

When your hands, or
otherwise need him



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When interviewing before the camera, remember that the camera has a limited field of vision and never point to something or someone out of shot without identifying it verbally in case the camera fails to catch it. Go over with the cameraman in advance what you plan to say, and any gestures you are likely to make. Warn him if you intend to wave dramatically, to illustrate a measure with your hands, or otherwise need him to change from close-up to a general shot. Try not to invent new 'business' in the middle of an interview: it may all be wasted.

Learn the camera's capabilities and stay within them. On overseas assignments reporters try to find appropriate backgrounds (otherwise they might as well be reporting from base). These must be chosen with care. There are still countries where small boys find the camera of such obsessive interest that they must rush in front of it and wave. Choose a background that is interesting yet not distracting. A long line of vehicles passing behind the speaker at speed might well be distracting. Wheeled vehicles are often distracting because they create a stroboscopic effect: at certain speeds, the wheels seem to be turning backwards (the actual speeds are 60 revs per second on American TV, 50 revs per second in Britain).

Harsh light contrasts are also best avoided. If the foreground speaker is in shade and the camera is set to focus on him, he will be clearly outlined while the background will be little more than a white haze. Some news reports start with the camera on a landscape while the reporter talks over it, and the camera slowly pans around to him.

It is generally better the other way round start with the camera on the reporter—to identify the voice—and then if necessary pan away from him to the landscape. If possible avoid a wholly static background—it might just well be a still photograph, and wastes the cost of sending a reporter to film.