

Production Notes

Journals and notes from the production staff of E:60.



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FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2011

Co-Stars

At about 10 a.m on April 8 Carl Crawford climbed out of a dugout onto the field at Fenway Park, four hours before the home opener of the Red Sox. He was greeted by an E:60 crew on hand to capture the moment. For Crawford it was the start of the Red Sox phase of his career, after 10 years in the Tampa Bay Rays organization.

As Crawford walked toward left field and gazed upon baseball's most iconic location, producer Heather Lombardo's cameras devoured the scene. John Updike once called the wall "a compromise between Man's Euclidean determinations and Nature's beguiling irregularities." Whatever.

To Crawford the Green Monster is something he was hired to protect, but to Lombardo it's a co-star in her profile of Crawford. In Lombardo's telling, Crawford inherits a realm of immortals - Ted Williams, Carl Yastrzemski, Jim Rice - Hall of Famers who played left field for the Red Sox. (And Manny Ramirez, an immortal flake and cheat). Crawford has something none of them had - speed - a gift that carried him out of his tough neighborhood in Houston and to four American League stolen base titles with Rays. And now it has carried

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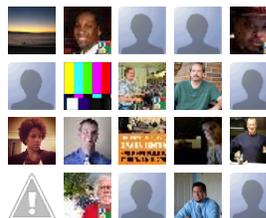
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him to a \$142 million contract and a chance to become the next Hall of Fame left fielder from Boston.

"The Wall bookends the piece - we need it as a character," Lombardo said. "We just wanted to capture the beauty and grandeur of the Wall." Lombardo approached the Monster shoot as she had other iconic locations - Churchill Downs, Belmont Park and Daytona.

"You want to capture them in their most pure form," she said. "You want to capture a quiet moment - that's where it resonates with people. You want it to be as pure as it ever was - if it's iconic it's traditional, and tradition is roped into it - you want to capture that. "You want to make them feel big, because that's how people build them up to be in their minds.

"And respect. You always want to be respectful of these locations. You don't want to shoot the Wall with people milling about. You want it to be the central focus."

The shoot began as Crawford and reporter Buster Olney walked toward left field, while shooters Mike Bollacke and Tim Horgan circled in front and behind. At one point, Crawford stopped and turned his back to the Monster, to allow for a different angle.

The shoot called for Crawford to walk through the door at the base of the Monster, enter the dim and cramped interior, and sign his name on a wall alongside thousands of signatures of players and fans. As Crawford signed, one camera zoomed in on the signature, while another got a low wide shot. But the interior shots, Lombardo knew, wouldn't be as important as those of the exterior.

"From a distance the Wall looks small and then you stand next to it and look up and it's huge," Lombardo said. "It comes across as a larger-than-life structure, almost like a sculpture. That will come across, I hope. These guys are artists that way - they'll make it come alive." The bright morning sun, which bathed the Wall in a flat light without texture, proved a challenge. Bollacke's solution was a "boatload of filters".

"You want something that draws your eye to the standard part of the frame but the edges will be kind of black or faded off," Bollacke said. "The idea is to draw the viewer's eye somewhere else to distract you from the flatness."

The shoot took about 25 minutes. When it ended Crawford grabbed a glove and fielded caroms off the Monster. They had met before, but never as co-stars.

Posted by Steve Marantz, April 11, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [3:56 PM](#)

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THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2011

E:60's new season begins Tuesday, April 12th @ 7pm ET on ESPN.

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E:60
Bristol, CT, United States

"E:60" is ESPN's first prime-time newsmagazine featuring profiles, investigations and cutting-edge stories on emerging and established sports.

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TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2011

E:60 3D: Coming at You



Making of the Great Throwdini in 3-D

from [E60](#) PRO

04:14 | 

[Making of the Great Throwdini in 3-D](#) from [E60](#) on [Vimeo](#).

ESPN pioneered sports television 3D with a college football game in 2009, and continued in 2010 with World Cup Soccer, the Home Run Derby, and college and pro basketball. Viewers find live action enhanced by a depth of field enjoyed by the athletes.

In April E:60 will debut ESPN's first 3D feature presentation: "The Great Throwdini" - about the daredevil act of a knife-thrower, David Adamovich. Viewers will see sharp gleaming knives fly through the air, in ultra-slow motion, in various directions. Some come straight at the screen, others go toward a woman attached to a giant spinning "wheel of death".

