



SINCE RETIRING AS CHAIRMAN OF THE GTC IN THE SUMMER, BRIAN ROSE HAS TAKEN ON THE NEWLY CREATED ROLE OF GTC WELFARE OFFICER AND HAS BEEN WORKING WITH VARIOUS INDUSTRY CHARITIES TO FORM BONDS WITH THE GTC AND TO INVESTIGATE WAYS IN WHICH THE GTC AND ITS MEMBERS CAN BOTH GET INVOLVED AND BENEFIT FROM THESE LINKS. HE RECENTLY ATTENDED THE RORY PECK AWARDS CEREMONY.

Here is a question for you. Over one hundred people killed in conflict areas since 1985. So who were they? Soldiers? Civilians? Aid workers? No,

Here is another statistic for you. For every pound spent on preventing conflict, we spend over two thousand pounds on weaponry and the military.

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they were all freelance cameramen and women, bringing pictures of conflict; pictures that have often changed terrible situations, making people and governments aware of the futility of war.

Danger zone

Time was, if you worked for the news, you had total protection. It was in the interest of both sides of a conflict to ensure that news crews were safe. Not any more.

According to the All Party Group on Conflict Issues, even a small conflict, such as a minor civil war, costs an average of \$64 billion – and this in the 'enlightened' twenty-first century. I say this, because I believe we cannot go on in this way. As a civilisation, as a world, as a global village, we simply cannot afford to waste our resources and humanity on such stupidity. And you'll probably say, 'Yes, I agree with you; but what can we, as ordinary people do about it?'



▲ Filming on the front line – an occupational hazard for news cameramen

What can we do?

Of all people, we as cameramen, can actually do something about it. We live in a 'global village'. We work in television. With virtually instant communication, it is becoming more and more difficult to hide behind the great lie. But at the same time, it can become more and more dangerous to expose the truth.

Thus, those cameramen and women who bring us the news, have a vital role to play, a role that goes far beyond that of simply making

television programmes. One such cameraman was Rory Peck. Rory was killed in crossfire while filming the battle for Ostankino TV Centre in Moscow between Vityaz special forces and oppositional gunmen led by Albert Makashov, during the Russian constitutional crisis of 1993.

The Rory Peck Trust was established in 1995, two years after the freelance cameraman was killed. It was set up by his wife, Juliet, and close friends to provide the help for freelancers and their families that nobody else would give. They also established the

Rory Peck Awards to honour the work of freelance news cameramen and women. It is a unique organisation.

Just like in the more urbane areas of television production, most of the cameramen and women working in conflict areas are freelance. Indeed, it goes further than that. Many of them work entirely freelance; producing the material uncommissioned, in the hope that it will eventually be transmitted. True, there are those who may be motivated by fame and fortune. But, if the recent Rory Peck Awards are anything to go by, most are motivated by a need to expose evil and to tell the truth.

How much risk is too much?

Now, let's get one thing quite clear. Time was when conflict cameramen could take a gung-ho attitude. We've all seen it in the movies; and some of us (me included) tried to emulate them. In my time as a press photographer in Israel, I was shot at (twice), threatened with death by rioters, and nearly got roasted in a

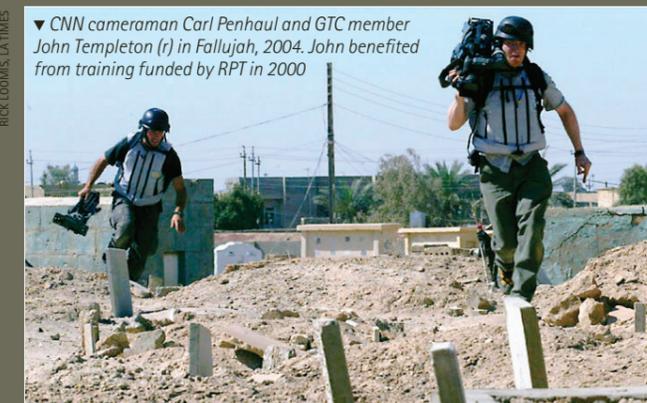
war, fought by 'gentlemen' to rules, one of which was, 'Don't shoot the cameraman'.

Not any more. Members of the Press and TV are now seen as legitimate targets, either because combatants don't want their material to be shown, or because they can be kidnapped and used as hostages.

