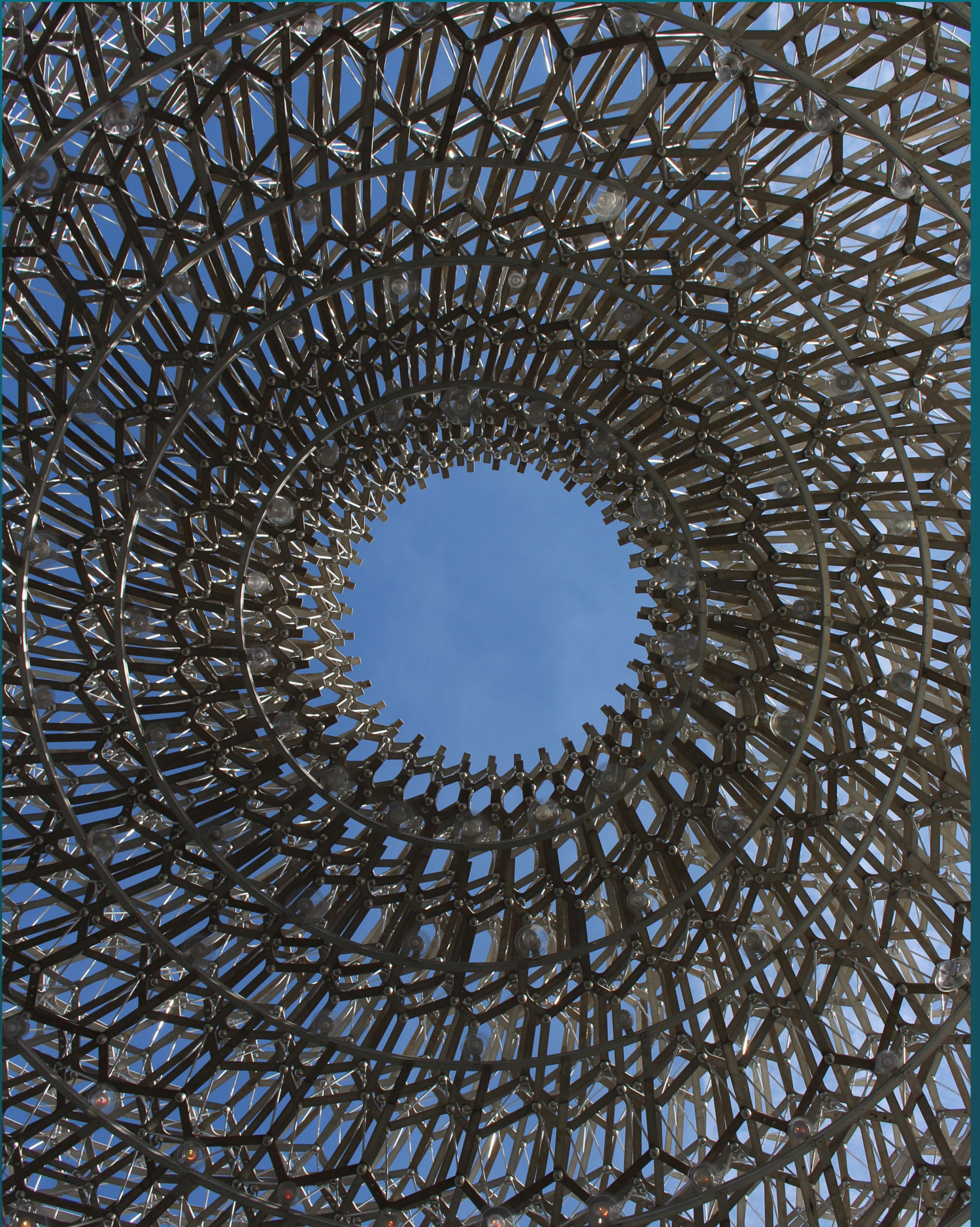


# FOCAL POINT

ISSUE 6

WINTER 2025





# INTRODUCTION

As we start the new year 2025, we hope you enjoy the Winter edition of FOCALPoint with several industry articles including the use of AI in close captioning and where the development is heading from PFT. We hear from both IMG and Archival Ninjas, two views of the use of sports footage from a footage library and archive producers' point of view. How can we shift public consciousness on protecting our planet and the impact of climate change and nature crises, Open Planet working with All3Media explain how storytelling can shift the way people think. In addition, we continue our series 'Meet the Executives' and we highlight one of our new FOCAL Member resources: the Researchers Toolkit, launched by the FOCAL Office and the Researchers Committee during the FOCAL Regional Event last October.

If you have any articles or ideas for future editions, please contact us at [info@focalint.org](mailto:info@focalint.org) – we are always happy to hear from you.