What they won't see is the 10-12 hours of trial-by-error that went into shooting the 4-5 minute piece. That was in February, at a Hofstra University theater, in a session that required a small army of 15 to 20 specialists. Nor will they see the hours of editing.

"It took James Cameron nine years to do 'Avatar' in 3D, and I'm like, 'That's all?'," said producer Martin Khodabakhshian,

"Everything takes longer in 3D - field planning, pre-production, shooting and editing."

Khodabakhshian was on his first 3D shoot, as were producers Robert Abbott and Brian Liburd. They were challenged to get a shot of a knife hurtling toward a \$200,000 Phantom camera - without damaging the camera.

The camera was protected with one sheet of plexiglass, then three. A mirror was set up, and a reflection of the knife was shot as it hurtled through the air.

Wearing 3D glasses, the producers watched replays on monitors. But, for an unexplained reason, the slow-motion shots would not replay in slow motion.

Producers experimented with unfamiliar 3D technology and arrived at a few conclusions:

1) Conceive and layer shots differently than in 2D - the more layering the better. Create depth between the camera, the subject and the background.

2) Cameras and rigs should be static. Movement should come from the subjects.

3) Abundant lighting is required for Phantom cameras, which enhance 3D with ultra-slow motion.

4) In edit, avoid fast cuts. Viewers need more time to adjust to the depth and dimension of a 3D shot. Shots should be longer with movement toward and away from the camera.

At the end of the day, Khodabakhshian was intrigued by the creative potential of 3D.

"You don't have to be throwing something at a camera - it doesn't have to be Friday the 13th," he said. "If you have a story on rowing, and there's layers of kayaks, it will look cool. If a girl is honoring her brother at his gravesite, and the tombstone is in your living room, and she's coming to kiss that thing with emotion, why not?"

“You could do almost anything with 3D. It just takes a lot of time and money.”

(Posted by Steve Marantz, March 22, 2011)

Posted by [E:60](#) at [12:11 PM](#)

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

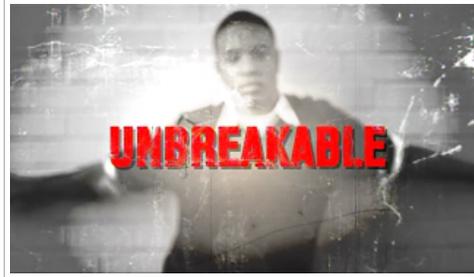
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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2011

Re-enactment and Specialty: A Fine Line



Part 2

A dummy from a costume shop was outfitted in a black hoodie and wing pants. Producer Martin Khodabakhshian used the dummy as a stand-in for [Jordan Burnham](#), who had survived a suicide plunge from a ninth-floor window.

“This was more of an experiment - I didn’t know if it would be cheesy or offensive,” Khodabakhshian recalled.

He considered a drop of the dummy from the bedroom window, but decided the image would be “too much”. Instead, the dummy was thrown from the hood of a car, and filmed as it plummeted downward, silhouetted against a white sky.

Powerful images, for sure, but



Khodabakhshian wondered if they might be too...something. Uncertain, he consulted E:60’s management team.

“It’s not just you deciding in the end this is right for what we’re doing,” Khodabakhshian said. “There’s nothing wrong with getting input from the subject, photo editors, bosses and peers. They help you decide if you’ve gone too far or not far enough.”

Producers walk a fine line on re-enactment and specialty B roll.

E:60 executive producer Andy Tennant produced a piece in 2002 on a former Buffalo Bills running back, Doug Goodwin, who had received a heart transplant in Manhattan on the morning of 9/11. The story included re-enactments of the donor heart harvested in Boston by two surgeons, flown to New Jersey, and shuttled across the George Washington Bridge minutes before the bridge was closed.

The re-enactment was so lifelike that some at ESPN thought Tennant had shot the story live. Tennant ultimately added a ‘re-enactment’ font at the start of the sequence.

“The way you shoot a re-enactment will determine how it’s accepted by viewers,” Tennant said. “If it’s shot to match the time of

day, at live speed, off the shoulder, it will give the appearance that it's live and the story is unfolding.