Prepare yourself

It's one reason why broadcasters now insist that anyone working in a combat zone receives training in hostile environments. All very fine and sensible; especially if you are an employee. For freelance news-gatherers however, it's not so simple. Andrew Kain of AKE in Hereford was the first person to provide hostile environment training. A typical five-day course would normally cost about £2500 (frankly remarkably good value in itself). But with a Rory Peck Bursary, the cost drops to about £300, a far more affordable prospect.

Such training is now essential if you are going to be insured. Whilst it's not going to teach you how to



▼ CNN cameraman Carl Penhaul and GTC member John Templeton (r) in Fallujah, 2004. John benefited from training funded by RPT in 2000

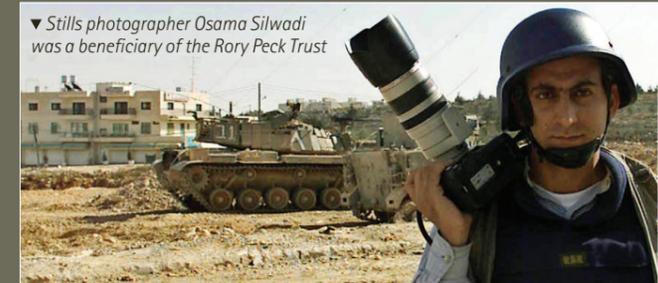
fire. But it was all very exciting for a 24-year-old just starting out on a new career. My battered Nikon Fs attest to this.

become an award-winning combat cameraman – that's not the purpose – it will train you how to be safe and to keep out of trouble in hostile areas.

THE RORY PECK TRUST ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA DEBATE, ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS, SEMINARS AND HUMAN RIGHTS FORUMS

But these days, such an attitude spells at the very least, extreme stupidity. It's not just a case of the Health and Safety brigade and the insurers. The world has changed; radically. Time was when, as a member of the Press or TV, you were totally protected, by both sides. There was a feeling of invulnerability. War was

In the end, it could save your life, and the lives of others; pretty good value for the cost of a decent night out in London. Incidentally, the Trust doesn't just operate in the UK, it's very much an international organisation, helping news-gatherers throughout the world, especially in those areas that are themselves the subject of conflict.



▼ Stills photographer Osama Silwadi was a beneficiary of the Rory Peck Trust

Rory Peck Awards

Even if it's a rather poorly chosen metaphor, the Rory Peck Trust punches above its own weight. For example, their Annual Awards held at the BFI Southbank Screen 1, is a huge ceremony, attended by industry luminaries from throughout the world. It was even covered by SIS LIVE. The format itself (and even the glass awards) may be similar to the

Where it can, funds permitting, the Trust will help those injured or, worst, the families of those killed. This assistance may be something relatively simple, such as a piece of equipment that allows an amputee cameraman to continue working. Or it may be financial help for treatment or to tide a family over in times of distress. Standing as it does in the background, one can't help but admire the fantastic

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GTC Awards – but they fill the largest cinema at the South Bank. Guild members take note!

The Awards ceremony is the main fundraising event of the year, with tickets costing £80 (somewhat less for freelancers and, as I say, the 450-seat theatre was full. It is very well supported by the Trust's many sponsors, especially the news organisations as well as by major manufacturers, such as Sony.

It is not just about training and awards, although these tend to be the most visible parts of the organisation. The Rory Peck Trust actively participates in international media debate, round table discussions, seminars and human rights forums. Many of these meetings seek to support the rights of journalists and newsgatherers in the very countries that are subject to conflict. An example of this was the Zimbabwe International Cooperation Stakeholders' conference held in Harare in August 2010.

It takes enormous courage to film in such countries. But for that courage, we wouldn't know what is happening in the world, and couldn't even attempt to make changes. As we've seen, such risks far too often lead to death or injury. Most of the time the motivation is to tell the story, even if on occasions this means committing the most dreadful sin of all; getting involved.

work the Trust does. For, in the end, it isn't only freelance newsgatherers and cameramen. It's everybody. Because of their support, we can be kept better informed.

As television cameramen, we lead remarkably privileged lives. We get to work with the stars, to visit all kinds of wonderful places and sometimes – very rarely – to help change the world for the better. As Ghandi said, 'We must be the change we want to see in the world!'

Fact File

- The Rory Peck Trust operates in over 60 countries and distributes around 100 charitable grants a year to freelancers and their families in need
- Since its establishment in 2000, the Rory Peck Training Fund has awarded more than 400 safety training bursaries to freelance journalists and media workers
- The 2011 Rory Peck Awards will be held at the BFI Southbank on Wednesday 16 November
- For more information about the work of the Trust and the Rory Peck Awards visit www.rorypecktrust.org