Mary Egan  
Director of Operations



Launch of the FOCAL Member resource Researchers Toolkit at the FOCAL Regional Event 2024

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**FOCAL**  
INTERNATIONAL

# FOOTAGE FOR CHANGE: SUPERCHARGING SOLUTIONS STORYTELLING

Article by Open Planet & All3Media Clip Sales



Throughout history, storytelling has shaped our understanding of the world and our place in it. As technology evolved, visual storytelling has emerged as one of the most powerful tools for affecting change – offering the unique depth and authenticity needed for evoking human emotion and connection at scale.

People are 22 times more likely to remember a story than any other form of communication, with [around 65%](#) of us being visual learners.

Whether through film and documentary, video games, social media content or virtual reality experiences, visual stories have the power to capture hearts and minds and shift the way people think, feel and act on certain issues.

Crucially, stories can also help us to imagine the future we want to create. This has never been more important than in this critical decade to restore our world and avert the worst impacts of the climate and nature crises.

[2024 was the hottest year on record](#), fuelling unprecedented extreme weather events, food shortages, health risks, deaths and displacement for people and wildlife across the globe. Meanwhile, [84% of targets](#) for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals remain off track for 2030, exposing the immense scale of our collective challenge.

But the story of our changing planet doesn't need to be one of devastation and despair. We can reshape the story of our future to one of hope and possibility. The solutions exist, game-changing innovation is already happening, and the public call for action is louder than ever.



By supercharging the breadth and diversity of stories told, we can shift public consciousness, amplify the voices of those on the frontline, and showcase the pioneers aiding our planet's recovery. At a time when misinformation and disinformation is ranked top of the [global risks tracker](#), it's vital that authentic, accurate stories cut through.

[Open Planet](#) was created in response to this urgent global need: to help scale-up powerful, credible communications, by democratising world-class content for storytellers everywhere.

Launched in 2023 and free for non-commercial use, the award-winning, open-source footage library is documenting major planetary events as they unfold and unlocking trusted, high-quality footage from the archives. A growing, global community of over 65 filmmakers, production companies and media broadcasters (including Netflix, Silverback Films and Studio Lambert) are regularly contributing footage to the platform, with over 12,000 clips now available.



Open Planet is also working in partnership with [All3Media Clip Sales](#) to unleash a growing collection of footage for commercial projects and initiatives, including feature films, TV shows, documentaries, advertising campaigns, brand marketing and other corporate communications. All profits from commercial clip sales are reinvested into Open Planet, to empower storytellers everywhere to create impactful content.

Solutions storytelling is one of the library's key content pillars. Alongside evidence of the damaging impacts of the planetary crisis, the library features compelling footage of innovation – from sustainable food production in India, to regenerative farming in Argentina, to forest protection initiatives by Indigenous communities in the Brazilian Amazon, to wetland restoration to mitigate flooding in South Africa, to seaweed cultivation and harvesting in Wales.



As we approach the midway point in this historic decade for action, brands, corporates, creative agencies, media companies and documentary makers can all play a crucial role in harnessing the power of storytelling to drive change and help scale effective solutions across the world.

It's time to celebrate stories of hope, optimism, and the human spirit's capacity to adapt and overcome our world's greatest challenges.

If you'd like to find out more about Open Planet, contribute footage to the library, or discuss content packages to support your upcoming projects, please get in touch with the team:

- Non-commercial and general enquiries: [enquiries@openplanet.org](mailto:enquiries@openplanet.org)
- Commercial clip sales: [clipsales@all3media.com](mailto:clipsales@all3media.com)



# REVISITING THE GAME: HOW ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE BRINGS SPORT STORIES TO LIFE

Article by Archival Ninjas

In the world of sports documentaries, archival footage is more than just a tool—it's the foundation of the story. **Archival Ninjas**, an award-winning Archival Production company specializing in rights, clearances, and licensing, has played a critical role in shaping some of the most impactful sports documentaries. Last year, the team's outstanding work on ***Super League: The War for Football*** earned them a Sports Emmy, solidifying their expertise in this dynamic and demanding genre.

For this article, **FOCALPoint** sits down with Archival Ninjas founder **Meghan Geier** and two of her team's Archival Producers, **Mandi Robinson** and **Jennifer Cook**, to explore how archival footage brings sports documentaries to life, the challenges of working with historical materials, and the innovations shaping the future of the field. Their portfolio includes projects such as ***In the Arena | Serena Williams*** on ESPN, ***Power of the Dream*** on Amazon Prime, ***Goliath*** on Showtime, and ***Charlie Hustle and the Matter of Pete Rose*** on HBO. Together they reveal how archival storytelling connects audiences to the triumphs, struggles, and emotions of the game.

## THE POWER OF ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Archival footage lends authenticity and depth, allowing audiences to relive events as they happened. As Mandi explains, *"Archival footage brings nostalgia and an emotional connection that keeps audiences invested."* Meghan saw this first-hand working on ***In the Arena | Serena Williams***, where archival materials were paired with Serena Williams' reflections with the moments she described. *"It was amazing to hear Serena speak about trying to earn a point or dealing with an injury while the archival footage showed those exact moments,"* Meghan shares. This combination of narration and visuals brought Serena's journey to life.

