, some atrocious but, nevertheless, my learning curves were now escalating". He was then accepted on a Masters Degree course in television and video production at Bournemouth University.

"My first job as a fully fledged 'broadcast' cameraman was soon after graduating. I moved to London and a chance encounter with a news crew introduced me to Gerry Williams, who was then head of the camera department at Sky News. He invited me to an interview and insisted I

brought a tape of my rushes so he could judge my ability and not any clever editing. I showed him some material from a documentary I was developing and fortunately he liked enough of it to put me on his freelance list.

"As much as I hated it, I loved it too. Nothing else sharpened my awareness, initiative and diligence like it. Often alone, I could be in the middle of a riot, first to a train crash or even waiting for the PM to talk down my lens for a 'live' interview. I had to be prepared for every eventuality, because I knew I'd only get one chance to get it right. The sense of relief and satisfaction afterwards was overwhelming and, best of all, I got to see my pictures televised the same day."

Best advice? "Find work that can at least give you some income (News, for example), whilst getting experience in the more imaginative genres".