"We discuss re-enactments often - how to do them - where to draw the line - what's over the top and what's acceptable."

The history of re-enactment is as old as the re-enactment of history. So said an Oxford professor of metaphysics, R. G. Collingwood, who died in 1943. "History is the re-enactment of the past in the mind," he wrote.

Film re-enactment enjoyed a watershed moment in 1988 in documentary filmmaker Errol Morris's award-winning "[The Thin Blue Line](#)". Morris' re-enactment of the murder of a Dallas police officer, based on interviews, trial testimony and evidence, was so persuasive that it resulted in the over-turning of the conviction of a man sentenced to death.

In the last decade, cable viewers grew accustomed to re-enactments in the programming of the History, Discovery and Sci-Fi channels.

But a 2005 documentary film, "[Mighty Times: The Children's March](#)" - about a 1963 civil rights protest by thousands of children in Birmingham, Ala. - was controversial for its use of re-enactment. The filmmakers, Bobby Houston and Robert Hudson, recreated scenes with vintage cameras and distressed film stock to shoot more than 700 extras, trained dogs, period autos and fire engines at various locations in Southern California. Real archival footage and re-enacted footage were woven together. Shots from other cities were edited into the footage from Birmingham.

Of "Mighty Times", Errol Morris wrote in an essay for the New York Times: "Surely this is not a question about re-enactments. It's a question about fraud. If someone presents a scene as a real event, and it has been produced after the fact, it's a re-enactment that's a deceptive practice. It's a false claim. It's a lie."

Morris made a broader point: "Critics argue that the use of re-enactments suggest a callous disregard on the part of a filmmaker for what is true. I don't agree. Some re-enactments serve the truth, others subvert it. There is no mode of expression, no technique of production that will instantly produce truth or falsehood. There is no *veritas* lens - no lens that provides a "truthful" picture of events. There is *cinéma vérité* and *kino pravda* but no cinematic truth. The engine of uncovering truth is not some special lens or even the unadorned human eye; it is unadorned human *reason*."

"The brain is not a Reality-Recorder. There is no perfect replica of reality inside our brains...Many people believe they have found a way around the eccentricities of the brain by substituting a camera, but this only defers the problem. It does not solve it. Even photographs have to be *perceived*. They have to be *seen*. There is no shortcut around the Cartesian riddle of separating reality from the appearance of reality. There is no shortcut to reality. The brain is all we have."

E:60 producers have used re-enactment since the show's inception in 2007. Producer T. Sean Herbert, whose resume includes CBS News' '60 Minutes', had never shot a re-enactment in 20 years in network news before he came to ESPN. The difference, Herbert noted, is because ESPN, as a sports network, does not have the same standards and practices as a news network.

"It's always a delicate balance," said Herbert. "If you're asking your character to do what they normally do, that's okay. At '60 Minutes' we could have a generic walking shot, or a shot behind the desk or typing at a keyboard - something the character had done a gazillion times and might do that day.

"Conversely if you took someone to the middle of a desert, or to a concrete bunker - anything that didn't happen or never happened and is unnatural - that might be pushing the boundaries.

"Re-creating is okay - you duplicate what they do, whereas, creating is asking them to do what they haven't done before. Staging is not organic, and in my mind it's not real or authentic."

Herbert cited his piece last fall on Preston Plevretes, a college football player who nearly died from Second Impact Syndrome. It included specialty shots of Plevretes as he held a football and wore his letterman's jacket, and of his mother as she peered at a pre-injury photo of him.



“Would they normally do those things - not necessarily,” Herbert said. “But I was in her foyer at her home so I was comfortable asking them - to have him wear the clothes he wore, and to have him hold a football he actually owns, and to have her at the bottom of a grand staircase holding the photo in her arms.”

Producer Lisa Binns, who also worked for ‘60 Minutes’, recalled her piece on Andre Lampkin, a Texas football player whose legs were amputated as a result of bacterial meningitis. She re-enacted the night he became ill with POV shots of Lampkin in the shower, at the refrigerator, and falling down.

Andre Lampkin's Track Return - ESPN Video



“It falls in line with what this show tries to do - you might see something like that in a movie,” Binns said. “As long as the viewer is aware that it’s not actual video and not altering or taking license with the facts.