For Jennifer, archival footage does more than evoke emotion—it creates momentum. *"These docs tend to use more archival footage than other projects because it's the best way to illustrate the action of the sport,"* she explains. *"It helps with pacing and drives the story forward."* By immersing viewers in the energy and intensity of the game, archival footage ensures that the audience feels like they're part of the action.



Alamy Credit: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

## EMOTIONAL IMPACT: RELIVING KEY MOMENTS

One of the greatest strengths of archival footage is its ability to evoke powerful emotions. In one episode of ***In the Arena | Serena Williams***, there was a particularly moving moment that highlighted the sisterly bond between Serena and Venus Williams.

*"We compiled memories of them training together as young girls and intercut them with one of their early matches against each other,"* Meghan recalls. *"It was emotional to see their care for each other balanced with their competitiveness in a moment where one would win, and the other would lose."*

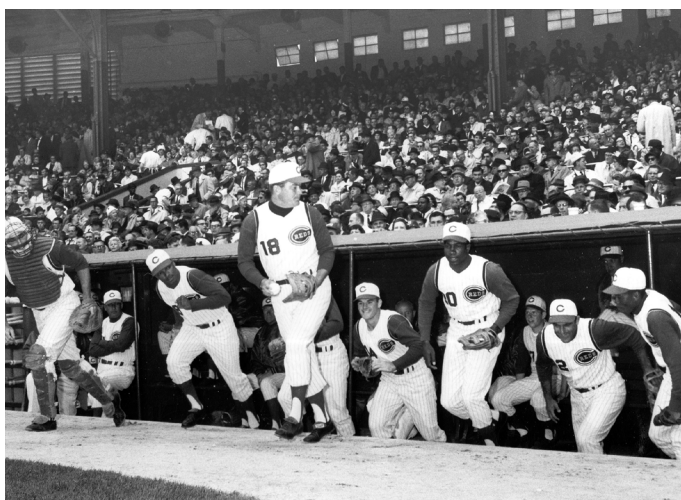


This combination of archival footage and storytelling captured the depth of their relationship in a way that words alone could not convey.



Alamy Credit: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Similarly, Jennifer shares a touching moment from *Charlie Hustle and the Matter of Pete Rose*. “Pete, who was 83 at the time of his interview, talked about his excitement on Opening Day in 1963,” she explains. “We found a photo of him running out of the dugout, grinning from ear to ear. It’s a total gem that perfectly conveys his joy and hope as a young player.” Moments like these remind audiences of the humanity behind the athletes and their achievements.



Credit: © USA TODAY NETWORK

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES IN LICENSING

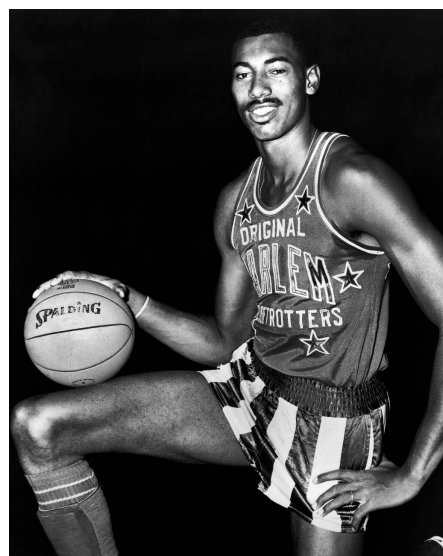
While archival footage is essential, licensing sports content often comes with significant challenges. The team collectively agrees that often the biggest hurdle is the high cost of licensing and whether the budget supports the need. Meghan elaborates that, “ownership can also get complicated based on when the footage was created and who owned the rights to that game/match at that time. Additionally, video can be owned by one source and audio by

another.” These complexities require careful planning and negotiation to ensure that the footage can be used without exceeding the budget.

Older footage presents its own set of challenges, particularly when records are incomplete or archives are not fully digitized. “With older footage, you often face issues like missing metadata or lost archives,” Jennifer says. “Something that feels like it should be an easy find sometimes isn’t.” She recalls a particularly tricky situation on *Charlie Hustle*, where licensing a watermarked clip involved tracking down a vendor through extensive detective work. “We pinpointed the vendor holding the copyright, licensed it, and got the clean master,” she shares. “Sometimes it takes a little extra sleuthing.”

## TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND BEST PRACTICES

Advancements in AI and digital restoration are starting to shift how Archival Producers’ approach their work, offering new tools to enhance storytelling. *Goliath* explores Wilt Chamberlain’s groundbreaking basketball career, his cultural impact, and his personal life through the perspectives of family, friends, and his own words. By gaining the approval of the use of Wilt’s book through his estate, the production used AI to adjust the narrator’s voice to sound like Wilt Chamberlain’s. “Hearing his story through his own words made it so much more impactful,” Meghan explains. AI is also helping archives streamline their operations, a development Jennifer finds particularly promising. “There’s so much footage out there that hasn’t been reviewed yet,” she notes. “Better cataloging could revolutionize research.” However, the team stresses the importance of maintaining ethical standards and editorial integrity when enhancing archival materials.



