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## WIND, REEL, AND PRINT — THAT'S A WRAP: GAIL

Gail Jenkinson is the real deal. As a camerawoman, she works above and below the water. Her work on films and documentaries takes her around and, on occasion, she will even fill in as an underwater safety diver. She loves what she does and is driven by passion and adventure.

It's common to say "it's a small world" when we find we have six degrees of separation from people we meet. However, when you come across an accomplished underwater



camerawoman and photographer in a predominantly male field it's even smaller. I first read about Gail in a BBC interview and later found that she has worked with friends and colleagues of mine that include Daniel Malone (Marine Coordinator for major Hollywood productions) and Mikey Kay (host of the Travel Channel's "You only Live Once"). In fact, in October 2013, I was visiting the set of Ron Howard's *Heart of the Sea* at Warner Brothers studios' in Leavesden, UK and Gail was filming underwater. It was an amazing experience to see the size of the studios and the work that goes into a big budget movie.

She is well respected professionally and keeps good company within the film industry. Gail is UK-based, but travels for up to 3 months at a time fairly often. It was tough getting us together for this interview since she is never in one place for very long, and she likes it that way — "keeps life interesting," according to Ms. Jenkinson.

In keeping with the theme of my "Exploring Women" columns, Gail is driven by passion and love for what she does and believes in following your dreams.

Gail started her professional career at 35 after having spent much of her early 20's traveling and experiencing the world. She studied photography and found a career path she loved but wanted to move onto larger and more creative roles, which lead her to the world of the moving image and thus her film career began.

I can appreciate being the only woman on a team of men, and it can be empowering, fun, and difficult. I asked Gail if she felt intimidated at first going onto a production set or being on location as the only woman on team?







“You know I didn’t really,” she said matter of factly. “I didn’t think much on it and it would always take awhile before I’d look around and notice I was in a minority. But I don’t feel intimidated, the guys are fine and usually — not always! — fun to work with.”

### **Are you usually one of few women on location or expeditions?**

“Yes, often it’s just me or maybe a female director or producer.”

In speaking with Gail it’s obvious she loves her work, but there are some difficult aspects to overcome in her profession. She said, “the difficulty is getting the work. It’s highly competitive, and, yes, in certain areas a proper boys’ club. It involves fitting in to make the process work and have people’s allegiance. I am a team player and believe the best way is to lead by example and earn respect of my peers. I am not competitive but I strive to do the best I can do. I follow my instincts on most things I do and it works for me. I grew up with an equal partnership family and never felt a need to compete against men.”

### **Do you see more women venturing into this field ?**

“No, I don’t unfortunately. Maybe more directors and other crew but I think it’s the women I’ve always known were around I’m still seeing. There are lots of women in production roles, so I think it might look fairly mixed but very few in camera or sound. There are more people moving into the world of camera operating, though, with the ability to get kit (gear) cheaply and fashions for gimble rigs has bought a whole new group of people to the world of filmmaking.”



**Do you prepare physically prior to each assignment and learn about the team and producers you will be working with?**

“Yes, I do prep for each job, and although each are different it’s always good to be fighting fit. I like to train at a boxing gym; it’s great fun and good for fighting all your demons. In this day and age I don’t think there is any excuse for not knowing who you will be working for. It’s well worth the time googling and finding out as much as you can about potential companies and people.”

**Did you grow up with a love for travel?**

“Is it naughty to say it’s the main reason why I’m in this business! That’s not strictly true, but it always has been a great drive. And when I sat down and thought about the things I love and wanted to be part of my future I decided being creative with images, animals, and seeing the world were the main components, so I thought, what job is that?

The New Forest in the south of England is my family home and a beautiful place to have grown up.

It’s where I took all my risks as a child and felt the freedom of walking in the forest and being surrounded by horses and pigs. I’m lucky I get to return regularly and can’t help but stop to take a photo of my favourite tree in its various shades of weather. I’ve





seen some beautiful beaches and mountains, but I think a relationship to a place is what talks to your heart.”

**Gail is creative and very much an artist who looks for beauty in everything; I wonder what inspires her?**

“I’m a very visual person, in terms of my work, the sheer beauty of nature and places I see is where I take inspiration from. I even look at photographs for inspiration, Ansel Adams being one of my favorites. I am a painter and photographer, and I like line and forms.”

**Did you want to be an artist/ painter from a young age?**

“I wanted to be a vet, I think. Then an actress, but now I’m thinking paramedic; I’ll let you know when I get there.”

**Do you have a destination or project you dream about being able to make happen?**

“I love volcanos. I’ve been to the top of mount Etna on a job and loved it. Such an exciting and privileged view, and I’d really like to see more and get involved with the the cultures that live in their shadows.”

Gail Jenkinson sees the world through the lens and tries to capture its beauty



and emotion to share with others, but admits it can be quite frustrating. She loves windows; in fact, she always has a window seat on planes and looks out even when it's dark because she doesn't want to miss anything.

Her next project is a personal journey walking the Camino de Santiago which spans 500 miles across Spain. She departs April 19 and plans to be there for a month. She is not blogging nor uploading to Facebook, but wants to take time to think, revive her soul away from work, and take in all the views with her eyes not a lens!

Gail is a fabulous Exploring Woman living her life in her own way and loving it.