

Guernsey dreams up another way to abuse the world and .

Published: January 13, 2026, 6:34 am

As the [Guardian reports this morning](#):

With HMRC having clamped down on so many of the Channel Islands' money-making schemes, a controversial new venture has been dreamed up in Guernsey which its creators hope will make the rich even richer.

If all goes to plan, by the end of 2012 Guernsey will have the world's first ever image rights registry, which will allow celebrities to earn a fortune from not just their face but also their catchphrases, mannerisms and gestures. Usain Bolt, for example, would be able to register his victory bow-and-arrow pose potentially to stop unscrupulous advertisers anywhere in the world from hawking their wares using an image of a black man in running gear pretending to do archery.

Intellectual property experts on Guernsey argue that current trademark and IP laws do not go far enough to protect a person's image from commercial exploitation.

No hang on a moment: let's be clear what's really happening. That is that what is going on here is a tiny jurisdiction of well under 100,000 people is saying that a world wide injunction can be issued in its courts regulating the use of images anywhere. And what's the purpose? Clearly there are three. First it is to extend monopoly rights for the rich and large companies. That is anti-competitive. second, it is to ensure the rich can transfer more income into tax havens. Third, it is to make Guernsey lawyers rich.

This is abuse, written large. From beginning to end this is a small jurisdiction selling its ability to legislate to undermine law elsewhere. That's pur tax haven / secrecy jurisdiction behaviour.

And as the Guardian notes there are two possible responses. The first is deny any Internet content to Guernsey: an interesting idea but maybe hard to enforce. Alternatively the world's legislators are going to have to turn round and declare such laws illegal. The fightback against this abuse has to happen.