Alamy Credit: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Despite these technological advances, ultimately the best practice for any project relies on strong organization. Meghan emphasizes the importance of detailed tracking systems: *"Track the owner (or owners if there are multiple) and keep match/game info with it—date, who vs. who, etc. This helps when looking for swaps or ensuring accuracy."* Jennifer agrees, adding, *"Be vigilant about naming protocols. Documentaries can take years to make, and teams change over time. A solid system ensures everyone stays on track."*

### THE FUTURE OF ARCHIVAL IN SPORTS DOCUMENTARIES

Finally, as the demand for sports documentaries continues to grow, so does the importance of archival footage. Meghan sees exciting opportunities ahead: *"I hope we gain more access to footage that's currently inaccessible. Some of the best stories are waiting to be rediscovered."* With digitization efforts expanding, more hidden gems are likely to come to light, enabling filmmakers to tell richer and more nuanced stories.

Emerging trends, such as personal storytelling and broader cultural contexts, are also shaping the future of sports documentaries. *"How do we tell people's stories differently?"* Meghan asks. *"If it's historical, how can we use archival in new ways? If it's a docu-follow, are we seeing the athlete from a different perspective?"* Jennifer and Mandi agree, highlighting the value of fan-captured archival content. *"Fans are a vital part of sports, and their perspective adds a humanizing dimension to the story,"* Jennifer adds. *"Finding archival from their point of view can make a documentary even more impactful."*

Archival footage is the heart of sports documentaries, offering a window into the triumphs, struggles, and emotions that define the game. From Serena and Venus Williams' sibling rivalry to Pete Rose's youthful joy, these stories resonate because of the care, creativity, and dedication behind their curation.

*"At Archival Ninjas, we're proud to play a vital role in preserving sports history and shaping the future of storytelling. And to all the archival producers out there: keep digging, keep innovating, and keep bringing the stories that matter to life!"* says Meghan.

As access to archives grows and new tools emerge, the future of sports documentaries holds endless possibilities—and there's no doubt that Archival Ninjas will be leading the way!

### EXPLORING NEW FRONTIERS

Here are three non-traditional resources to consider when working on your next sports documentary:

1. **Check your local news stations, libraries and newspapers.** Regional outlets may have archived stories and footage from key sporting moments, especially for hometown heroes.
2. **Try reaching out to Athlete families and friends (former teammates):** Personal home videos or scrapbooks can provide intimate glimpses into an athlete's early life or career.
3. **Fan-driven archives:** Hardcore fans often preserve footage or memorabilia that isn't available elsewhere, offering unique angles or rare finds. The key question to ask is **"Who Owns the Footage?"**



Alamy Credit: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



Alamy Credit: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

To learn more about Archival Ninja's work, visit [www.archivalninjas.com](http://www.archivalninjas.com)





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# RESEARCHERS TOOLKIT

## A NEW FOCAL MEMBER BENEFIT



Following the success of the 2023 FOCAL regional event Salford, a further event was held last October 2024 in Bristol to bring the footage archive community and production together for an afternoon of three engaging interactive panel sessions and networking opportunities. At the event we published the **FOCAL Researchers Toolkit**, an exclusive benefit for all FOCAL members.

This document was created over a twelve-month period by the [Researchers Committee](#) and the FOCAL Office to provide guidance, information, and support to help undertake the roles of Archive Producer and Archive Researcher. *All the information in the document is from the point of view and experience of the FOCAL Researchers Committee members.*

If you are a member of FOCAL, just **log into your FOCAL account**, the document is available under Member Resources.

## BEST MOVIES & TV SHOWS 2024

### ACCORDING TO MARY & SEBASTIAN

Mary and Sebastian (from the FOCAL Office) thought it would be fun to share their **personal view** of the top Movies and TV Shows released in 2024. While they both have impeccable taste, they only agreed on ***Dune: Part Two*** and ***Emilia Pérez***, from their extensive viewing last year of dramatic productions without the use of footage.

We hope you enjoyed the productions as much as we did... Let us know your personal top 5!

### MARY'S PICKS

#### TOP 5 MOVIES

- *Emilia Pérez*
- *Dune: Part Two*
- *The Substance*
- *The Six Triple Eight*
- *I'm Still Here*

#### TOP 5 TV

- *True Detective - Night Country*
- *The Diplomat (S.2)*
- *Shōgun*
- *Bad Sisters (S.2)*
- *A Man on the Inside*

### SEBASTIAN'S PICKS

#### TOP 5 MOVIES

- *Anora*
- *Challengers*
- *Dune: Part Two*
- *Emilia Pérez*
- *Inside Out 2*

#### TOP 5 TV

- *Arcane (S.2)*
- *The Jetty*
- *Lost Boys & Faries*
- *Griselda*
- *The Traitors (S.2)*

# OUR LASTEST DIGITISATION PROJECT UNCOVERING FASCINATING HIDDEN ARCHIVAL GEMS

Article by Reuters Screenocean



We are currently embarking on a huge digitisation project, uncovering fascinating hidden footage from around the world, which has been stored away in varying conditions in different locations.

