

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, August 24, 2025

**Doug Boles**

**Dario Franchitti**

**Will Buxton**

**Jonny Baker**

**Marshall Pruett**

Press Conference



likely watching.

Justin was one of my closest friends. Nothing to do with racing, just as a person. It's been weighing pretty heavily on my heart. This 10-year anniversary is coming. I've been thinking about what we're going to do for two years. I'm a self-avowed idiot, about six weeks ago it finally occurred to me what to do. Let's do a documentary because that's easy to do, to pull off in no time.

I thought about that, reached out to Stef and said, What do you think?

He said, That would be amazing.

I said, Cool, but you have to be a producer on this with me. I don't want to do this without you.

We started developing a list of who to interview. We've done 18 interviews so far. We're going to cross the 20 threshold next month. Mr. Lanigan here, we'd love to speak with you about Justin. Mike Hull from Ganassi. Mark Webber, former Formula 1 teammate. Trying to get ahold of Lewis Hamilton.

That occurred to me at a very late hour. My friends and partners at CoForce, I work with constantly, reached out to Jonny Baker, What do you think?

You want to get this done by when?

I truly had only one demand. If we were going to do it, Max was going to be my co-director, co-everything, because his heart and sensibilities are perfect for what we're trying to do here.

So decided to do this. This is a love letter to a dear friend. More than anything, this is meant to be for the Wilson family, primarily for their daughters Jane and Jess. Jane was seven when Justin was lost. Jess was five. She doesn't have a lot of memories of her dad. Jane looks just like Justin. She speaks just like him. Her cadence, her everything. Jane is exactly like her mom Julia. We got to go out and see them, spend some time, film with them the Thursday of the Portland race week, it was magical.

THE MODERATOR: Good morning. Obviously very excited about race day here at the historic Milwaukee Mile, sure to be a couple of great races. Wanted to begin the day by honoring the legendary Justin Wilson. Crazy to think it's been 10 years since his passing. Incredible racer, even better father, husband, friend to many in this room.

In partnership with Marshall Pruett and CoForce, an announcement this morning that a documentary film is in production. It's entitled Bad Ass Wilson, His Life and His Legacy. The documentary film is in production and coming soon with the official premier date to be published on CoForce's social media channels and on BadAssWilson.com.

Please turn your attention towards the monitor on the left for a sneak peek of the film.

(Video Shown.)

THE MODERATOR: Not only is this morning an opportunity to talk about the document but reflect on the life of Justin.

Doug Boles, president of INDYCAR and IMS. Dario Franchitti. Jonny Baker, CoForce CEO. Will Buxton from INDYCAR on FOX.

Let's start with Marshall. What a special day today is. Why is this moment the right time for a documentary like this?

MARSHALL PRUETT: First of all, thanks to (indiscernible) Butler, his brilliance, that trailer. Also want to say morning to the Wilson family. I believe Keith and Lynne, Justin's parents, and likely his taller, younger brother Stefan, are



This has been a beautiful thing to see coming together. Doug, Alex Damron, Mark Miles, everybody at INDYCAR was an immediate, Yes, tell us how we can help.

This is all for Justin. That's been the cool thing, is knowing that this is a Justin project. IMSA, Formula 1, you name it, everybody in some way, shape or form has told us, Yes, tell us how we can help. Just a measure of the man.

Last thing I'll mention, on this day, the 10th anniversary of losing Justin, when we're done here at 9:30, Honda will be here celebrating doing a press conference about winning the manufacturers championship. One of the themes you've seen speaking of heavily is Justin and the way he went about racing, with dignity, with respect for his fellow driver. He was a peaceful person but also was a bad ass on track.

Scott Dixon has exemplified that for years. I think of Alex Palou, our new four-time champion. I think if Justin was here, I think he'd be fascinated by Alex because I think he'd see a lot of himself in how Alex goes about his career, in a warm and positive way, then does things on track that infuriates the heck out of everybody else because they're trying to solve that puzzle.

On this 10th anniversary, thinking of all that Justin left behind with us, I think there's a pretty deep infusion of his spirit in this paddock. The idea to put together a documentary, hopefully we'll have this ready by the end of the year, just feels right.

THE MODERATOR: It is a tremendous undertaking anytime you put together something like this, certainly in the timeline you have done it. It has already been impressive.

Doug, for you, as mentioned, it's crazy, 10 years. What are your memories when you hear about the name Justin Wilson?

DOUG BOLES: First of all, when Marshall came to us with this idea, he's right, I think Mark and Alex and I all were excited about it I think because of what Justin meant. You heard the quote in there, You can't race statistics, they don't always tell the story. That really was the story of Justin Wilson.

Justin maybe never got the perfect ride for Justin and his talent. His talent oftentimes far exceeded the cars he was in. The beauty of Justin I think is that he could be a coalition builder.

I was only two years in my job at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway as president when Justin was racing. He

became one of those people that you could call and you could ask questions and you knew you were going to get the right answer from Justin.

