

FOCALPOINT

Issue 4

Summer 2023





The summer edition of FOCALPoint looks back as several FOCAL's events from the start of 2023. The annual FOCAL Awards celebrated its 20th anniversary this year at a spectacular gala evening at the Grand Connaught Rooms, London. Congratulations to all the shortlisted nominees and winners, they are a fantastic example of the outstanding work that is being undertaken in the global audiovisual industry today. A full list of Award winners and photos are included for your enjoyment. Thanks to all our sponsors, jurors, and volunteers, we would not be able to hold the Awards without you.

Alongside the Awards, we returned to Manchester after 10 years for an afternoon of lively panel discussions, a summary of the first session is included where speakers shared their experiences and discussed if changes have been achieved to bridge the economic divide between London and the UK regions. Finally, we've included photos from the record breaking sold out FOCAL Summer Party at the House of Commons, London earlier this month.

In addition, we continue with our series of 'Meet the Executives'; the British Entertainment History Project (BEHP) article retells some of the memorial interviewers from the past 26 years, an interview with Archive Producer Daniel Kilroy and his work with Archive Masters plus how one international company launched a new clip sales business.

Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you at one of the next FOCAL events.

If you have any articles or ideas for future editions, please don't forget to contact us at info@focalint.org – we are always happy to hear from you.

Mary Egan, Director of Operations

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Designed and Format: Adrienne Kuster, FOCAL
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FOCAL's Regional Event

Session 1: The Northern Powerhouse: What's the Attraction?

After 10 years FOCAL returned to Manchester to hold a regional event of to includes several panel sessions at BBC Studios in Salford, bringing together professionals to discuss has "levelling up" affected our industry as original planned?

Moderated by Kay Page, Northbound/All3Media we heard from Graham Relton, Yorkshire & North East Film Archive, Matt Wills from ARK by KOMI, with Archive Producers Andy Beckett and Daniel Kilroy. Each speaker shared their experiences and showcased clips from their work to demonstrate if they have faced any changing relationships or witnessed any trends in business with the move of production companies and broadcasters relocating outside London.

The panel discussion began with the moderator introducing the speakers: Kay Page from All3Media, Graham from the Yorkshire and Northeast Film Archive, Andy Beckett, an archive producer, Matt Wills from KOMI, and Daniel Kilroy, an archive producer. Each speaker shared their experiences and showcased clips from their work.

Graham represented the Yorkshire and Northeast Film Archive, emphasizing their mission to find, preserve, and share footage to facilitate storytelling. Their diverse collection showcases the industries, landscapes, and regional identity of the North.

Andy Beckett, an archive producer, shared his experiences working on projects such as "The Queen and I" and a football biography about Ronaldinho. He highlighted the emotional and warm nature of archive-based films and the challenges of accessing physical footage.

Matt Wills represented KOMI, a social publisher based in Manchester, and discussed the relevance of user-generated content. He also talked about their efforts to build a licensing division and showcased clips from their show, which garnered millions of views on YouTube.



Daniel Kilroy talked about his work as an archive producer, founding Archive Masters, and starting his own production company, Genco Films. He showcased clips from a Netflix series called "Breakpoint" and a scene from "Black Mirror," demonstrating the variety of their work.

The panel then engaged in a discussion about their experiences working in the North and the observed changes in the industry. Kay Page mentioned the government's "levelling up" initiatives and questioned if they had led to more opportunities. While there has been an increase in productions and company growth in Leeds, London still retains its prominence.

Other panellists shared their perspectives, noting improvements in job opportunities in cities like Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, and the Northeast. They highlighted the growing recognition of regional voices and stories, with increased movement and activity in the North.

Overall, the panel provided insights into their work, the challenges they face, and the changes they have observed in the industry, particularly in relation to the North and the impact of "levelling up" initiatives.

The pandemic has significantly influenced the media industry, diminishing the relevance of geographical location due to the shift towards remote work and digital delivery. This has been especially true for digital archives like the one discussed during the panel. The ability to deliver content electronically and the digitization of materials have reduced the significance of the archive's physical location. However, from a wider company perspective, there is more business activity happening in Manchester as local companies prefer working with agencies and publishers in the area. Despite the presence of major broadcasters like Channel 4 relocating operations to the North, it doesn't significantly affect this digital archive since their deliveries are primarily digital, enabling them to work remotely.

Challenges still exist, though. Physical presence is sometimes necessary, and traveling to London for meetings can be time-consuming and frustrating. However, the industry generally accepts people based on the quality of their work rather than their location. Traditional companies have realized the effectiveness of remote work, allowing many producers to work remotely most of the time. While there may be additional fees associated with travel, most companies understand the importance of building relationships and prioritize good content, accessibility, and quick delivery.

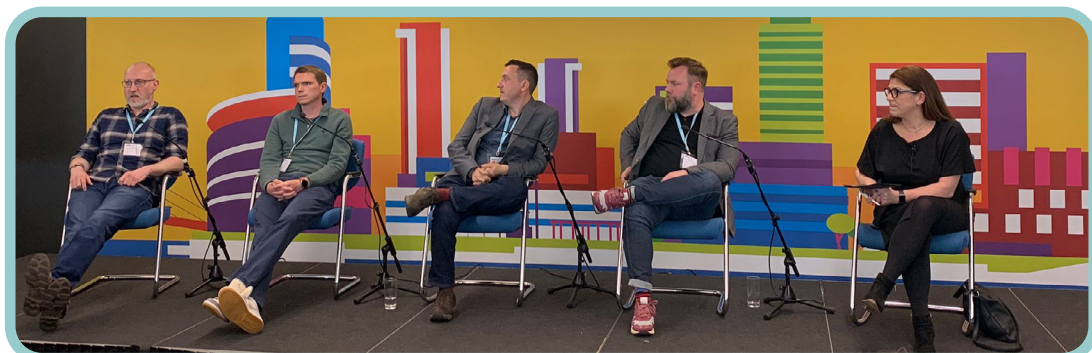
Having headquarters in the North provides advantages for businesses like KOMI, including a broader range of people and interests found in the region. This diversity contributes to creating more varied and interesting content. Additionally, the North offers more space and a better quality of life compared to the crowded and expensive city of London. As a result, there has been a migration from big cities, with people willing to relocate to the North for better opportunities. Overall, having Northern representation in both the workplace and on screen is crucial to appealing to a wider audience and ensuring diversity.

There is a perception that Northern productions possess a unique character, often reflecting the gritty stories associated with the region. However, it is important to strike a balance and avoid excessive bias in the content. The aim is to authentically represent the North while also appealing to a broad audience. To achieve full representation, it is essential to include Northern voices and voices from various regions and backgrounds.

