

<b>BENETTA ADAMSON</b>	<b>Director/Camera Producer/Director Series Producer</b>
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## **ABOUT ME**

I'm a very collaborative film-maker, happiest when I can work with people rather than make films about them. I have solid experience of prime-time long-form observational documentaries, when I strongly prefer to allow events to evolve naturally without interference. I believe a large part of the skill of this kind of film-making lies in knowing your contributors well and intuiting their feelings, so that you can achieve intimacy and honesty. I'm happy self-shooting, directing and recording sound, using my own equipment, or working with a crew.

I take pride in maintaining excellent relationships with very vulnerable contributors while delivering challenging and thought provoking television. I particularly enjoy presenting difficult issues in popular and accessible ways. I have developed a specialised interest in and understanding of medical and scientific issues, and enjoy working in very sensitive areas.

My films win large audiences and critical acclaim: two of my recent films have been nominated for BAFTA, RTS and Broadcast awards, and "ONE Life: Size doesn't Matter" won Best Factual Programme at the RTS Awards for the Midlands on October 9<sup>th</sup> 2004.

## **FILMS AS DIRECTOR**

Producer/Director/Camera: "**Being Breast Aware**" 1x17' film for the Community Channel and Breast Cancer Care encouraging women to check for signs of breast cancer. Directed camera (including a 60 person choir using a Jimmy jib) and self-shot some material. Executive producer: Jane Stephenson

Producer/Director: **Wife Swap Series 10** 1x50' RDF Media for primetime Channel 4 of this perennial favourite. Managed difficult and vulnerable contributors and successfully completed edit. Executive producer: Rukhsana Mosam and Commissioning Editor: Ruby Kuraishe

Producer/Director/Camera: "**Take Each Day**" 1x32' film for the Community Channel and Breast Cancer Care, following the experiences of four women at different stages of living with secondary breast cancer. For tx in March 2008. Executive Producer: Jane Stephenson

Producer/Director/Camera: "**Living with Congenital Heart Disease**" for Media Trust productions 1x30'. An observational portrait of the world-class paediatric cardiology service at the Evelina Children's hospital, commissioned by the parents' support group as a tool for families given a diagnosis of congenital heart disease.

Director/Camera: **“Dancing on Wheels”** for BBC1’s ONE life strand following preparations for the British Wheelchair Dance Championships in Blackpool. Majority self-shot on Z1. Through Tiger Aspect. Tx: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Commissioning Editor: Todd Austin

Senior Development Producer, **Darlow Smithson Productions**  
Stage One of an open ended project to grow an observational documentary unit within DSP. Reporting to Tom Brisley, Head of Factual.

Series Producer/Director: **“Among the Believers”** 3x60’ films for BBC Scotland and BBC4 exploring faith in Scotland, presented by Andrew Slorance. Executive Producer: Neil McDonald. Tx begins 5<sup>th</sup> March 2006 on BBC2 Scotland at 2100 for three weeks.

Producer/Director: **“My Husband’s Secret Life”** 1x50 film for ITV1 primetime through Caledonia. An intimate documentary exploring why gay men marry women through the eyes of three couples who have faced this challenge. The film also asks why so many men still struggle to identify themselves as gay. Commissioning Editor: Daniela Neumann. Tx November 2005

Director: **“Kirsty’s Millions”** 1x60 film for BBC1 about Manchester’s Francis House children’s hospice. Eight year old Kirsty Howard has an inoperable heart condition, which doctors predicted would kill her in early childhood. Instead she has become a celebrity who stole the nation’s heart when – clutching David Beckham’s hand – she presented the baton to the Queen at the Commonwealth Games. This film follows her and other families supported by the hospice into an unexpectedly joyful world full of laughter, where the nearness of death means that life must be lived to the full. Commissioning Editor: Richard Klein; Executive Producer: Paul Stead at Daisybeck Productions. Tx 12<sup>th</sup> December 2004

Producer/Director: **“In Your Face”** 1x40 film for BBC1’s ONE life documentary strand (second series). Ros Pryor suffered bullying because of a port-wine birthmark which made her childhood miserable. At 18 she discovered camouflage makeup and her life was transformed. Now nearly twenty years on she sets out on a journey to meet others affected by birthmarks in an attempt to understand how attitude affects how those with a facial difference face the world. Series Editor: Todd Austin. Tx: 27<sup>th</sup> April 2004.