“A purist would say any re-creation is too much. The rule of thumb at other networks was ‘oh yeah, that’s a great story, but how can you tell it visually?’ And if you couldn’t you might pass on the story. But considering how the medium has evolved, if a story should be told, you should be able to use visual tools that are out there.

“A producer might say to a character ‘show me what you were doing’ and somebody might perceive that as acting. But a print reporter would do the same thing. What’s wrong with asking them to emote and show what they did? What’s the difference?”

Producer David Salerno re-enacted a scene in his piece on running back Maurice Jones-Drew last fall. He shot Jones-Drew under a showerhead, with water cascading over his head.

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“It wasn’t a special shower - he wasn’t pretending anything - he was in a contemplative mode,” Salerno said. “It wasn’t overt - it didn’t feel emotionally over the top to me. In the Burnham piece I wouldn’t have chosen to have the mother bang on the door. I like to be more subtle and not as overt.”

Neither re-enactment nor specialty shots are addressed in ESPN’s new Editorial Guidelines for Standards and Practices, although “the intention is to continually grow the documents - they may be something to consider at some point,” Senior Vice-President/Director of News Vince Doria wrote in an e-mail.

“I’ve never been comfortable with re-creations in pieces that are clearly investigative, or examples of enterprise journalism,” Doria continued. “The credibility of that sort of work relies heavily on accurate reporting and hard facts. The interjection of actors re-creating a scene clearly can increase the dramatic impact of a piece, but too often, I think, may over-dramatize the facts in ways that don’t reflect accurately what actually occurred.”

Re-enactments and specialty shots in the Burnham piece were scrutinized, Tennant said, because the principals acted them out, they looked real, and the subject - clinical depression - is sensitive.

“Every story gets treated differently,” Tennant said. “This subject matter was very sensitive, but the producer argued that the family was comfortable with it. At no point when we watched it did anybody question the integrity of the piece.”

In the end, four of Khodabakhshian’s dummy shots were approved. The first three are in a ‘falling’ sequence that includes a shot of Burnham looking upward and opening his mouth as if to scream. In the fourth and final, the dummy floats upward, to symbolize Burnham’s recovery.

“To me it’s more about doing it tastefully cinematic and dramatically than just doing it to have video,” Khodabakhshian said. “I don’t think there are any rules beyond not offending the family or doing something they wouldn’t be on board with.”

posted by Steve Marantz, February 14, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [2:59 PM](#)

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2011

Re-enactment and Specialty: Trust and Imagination



Unbreakable

from E60 PRO

12:01 |



[Unbreakable](#) from [E60](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Part 1

E:60 producer Martin Khodabakhshian set out last year to make “Unbreakable”, a feature on Jordan Burnham, a 21-year-old who survived a suicide attempt in the throes of depression.

But there were no photos, or video, of Burnham’s attempt, which had occurred in 2007. Nor were there photos or video of the events that had led up to it.

Khodabakhshian had a few photos of Burnham as a high school golfer and pitcher at Upper Merion High, near Philadelphia. He had video of his high school graduation, and of him, at 21, speaking to incoming freshman at the University of Miami. He had video shot by Burnham’s family during his rehab, and some film from local media.

But the heart of the story - Burnham’s protracted descent into alcohol and depression and his plunge from a ninth-floor bedroom window - was bereft of actual images.

“How do you illustrate a battle with depression?”

Khodabakhshian asked himself.

“How do you represent the fall - and make people feel what it’s like to fall out of a ninth-story window? How do you tell about the moment when his father found him under the window? Or the moment his father confronted him with a duffel bag of alcohol - the straw that broke the camel’s back? How do you play that out beyond the family telling you about it on camera?”

Thus began an effort that pushed the creative and journalistic envelope, even for E:60, which prides itself on bold storytelling.

A producer relies on an array of storytelling tools - among them re-enactment and the B roll ‘specialty’ shot.

Re-enactment is a literal interpretation of something that happened in the past, but was not filmed. A specialty shot is a subjective or metaphorical interpretation. Khodabakhshian used both, in unusual fashion.

Typically, actors are in re-enactments, because the protagonists are deceased or unavailable. But Khodabakhshian made his with the actual characters - Burnham, his father and mother - with their full cooperation.

