Impact 4
Unit 8
Main Video Script
Scene 8.1: *A Photographer's Life*

Joel Sartore: What does it take to be a National Geographic photographer? *Listo*…I'm ready. It's like being James Bond, but nobody's trying to kill me, at least not every day. It takes being type A, driven, so that you never put anything off because you know that situation's going to evaporate if you sleep on it. It takes being aggressive to the point of getting your way.

Cole Sartore: Do you think I save you money in comparison to a regular assistant?

Joel: Yeah, you work for food. You don't charge any money. A real assistant would charge me by the day…without alienating everyone around you.

Cole: I think you should be a little more appreciative of that maybe.

Joel: It takes being able to eat things like guinea pig with the teeth still on staring at you, when there's nothing else. You know how this looks? That's how it tastes. And it takes an open mind. We're constantly strangers in strange lands, and yet we have to immediately establish friendships and bonds in order for people to share their lives with us. That's the biggest thing that we do beyond the picture taking, is to quickly ferret out where the pictures are, how to get them, and to leave the place better than we found it. Photography can take an ordinary moment and elevate it to the iconic. I shoot thirty-thousand pictures a year, minimum; maybe three or four are keepers. That's the goal: to create a picture that outlasts us, and goes to work, and does good things. You know of all the work that I do, though, the pictures that mean the most to me are the ones that deal with conservation. Pictures of places, habitats, and species - things that might not be around for very much longer. Most species are going extinct because we don't pay any attention to them. That's where I come in. One of the things I'm doing now is called The Photo Arc. It's a twenty-year effort on my part to try to photograph as many animal species as I can, using studio lighting and black and white backgrounds. What do you think?

Man: I can just hope.

Joel: So far, I've photographed more than 2,500 species—probably get five or six thousand by the time I'm done. The goal is for people to be able to look these species in the eye, and get them to care, while there's still time to save them. You know, at the end of the day, I'm a storyteller. It's about all I've done since I was eighteen years old. What do you do when you've been a National Geographic photographer? It's a little like being an astronaut. What else are you going to do when you're done, open a car dealership? I don't know. That's why we don't quit until we die. That's why we keep going.

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