Regarding funding and support for the creative industry in the North, there is a need for more government support, especially for regional charities impacted by the pandemic. The commercial side of the industry helps bridge the funding gap, but additional support is necessary to cover essential costs such as staff salaries, maintaining the archives, and digitization efforts. Government funding has decreased over time, and there is a demand for more transparency and clarity in the distribution of funds. It is worth noting that positive discrimination against London has been observed, with government departments actively assisting companies outside the capital.

In conclusion, the pandemic has reduced the significance of geographical location in the media industry, with remote work and digital delivery becoming the norm. While challenges remain, the ability to work remotely and deliver content digitally has allowed the industry to adapt. The North has experienced increased business activity and offers advantages such as a diverse talent pool and a unique regional character. It is crucial to have Northern representation both on screen and behind the scenes to ensure diversity and authenticity. However, additional government support is needed to sustain and foster the growth of the creative industry in the North.

FOCAL Members, as part of your benefit, you can access all the panel session summaries through the members area on FOCAL's Website.



Can you please explain your company?

E Klinck Research is based in Canada and has been operating since 1982. I have had the great pleasure of working with outstanding international filmmakers on over 400 films and programmes that have been honoured with international awards and accolades. I have volunteered on numerous boards: WIFT, Canada's Audio Visual Trust, World Congress of Historymakers, programming consultant at DOK Leipzig and Sunnyside of the DOC, and chairperson for the first ten years of the Visual Researchers' Society of Canada.

How long have you been an Executive Director at FOCAL?

Since 2006.

What is the most fulfilling aspect and what inspired you for joining the FOCAL Executives?

I was at a point in my career when I wanted to branch out internationally. I had always admired the way archive researchers in the UK had a standard of professionalism and lifelong commitment to their craft. It was not simply considered an entry level or unpaid intern job as it often was (and in some cases still is) in North America. I was delighted to be asked by several board members to "throw my hat in the ring" as one of the two researcher positions on the executive. FOCAL led by example and through their structure and committee format enabled a group of archive researchers in Canada to form and grow the Visual Researcher's Society of Canada to over 125 members today.

What is the biggest risk you've taken?

The greatest risk has been owning my own company for the past 35 years. My greatest accomplishment has been being a parent.

If you could only watch one movie or TV show for the rest of your life, what would it be?

The Dick Cavett Show

If you could invite 3 people over for dinner dead/alive, who would it be?

Joan Didion, Alan Arkin and Vanessa Redgrave

What talent are you most proud of?

Making and keeping friends and colleagues

What do you see as the most important aspect FOCAL should be working on, for the industry and its members?

- Advocacy for our archive and library members.
- Professional and legal advice for archive researchers and working towards their improved working conditions.
- Education and professional development for the next generation of international archive researchers and producers.
- Networking within the international production community and seeking alliances with other like-minded international trade and cultural organizations.

What impact do you think FOCAL has had on the industry now and for the future?

- Professional affirmation and the elevation of standards in the archive industry.
- Providing the ways and means of conducting and improving business opportunities.
- Elevating the role of archives at international markets and events.
- Celebrating the world class accomplishments of our members within our industry at the FOCAL Awards every year.

What did you enjoy most about your job last year?

Working on several international co-productions. Producing panels and workshops at markets and film festivals that serve to elevate the profile of film archives around the world. Chairing FOCAL's Researcher's Committee and working with the German (GRAP), Spanish (ADAE) and Canadian (VRSC ARAC) archive researcher and producer groups. Working on the FOCAL Events and Awards Committees.





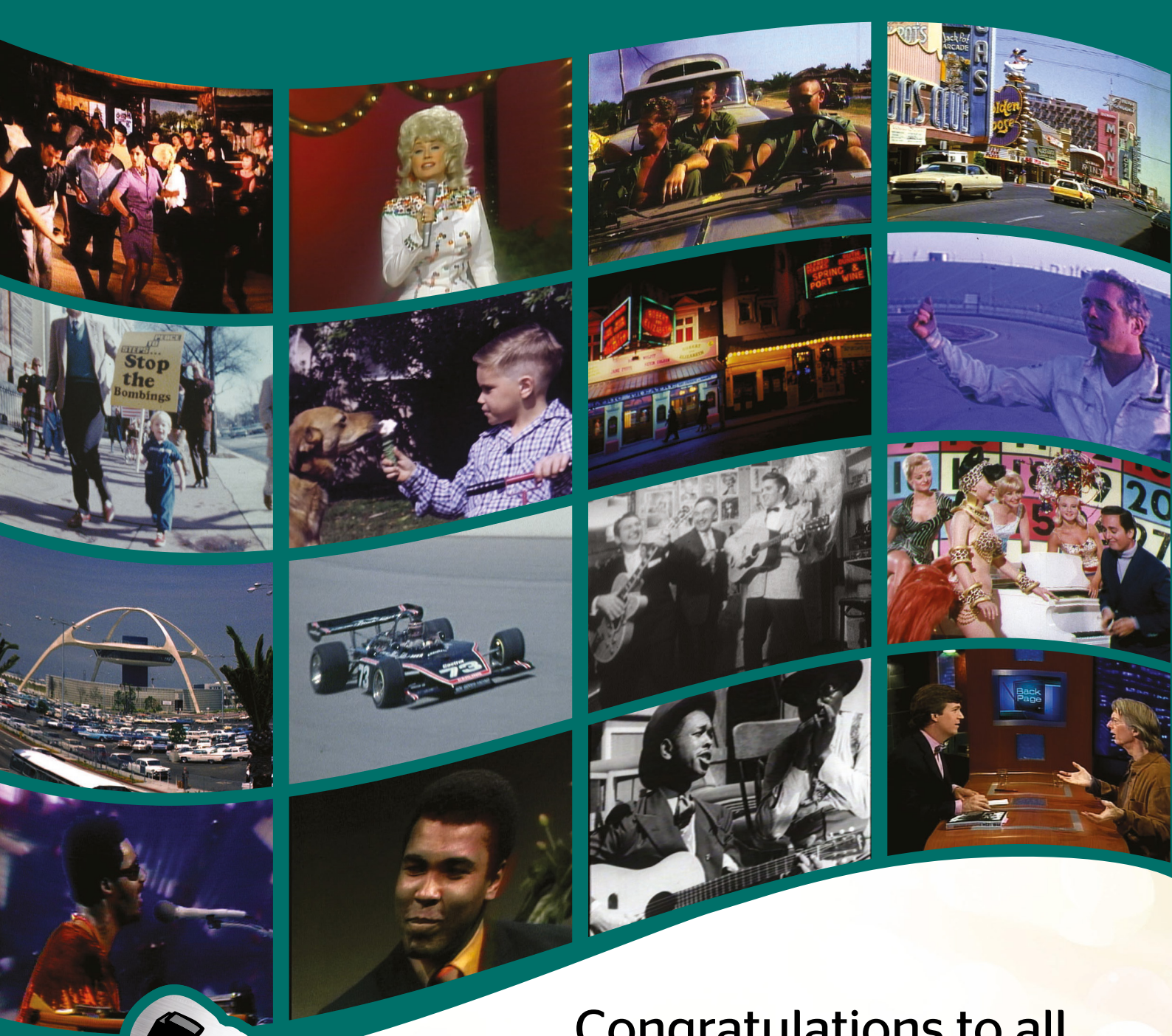
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Archive Masters