“The biggest thing to me was building trust with the family members,” Khodabakhshian said.

Re-enacted scenes included Burnham’s father laying a duffel bag of liquor at his feet, Burnham’s sullen reaction and subsequent locking and barricading of his bedroom door, and his mother’s anguished pounding on it.

Khodabakhshian asked Burnham to fall backward, as if he were dropping out of a window, into the arms of the production crew.

“Open your eyes and mouth like you just jumped,” he directed Burnham.

Burnham complied. Khodabakhshian understood that Burnham, now a motivational speaker, perceived the E:60 piece as a potential tool. Burnham knew the more powerful the image, the greater the impact on an audience.

In one specialty shot Burnham dropped a beer bottle in a stairwell and watched it shatter at his feet. Then he dropped two. Then nine.

“We wanted to create a theme of falling,” said Khodabakhshian.

In another specialty shot, Burnham pushed athletic trophies - made for the scene - out the window. As they toppled, the trophies, labeled with “pain” and “hopeless” and “empty”, were shot in slow

motion by a Phantom camera.

A \$200 flip-cam was protected in bubble wrap, with the lens cap open, and tossed out of the window.

"We got two incredible shots spiraling downward, in real time," Khodabakhshian said.

"I shot the ground where he landed at several angles. I put the lip of the lens at grass level - it felt ominous. I shot tilt-downs from the building to show how high it was. I shot POV shots from outside the window."

Exploding golf balls were shot, at Burnham's feet, to symbolize how depression had detached him from the sport.

One scene combined re-enactment and a specialty shot. It depicted Burnham's father arriving at the site of the suicide plunge, moments after it occurred. In reality Burnham's crumpled body was rushed to a hospital as he clung to life. In Khodabakhshian's version, the father sat down next to his son and hugged him.

Khodabakhshian directed:

"Mr. Burnham, can you remember how you felt when you saw your son on the ground? Can you do that face?"

"One more time?"

"Can you go up to him and put your arms around him?"

"Jordan, close your eyes. Earl, keep yours open."

"Jordan, open yours and Earl, close yours."

"Both open your eyes."

"Both close them."

The scene, shot in muted colors to impute starkness and cold, connected to old footage shot when Burnham, barely able to walk, received his high school diploma, and hobbled toward his father.

"You can't be afraid to take those educated risks after you build trust," Khodabakhshian said. "Explain to them what you're doing. Don't rely on spontaneity. You need precise direction, and you need to control the situation where you can gauge how much is enough."

A fine line - between enough and too much - is discussed in Part 2.

posted by Steve Marantz, February 9, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [2:19 PM](#)

Reactions: [funny \(0\)](#) [interesting \(0\)](#) [cool \(0\)](#)

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2010

Josiah T-Shirts



Our little hero Josiah, who has progeria--and loves to play baseball, has created such a buzz around the country since the airing of his story on E:60!! There has been such interest in the t-shirts and so many requests from college to major league teams, and just those who want to be a part of his story!

Therefore, we are going to do another t-shirt and hat sale that will go nationwide and also be included within the ESPN websites!! Proceeds will benefit Josiah and his family!! Sizes are listed below and

hats will have Velcro backs.

If you are interested, please read all info below and get your order in immediately! Orders will only be taken until December 2. We cannot accept orders after that date.

T-shirts—
\$12.00 S-XL
\$13.50 XXL & XXXL
\$14.50 XXXXL
Hats-\$12.00

If you cannot pickup your order at the Hegins Ambulance building on December 16 from 6pm-8pm, you will need to include shipping charges as follows:

1-9 items--\$4.95
10-30 items--9.95
31-100 items--14.95

Checks or money orders should be made out to:

Jen Bordner
c/o Josiah Viera
63 Schwartz Road
Hegins, PA 17938

****PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND SIZES OF TEES, OR QUANTITY OF HATS.****

Posted by [E:60](#) at [12:33 PM](#)

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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Anatomy of Chemistry



Josiah plays baseball with the crew.

Last spring reporter Tom Rinaldi was about to leave home to work on an E:60 feature. Before he left, Rinaldi explained to his 6-year-old son, Jack, about Josiah Viera, also 6, who has a rare disease and a love of baseball.

“Wait,” Jack said.

