



# TELEVISION TECHNIQUE

## TIPS FOR APPEARING ON TELEVISION

### So you are going to be interviewed: What should you wear?



A pale coloured shirt or top is better for the camera than absolute white. In the same way as a stills camera finds it difficult to expose someone's face who is standing in front of a bright window, it is hard for the television camera to be exposed correctly for the face and for the 'whiteness' of the shirt. Black clothing is also best to avoid where possible as the camera has great difficulty in resolving information in large areas of black. Fine stripes, checks or herring-bone patterned clothing should also be avoided - the effect when seen through a

camera is that of 'strobing' or 'flashing' - this can be very visually disturbing. If you are unsure then it's always wise to take along an alternative shirt, top or jacket. T-shirts with obvious advertising logos and slogans or overt statements should not be worn. You may be asked to avoid wearing green, (or in certain cases, blue) because an effect called chromakey or CSO (colour separation overlay) also known as 'Green Screen' is to be used. This is an effect where, when a person stands in front of a completely green screen, it is possible to superimpose another picture (possibly a graph or diagram) behind the person standing in the studio. This technique makes it possible to superimpose a picture of the Eiffel Tower behind someone actually standing in front of a green screen in a studio in London! If the person was to wear a green tie or shirt, then the picture would also 'bleed' through the tie or shirt making that part of the person seem invisible and destroying the visual effect.

### So you are going to be interviewed: Do you need to know the questions in advance?

This depends on the subject of the interview. If you are likely to be required to provide certain statistics or you are asked to comment on a particular statement then it may be useful to know in advance so that you can prepare or research your facts. Generally, it is best not to know the specific questions or you will be tempted to rehearse the answers so much you will not give a natural performance in front of the cameras. A guide to the subject matter or line of questioning may be useful to know in advance but don't be tempted to script your answers. If you do come across as too well rehearsed the interviewer will notice and change the questions so as to get you to be more natural in your answers. You may be asked to re-do some of the questions, this could be for a variety of reasons but will mainly allow the Director to use different camera angles or shots so as to make the visual imagery more interesting for the viewer. You may also be asked to record some 'noddies'. These are cutaway shots used to cover up any edits and will consist of you simply looking at the presenter or other guests as if you are listening to what they are



saying. It can sometimes seem a little un-natural with the tendency to want to speak or giggle but you must keep a knowledgeable look about you whilst this is being recorded.



During the recording there may be some distracting noises 'off mike' and although normally ignored by the human ear when recorded, can sound very distracting. These are generally noted by the sound recordist and the Director will be advised to re-take the question.

If you are being interviewed in a group then always pay attention to whoever is speaking at that time as another camera may be shooting cutaway shots of you without your knowledge, so try to look interested in the speaker and not look away, yawn or look down as this will tend to look as if you are falling asleep. Politicians are particularly advised to be wary of this!

### **So you are going to be interviewed: Who will be present during the shoot?**

Apart from yourself and any other guests there will be the interviewer or presenter who will ask you the questions. Often their questions are removed from the final edit so you will be asked to incorporate the question into your answer so that the viewer understands what your answer relates too. The interviewer will not interrupt your flow and so will tend not acknowledge you but will simply nod the head in approval, this can seem a little un-natural so don't take it as a criticism of your performance.



There may also be a Producer/Director who controls the shoot, a cameraman and his assistant, a sound recordist, possibly a production runner and sometimes a make-up artist. It can get quite warm under the lights so the make-up artist will apply a little powder to prevent glare from the lights spoiling your shot.

### **So you are going to be interviewed: Ignore all those around you!**



Do not to look at the camera or other members of the crew and concentrate on the person asking you the questions. Don't be afraid to take a pause for breath prior to answering the question or take some thinking time. Usually any pauses are edited out of the final programme. Don't start an answer with "as I said earlier" or "yes" or "so" or "that's right" these comments make editing difficult. If, for any reason, you are not happy with your answer ask to record it again.

### **So you are going to be interviewed: ....and finally!**

It is a requirement that the Producer obtains a release form signed by all of the contributors to the production. This is only a formality and states that you have given your consent to take part in the programme on your own free will and that you will allow the Producer to edit the programme at a later date.