

Production Notes

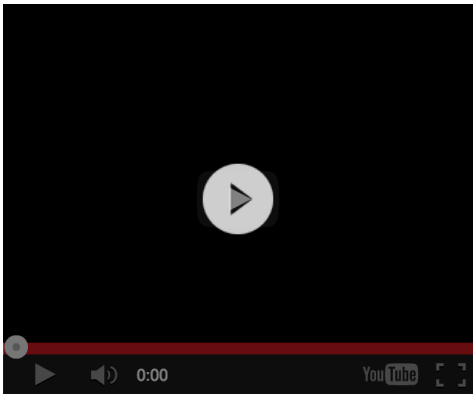
Journals and notes from the production staff of E:60.



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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

In the Moment



Producer Dave Salerno was under pressure for his August piece on Tulsa quarterback G.J. Kinne. Another story was cancelled at the 11th hour, and Salerno was asked to pull off a tight turnaround.

Kinne’s story involved his father Gary Kinne, his former coach at Canton High School in Texas. In 2005 a disgruntled father of another player confronted Gary at the high school and shot him in the stomach. He was rushed into emergency surgery, and a police officer told G.J. that his father had died. But he hadn’t.

Salerno moved into production mode without a script in mind. He interviewed G.J, his mother, another coach, and Gary, and elicited detailed and emotional accounts of the shooting and aftermath.

In edit he had two choices.

One was to use Gary’s voice in the re-telling of the incident. Another was to create a “reveal” - an editing technique in which

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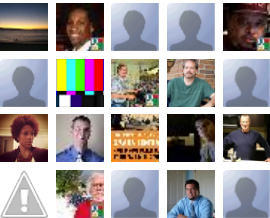
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crucial information is withheld until the middle or end for a surprise. In this version, the reveal would be Gary's survival. Reveals are desirable for their dramatic tension.

E:60 has used reveals in stories about retired NFL-er Marvin Harrison, MMA fighter and bank robber Lee Murray, double-amputee sprinter Oscar Pistorius, and brain-damaged college football player Preston Plevretes.

An effective reveal requires interviews that stay in the moment, meaning they describe action without giving away the outcome of that action. The subject knows the outcome, but is transported back in time to when he or she did not.

"I knew there were things we had to hit," Salerno recalled. "I wanted to go into detail and build up the events of that day."

Salerno and reporter Lisa Salters managed to elicit G.J.'s description - six years after the fact - in the moment. In edit, Salerno went with the reveal because "we had the sound to support it."

At the top, when reporter Salters ask G.J. for his thoughts at the time of the shooting, he says "I'll never see my Dad again. He'll never get to coach me again. He'll never get to do the things that Dads do because someone had taken that from him."

The first hint of Gary's survival comes at about eight-and-a-half minutes into the piece. Gary doesn't speak until 9:10 - a powerful and uplifting moment for those unfamiliar with Kinne's story.

The reveal proved persuasive at the E:60 screening and became a segment titled, "Back From the Dead".

In retrospect, Salerno credited the interviews.

"With material like that it's much easier to hold the reveal," he said. "Sometimes you can do it, and sometimes you can't. In theory it's great but in practice it's more difficult to pull off."

posted by Steve Marantz on September 22, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [12:30 PM](#)

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

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2011

Finding Emotion



By the time producer Hillary Horgan caught up with the 18-year-old Coppola triplets in December 2010 their unusual story was well along. Brandon Coppola had fractured a cervical vertebra in a 2008 scrimmage that ended his football career. Jared Coppola had suffered the same injury in a 2009 practice, and was in a wheelchair.

The third brother, Tyler, was the star running back of St. John's Prep of Danvers, Ma. He was "Running for Three", as St. John's went into the state championship Super Bowl at Gillette Stadium.

Horgan had two challenges. Her story had three main characters, and two (Tyler and Brandon) are identical. She had to minimize confusion to viewers.

"Typically in a feature we only put name fonts to identify a person one time - the first time they show up on the screen," Horgan said. "But in this case, to alleviate any confusion, we put name fonts up each time a triplet was on the screen."