Daniel Kilroy

Daniel Kilroy is a UK-based Archive Producer with 15 years of experience in working on Archive programmes. He is the founder of a company called Archive Masters, which is a collective of Archive Producers working on various projects simultaneously. Seven years ago, Daniel established another company called JenCo Films, dedicated to producing original ideas. Under this banner, they have collaborated with Salon Pictures to create a Feature Documentary and are currently in production with Passion Pictures and Misfits Entertainment on another project, as reported in this article:

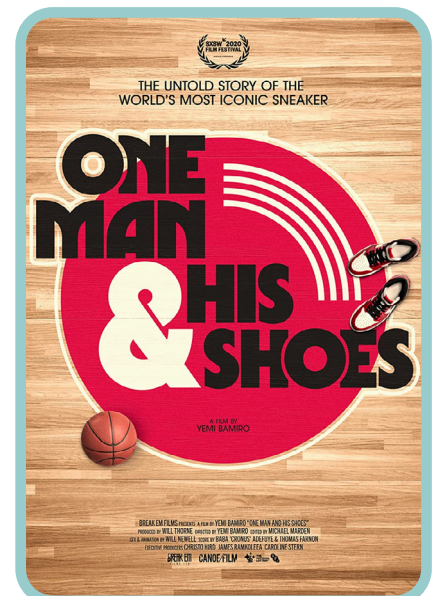
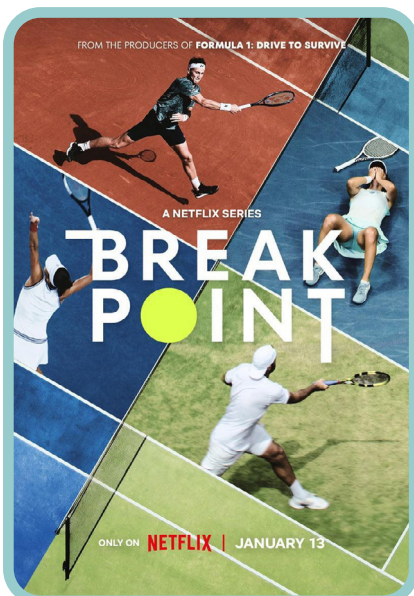
<https://www.screendaily.com/news/mcqueen-filmmakers-reunite-for-documentary-about-superman-star-christopher-reeve-exclusive/5182169.article>.



The unique selling proposition of Daniel's companies is their passion for archives and their exclusive focus on archive-driven stories. Rather than following the conventional approach of finding a story and then searching for footage during production, they strive to uncover rare and unseen archive material first and then build the pitch around it. They have a proven track record of successfully developing and pitching Feature Documentaries to secure financing or involvement from broadcasters and streamers. Additionally, they have also encountered a Scripted Feature Film idea, which led to an option being taken.

Daniel is actively seeking connections with Archive Libraries, Archivists, and individuals with documentary ideas. He welcomes individuals who possess rare or unseen footage that has the potential to be transformed into a compelling documentary. To incentivize collaboration, Daniel offers a profit-sharing scheme for ideas and footage that eventually receive the green light. He assures confidentiality and proposes flexible terms that accommodate the interests of potential collaborators. Interested parties can contact him at Daniel@archivemasters.co.uk or daniel@jencofilms.com. Moreover, Daniel will be attending Footagefest in person this year in LA, providing an opportunity for face-to-face discussions.

Website: <http://www.archivemasters.co.uk>



Images provided by Archive Masters

We made and timed the release of the film Elizabeth Windsor to celebrate the life of an extraordinary woman who was marking her Platinum Jubilee. Although released just in time for the celebrations, within a matter of 3 months it had become a far more poignant film.

In terms of subject, the film is a bit of a departure for Ad Hoc Films. But we've made archive driven stories before (The United Way, 48 Hours with Muhammad Ali which is 100% photographic archive and the Focal award winning I Am Duran in particular) and in truth, as long as you have a passion for the story, the subject matter can be anything.

Given this was to be a look back at perhaps the most famous person on the planet over approximately 90 years and because it was highly unlikely we'd get a fresh interview with the Queen, archive rich storytelling was the order of the day.

Given our tight schedule, I was very keen to make the archive management process as simple as possible for our director Patrick Dickinson, archive producer Ash Davies and the whole Production team. For this reason, approaching a single archive house felt like a good way to go. And although we'd secured some weighty interviewees already, including royals and respected journalists, too many in vision talking heads onscreen is obviously just dull storytelling. We needed strong archive to help us tell this story in as engaging and entertaining a way as possible.

We've worked with Getty many times. Given the breadth of their resource they were our first port of call. Trying to secure a good deal for the bulk of archive from one house makes a lot of sense from a pragmatic and budgetary point of view, for any producer. The more you're buying the cheaper the footage/stills cost (generally, though not always!). And although it's still expensive as a total, it always helps with any negotiation to go in wanting to licence as much footage as possible. It's also of course nice and neat when it comes to contracting and can help save any budgets legal line. If your business affairs team are reviewing just a handful of archive contracts as opposed to dozens and dozens, I'm saving money for the budget.

Having a vast amount of creative freedom with a looming deadline on the horizon isn't a good thing. There was little time to 'find' a lot of the story in the edit, so giving some archive usage restrictions from very early on was important. We agreed that we'd restrict ourselves to a fixed number of minutes of archive, with the overwhelming majority coming from our fixed deal with Getty. Alamy, AP and of course Pathè provided most of the rest.

This really helped focus Patrick's treatment and approach. He's a fantastic talent, focused and enthusiastic and his and the editor's work communicating such an extensive period of a life in such a digestible 90 minutes is a real achievement. It never feels rushed or clumsy and I'm amazed just how insightful, yet breezy and entertaining the film turned out to be.

It was always an intimate and emotional watch, but when Queen Elizabeth died it became even more powerful and touching. I'm incredibly proud of what the entire production team managed to achieve on this one.