As a result, we are able to excavate these untold stories and unseen rushes from significant events over the past few decades, digitise and make available online.

Helen Walker has been overseeing the project, and shares her thoughts on the project to date.

## WHAT HAS INSPIRED THIS PROJECT AND WHAT'S THE PURPOSE?

Soon after our relationship with [Reuters](#) was first forged in 2017, we embarked on a project to digitise their [Johannesburg Bureau](#) archive, which had previously been sat in a garage unloved and forgotten about. This venture uncovered some amazing unseen footage. When we fully joined the Reuters family last year, it was really exciting to gain unfettered access to the undigitized tape archives of their news bureaus all over the world. While Reuters is known worldwide as the top agency for breaking news, with this project we hope to bring their first-class archival content to the fore also.

The project also takes archival preservation into consideration: as tape degrades over time and so we risk losing this precious content if it is not digitised, plus some of these tapes are the only format we hold the asset, so if there was to be a disaster (natural or otherwise), we are in danger of losing content - which given the current situation in the Middle East, is a real danger for the Jerusalem bureau.

## HOW MANY TAPES ARE THERE IN TOTAL TO DIGITIZE?

We have been working with bureaus in Singapore, Sarajevo, Berlin, New York, Tokyo, Cairo, Jerusalem, Hong Kong, Santiago, Washington DC, Iraq, Seoul, Belgrade, Athens and Madrid and together that comes to at least 7500 tapes we are digitizing - although we uncover more material all the time!

## WHEN YOU VISIT THE BUREAUS, WHAT TASKS DO YOU DO?

So far, we have gone on-site in New York, Berlin and LA, as well as visiting the storage facilities in the UK where the Singapore and Sarajevo content were shipped.

The first thing to take into account is the physicality of the tapes - what formats are in the archive? What condition are they in? Some haven't been stored in ideal conditions over the years so there is the risk of mould and other deterioration.

Next we look for any useful metadata written on the tape case or labelled on the tape itself which might give us information on when and where the content was filmed - but often busy journalists didn't label tapes with future archivists in mind!

Once we've sifted for archival gold - such as unseen rushes - we get the tapes safely packed up ready to be sent to the nearest Iron Mountain digitisation facility.



## HOW HAS IRON MOUNTAIN HELPED?

Iron Mountain has provided a one-stop-shop for this project! It was evident from the outset that there was no other organisation that would be able to accommodate a huge project that was to be delivered in such a tight timeframe.

We also needed several solutions provided to us: not only was there the actual digitisation aspect but there was also a lot of shipping and logistics work to undertake.

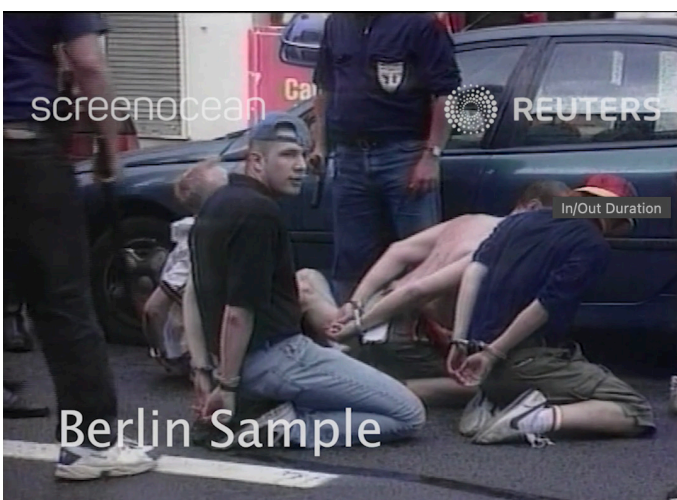
Finally Iron Mountain were able to provide us with solutions for the lack of metadata available for these tapes, by imaging assets so that we can ingest them into our database using picture to text AI readers in order to populate our metadata fields.

## HOW FAR ARE YOU WITH THE PROJECT TO DATE?

We have about a third of the bureau archives digitised, which means there are still about 5000 tapes to go! Most of these remaining bureaus are being shipped directly to the nearest Iron Mountain digitisation facilities in London, New Jersey, Los Angeles and Paris in order to get digitisation underway as soon as possible.

## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY DELAYS, OR PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED?

Most of the delays have been logistics related - unsurprisingly getting tapes out of less stable areas such as Baghdad and Jerusalem has presented a few hold-ups! The Iron Mountain shipping and logistics experts have been amazing in finding solutions.



## WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST UNUSUAL ITEM/TAPE YOU HAVE UNCOVERED?

When I got stuck into the Sarajevo archive, on opening a can of what looked to be 16mm film I was surprised to find a carton of 30 year old Serbian cigarettes. For the journalists on the ground during the Bosnian war, these would have been a useful sweetener for getting information from 'fixers' or getting past police and military checkpoints!

## WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST FIND YOU HAVE DISCOVERED?

The history some Reuters video journalists have borne witness to is quite astounding. For instance, we have a lot of footage of exhumations of mass graves during the Bosnian war, when UN officials were gathering evidence of war crimes. I was also amazed to find footage of when Princess Diana travelled to Bosnia as part of her landmine campaign work and when U2 became the first artists to hold a concert in Sarajevo after the Bosnian war ended.

## HOW OLD IS THE FOOTAGE ON THE TAPES?

Some of these collections date back to the first betacam and Beta SPs of the 1980s, and the archive ends in the late 00s when Reuters journalists rolled out their digitisation programme and retired cameras which recorded onto tape.

## WHEN WILL THE TAPES GO ON REUTERS DATABASE AND HOW CAN PEOPLE GAIN ACCESS?

Keep your eyes peeled on [reuters.screenocean.com](https://reuters.screenocean.com) where all this new content will be searchable and downloadable, as well as newsletters where we will be curating the best content for you to peruse!

# IMG ARCHIVE UNCOVERED: DIVING INTO THE MOST ICONIC SPORTS VAULT OF ALL TIME.

Article by IMG



IMG's archive is home to the largest sports footage archive in the world. We represent more than 35 of the world's leading rightsholders including the Premier League, Wimbledon, World Rugby and Roland-Garros. Rightsholders trust us to digitize and license their archive worldwide– we're fundamentally the gatekeepers to their past.

We provide producers, creatives and storytellers with access to some of the most iconic sporting moments, dating back over 100 years. Our work connects the industry with captivating content that enables them to create new and authentic stories that resonate with their audiences.

Content highlights include Tiger Woods winning his fifth Masters in 2019, every single goal ever scored in the Premier League dating back to 1992, South Africa winning the Rugby World Cup in 1995 – there's so much to explore. We represent over 500,000 hours of material, so have plenty of iconic, history-defining moments in there.

In line with the growing popularity for sports documentaries and demand for new and untold stories, we've seen a rise in demand for authentic, unsanitized footage and behind-the-scenes material. Storytellers and producers feel that using this type of footage can offer intimate access without being there in the grounds with a camera crew.

We often work with rightsholders to make additional unseen footage available too. This can be anything from world renowned rightsholders such as the Premier League, or broadcasters with unique access and footage, such as Fútbol Mundial.



For example, we have recently catalogued, digitized and uploaded over 300 compilations of non-match archive footage for the Premier League, covering the period 1998 – 2014. These total more than 400 hours of rushes, including interviews, training footage, fans' vox-pops, transfer unveilings and lots more. These compilations were shot at Premier League member clubs during the period, by Premier League Productions, who had exclusive access to players and managers at the clubs.

Fútbol Mundial is another excellent source of untapped footage. As a regular football program that focused on different stories from the world of football (1000 shows between 1994 – 2014) there is an incredible volume of interviews, conversations, casual shots and more featuring players and key individuals from all over the world. This content is also in the process of being catalogued and digitized to make it easier for creators to access.

ATP Tour also recently made a vast catalogue of off-court moments spanning back to 1990 available. This includes player interviews, behind the scenes features, award presentations, gala evenings, off-court player visits, practice sessions, training camps and lots more.

We also license Trans World Sport, an IMG property and one of the longest running weekly international sports programmes, with an archive full of interviews and clips of today's athletes in their younger days, which is gold dust and amazing material. There's interviews in there with a young Serena and Venus Williams discussing future plans and tennis inspirations, interviews with Carlos Alcaraz speaking about his ambitions four years before he wins Wimbledon, and so much more.

These raw and often unseen interviews are some of the most powerful content for anyone creating a sporting documentary around an icon.

There are so many untapped stories within IMG's archive, which are waiting to be told, or re-told from a new perspective.

As a team we want to be proactive and inspire new ideas when working with production companies – trying to help them think what the next 'BECKHAM' or 'The Last Dance' is going to be. We have a team of sports-mad archive researchers that love what they do and love working with sports producers to bring these stories to life.



Courtesy of Amazon Prime



Courtesy of Ventureland, Studio 99, and BUZZ 16

For all enquiries, please contact [videoarchive@img.com](mailto:videoarchive@img.com)  
<https://imgvideoarchive.com/>





# Last chance to enter the FOCAL International Awards 2025!



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**Closing deadline: 28 February 2025**





# FOCAL EXECUTIVE

## RICHARD GOLDTHORPE

### IMG ARCHIVE

#### SALES DIRECTOR, PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTAGE ARCHIVE



#### BRIEF EXPLANATION OF YOUR COMPANY.

IMG is a leading global sports marketing agency, powering transformative growth of revenue, fanbases and IP for federations, leagues, teams and events. We are the leader in managing and licensing sports archive content and are the trusted archive rights partner to over 30 of the world's leading sports rightsholders, including Premier League and German Bundesliga football, Wimbledon tennis, World Rugby, Masters golf and many more. We represent over 500,000 hours of premium sports archive spanning 120 years including full matches, highlights, interviews, ISOs and more.