Problem solved.



The second challenge was more difficult. In their interviews with E:60, the triplets and their parents had a flat affect. This may have been because they had ample time - and local media coverage - to move beyond the initial trauma. Or it may simply have reflected their personalities and priorities.

"The parents, Dawn and Skip, never really got emotional in order to stay strong for the family," Horgan said. "They never felt sorry for themselves or their situation. They always stayed positive. The children saw this and did the same.

"I give them a lot of credit, because I think the positive attitude helped Jared to continue to work as hard as he has in order to one day walk again."

A flat affect is okay for people, but not for stories. Horgan had to find a way to tell what in essence was a dramatic story - of three brothers tied to a cruel fate - without emotion from the main characters.

She took two approaches. First, to put viewers 'in the moment' as the triplets and parents experienced the injuries and aftermath. Second, to emphasize the close bond of the triplets, with photos and video from their infancy and youth.

Especially powerful were images of Tyler and Brandon helping Jared with his rehab. The defining image came as Tyler carried Jared up a flight of stairs, to the second-floor trophy room at St. John's Prep, where Horgan shot their interviews.

"The shot happened by chance," Horgan said. "There was no elevator and no way to get Jared up the stairs without someone carrying him up. Without even giving it a thought, the boys said 'no problem, we can carry him up, we do it all the time'. So when we were ready for Jared, I asked one of my camera men to get in position and shoot them going up the stairs."

The special brotherhood of triplets takes over the story. There is Jared, on a walker, making his way to the center of a football field, with Brandon and Tyler at his side.

At Tyler's final high school game, Horgan has her cameras on Brandon and Jared, riding the team bus, watching from the sidelines.

Horgan wraps it with a specialty shot, with Jared between his two brothers, arms entwined, standing tall, about to head off to three different colleges.

By that time it's hard not to cheer - and feel a lump in the throat - for the Coppola triplets.

Posted by Steve Marantz on August 17, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [10:58 AM](#)

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

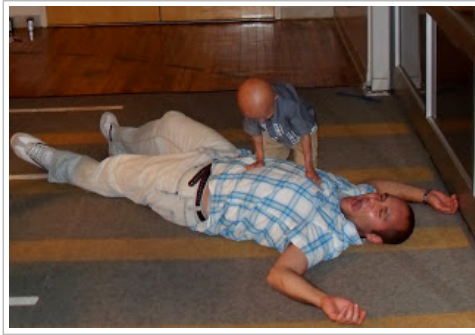
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Labels: [coppola football](#), [e:60](#), [e60](#), [paralyzed](#), [triplets](#)

MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2011

Comfort Zone



Production assistant Toby Hershkowitz writhed on the floor while a frail 7-year-old boy twisted his arm and stomped on his chest.

E: 60 meets WWE? Not exactly.

The vignette occurred July 7 at the E:60 roundtable shoot in midtown Manhattan, as producers, talent and film crew relaxed between segments.

By way of explanation, later, Hershkowitz, 26, said, "I still consider myself a kid."

But that's only part of it.

Rewind to last fall when E:60 ran a story about the little boy fastened onto Hershkowitz.

Josiah Viera suffers from Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria syndrome, which causes accelerated aging in children, and has a life expectancy of eight to 13 years.

Baseball, a sport without a clock, is Josiah's passion. The story, "Josiah's Time", with footage of his first Little League game in Hedges, Pa., touched viewers near and far, and garnered an Emmy nomination. For E:60's summer lineup 2011, executive producer Andy Tennant proposed a show of Emmy-nominated features. Feature Producer Ben Houser, who produced "Josiah's Time", suggested that the boy and his mother sit in on the roundtable - a simulation of a news meeting in which producers and reporters discuss the news value, characters and themes of stories. The idea was to use the roundtable to update Josiah's story.

That's where Hershkowitz, who produces the roundtable, came in. When Houser arrived with Josiah, and his mother, Jennifer, Hershkowitz called for a break.

Houser introduced Josiah to Hershkowitz. They shook hands - and Hershkowitz took note.