Image provided by Ad Hoc Films



1389943528, Chris McGrath

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Gladbeck: The Hostage Crisis | Film Five
GmbH

**The Jane Mercer Researcher of the Year
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Sidney | Apple Original Films, Harpo
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Collection

Huntley Film Archives

**Best Use of Footage in Advertising or
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Footage Person of the Year:

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Graham Relton - Yorkshire and North East
Film Archive

Best Use of Footage in a History Feature:

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Elizabeth: The Unseen Queen | BBC Studios



Best Use of Footage in a Cinematic Feature:

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Fire of Love | National Geographic Documentary Films, Sandbox Films Production, Intuitive Pictures, Cottage M Production

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Fire of Love | National Geographic Documentary Films, Sandbox Films Production, Intuitive Pictures, Cottage M Production

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StoryTrails - The People's Metaverse | StoryFutures, Nexus Studios, ISO Design, Produce UK, The Reading Agency, BFI, BBC, Uplands

Best Use of Footage in a History Production:

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1979 The Year of the Islamist Revolution | OR Media Ltd

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Moonage Daydream | Public Road Productions Inc.

Best Use of Footage in a Short Film Production:

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Cost of Living | Yorkshire and North East Film Archive, York St John University



FOCAL

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS 2023





View more photos at:
focalint.org/photos-from-awards-2023-gala-evening



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The FOCAL International Lifetime Achievement Award 2023, Sue Malden

Sue Malden, recipient of the FOCAL International Lifetime Achievement Award 2023, possesses nearly 50 years of diverse experience in audio-visual archive management. She started her career at the BBC Film & Video library in 1973 and gradually assumed various operational roles, gaining extensive knowledge of the organization's history. In 1978, she became the first BBC Television Selector, designing and implementing the BBC's television selection/retention policy. Throughout her career, she actively participated in international audio-visual archive management, representing the BBC in FIAT/IFTA and promoting the value of archive services globally. Sue's dedication to archives also led her to advocate for collaboration and recognition within the field. Currently, she serves as the chair of the board of trustees for MACE and remains involved with the British Entertainment History Project and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. She continues to demonstrate her enduring passion for her work and the media industry. She is of course also a regular attendee at Dr. Who conventions.



Unfortunately Sue Malden was unable to attend the FOCAL Awards and would like to share the following message,

//

Hi everyone
I really regretted not being with
you all at the award ceremony - I
so appreciated the award and your
wonderful response.

//

INA Students Speech from the 2023 FOCAL Awards

Maya Labiadh, Laure Fletcher, Clara Sebastiao, Manon Berthet

We are honored to have been able to participate in the student jury of this year's Focal Awards alongside our colleagues at the NFTS English school. It was a new, exciting experience for us.

We thoroughly enjoyed watching all four movies, as they all had fascinating points of views, their own style and their own construction. Furthermore, we were delighted to see how passionate they were with the archives they were using. We also enjoyed the historical quality, and we noticed the active use of archives to narrate events.



However, as representatives of our generation, we feel that it's important to bring to archives a more modern aspect by allowing the archives to speak for themselves. We wish to highlight this innovative approach of letting the archival footage have its own voice, that we especially noticed in two of the movies. It was difficult to choose between these "finalists" we had in mind.

But finally, there was one that spoke out to us particularly. We love this movie's archival integrity and how it went a little further with the archival footage than what the archival footage looks like with a first glance.

The film that has captured our hearts has done a marvellous job in this field, especially by using intimate stories to unfold a wider fresco. The use of different visual and sound archival footage was varied and creative.

We thought the direction and editing of this archival footage helped tell many stories in one, and that is where our choice lied for it to be the winner.

By trying to immerse itself in the zeitgeist of the era, in its mentalities, through the traces found and all forms of archives, it called on images and sounds to achieve an ultimately political subject.

We would like to thank our school for this opportunity and Mary Egan for giving us a warm welcome.

We hope you will understand our choice, and we congratulate all the work as well as all four documentary teams and to the winner, GladBeck: The Hostage Crisis.

The Student Jury for Most Inspiring Use of Footage, Sponsored by Sky Clip Sales.





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- Various media and video format options

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- Concepting, storyboarding, and pitching
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Film & Television



Podcasts



Education



Meet the Executives:

Can you please briefly explain your company?

CNN Collection is the content licensing division of Cable News Network (CNN) We begin in 1980 and our archive contains over 5 million assets.

How long have you been an Executive Director at FOCAL?

1 year.

What is the most fulfilling aspect or inspired you for joining the FOCAL Executives?

I was inspired by the opportunity to be at the forefront of our archival community. It's especially exciting to be part of an organization that represents the best interests of archives around the world.

What did you enjoy most about your job last year?

It's one of the things I enjoy most every year. Knowing that my team and I were a part of some of the best productions to hit the big and small screens.

How do you feel the industry has changed?

It changes all the time. The Hargreaves Review led to changes in licensing and copyright that affected everyone. Improvements in scanning technology have opened up more old archives to modern production uses. Cloud-based databases and work-flows have made life a lot easier on the tech side. Smaller independent archives have been swallowed up by larger international ones. And there are now far more outlets and platforms for productions than there ever were. It's constant flux.

If you could invite 3 people over for dinner dead/alive, who would it be?

My mom (Deceased 2017), President Barak Obama and Michael Jackson



Bobby M. Dicks

*Vice President of Sales and
Content Licensing
CNN Collection*

What do you see as the most important aspect FOCAL should be working on?

There are a few. The preservation and restoration of historical content remains paramount in my mind as well as continuing to protect the rights of content owners and representatives from "abusive" fair use/dealing practices.

What impact do you think FOCAL has had on the industry now and for the future?

Focal continues to bring us all together for networking and continuing education opportunities. This is necessary as the world, technology, and content laws around us continue to evolve.

What is the biggest risk you've taken?

Moving my family 900 miles from home and starting a new life in a place where we didn't know anyone.

If you could only watch one movie or TV show for the rest of your life, what would it be?

I'm going to have to buck the system and give you 3 movies... Malcolm X, Scarface and The Dark Knight

What talent are you most proud of?

It's a new one! I am learning to be an airplane pilot!