Director: **“Size doesn’t Matter”** 1x40 film for BBC1 in the new documentary strand “ONE life”. Caroline Miller is 28 and lives on the island of Jersey. She is a dwarf, born with the condition achondroplasia, and she has never met anyone like herself. We join her as she sets out to meet other dwarves on a journey of a lifetime which may, just, lead to love. Series Editor: Todd Austin. Achieved an audience of 4.6m with an AI of 81. Tx: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003

\*Winner RTS Midland Centre award for Best Factual Programme\*

\*Shortlisted for RTS award for Best Documentary\*

*The Independent: Affectionate and irreverent*

*Evening Standard: Inspiring – and crucially not patronising – stuff*

Producer/Director: **“Thalidomide: Life at 40”** 1x50’ film for BBC2 network primetime as part of the “What’s your Problem” season. This observational documentary celebrates the achievements of three Thalidomide-affected people forty years on. Using a mixture of specially shot actuality, intimate interviews and archive we chart the successes of a group whose futures were dismissed at their birth. Executive Producer: Neil McDonald, Creative Director Factual Programmes at BBC Scotland. Tx: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2002 at 2100

\*Shortlisted for BAFTA Flaherty Award for Best Documentary\*

\*Shortlisted for the 2002 Broadcast Awards for Best Documentary\*

*“A passionate, brilliant piece of film-making” Jane Root, Controller BBC2*

*“A wonderful film” Nicola Moody, Head of Factual Commissioning, BBC Television*

Producer/Director: **“Children’s Hospital”** 2x6x30’ films for BBC1 based in Manchester. Shot on DV and some digibeta, this series takes an old favourite into new territory with a fresh approach. Executive producer: Edwina Vardey. Tx (series 1) June-July 2002 BBC1.

Producer/Director: **“Trauma Team II”** 6x30’ films for the ITV Network through Yorkshire TV following the patients and staff of the trauma unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. Series Producer: Nick Gray. Tx: primetime September 2001.

Director: **“Pet Rescue”**: directing segments for this popular presenter led early evening series for Channel 4 featuring the work of the RSPCA from centres around the country.

Location director: **“Rescue”** 2x50’ films for C4 Cutting Edge shot on DVC following the emergency medical care and repatriation of travellers abroad Tx: September 1997

Producer/Director: **“The Surgery”** 3x50’ films for C4 looking at the challenges of delivering primary care in Rusholme, Manchester. Executive Producer: Grant McKee Tx: April 1997

### **AS PRODUCER**

**For Touch Productions (1994-1996):** **“The Mating Game”** a 75’ special for BBC2 on the meaning of matrimony at the end of the 20th century for four couples embarking on married life in Britain; **“Island of Dreams”** (C4): three films on British women who settle with Greek men in Zakynthos; **“On My Feet Again”**: BBC1 Inside Story about a paraplegic woman who received the first spinal nerve root stimulator to allow her to stand at will; **“Survivors”** BBC1 Inside Story centred around an intensive course for PTSD sufferers; **“Junior Doctors”**: BBC1 Inside Story following two house officers in their first few weeks as qualified doctors.

### **AS ASSISTANT PRODUCER**

**For Touch Productions (1991-1994):** **“Song for Annie”**: BBC1 QED about Annie Reid, whose response to a diagnosis of terminal cancer was to change her life and leave a legacy of memories for her children; **“A French Affair”** C4: two films on British expats in south west France; **“Coast of Dreams”**(C4): two films on British expats and tourism on the Costa del Sol; **“Simon’s Return”**: BBC1 QED special Simon Weston, accompanied by two other British veterans, meets Argentine veterans in Buenos Aires. I started out as a specialist in music and opera, moving into observational documentaries in 1991.

### **SKILLS**

Shoot on Z1 to broadcast standard with kit (see above)  
Competent boom swinger; competent with radio mics  
Owner/driver (clean licence) – car insured for work

## **TEACHING AND MENTORING**

Devised and ran a two Skillset approved course for the Documentary Filmmakers Group called Directing, Interviewing and the Ethics of Documentary, and their one day Interviewing for Documentary course. Also invited to speak as guest tutor on courses run by DFG and the Short Course Unit at NFTS.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Education: BA (Hons) Linguistics, University of Reading  
Interests: Music, opera, photography (several published photographs), languages. Past member of Philharmonia Chorus (until work made it completely impossible!)  
Training: Undertaken and passed BBC Health and Safety Course (2001)  
NFTS 5 day course on use of PD150, updated to Z1; experienced in documentary sound recording with own mixer  
Languages: Excellent Spanish (and have worked as interpreter as well as in my production role on seven or so programmes filmed in Spanish speaking countries), good French, serviceable German, rusty Catalan and basic Greek.

18 May 2009