

Direct Dial Number

February 22, 1996

818/777-1808

Mr. Steve Leggett
Library of Congress
338 James Madison Memorial Building
First and Independence Ave., S.E.
M/B/RS Division
Washington DC 20540-4690

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

FEB 22 1996

MOTION PICTURE, BROADCASTING
AND RECORDED SOUND DIVISION

Dear Mr. Leggett:

Attached please find our written comments that we would like to present at the hearing in Los Angeles March 6, 1996.

Respectfully,



Edward F. Zeier
Vice President
Post Production
Universal City Studios, Inc.

EFZ:jf

cc: J. Daruty, R. O'Neil, D. Slusser

Universal's Library consists of some 18,000 Television titles for which we have current rights. It is primarily comprised of episodic series (both dramatic and comedic), Made-for-Television movies, mini-series, cartoons, syndicated strips and various teleplays all falling into the Entertainment category. Universal's history in the production of television began in 1950 with the development of our first series by MCA owned REVUE PRODUCTIONS. Television titles were created and produced under this banner until 1959 when MCA purchased Universal Studios and REVUE PRODUCTIONS became Universal Television. Since that time television programming has been produced under various MCA banners.

Currently, we physically hold over 61,400 reels of color or black & white negatives, supported by over 154,800 reels of picture and sound preprint elements which include over 27.3 million feet of color interpositives or finegrains for television productions. The exception to this is a 13-year period before the advent of videocassette and laserdiscs when other small gauge film formats or intermediates were considered sensible protection. However, we are currently in the process of manufacturing interpositives on these titles. Of the above totals, approximately 29% of the elements are black & white, while 71% are color.

The predominant majority of our product has been produced on 35mm film after which the negative was conformed, interpositives or finegrains were created and then were geographically separated. However, with the advent of multi-camera shows and electronic editing, we often edit and assemble some of our shows electronically creating a videotape master. The original negative is then archived along with the Edit Decision List and original production paperwork for future use. The videotape masters are duplicated and geographically separated. With these items still available, we will be able to address any new medium or technology that presents itself for future ancillary markets. The predominant video formats used by Universal are 1" C, D-1, D-2, D-3, D-5, and DCT.

Since 1976 Universal has spent approximately \$30 million building and maintaining vaults, creating a computer database, relocating material to provide for geographical separation and maintaining knowledgeable staff personnel. In 1995 alone, we spent over \$4,450,000 on television preservation copying, and archiving.

Our main archive facility is located in Universal City, California. There are five buildings totaling 49,000 square feet with a capacity of 1.7 million containers. In 1976 Universal built its first modern vault building. This structure is a state-of-the-art facility in which we're able to meet the vendor-recommended storage conditions of 50 degrees Fahrenheit and 50% relative humidity. In addition, mobile storage racks were installed, providing maximum utilization of space.

In 1987 Universal converted one of its older vaults to an environment of 46 degrees Fahrenheit and a relative humidity of 35%. We realized at that time the correlation between humidity and the deterioration of color negative, and chose to improve the

storage conditions beyond Eastman Kodak's recommended standard of 50 degrees Fahrenheit and 50% relative humidity.

In making this change, we extended the life of our color elements before they succumbed to color fading. In both instances, Universal was well ahead of the industry in the area of archival film storage. In 1986 Universal established an additional storage location in Boyers, Pennsylvania, owned by National Underground Storage (NUS).

These vaults are situated in underground limestone mines and are guarded by 24-hour security. Currently our storage environment at NUS is 50 degrees Fahrenheit, 25% relative humidity. Universal was the first major studio to enter into an agreement with this facility. It was later followed by Paramount, Columbia and Disney in 1992 and 1993.

This operation is the cornerstone of our geographical separation philosophy wherein we're able to store separate preprint, picture and sound elements 3,000 miles apart.

In 1988 Universal expanded its total storage area, by adding a state-of-the-art videotape, audio tape and viewing print vault. This area comprises a total of 7,000 square feet with a capacity of 510,000 containers. Incorporated into this vault is a high-tech mobile shelving system that allows 60% more usable space than that of conventional stationary storage systems. This facility operates in an environment of 65 degrees Fahrenheit and 50% relative humidity.

Universal is also currently reviewing the new ANSI standards and SMPTE recommendations for the storage of motion picture film and will be addressing them in the near future.

In 1986 Universal undertook the arduous task of creating a computerized tracking system for picture, sound and videotape elements. The task of implementing this system included the creation of a vault inventory software program, the establishment of a standardized nomenclature, the inventorying cataloging and barricading of over one million elements, thus providing interface throughout the studio post production departments, home video and MCA-TV areas.

This system allows us to track elements in our vaults in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, in addition to our location in Universal City.

In the mid-1970's Universal's sound department began protecting soundtrack masters. The program was then called STUMPF copies. This process involves the copying of track masters to 1/2-inch nonsprocketed tape with sync pulse. The phrase STUMPF was defined as studio track universal multichannel print facility, and incidentally was also the name of the director of sound for Universal at that time.

The STUMPF copy process of protecting our feature and TV sound masters continued into the 1980's. We concluded that as stereo tracks became more complex the three tracks available on the 1/2-inch tape weren't sufficient for our needs.

Under the guidance of Bill Varney, vice president of sound services, Universal instituted the following procedures for preservation of sound elements. Physical cleaning and/or repairing of original master elements whether magnetic or optical, relabeling and bar coding of those masters, simultaneous transferring of these tracks to both 32-track digital and analog 24-track protection masters, the shipping and protection of masters off the lot to storage facilities. We are also actively inspecting our magnetic sound elements for "Vinegar Syndrome". As material showing evidence of this problem is identified, it is cleaned, recanned and duplicated onto two separate 2", 24-track audio tapes and stored in geographically separated areas.

Older sound masters with unique inconsistencies are processed through the Sonic Solution system, which is a digital noise removal system. Sonic Solution equipment removes distraction noise from the valuable titles without damaging the integrity of the original mix of track. This afford the preservationist the ability to chose many different degrees of noise reduction with minimal adverse effect upon the original soundtrack.

Most importantly, this process allows all this flexibility and improved quality through the digital medium eliminating any additional analog generation loss. Universal itself solely continues to evaluate emerging technology which could assist our sound preservation goals.

A limited number of titles are also stored at various archives. And under our existing agreement scholars may access titles for research free of charge in a library or classroom environment. With prior authorization under certain circumstances, screenings or cassette loans are permitted, providing no fee is charged for admission. Universal actively works with institutions such as U.C.L.A. Film Archives in the restoration of classic television titles.