"An incredibly firm handshake for a 25-pound kid," Hershkowitz recalled. "A lot of kids are shy whether they have issues or not. He was not shy."

Josiah took a shine to



Hershkowitz. He told the producer that he planned to go to a park to play baseball after the roundtable.

"You can come and be on my team."

Soon enough, Josiah and Hershkowitz were on the floor in their best WWE imitation. Hershkowitz was not entirely surprised - though not a father he has young cousins and he babysat in his younger days.

"I love being around kids and I usually have a pretty good rapport with kids," Hershkowitz said, later. "I still consider myself a kid. Anytime I refer to myself in conversation I probably use the word 'kid' more than I use the word 'man' because that's just how I feel. I don't mind rolling around on the floor and pretending to play dead when he punches me in the chest. It's as much fun for me as for him."

But behind Hershkowitz's playfulness was a professional calculation. In a few minutes Josiah would be on camera.

"We've had guests at the roundtable before - it's always important to let them know what we're trying to accomplish and to make them feel comfortable," Hershkowitz said.

"He was in a room full of adults and I could tell he wanted to play - little kids just want to run around and play all the time. And I'm probably among the goofiest most childish people on this show so I was a good candidate to play and make him feel comfortable."

Indeed, Josiah and his mother appeared relaxed when the cameras rolled. At the table - actually a rectangle - were Tennant, Houser, coordinating producer Michael Baltierra, and reporters Rachel Nichols, Chris Connolly, and Jeremy Schaap.

Jennifer told about wondrous events, about gifts from Terrell Owens, a trip to Cameron Indoor Stadium at Duke, the 15-games Josiah played in little league, the Harlem Globetrotters' show at his elementary school, and about countless requests for autographs. Josiah, in his squeak of a voice, talked of the batting glove and bat he received from Ryan Howard.

Neither mentioned the several strokes he has suffered in the past year, or the increased fragility of his health. Those demons will return soon enough. But not now - not with Josiah feeling chipper and surrounded by a roomful of adults and cameras who adored him.

The group arose from the table. Tennant tossed a plastic ball and Josiah swung a thin wooden bat. The ball soared over Tennant's head and caromed off a wall. Another pitch came back on a line at Tennant's face. Then Josiah ran around the table. The cameras got all of it.

Later, after Josiah, his mother, and Houser departed, to eventually visit Diane Sawyer at the set of 'World News Tonight', Hershkowitz pondered the edit.



"This is a situation where they will let the roundtable go a little longer - maybe two to 2 ½ minutes," he said. "Because it's easy to feel for this kid - but

maybe tough to connect to him on a personal level because of the unique situation facing him. That's what the roundtable does. It lets us connect with him just as a person and forget for a minute that he's a little kid with this terrible disease. It lets us see him just as a little kid who loves to have fun and play baseball and interact with adults the same way other kids do. I hope we can get that across."

Posted by Steve Marantz on August 15, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [10:54 AM](#)

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

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MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 2011

E:60 Jib and Boom

For two days last August E:60 producer Ben Houser followed Mike Reeder around two of the lesser-known of the five courses at St. Andrews in Scotland. On the third day Houser arose well before dawn. Reeder, 63, of Franklin, Tennessee, was about to become the first

wheelchair golfer to play the Old Course, the ancestral home of golf, one of the most iconic locations in all of sport.

Reeder had lost both of his legs below in the knee in 1970, in a mortar explosion, while serving as a medic in Vietnam. He took up golf in 1988, shot par at his home course in 2001, and dreamed of playing St.

Andrews with his golf buddy, Mike Bilbrey.

But Bilbrey never made it - cancer took him in 2009. Before he died he asked Reeder to spread his ashes on the Old Course. Reeder made the journey in August 2010, funded by the Challenged Athletes Foundation. Which is why Houser found himself, with a local Scotsman, assembling a jib camera near the Swilcan Bridge - the most iconic landmark at St. Andrews - before sunrise.



The jib, which reaches 36 feet at full extension, was essential to Houser's game plan.

"The jib gives you a different perspective," Houser said. "It allows you to see the majestic nature of that course, and also gives you very smooth movement."