That was the same as the paddock drivers. Even Scott Dixon could count on somebody like Justin. Dario will tell you probably the same thing. When you look at those statistics, Scott Dixon, there's Dario Franchitti, Justin is down here, but those drivers looked up to Justin because of his talent but also because of his demeanor, his ability to help people think through problems, build the coalition.

I think as you look at the paddock today, who is that next Justin Wilson? Who is that person in the paddock that all the drivers can go to? Oftentimes you think it's got to be Scott Dixon, right? That's got to be the guy.

The thing that was so cool about Justin is he was not the one you would expect. If you polled the driver that day, I would guarantee every single one of them would have said, If I have an issue, if I have a question, if I want to ask me to tell me honestly how I can be better at my craft, it was going to be Justin Wilson.

It was the secret sauce about him. He could run on the track, but an unbelievable ability to be a friend and mentor to everybody who was driving a race car.

MARSHALL PRUETT: He wasn't just an emissary for the drivers to the series, but he'd come to me every now and then, Hey, if you see Kanaan, steer clear. He said he's going to whoop your ass. He also was kind of my personal savior among the drivers, too.

THE MODERATOR: Jon, speak to the opportunity to tell Justin's story in such a very unique way. It's got to be really good, right? No pressure.

JONNY BAKER: Yeah. Just on that word 'pressure', there is pressure with it, but pressure's great. That's where we do our best work. I think ultimately that's what you have to be willing to live with. That's what makes the end product so rewarding.

We feel like we're in good shape. I think the key to any production like this, and our guys will preach this, you got to have access and you got to have resource. We're fortunate that we've got both.

Big thanks to INDYCAR. Without them, this wouldn't be possible. All the historical footage we have is just unbelievable. I think that's really then, when you tie in the access that Marshall has been able to line up with the likes of Doug, Dario, Will, Mike, 18 interviews, I think we're going to surpass 20 next month, the access is going to be unreal.



Yeah, feel really good about that.

Obviously having Max lead the project from our side, Max is amazing. Really excited to see what we can all cook up. I think also having the support of the Wilson family is key. Stef is a good friend of mine. That makes it that little bit more special as well.

We're excited. I think excited to see what we can all come up with. We're going to make something special, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Will, coming to you next. You were just coming into the sport when Justin was graduating from F-3000, going into Formula 1. What are some of your memories of him during that time?

WILL BUXTON: First, a huge thank you to Marshall for asking me to be a part of this. I feel wholly unqualified and honored to be a part of it.

I was just starting out. One of my first gigs when I joined Formula 1 Magazine, straight out of university, was to go to the press conference where Justin announced that he was floating himself on the stock market in order to raise the funds that would allow him to go and compete in Formula 1.

Even before that, he tested out here. This was always part of the dream that Justin had. I think one thing that set Justin apart was his humility. That came across in how mild-mannered he was. As you rightly pointed out, he was a bad ass.

When we've been interviewed, this is probably going to sound really silly, if anybody remembers the cartoon Kong Phooey, who was a Super Hero and a total bad ass.

Justin could have achieved so much more than he had the opportunity to do in Formula 1, where I've been for the last 25 years. But the fact that he didn't was almost because he overachieved in the early part of his one and only season. He was so good and performed so well that he was almost into a place that didn't give him that opportunity to shine.

Formula 1's loss is INDYCAR's gain, and I think Justin's gain as well. He found a place and home that was far more representative of the place he was, which wasn't political, didn't play games, didn't go out to mess people over for selfish reasons.

He was selfless and a phenomenal racing driver that we all look up to, drivers look up to. Part of our job in storytelling, getting people to care about the drivers today, is to do that through the lens of history. There's no better person to

have the drivers of today and the fans of today to look up to than Justin.

THE MODERATOR: Well said.

Dario, obviously close friend of yours. You had some hellacious battles on track as well. Maybe share a couple thoughts about Justin.

DARIO FRANCHITTI: We had some hellacious nights out, too (smiling).

Good morning, everybody. I think if you're in this room, you knew Justin, probably fairly well. I would say thank you, Marshall, and thank you everybody involved because I think Justin was always a bit under the radar because he wasn't a self-promoter. He probably didn't get the respect he deserved I would say at the time for what he was able to achieve.

In the 10 years since he passed, I think my biggest concern is that he would be forgotten. I think this doesn't allow that to happen. So well done, MP, on that. That's really, really important, that we do this for our friends.

Anyway, yeah, as Doug said, he was a guy that we all went to. We did. There was a time that other drivers were all getting together as a group and trying to improve things in this sport. I think James Hinchcliffe was involved, I was involved, Justin was involved heavily. We had a lot of late-night phone calls trying to sort of steer things in a way that improved all kinds of parts of this sport, including safety.

A lot of those calls were Justin going, Okay, just calm down, we'll figure this out. I think maybe we should do this.

He had such a gentle way in everything he did, apart from driving a racing car, in steering it, defusing some of the passion of the rest of us. Kanaan was involved. You can imagine some of the steam coming out of his ears. Justin was so good at doing that, too.