BEHP Anniversaries

Sue Malden Secretary BEHP

The British Entertainment History Project (BEHP) started life as the ACT History Project back in 1987, so 2023 is not a very memorable anniversary for us! However, many movies, television productions, and people celebrate significant anniversaries this year. The History Project could be a great source of personal recollection of working on these productions. For example:

- 45 years since the release of Jurassic Park. Colin Flight of the Eastman Project, interview number 792, talks about the newly introduced digital effects. The director, Richard Attenborough, is interview number 500.
- 50 years since the release of The Exorcist. DoP Billy Williams, interview number 226, talks about filming in Iraq.
- 55 years since 2001: A Space Odyssey. Stanley Kubrick calculated that it would take one person 13 years to hand-draw and paint all the mattes needed to insert the assorted spacecraft into the starry backgrounds. Kubrick hired 12 people to do the job in one year. Joy Cuff, interview number 606, in 1967 found herself designing and building the moon sets for Stanley Kubrick's 2001.
- The centenary of the birth of Sarah Erulkar (2 May 1923 – 29 May 2015). Interview numbers 187 and 471 feature a prolific multi-award-winning Indian-born Jewish filmmaker. The BFI marked her centenary on 11 June. She specialized in sponsored documentary shorts, having begun her career at the Shell Film Unit. She quickly graduated from scripting and editing "Aircraft Today and Tomorrow" (1946) to directing her second film, "Flight for Tomorrow" (1947). She also directed "Lord Siva Danced" (1947), featuring celebrated Indian dancer and choreographer Ram Gopal. After leaving Shell in 1952 and marrying fellow SFU filmmaker Peter de Normanville (interview number 186), she worked as a freelancer for the rest of her career. She served as an editor at the National Coal Board Film Unit before directing for numerous sponsors, including

the British Productivity Council, the Central Office of Information (COI), the Gas Council, and the General Post Office (GPO).

- The birth centenary of John Krish, interview number 326. He was a British film director and screenwriter who directed and filmed much archive footage, particularly "Our School" in 1962, showing the changing ways of Britain's schools in the last few years of the 11-plus exam. The BFI celebrated his centenary on June 8th. He also produced "Let My People Go" in 1961, a hard-hitting account of the Sharpsville massacre of protesters in 1960. After demonstrating against pass laws, a crowd of about 7,000 protesters went to the police station. The South African police opened fire on the crowd, resulting in 249 casualties, including 29 children. The film is a powerful argument against apartheid and describes the impact of the system on the majority of South Africans.

The British Entertainment History Project is honored to be the custodian of interviews with the director, editor, and continuity of this film, as well as the founder of Contemporary Films, Charles Cooper (interview number 121). The film is available through Contemporary Films (<https://www.contemporaryfilms.com>), established in 1951 - the oldest independent film distribution company in the UK. Charles Cooper intended his company to make arthouse films, shorts, and documentaries from all over the world available to British audiences. The company played a key role in introducing British filmgoers to works by major directors such as Andrzej Wajda, Milos Forman, Ingmar Bergman, Mike Leigh, Jean Renoir, Robert Bresson, Sergei Eisenstein, Andrei Tarkovsky, Werner Herzog, Satyajit Ray, Yasujiro Ozu, Nagisa Oshima, Bernardo Bertolucci, Luis Bunuel and many others. It built up a unique film catalogue. The Coopers' independence of mind and left-wing political views were often reflected in the films the company acquired. The company also had a hand in the making of "March to Aldermaston," a documentary about the first march from London to the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston. Charles Cooper died in 2001, and in 2008 his widow, Kitty,

made the decision to retire. The company was acquired by Eric Likhaitzky, its longest-serving employee, in December of that year.

In television, "Doctor Who" celebrates its 60th birthday! I previously wrote about the BEHP "Doctor Who" related interviews for the Cinema Veteran. Following that article, we asked some fans who else we should interview. Alys Hayes suggested the Mat Irvine interview number 811, while John Luton went on to record the Mitch Mitchell interview number 171. Both had worked on video effects. Steve Brook Smith captured the renowned cameraman Ken Westbury's interview number 813. Sadly, Ken has recently passed away, but we are grateful to have captured his memories in this recent interview.

1963 was the year the Beatles hit the pop scene with a bang! There are some key people in their early career represented in the BEHP archive. Their debut on radio was on January 26th, 1963. The producer of the session was Bernie Andrews, interview number 590. He went on to produce all the Beatles sessions on Saturday Club. Bernie became a personal friend of the group, regularly inviting them to his flat in Shepherd Street in Mayfair, which he shared with Terry Doran - a close friend of George Harrison and a business associate of Brian Epstein.

On tour in the early 1960s, they sent him regular letters and postcards from all over Britain and beyond. In 1980, John Lennon spoke affectionately of Bernie in his last radio interview, recorded the night before he was murdered. Brian Epstein described Bernie as "someone who I and the boys have a great deal of affection for because he is probably one of the best producers in the Corporation."

Kenny Lynch, interview number 653, talks about being on tour with Helen Shapiro as the top of the bill, with the Beatles as the supporting act. He apparently was the only act prepared to go on before the Beatles. Pete Murray, interview number 684, talks about the Beatles' influence. Gavrick Losey, interview number 743, became the in-house production supervisor for Tony Richardson's Woodfall films and worked on the Beatles' film "Magical Mystery Tour." Stan Fishman, interview number 632, recalls stage managing

live shows in Odeons and Gaumonts all over the country, ranging from Bill Haley and the Comets to the Beatles. Bob Godfrey, advisor on "Yellow Submarine," and Dick Horn, interview number 468, discuss their work on the Beatles series and "Yellow Submarine." Nevil Wortman, interview number 712, producer of "Juke Box," recalls meeting John Lennon and the experience of working with the Beatles.

Bill Cotton, interview number 153, shares the story of starting the "Top of the Pops" program and the Beatles' involvement. Renne Glynne, interview number 720, talks about working on "Yellow Submarine" and the pranks played by the Beatles during the production. Joe McGrath, interview number 630, directed pop promos for "A Hard Day's Night" and "Help!" He shares how his involvement came about and his experiences working with the Beatles.

And believe it or not, parents and grandparents, it's been 10 years since "Frozen" was released!



Image provided by Sue Malden

Villon Films

Interview with Alex Wilson

Can you please tell us about your current role and what projects you work on?



I suppose I don't necessarily have a fixed 'role' in the conventional sense, instead I'm active across a variety of different audio-visual archive projects, at all stages.

For instance, I'm currently busy as archive researcher on a couple of long-form film/TV projects, and one bonus I can bring to these projects is that I have a home digitisation studio which can capture various video formats. Much video rolls through those tape heads, from one-off pieces to a major video transfer project I'm currently on for a forthcoming music documentary about Brian Eno.

In recent times the machines are getting a workout for a short documentary I'm directing about performance artist couple Shirley Cameron and Roland Miller which is derived from a fifty hours of archive footage, audio, and stills.

Elsewhere I manage archives and websites such as the London Community Video Archive, and help consult filmmakers, museums, and galleries on their moving image collections. That's the tip of the iceberg. If it's old, unique, and interesting, I'm interested!

How have you moved from being an archive consultant to building your own collection?

By accident and design. I spent the formative years of my career at the British Library Sound and Vision archive where I learnt about the multitude technical aspects of AV archives: the international standards involved with cataloguing, curation, and digitisation. Since going freelance, I've taken these skills forward to help other organisations in the dark arts and have also fallen into overseeing small private collections, mainly through the act of meeting filmmakers who need advice.

How did you find Peter and the Villon collection?