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT FOCAL?

I was newly elected in October 2024.

#### WHAT IS THE MOST FULFILLING ASPECT OR INSPIRED YOU FOR JOINING THE FOCAL EXECUTIVES?

My relationship with FOCAL's membership community has always been incredibly important to me throughout my career. I felt it was time for me to contribute whatever I can to the organisation, as well as representing IMG and the often-complex world of sports archive!

#### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT FOCAL SHOULD BE WORKING ON, FOR THE INDUSTRY AND ITS MEMBERS?

FOCAL has a key role in building connections with the wider production industry community, to inform and educate them on archive collections and the nuances of content licensing, as well as promoting FOCAL's membership skillsets.

#### HOW DO YOU FEEL THE INDUSTRY HAS CHANGED?

There's been a whole series of technological changes. It's hard to believe that when I first started, screeners were sent on VHS by post and licence agreements were sent and signed via fax machine. Yet, I'd say the biggest change has been the rise to prominence of unscripted programming in all forms, and especially documentaries. Twenty years ago, documentary was a pretty niche cottage industry and the programming existed almost exclusively on public-service broadcasters. Now, docs and docuseries are key pillars of commissioning strategy for all broadcasters and platforms. Documentaries getting a theatrical release was unheard of when I started out,

whereas we're seeing them more and more now, even in the streaming age.

#### WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK FOCAL HAS HAD ON THE INDUSTRY NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE?

The main impact during my career has been the successful lobbying against the Hargreaves Report, which I remember well from my time at British Pathe under Roger Felber. FOCAL has also had a tremendous dedication to training and mentoring, and bringing the community together via networking events and of course the annual awards.

#### FUN QUESTIONS:

##### WHAT TALENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I'd like to think I'm a good listener. My partner may beg to differ...and I've never met anyone who can match my talent for power-napping anytime, anywhere.

##### WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB LAST YEAR?

Having just celebrated my first anniversary in my current role at IMG, there have been so many highlights, it's hard to pick just one. Working on the Manchester United '99' series was a dream project for me personally, as a United fan who was a teenager in 1999 – pure nostalgia heaven! We were also proud to have supported Ventureland, Studio 99, and BUZZ 16, licensing footage from our Premier League archive and allowing fans to relive this extraordinary season.

##### IF YOU COULD ONLY WATCH ONE MOVIE OR TV SHOW FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

'The Premier League Years', of course, plus 'The Sopranos', and golden-age episodes of 'The Simpsons'.

##### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST RISK YOU'VE TAKEN? (EITHER IN YOUR WORK OR PERSONAL LIFE).

Nearly 20 years ago I moved to Leeds without a job, hoping to find inspiration and within a couple of months I started my first job at ITN Archive (as it was known then). That was the beginning of my career in this industry.

##### IF YOU COULD INVITE 3 PEOPLE OVER FOR DINNER DEAD/ALIVE, WHO WOULD IT BE?

Sir Alex Ferguson, Tina Fey, F. Scott Fitzgerald.

# THE WINNING FORMULA OF AI-HUMAN COLLABORATION

Article by Prime Focus Technologies

## HOW MUCH AI: REDEFINING ROLES IN CONTENT LOCALIZATION

In early 2023, a highly anticipated international thriller debuted on a global streaming platform, but it quickly faced unexpected backlash from viewers in Brazil. The reason? Literal, clunky subtitles that distorted key cultural references and misrepresented humour, leading fans to take to social media to voice their disappointment. This incident highlighted a challenge that the Media & Entertainment (M&E) industry increasingly faces - scaling quality localization that authentically resonates with audiences worldwide.

Today, getting localization right is mission critical. Recent studies reveal that 9 out of 10 viewers would disregard content if it's not available in their native language. This statistic underscores a crucial reality for Media & Entertainment (M&E) companies: in an increasingly interconnected world, content must resonate culturally as much as it does linguistically. With the global video streaming market poised to reach nearly \$2 trillion by 2030, the push for culturally nuanced, multilingual content has skyrocketed. Content now must be more than understandable; it must be relatable.

Amidst this demand, artificial intelligence (AI) is making an impressive entrance. Far from being a simple translation tool, AI is enabling unprecedented levels of speed and accuracy, helping companies bring content to diverse audiences at scale. But here's the twist—AI alone isn't enough. The magic happens when AI and human expertise come together, bridging languages and cultures in ways that resonate deeply with viewers around the world.

## THE POWER OF AI IN LOCALIZATION

AI has redefined localization in powerful new ways offering benefits that were previously unattainable. Machine translation technologies, especially Neural Machine

Translation (NMT), have significantly improved translation quality by better understanding context, interpreting nuances, and generating fluent, natural-sounding translations. By utilizing AI, businesses can rapidly translate vast volumes of content, providing a solid foundation for their localization efforts.

With AI's lightning-fast capabilities, companies can tackle vast amounts of content quickly, laying a solid foundation for their localization efforts.