At sunrise, when Reeder rolled across the fairway in his wheelchair, the jib was ready, as were Houser's two other cameras.

"We waited for the sun to come up on the horizon, so that it framed our shot," Houser said. "It was between the bridge and Reeder as he wheeled toward the bridge. When he was on the bridge we had this big jib overhead."

The sunrise shot in "Dead Solid Perfect" speaks for itself, for sheer beauty.

But the emotional climax came later in the day, after Reeder teed off on the 14th hole. He climbed out of his golf cart, accompanied by his wife, and carried Bilbrey's ashes to the sand trap known as Hell Bunker. Houser's main shooter positioned at the edge of the bunker, while Houser held a second camera from another angle.

As Reeder spread the ashes over the sand, and bid farewell to his friend, he was seized with grief. When he walked away from the bunker, he sobbed. Houser got it all.

"A guy with a boom mike was standing there right over top of him - but out of the frame so you can't see him," Houser said.

From the Old Course to your screen, another E:60 trail of tears.

"What you saw was real," said Houser. "Witnessing it, obviously not knowing Mike Bilbrey, and only knowing Reeder for a short time, to have him open up his world and allow ESPN to document what happened, to be a fly on the wall as he's doing that, takes a lot of trust. I was thinking from a producer's standpoint, what an amazing moment to capture. Most of the time you don't have people open up the most intimate things in their life."

"Lots of times a story will just cover that moment with a track, 'oh, and he spread the ashes'. Or we'll do a recreation or cover it with a photo. But we literally had it. The way it happened is the way you saw it."

Reeder emoted for E:60, Houser suspected, because he had come to know Houser and his crew in the two days before he played the Old Course.

On the second day, Houser recalled, one of the cameras had moved too close to Reeder as he hit a tee shot.

"Hey, you got a little close that time," Reeder said.

That moment, Houser later realized, was crucial in establishing rapport and trust.

"By Day 3 he had played 36 holes with us," Houser said. "He knew we weren't going to talk or interrupt his golf game. He had a comfort level with us."

Posted by Steve Marantz, August 1, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [10:38 AM](#)

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

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THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2011

E:60 Paco Rodriguez (subtitled)

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On Sunday, November 22, 2009, boxer Francisco “Paco” Rodriguez was declared brain dead two days after collapsing in the ring following a fight in Philadelphia. Hours later, his family made the decision to donate Paco’s organs and in turn revitalized the lives of five others. One of the recipients, 25 year old Meghan Kingsley had been diagnosed nine years earlier with a condition known as Neurofibromatosis Type 2 . In 2009, Kingsley participated in a clinical trial to attempt to reduce the growth of the benign tumors in her brain and spine, but the medication shut down her liver, leaving her in dire need of a transplant. Meghan, like many NF2 patients has suffered a loss of hearing. In order to serve the Neurofibromatosis community, we have produced a version of E:60 Hero - The Paco Rodriguez story” with subtitles.

Posted by [E:60](#) at [2:57 PM](#)

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

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MONDAY, MAY 23, 2011

Chameleon: Going Undercover

This is the story of two E:60 producers - one who conceived and plotted “Cockfighting Undercover” and one who shot it. Their names are changed here to safeguard their identities.

The lead producer, Claude, had read about illegal underground cockfighting in Texas. The ‘sport’ features duels to the death, with rooster claws outfitted in three-inch blades that produce a bloody and gruesome result within a few minutes. Up to 20 matches take place, before crowds of 200 to 300, who wager on the outcomes.

Claude reached out to the Humane Society, which investigates and exposes cockfighting. The Humane Society agreed to take an E:60 producer undercover to shoot an underground cockfight. But the Humane Society did not want the typical producer type - urbane and sophisticated.

"Since cockfighting in Texas is largely Hispanic and rural they needed someone who kind of fits the bill," said Claude.

That's where Earl came in - he had The Look. Claude asked Earl if he were game, so to speak.

"I'd like to be part of it," Earl said.