Anyone in this game should watch lots of documentaries as standard. Anyone in this game should also then wait until the Archive Credits roll.

During the lockdowns of 2020 I binged a lot of docs. One of which was a re-watching of Searching For Sugarman. Amongst the familiar names on the credits was VILLON FILMS. A quick Google led me to the old Villon website – a WordPress blog essentially- and after some digging on there I was very interested to discover more.

I emailed Peter Davis over in Vancouver and after some back and forth I realised that I really wanted to see some of these 60s and 70s titles listed on his site, so I agreed to help set up a YouTube channel for him to share these videos online.



Our relationship has grown since then, and in 2022 I became formally part of the collection as archive manager. It has been an incredible couple of years learning about Peter's journey over the last five decades; so many travels, so many stories, so much incredible material. Inspiring stuff.

Can you tell us more about the archive collection and what it contains?

The Davis collection starts with his first -and only- fiction work in 1959 (Shadowplay) before a series of 16mm Documentaries made for Swedish TV shot in Sixties London which observe everything from Chelsea motorbike gangs, first-generation immigrants, countercultural conferences, and East End pubs. Elsewhere in that decade there are gorgeous and politically vital documentaries made in Jamaica, Belize, and Cuba – countries on the verge of great change.

His first films of the 1970s touched on Cold War espionage (Counterpoint), Watergate (The Paperback Vigilante), and it was during this time when Davis began studying the injustices of Apartheid South Africa with the documentary White Laager (1977). His work in that country yielded films about Winnie and Nelson Mandela, recorded musical performances, and a two-part series on South African Cinema history – In Darkest Hollywood. Peter Davis continued to make searching and politically important films until the 2000s, covering diverse issues such as AIDS in Zimbabwe, healers in South Africa, a history of Jewish tourism in the NY Catskills Mountains, and environmental problems in Eastern Europe.



Throughout this period, Villon has also distributed works from other filmmakers and some of these are made available online on the Villon website for the first time. From the pre-War South African silent Siliva The Zulu (1923) to rare post-War fiction from that country including African Jim, Zonk, and Song of Africa, and also a very unique collection of South African Pro-Apartheid government propaganda videos and films.

Alongside over 400 films there is, for the first time, Peter's huge collection of stills photography from across the globe, captured over many decades. There are currently over 4000 images with many more to add. Elsewhere, there are hundreds of ephemeral items related to the collection: full transcripts and scripts, posters, news clippings, articles and more. Finally, there is a growing body of Stories and Essays by Peter Davis reflecting on over sixty years working in moving images, and socio-political documentary.



What challenges have you faced from moving as a researcher into working with your archive collection?

There are more similarities than challenges really. The key tenets of being a decent researcher are in many ways the same faculties required to be a considerate archive collection manager. By that I mean starting with a solid ethical base in caring for moving image items, arriving at any new material from a place of understanding about the complexities of this work from a technical and content view. Being rigorous and meticulous in the spreadsheets (a must!). And of course, the need to be passionate about what you are advocating for.

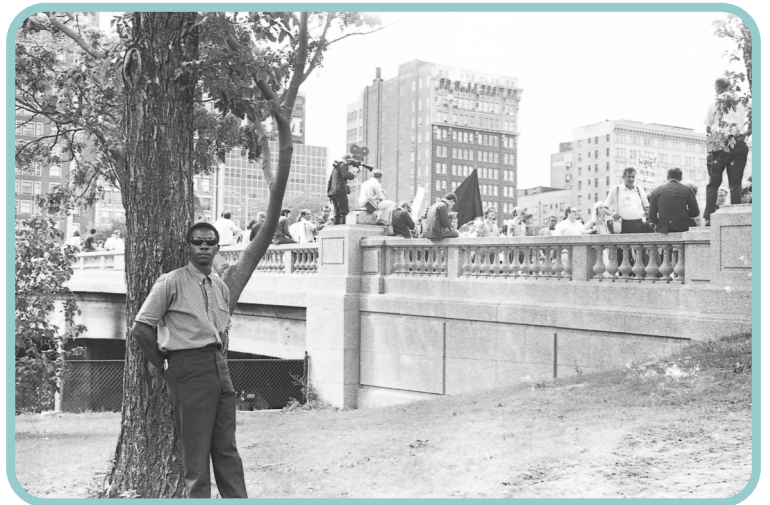
Ultimately, whether researcher or collections manager, the goal should be about furthering access and ensuring that materials are ready for a new life in exciting new contexts through re-use and re-activation. That's the goal that should unite us.

What inspired you to move from being an archive consultant to working with your collection?

Not to sound too worthy, but I've always prided myself in sticking up for the underdog and have tried to champion voices that haven't always had their moment. This manifests itself particularly in my work researching and engaging with filmmakers and collections in Northern England, especially Yorkshire (i.e. Sheffield Film Co-op, Richard Hines, Leeds Animation). But also, when working in TV/ Film research, simply using traditional footage archive sources is not so interesting to me, I always like to look for collections that exist outside of those spaces.

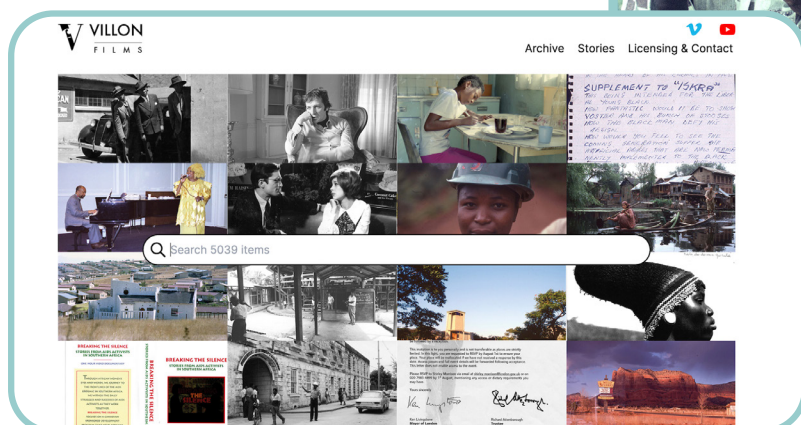
While in so many obvious ways the story of Peter Davis is not an underdog story, it is one of independence and determination. He has built a long and fascinating career fighting the good fight and supporting stories from around the world that needed to be heard. And because he has never really had institutional and commercial funding, his work has been pushed to the shadows. Hopefully I can bring my wide-ranging experiences as consultant working with forgotten collections and help shine a light again. Moreover, because much of the Villon collection is rooted in South Africa and the continent I'm really committed and inspired to work alongside colleagues to tell stories from their perspectives using Villon material.

We offer discounts to all customers based in Africa (cross-sector) seeking to use films and stills from the collection. This is, and always has been, an important aspect of Villon: to give affordable access to our substantial South African and pan-African collections to those creative and educational organisations and individuals that want to work with them.



