

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL™ UNCOVERS ICONIC ARTIFACTS  
BEHIND AMERICA'S GREATEST SPORTING MOMENTS IN**

# **SPORTS DETECTIVES**

**PREMIERING SUNDAY, APRIL 24 AT 9PM ET/PT**

***Docu-Series Of Six One-Hour Episodes Features Sports Reporter Lauren Gardner  
And Former FBI Agent Kevin Barrows***



**NEW YORK, March, 9, 2016** - Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point ball. Dale Earnhardt's legendary pink race car. The American flag draped around goalie Jim Craig after the "Miracle on Ice." All of those historic objects from indelible moments in sports are either lost or in dispute. Now, Smithsonian Channel debuts a unique six-hour docu-series, **SPORTS DETECTIVES**, on Sunday, April 24 at 9 p.m. ET/PT, to try to hunt down the truth of what happened and find missing treasures behind some of the most iconic moments in American sports history.

Stories in **SPORTS DETECTIVES** are told through first-hand accounts from the players, managers, announcers, and fans who witnessed sports history unfold. With state-of-the-art technology, sports analysis, and real-life detective work, **SPORTS DETECTIVES** plunges into the moments that made these objects so coveted, piecing together the evidence for what happened and why.

The series enlists the investigative acumen of Lauren Gardner, a sports reporter, and Kevin Barrows – a top private investigator and former FBI Agent who took down the mob on Wall Street in one of the biggest securities fraud cases in U.S. history – who has served as a security and investigative consultant for professional sports leagues. Together, they seek to find and confirm the lost items while unearthing new details on these events that have transcended their sports.

In the series premiere, the **SPORTS DETECTIVES** attempt to track down the American flag that was draped over goaltender Jim Craig after the 1980 United States Olympic

hockey team's Gold Medal game victory over Finland in Lake Placid. That game came two days after the team defeated the Soviet Union in the famous semifinal known as the "Miracle on Ice." Did that iconic flag end up back in the hands of the man who brought it to the game, or did Craig give it as a gift to another Olympian? Faced with two credible and compelling stories, the SPORTS DETECTIVES piece together the evidence to uncover the truth – with help from the hero himself, Jim Craig.

Ensuing episodes will help to explain other mysteries within the American sports landscape:

***SPORTS DETECTIVES: THE IMMACULATE RECEPTION, JIM BROWN'S RING***

**Premieres Sunday, May 1 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

It's the play that launched a Pittsburgh Steelers dynasty. A desperate throw bouncing off the defense and inexplicably into the hands of future Hall of Fame running back Franco Harris. For decades a local insurance agent has claimed he went home with the Immaculate Reception ball. But is he right? And what really happened to the 1964 NFL Championship ring of Cleveland Browns legend Jim Brown? Was it stolen from his home, or sold by his ex-wife? This episode features an interview with Franco Harris.

***SPORTS DETECTIVES: DALE'S CAR, SECRETARIAT'S SADDLE***

**Premieres Sunday, May 8 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

Dale Earnhardt made his mark as "The Intimidator," but two rare photographs from his early career confirm that he started out in a *pink* race car – a Ford K2 that over time has become almost as famous as the driver himself. For years Earnhardt's family has believed the car was simply sold for scrap, but the SPORTS DETECTIVES follow a trail of clues that leads them to a startling discovery. Next, they investigate the story of one of the greatest missing artifacts from the world of horse racing, the "A1" saddlecloth worn by Secretariat in winning the 1973 Kentucky Derby. It has been missing for decades. Can famed Secretariat jockey Ron Turcotte and a careful photographic analysis of the winner's circle provide the clues to finally track it down?

***SPORTS DETECTIVES: GEHRIG'S BAT, GIBSON'S BALL***

**Premieres Sunday, May 22 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

It was one of the most famous swings in L.A. Dodgers' history when a hobbled Kirk Gibson launched a home run in the 1988 World Series. Every artifact from that moment has been preserved except one: the ball itself. And now a man has come forward with surprising evidence that might reveal its fate. The SPORTS DETECTIVES also chase down clues to what could be one of the most elusive finds in baseball – a game-used Lou Gehrig bat. But how can it be authentic when it seems to be the wrong model?

***SPORTS DETECTIVES: 100-POINT GAME BALL, WAR ADMIRAL TROPHY***

**Premieres Sunday, May 29 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

Wilt Chamberlain cemented his legend on March 2, 1962 in Hershey, Pennsylvania, when he set a record that might never be challenged, scoring 100 points in a single game. But what happened to the ball that went through the net that night? The SPORTS DETECTIVES have their hands full with not one, but *three* possible claims to the truth.

And for years the Kentucky Derby Museum displayed a trophy they attributed to War Admiral, but when the real item turns up elsewhere, the question becomes: is this a fake, or could it be the winning trophy from another horse?

**SPORTS DETECTIVES: ALI'S MISSING GOLD MEDAL**

**Premieres Sunday, June 5 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

In his biography Muhammad Ali tells the story of what happened to his Olympic gold medal from the 1960 Rome Olympics: disgusted by being refused service in a Louisville diner, he tossed the medal into the Ohio River, making it an enduring symbol of his struggle for Civil Rights. But is that story true, or simply part of the legend of Muhammad Ali?

SPORTS DETECTIVES builds on a formula established by executive producer Brian Biegel in his best-selling book and award-winning documentary, *Miracle Ball*, which tracked down the 1951 home run ball from Bobby Thomson's "Shot Heard Round the World."

SPORTS DETECTIVES ([www.smithsonianchannel.com/sportsdetectives](http://www.smithsonianchannel.com/sportsdetectives)) is produced by Left/Right for Smithsonian Channel. Executive producers for Left/Right are Banks Tarver, and Ken Druckerman and John Marks. Brian Biegel and Robert Harris are also executive producers. David Royle and Charles Poe are executive producers for Smithsonian Channel.

Smithsonian Channel™, owned by Smithsonian Networks™, a joint venture between Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution, is where curiosity lives, inspiration strikes and wonders never cease. This is the place for awe-inspiring stories, powerful documentaries and amazing entertainment across multiple platforms. Smithsonian Channel combines the storytelling prowess of SHOWTIME® with the unmatched resources and rich traditions of the Smithsonian, to ` Among the network's offerings are series including *Aerial America*, *Million Dollar American Princesses*, *The Weapon Hunter*, *Mighty Ships*, *Mighty Planes* and *Air Disasters*, as well as critically-acclaimed specials that include *Civil War 360*, *9/11: The Heartland Tapes*; *MLK: The Assassination Tapes* and *The Day Kennedy Died*. Find out more at [www.smithsonianchannel.com](http://www.smithsonianchannel.com). Smithsonian Networks also operates Smithsonian Earth™, through SN Digital LLC., a new subscription video streaming service delivering spectacular original nature and wildlife content.

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