Earl's photo was sent to the Humane Society and he was approved. Claude and Earl met with Humane Society officials in Texas and agreed on a plan. Earl would accompany an undercover informant for the Humane Society, as well as the informant's undercover informant. They would attend an illegal cockfight just outside Gunter, Texas, (population 1,100), about an hour north of Dallas, on the morning of April 16. Both Earl and the informant for the Humane Society would be fitted with hidden cameras.

Dangers were discussed. Cockfights attract a rough crowd.

If the hidden cameras were exposed anything might happen.

Earl had a moment of reckoning.

"If you get caught doing something like this at the very least you are going to get the crap kicked out of you," he told himself. "Who knows what else could happen."

Details were ironed out. Earl would be outfitted with a buttonhole camera connected to a wire that ran down his leg to a receiver strapped inside one of his boots. Prior to the cockfight he practiced with the buttonhole camera - to learn its range. He practiced natural movement. Claude told him, "Be comfortable with the equipment."

Earl also watched footage of previous undercover forays, in order to dress to blend with the crowd.

Early on April 16 Earl met with Claude.

"If you don't feel safe you don't have to go through with this," Claude said. "Are you sure you want to do this?"

Earl nodded - this was his Rambo moment.

Soon he joined the two informants at a parking lot in Gunter and met with a surprise. Earl had expected to be driven to the cockfight in a vehicle owned by one of the informants. Instead, a fourth man pulled up, with roosters in his car.

"Right then you realize that going undercover things can change in a heartbeat and you have to react," Earl recalled.

Without his own vehicle, Earl knew, there would be no getaway if something went wrong. He considered aborting the mission, and then climbed into the vehicle.

"Now we were all in," Earl recalled.

The car with Earl and the informants made its way over flat country roads. Claude and his crew followed at a distance, guided by text messages from Earl. When Earl's car turned onto a dirt road he sensed it was near to the 'arena'. He texted Claude: "Don't come down this dirt road - I think we're close."

Indeed, Earl's car was the first to arrive, and each passenger paid \$20 for admission. Soon other customers filed in and circled the ring, a 15x35 rectangle covered in plywood.

As a new face, Earl felt eyes upon him, and his stomach knotted in tension. Worse, the receiver tucked inside his boot dug into his foot, but he dared not stoop down to adjust it, and he dared not limp. The promoter came through the crowd and introduced himself. Again, Earl tensed, because if the promoter had patted down his boot he would have discovered the receiver.

The promoter spoke in Spanish to Earl, who does not speak Spanish.

"I just shook his hand, gave him a nod and smile, and didn't say anything," Earl said.

The others passed a few words with the promoter, and he moved on to the next group.

"Did I just pass the test?" Earl asked himself. "I hope I did."

Just before the cockfights began Earl found a quiet spot and turned on his camera.

"I let it go from that point until it was full," he said. "I was already not part of this so I didn't want to stick out anymore by constantly going behind trees or trucks to check the device so I just let it go."

Earl went to work.

"You find a spot and stand there and make sure nothing is obstructing you and you stand there for the entire fight," he said.

"I just tried to fit in by seeming enthusiastic. The whole thing is to fit in like a chameleon."

During the fights, with attention on the birds, Earl found that his tension subsided. Between fights Earl moved through the crowd. He was approached by beer and food vendors, and by rooster owners who showed off their vanquished combatants, with blood dripping from slit

necks.

"Sorry, sorry - too bad," Earl said, and hoped that he had positioned his camera to capture the scene. He also hoped that his face did not reveal his revulsion.

"One thing that struck me was when a bird got sliced and was dying fairly quickly, the owner took almost as much pride as when they won," Earl recalled. "They were showing that off. That was disturbing. Be disappointed. Be upset. But don't be showing it off."

His hidden receiver had about two hours capacity. But the fights went on for six hours, during which 15 roosters died. At one point four toughs dressed like "Latino gang bangers" arrived.

"I made sure never to make eye contact with them," Earl said.

After the last bout Earl and his group filed out with the crowd and drove off the property.

"That's when I took a deep breath," Earl recalled. "My next deep breath didn't come until I was out of that vehicle and back with my crew and lead producer."

posted by Steve Marantz, May 23, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [3:48 PM](#)

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

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011

Empathy and Wow!