Website: <https://villonfilms.ca/>

Instagram: @memorydance



Images provided by Villon Films



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archiveox.com

The screenshot displays the Archive OX web application interface. On the left is a dark blue sidebar with the 'archive ox' logo and a menu of icons for Records, Licensors, Tags, Team, Reports, and Projects. The main content area is white and shows the 'Cold War Project' selected. It includes a 'Current Project' section with the title 'Cold War Project', a 'Recent records' section with a list of records (including 'Eisenhower in the Oval Offi...' and 'JFK moon speech at Rice'), and a 'Recent projects' section at the bottom with entries like 'Project 47' and 'Visor'.

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Cold War Project ▾

archive ox

Records

Licensors

Tags

Team

Reports

Projects

Current Project

Cold War Project

Recent records

 OXD-S0002
Eisenhower in the Oval Offi...
National Archive Co.

 OXD-F0003
JFK moon speech at Rice
US Footage, Inc.

OXD-S0001 LBJ meeting with MLK and civil rights leaders in Oval Office

OXD-F0002 MLK Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech

OXD-F0004 MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech

OXD-F0005 LBJ's Address to the Nation on Vietnam

[View all records →](#)

Recent projects

Project 47 P47
Ox Demo

Visor VSR
Ox Demo

FOCAL's Summer Party at the House of Commons: An Unforgettable Night!

On a warm summer evening, guests experienced a night to remember at the FOCAL's Summer Party held at the prestigious House of Commons Terrace Pavilion. The event offered a blend of sophistication, breathtaking views, and camaraderie, making it an extraordinary affair for all attendees. Nestled amidst the historic landmarks of London, the Terrace Pavilion provided a stunning backdrop for the evening's festivities. The awe-inspiring views of the River Thames from the Commons' Terrace added a touch of enchantment to an already delightful atmosphere.

"I love these iconic venues FOCAL keep putting events on at, its really draws in so many people to catch up with, keep it up!" remarked one of the guests.

The allure of the FOCAL Summer Party lay not only in its picturesque setting but also in the opportunity it offered to connect with friends, colleagues, clients, and even new acquaintances. Attendees were seen mingling, exchanging ideas, and forging new connections, making the event an excellent platform for networking.

The success of the FOCAL Summer Party can be attributed not only to the splendid venue but also to the thoughtful planning and attention to detail by the organizing team. From the welcoming atmosphere to the carefully curated selection of refreshments, everything came together seamlessly to ensure an extraordinary experience for each guest.

"We are thrilled with the overwhelming response to this year's Summer Party," said FOCAL. "It was heartwarming to witness everyone enjoying themselves, networking, and embracing the magic of this unique setting."

As the night came to a close, and the last rays of the setting sun painted the skies, it was evident that FOCAL's Summer Party had etched its place as a standout event on London's social calendar.



Launching a New Clip Sales Business in 2023

Luke Smedley, Orchard Clips

It's not very often that a new clip sales business launches. And, for those that do, it's a challenge to make an impact in the market. So, when I was asked by production company OR Media to launch a Middle East focused footage business, I had to think long and hard about whether to accept the challenge. Timing didn't look ideal: the world was still emerging from the pandemic with fragile economies, the footage sales industry being dominated by a few major players and archive budgets being stretched thinner than ever. It would need to be a truly compelling proposition.

The Challenge

I started by thinking about what makes a successful clip sales business. Of course, the content is front and centre. The footage needs to have a combination of quality and uniqueness. You could have some beautifully shot footage, but if one of the major players has similar clips of reasonable quality (and particularly royalty-free), producers are likely to spend their tight archive budgets there. Conversely, you could have completely unique footage, but if it doesn't meet the needs of the customer, they're never going to buy. On top of this, you need scale. If the archive isn't big enough, you won't generate enough revenue to maintain it as a going concern. You also have to ensure that your archive doesn't go stale. A steady stream of new content is so important to a vibrant archive.

The second important requirement is having a USP. If you can make a space in the market that nobody else is occupying, or at least is not focused on, then, as long as that space is large enough, you are in a good position. The third key requirement is having a strong team. If you go into any business without knowledge and experience, you're almost certain to make mistakes. Some of these could be big enough to cost you your business. For an archive, that means having people who know the content inside out, people who know the customers and the market and people who know the technology – this may mean the latest codecs, but can also mean legacy tape formats.

The question for me was whether this opportunity could meet these requirements.



The Opportunity

First up to explore was the content itself. OR Media is a small but successful production company. For 30 years they have been making award-winning documentaries, chiefly focused on the Middle East. Over that time they have amassed a good archive of high quality footage. They have managed to secure amazing access for many of their programmes. From wide ranging interviews with world and regional leaders, through to intimately following individuals and organisations with interesting stories to tell. This seemed like a good foundation on which to build a business.

OR Media is also going through a phase of significant growth. They are currently in production on 100s of hours of documentaries. Subjects range from the war in Yemen through to Saudi Arabia's immense Vision 2030 programme, transforming the country into a modern outward-looking society, reducing dependency on fossil fuels. I therefore judged the content to be of sufficient quality and scale. I could also see the value of the content and the proposition for a Middle East archive. Eyes are very much focused on the region right now. From the ongoing protests in Iran, economic breakdown in Lebanon, through to the controversial, but ultimately successful, World Cup in Qatar. There's a lot of interest in the Middle East. There is also a generational change going on. With a high-proportion of young people in Middle Eastern countries, many of whom having grown up with the internet, they are often outward-looking and ambitious. And this ambition is becoming a mark of much of the region.

Turning my attention to the archive world, there was no company that was the go-to destination for Middle Eastern footage. The major footage houses have some content – as they do on pretty much all subjects – but they aren't specialists and don't have the strength in depth and diversity of footage required to tell the true stories of the region. I could see an opportunity to fill that niche and to become the number one source for Middle Eastern footage. Importantly, OR Media's senior management were willing to properly support me in this bid. They could see the potential for the clip sales business, but they were also pragmatic about the amount of effort required to succeed.



The People

Things were looking promising, but there was one more piece required to reassure me that we'd have everything required to create a successful clip sales business: the team. An early success was enlisting the support of Paul Maidment. Paul's extensive experience in running BBC Motion Gallery, and more recently as an archive consultant, has been instrumental in getting the business off the ground. I have been able to bolster the team with experienced archivists to ensure that all clips are catalogued to the best of industry standards. And am planning to build out the team in future.

No archive business can run without a website. Thankfully the days of having to develop and build everything bespoke are behind us. There is a number of 'white-label' platforms on the market. We quickly partnered with Veritone, using their Digital Media Hub platform. As well as having a user-friendly, ecommerce enabled, platform, Veritone are experts in using AI. Their knowledgeable team have advised us on the best use of AI to add supplementary, high-quality metadata to all of our clips.

