

# TV Documentary Award

Of the ten films that the judges were asked to view, all but one received a vote in the first round and thus went on to be fully considered. That is, the judges feel, a sign that while the outlet for such films on UK TV has diminished, the quality of films has not. After lengthy discussion, four films stood out as revealing, gripping, important and well made. The Jury Chair has a particular interest in Afghanistan and Pakistan and thus sought to ensure a full and fair debate on all those films that deal with other subject matters but, nevertheless, three of this year's best four films do deal with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Of these, it was the jury's unanimous decision that the most deserving of the this year's award is **AFGHANISTAN: BEHIND ENEMY LINES**.

The winner was a fundamentally brave piece of film-making which deserves enormous praise for all involved, above all Najibullah Quraishi who spent two weeks with the insurgents in northern Afghanistan. In this difficult and dangerous environment, we were allowed to see the protagonists as three-dimensional humans: funny, murderous, fallible, scared. This was a powerful portrait of a radicalised enemy and was considered, perhaps because of the strength of its actuality, to have been the most gripping of all the films. It was felt that the context was presented rather broadly but nevertheless it is rare to see the war in Afghanistan from the 'enemy' point of view. Compelling.

**KIDS FOR SALE: STACEY DOOLEY INVESTIGATES:** It was great to see such a potentially impactful film on BBC3. The film talked about issues that affect the developing world in a manner that will certainly engage a young audience. The presenter was open and honest and willing to participate and intervene. The film wore its heart on its sleeve but was no weaker for that - you felt the journey by Stacey Dooley was a genuine one and it was fascinating to see her come to grips with the complexities of child labour. The difficulties of the production were not stressed nor was the audience patronised. It will be interesting to see how future films with Stacey track her expanding experience.

**DISPATCHES: AFGHANISTAN'S DIRTY WAR:** this was a model of journalism - a must for all Media/Journalism courses in the country. It left no stone unturned to present the background to an important but so often overlooked story. We weren't lectured and we didn't feel an obvious agenda except to find the truth and express the implications of that truth. The ability to be forensic and meticulous in such difficult circumstances and to deal with the bereaved and angry on one hand and the defensive and assured on the other was superb.

A final Special Mention for **Pakistan's Taliban Generation**. This was a brave, powerful, important body of work - excellently presented by Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy. It was perhaps the most disturbing of the films the judges had to watch, and thus perhaps the most important—really very fine film-making that only goes to show that this was, in many ways, a strong year for entries and is testimony to those film-makers who, despite the ever more difficult task of raising a budget, continue to make exemplary films about key issues. Credit also to the brave and professional crews and the support of key commissioning editors who have an unenviable job of persuading their channels to continue to support such projects and then the important job of working with the film-makers to make the very best films possible.

## The jury panel:

CHAIR: Phil Grabsky, Director, Seventh Art Productions  
Patrick Holland, Executive Producer, Ricochet  
Simon Gilchrist, Independent Producer/Director  
Alistair Clay, Media Relations Manager, Plan UK