The little boy ran to his room and returned with a book about how Babe Ruth “saved” baseball.

“Give it to him.”

By the time Rinaldi arrived at Hegins, Pa., senior producer Ben Houser was already there, with a plan.

Josiah suffers from Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria syndrome, which causes accelerated aging in children, and has a life expectancy of eight to 13 years. He is 27 inches tall and weighs 15 ½ pounds, and has a squeak of a voice, infectious smile, and a spirit buoyant and courageous.

But like any 6-year-old, Josiah doesn’t necessarily talk to suit producers or reporters. After an initial meeting with Josiah and his mother, Jennifer, Houser knew a conventional interview would not work. He conferred with Rinaldi.

“He just loves baseball,” Houser said.

“Let’s talk to him while he’s hitting or throwing,” Rinaldi said. When Rinaldi met Josiah he handed him his son’s book about Babe Ruth. Maybe chemistry can’t save Josiah, but it can tell his tale. The two clicked and the story took off.

Houser shot the interviews outdoors while Josiah swung a bat or threw a ball. In one shot, Rinaldi says, “Tom pitches, Josiah crushes it over his head! Oooh!” To which Josiah says, “That is gone!” Rinaldi echoes, “That is gone.”

One morning Houser asked Josiah to sit on a bench holding his bat.

“No.”

“Just a few shots.”

“No. I just want to play baseball.”

Houser and Rinaldi discovered Josiah Time, which meant a lot of throwing and hitting. Passion indulged, Josiah agreed to the specialty shots Houser wanted.

‘[Josiah’s Time](#)’

became a metaphor on which to hang the story - a boy whose time is limited playing a game without time. Houser had seen the BBC series, “Life”, which features visual representations of the passage of time, such as flowers blooming and growing. He decided to shoot Josiah’s birthday party, an obvious marker.

“Time was one thing you could definitely say he has less of than me or you,” Houser said.

“He’s not going to graduate high school or get married or have the things we have. That’s what gives meaning to the moments he has - why baseball is so important to him.”

Rinaldi’s rapport with Josiah enabled him to ask Josiah what heaven is. Josiah trusted Rinaldi enough to answer.

“It’s God.” He pointed skyward. “Heaven.”

“And what do you think heaven looks like?”

“Jesus.”

Houser and Rinaldi collaborated on the writing, though Houser credits Rinaldi with the memorable final track, set over images of Josiah slapping hands with the enraptured who lined the field to watch him: “It would be easy to say the scene was timeless. But really, it wasn’t. It was Josiah’s time.”

Said Rinaldi: “It seemed time was a natural theme. Ben and the editor who shaped the piece, Matt McCormick, enabled me to write more ethereal tracks because they could visualize them.”



Ben Houser at Josiah’s 6th birthday party



Josiah with DP Thom Stukas

Houser’s initial meeting with Josiah took place after he had played his first game for the Tri-Valley White Sox. He assigned two

cameras to Josiah’s second game - one to cover the crowds and people, the other dedicated to Josiah.

“It went wherever he went - running to first, scoring, sitting in the dugout,” Houser recalled. “He would actually push the camera out of the way, like we were paparazzi. He got comfortable with us.”

One camera covered Josiah’s third game, but for his fourth and final game Houser again had two cameras, plus a mini-cam he operated. In addition, Houser’s wife, Christina, shot still photos. Tom Stukas, director of photography, and shooter Jim Grieco, were in

position when Josiah reached base, and danced for joy.

The story aired on November 9. Three days later Josiah, with his entourage, came to the ESPN campus. Josiah sat on the shoulders of E:60



Josiah meets Chargers TE Antonio Gates

executive producer Andy Tennant, showed off his Ryan Howard swing for “Outside the Lines”, high-fived network execs and another visitor, Chargers tight end Antonio Gates, and ran around the tables in the café, as carefree as any six-year-old.

Those touched by Josiah’s story include six-year-old Jack Rinaldi and his three-year-old sister Tess.

“They have watched it every day since it aired - several times a day,” said Jack and Tess’ father. “They feel a connection to Josiah even though they never met him. It’s wonderful.”

(posted by Steve Marantz, November 16, 2010)

Posted by [E:60](#) at [11:35 AM](#)

Reactions: funny (0) interesting (0) cool (0)

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