He had that crazy ability to be a selfless racing driver, which we're all very good at hiding it, but we're all really, really selfish people. Okay, maybe not as good at hiding it (smiling). But you get the idea.

You and I talking at Laguna. I prefer to remember, whether it's him, Greg, Dan, the fun stuff. Standing here after I picked him for the pole, putting me in a headlock. Drinking too much tequila in Japan.

Yeah, that's what I prefer. I look back at those great memories. I'm glad that with you doing this, other people



are going to understand a bit more about this amazing, gentle giant who was an incredible person, just the most wonderful racing driver.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Marshall, as far as I understand, your documentary will also cover Justin's time in motor racing before he moved to America. How difficult was it to trace people in Formula 3000 and other series? Is it also planned in the future to produce this documentary on DVDs so fans can purchase it?**

MARSHALL PRUETT: I love that you believe DVDs still exist. So that is phenomenal, Wolfy. Never change, my guy (smiling).

No, I mean, we'll start with that first. No one's making any profits off this. There's no licensing fees. We all agreed going in we just want to cover the production costs. Of the couple things that occurred to me thinking about what should we do, Stef Wilson is just asking what is the status of DVD production (laughter). Wilson, get a job.

For those of us who knew Justin or know of Justin, you know a lot of his story. We want to celebrate that and share more. But he did pass 10 years ago. Doug and Dave and everybody at INDYCAR knows so well there's been a huge up-swell of fandom, new fans in racing, over the last 10 years who have come in without knowing Justin, without having seen him.

A lot of us wanting to do this, the reason is so that folks who never knew him can maybe learn something, realize what a gift.

All free. It's going to be distributed across all of INDYCAR's digital channels, some others we're working on which hopefully we'll share soon. It's just meant to be something where we want as many folks to know about him.

I do still have a DVD burner. I can make you one, zero charge (smiling).

As for the access, the fun part, Jonathan Palmer, who was Justin's manager, really did help propel him, we're meant to interview him. They've been super helpful.

Funny story. Bedford Autodrome has been a big part of Palmer's life. It's where Justin came up working as a driver instructor. One of Lewis Hamilton's first jobs was as a driving instructor.

Not too long ago, the entire Wilson family flew to the UK

and spent time with Uncle Palmer. And Jane, their eldest daughter, climbed into an open car, prototype, you name it, according to Stef she wants to become a veterinarian. According to Stef, no joke, she has it. Like if she wants to become a race car driver, she has it. Julia, their mom, is like, No, no, no. They are centrally involved through CoForce, the great Mari Mower, Chris, the Mower family, which ran Nordic, lots of photos. We're going to interview Chris.

When I said earlier the amount of people that want to help because it's Justin, it's phenomenal. F-3000, Palmer Audi, you name it, a lot of good folks are getting involved to make sure they have that content.

**Q. I was 10 years old a decade ago, growing up in the UK with a family that wasn't really race fans. INDYCAR wasn't something that was particularly on my radar. I know you've already shared a few memories. For whoever really wants to chime in, what are your kind of fondest and favorite memories of Justin that define him as a person or a race car driver?**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I'll just say one thing. When he won at Watkins Glen in the Dale Coyne car, there was more other drivers went into that Victory Lane to congratulate him than I've ever seen before. I think that says a lot about how we all thought about him.

That day, it was busy. It was like a reception line like a wedding, we were all waiting to congratulate the big man. That was to me the ultimate sort of proof of how we all felt because we all got beaten that day, but didn't matter.

MARSHALL PRUETT: Last weekend we were in Monterey for the Monterey reunion, historic event there. I don't remember the reason why, but I wasn't able to attend Pocono in 2015. The weekend prior was the Monterey reunion. Justin is there driving a 1967 Porsche 911 or something other that he didn't fit in, like every other car he didn't fit in.

My last text from Justin is a photo of him up against the fence, taking a photo of I think one of the screaming Mazda prototypes. It's a photo of Justin walking up to the fence, taking a photo of one of those prototypes going by.

This is a guy that won all of the things you can imagine in life, but was just a fan. It's something I'd send to somebody as a guy. But to get that from him, always a reminder, we might know of him as all the things he's achieved, but ultimately he's just one of us, nose pressed up against the fence looking at those cool cars. To have that childlike passion, I just always appreciated that.

Last thing I'll mention here, Mike Shank is here, Jay Frye, Mr. Lanigan, so many folks, Lisa Boggs from Firestone, friends from Honda, on and on, Mark from INDYCAR, radio. Guy's been gone 10 years. Look how much he's loved (tearing up).

THE MODERATOR: We'll leave it there. Everything was well-said today. Perseverance, I keep going back to that. He was with some teams, then still did quite well throughout his career. What a special way to begin this day. He was a 10-time starter here at Milwaukee, best second, podium finish here. He would love a gorgeous day like this. As we go about our day here today at the Milwaukee Mile, keep in mind of Justin's legacy. Look forward to seeing the finished documentary coming soon. Thank you all so much for being here.

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