



## Case study

### Subtitling a fast-paced and information-packed documentary

*The history of The Laughing Cow, “Fondue de fromage”  
(directed by Eric Pio for France 3 television and  
La Maison de La vache qui rit)*

**CONTEXT:** “Fondue de fromage” was produced in French for France 3 Television. La Maison de La vache qui rit needed a version with English subtitles for its international visitors.

**ISSUE:** The initial version did not work. The density of information presented in multi-line subtitles made it impossible to read, understand and enjoy the film – even for a native English speaker who had seen the documentary a dozen times.

**SOLUTION:** I was asked to start over from scratch and proceeded in 3 phases:

1. Revised the original translation for accuracy, tone, and terminology.
2. Distilled the dialogs by carefully selecting content (intimacy with the subject matter) and synthesizing its expression (precise writing), achieving a **47% reduction** in the word volume for the subtitles.
3. With Eric Pio and his team, remounted and continued to refine the subtitles until a non-native English speaker could visualize the film with ease, harmony among images, subtitles and tempo achieved.

*A “best of”, before and after, is in the works. I’ll upload it when Eric sends it.*