With the content, the USP and the team, I knew we were in a great position, so set about launching Orchard Clips. The website went live with 10,000 clips in April 2023. And, I'm pleased to say, we quickly amassed customers and sales.



The Future

This is only the beginning of the story for Orchard Clips. We are still mining the extensive archive, with fantastic footage being added to the collection every day. We are currently offering free research of the offline archive for anyone with specific footage needs. We will augment the collection with brand new clips shot to the highest standards and available in 4k DCI. Beyond OR Media's collections, we are working on a number of partnerships with content owners within the region. We will be announcing these soon. These will span the region and include news footage, creative content and UGC. Launching Orchard Clips has not been easy. There have been hiccups and delays along the way. However, with this content and this team, I am ready for ongoing challenge and confident that we will become the go-to destination for archive footage from and about the Middle East.



The Lessons

I've learned a lot during this process. Hopefully these lessons will prove useful to others contemplating setting up their own clip sales business:

- Everything takes longer than you think. There's always bottlenecks and delays. And technology never works properly at the first attempt.
- When things are working, you can achieve great momentum. We took as long to go from clips 1 to 100 as we did from 101 to 10,000.
- Keep it simple. Things can change massively over the first few years, sometimes in unexpected ways. If things are simple it's easier to evolve plans and processes than if you over-engineer them in those early days.
- Whatever task you need to do, there's likely to be a web-based tool to help you do it more easily or quickly – many with free trials / starter packages to evaluate them.
- Speak to people. I've sought the advice and opinions of many people in this process and they have been generous with their time and experience. I'm hugely grateful to all those who have helped us get to this point.

Connect with Orchard Clips

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<https://www.orchardclips.com>

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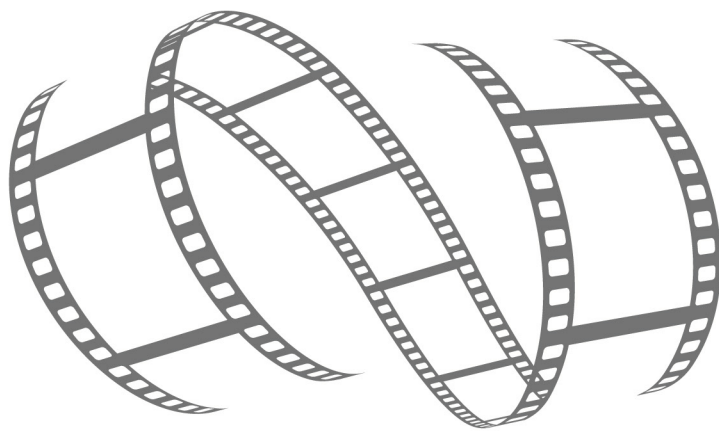
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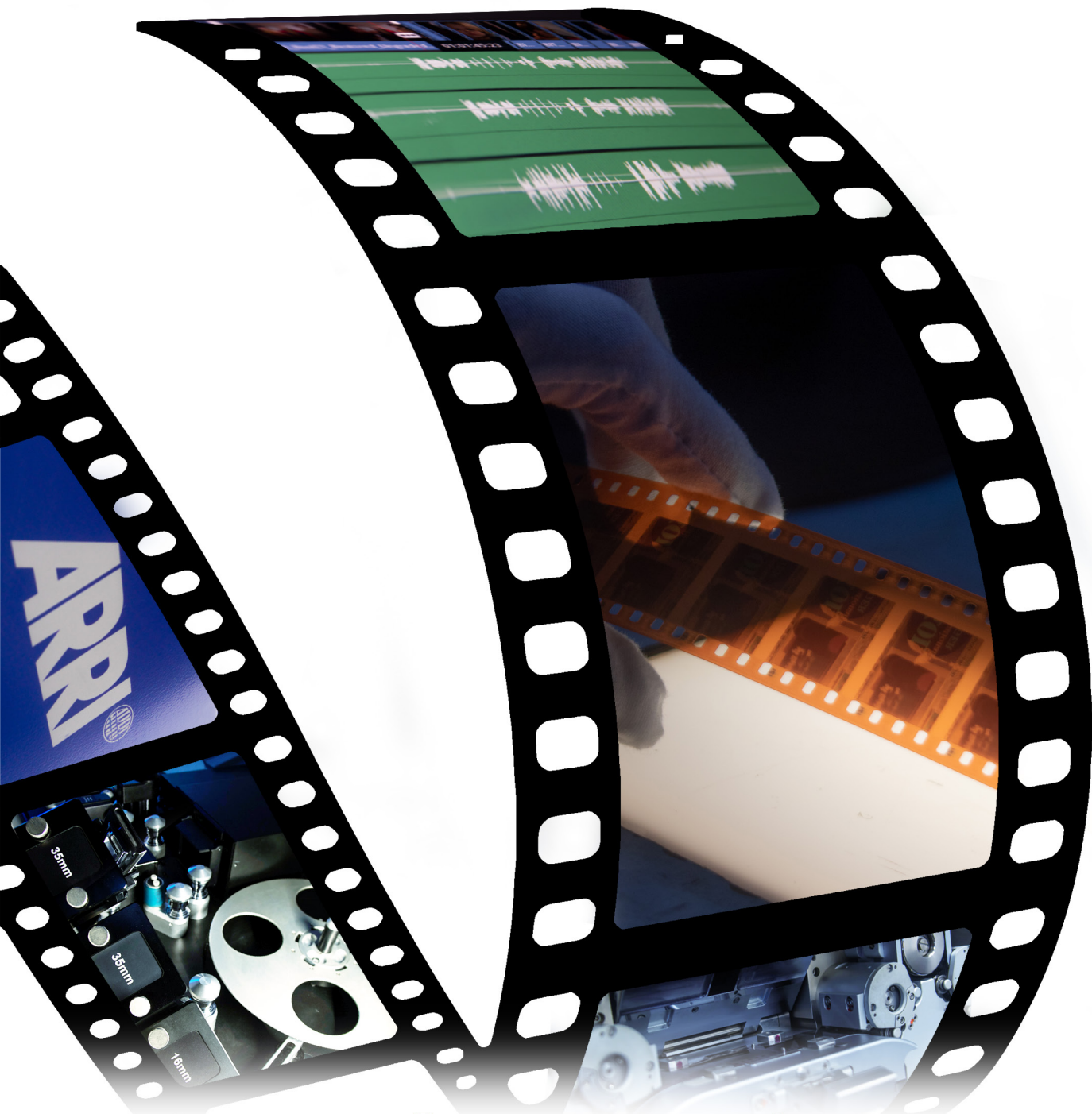
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