However, AI by itself lacks something essential: the ability to understand the emotional nuances and cultural references that make a story feel "real" for each audience. Localization isn't just translation; it's about capturing the soul of a story. This is where human expertise shines. Translators, linguists, and cultural consultants refine AI outputs, bringing a depth of understanding that no machine can replicate. Together, they turn AI's translation groundwork into content that truly resonates.

## ACHIEVING SYNERGY: AI AND HUMAN COLLABORATION

The real magic of localization lies in the synergy between AI and human expertise. AI-powered tools handle the heavy lifting, generating initial translations with speed and efficiency. But when human experts step in to fine-tune these translations, aligning them with cultural expectations, local humor, and emotional nuances, the content transforms from being passable to hugely impactful.

## CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

But putting it overtly—AI-driven localization still has challenges. A common misconception is that AI can fully replace human translators. While AI excels in efficiency, it falls short in grasping subtle cultural cues, creativity and context.

To harness AI's full potential, companies need a balanced approach that combines AI's strengths with human creativity and intuition.



A popular solution is a hybrid model, where AI generates the initial translation, and human experts review it for accuracy and cultural nuance. This combination ensures the final product is both linguistically precise and culturally engaging.

## FUTURE TRENDS IN AI-POWERED LOCALIZATION

The future is bright for AI in localization, with innovations that could soon make real-time, context-aware translations a reality. Imagine users experiencing seamless, in-the-moment translations in apps, games, and virtual worlds—creating experiences that feel genuinely localized, no matter where the viewer is. As machine learning continues to evolve, AI-driven tools will also further streamline workflows, from subtitle generation to dubbing, cutting down turnaround times without sacrificing quality.

## LOCALIZATION AS A STRATEGIC ASSET

In this fast-changing world, localization is no longer an afterthought; it's a strategic powerhouse for companies looking to expand globally. By investing in AI-driven localization, businesses can create content that's tailored to the diverse tastes and preferences of international audiences.

Prime Focus Technologies (PFT) understands this shift and is at the forefront with its innovative, AI-enhanced solutions for the M&E industry. Their CLEAR® AI platform is a game-changer, offering enterprises a scalable, efficient solution that accelerates their localization strategy with speed and precision. PFT's hybrid service model blends AI-driven speed with human insights, allowing for faster, culturally rich localization at scale. For instance, PFT has localized over 20,000 episodes in a single weekend, reducing costs by over 80%—a testament to the power of this AI-human synergy.

*"AI-powered localization is enabling us to adapt content with remarkable precision and reach, making stories accessible and relatable to*

*audiences worldwide. By pairing AI's innovative capabilities with human creativity, we're breaking down language barriers and delivering authentic, culturally attuned experiences to viewers everywhere,"* explains Murali Sridhar, Global Head of Product Management at PFT.

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PFT's tiered service model offers a dynamic approach to localization that ensures your message resonates globally. Topping it are the 20-60% savings in time and cost and a 40-90% increase in scale and speed. Our AI-led human curated Hybrid Solutions for Speech-to-Text offer Precision at Scale to help you achieve 90% accuracy for Tier-1 content, localizing to more regions faster. We offer unmatched efficiency, helping you save 30-40% on costs and timelines with AI-first technology. We ensure swift turnaround with over 20K episodes localized in a weekend, reducing costs by over 80%.

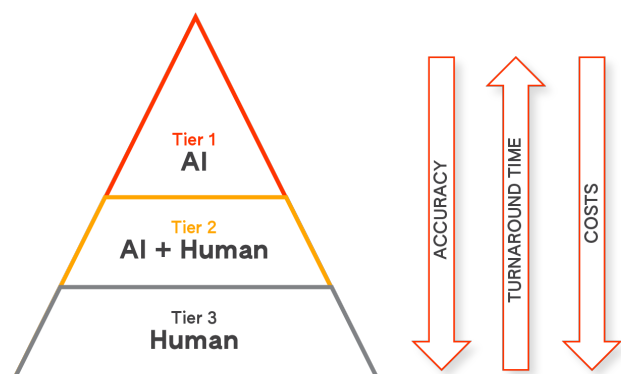
*"I believe that AI-powered localization is not just efficiency—it's about crafting content that speaks naturally and authentically across cultures. By combining AI's speed with human insight, we're setting a new standard in global storytelling that's both dynamic and deeply resonant. This fusion of technology and creativity is transforming how audiences experience content, making it feel truly local, wherever it's seen."* – Jyothi Nayak, EVP, Content Localization, PFT.

## SUMMING IT UP

As the demand for culturally relevant, high-quality content continues to rise, localization is transforming rapidly. For M&E companies, success will come to those who embrace the collaborative power of AI and human expertise, ensuring that stories resonate with audiences worldwide. By tapping into this dynamic duo, companies can elevate their localization strategy, connecting their stories to viewers on a deep and meaningful level.

In the global marketplace, those who value AI's efficiency and respect human insight will thrive, creating content that breaks language barriers and brings stories to life in a way that's truly universal.

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