Paco Rodriguez, a 24-year-old boxer, died on November 22, 2009, from injuries sustained in a Philadelphia ring. Shortly thereafter, his heart, lungs, kidneys, pancreas and liver were transplanted to five recipients. The New York Times reported Rodriguez' organ donations in December. In February 2010, E:60 requested permission from Gift of Life, a Philadelphia-based group that arranged the organ donations, to report on four of the recipients. (The fifth was an "uncle" of Rodriguez, who got a kidney) Permission was granted in July.

Producers Vin Cannamela and Frank Saraceno began the work. Cannamela went to Philadelphia to meet with the recipients, whose names were not yet public. It was a task to which Cannamela was sensitive. He was born with a congenital heart condition and underwent open-heart surgery when he was six.

"To some small degree I had empathy for what these people had been going through," Cannamela said. "But I also felt sympathy for what they dealt with. I did not equate my situation with theirs.

"Mine was a condition that could be repaired - my life wasn't in danger. Surgery certainly improved my life, but it wasn't a thing where I would have died."

Saraceno went to Chicago to meet with Rodriguez' family: his widow Sonia; infant daughter Ginette, brother Alex, mother Maria and father Evaristo. By that time Sonia had exchanged letters with the four recipients - all wanted to meet with her.

The meeting, underwritten by E:60, was arranged for December 1 in Chicago, in front of E:60 cameras. One recipient balked, and then consented.

Cannamela and Saraceno set up the meeting at the offices of Gift of Hope, an organ-donation group in suburban Chicago. They wanted it to be tasteful, genuine and powerful.

"How could we shoot this and have it be authentic?" Saraceno asked himself.

"You only have one shot at this moment, and if something goes wrong... a number of things could go wrong... a mike cuts out... a wrong button... everything has to be letter perfect."

A plan took shape. They decided to limit the initial meeting - too many faces could confuse viewers. The widow, daughter, brother, and mother were chosen to represent the family. The mother was chosen because of her desire to meet the heart recipient. Alex, the oldest brother, was chosen to help translate the mother, whose primary language is Spanish. Another question: should the recipients meet the family one-by-one or as a unit?

The four recipients - Alexis Sloan (heart), Ashley Owens (lungs), Meghan Kingsley (liver), and Vicky Davis (kidney, pancreas), had dined together the night before, and had established a rapport, a "sisterhood", as Saraceno called it. The producers decided they should meet the family as a unit.

Four cameras were deployed. The lead shooter, Mike Bollacke, was riveted on the widow, Sonia. A second camera was a "catch-all" for wide shots. A third camera shot at 60 frames per second, providing a slo-mo option. Saraceno had the fourth camera - a mini-cam - with the freedom to roam and fill in the gaps.

Eight microphones were wired to the four family members and four recipients.

As the meeting drew nigh anxiety mounted. The producers worried that the meeting could produce awkward moments. They worried that the one reluctant recipient would back out or not emote. They worried about the equipment.

"I hope nothing happens," Saraceno thought.

Finally it was time.

The recipients filed in, led by Vicky Davis, at 57 the eldest of the four. Davis hugged Sonia and Maria, the mother. Soon everybody hugged everybody, carried up on waves of emotion, awash in tears of joy. Maria buried her head in the chest of Alexis, over the beating heart of her son. It was the money shot, unscripted, and captured by Saraceno's mini-cam.

"It happened so quickly," Saraceno recalled. "The guys were on the other side. I was able to swing around and get the shot they couldn't get to."

Then Sonia placed the hand of her 11-month-old daughter on the chest of Alexis. At that instant Cannamela felt vindicated.

"This is going to be good," he told himself.

In time Cannamela sent in three more family members - father Evaristo, brother Tito, and "uncle", Ramon, who received a kidney. Then he sent in the four guests of the recipients, who had accompanied them on the trip. Among the guests was Sharon Kingsley, the mother of the liver recipient, Meghan. Sharon hugged Maria and whispered in her ear. Later, family and recipients lingered over a display of memorabilia from the boxing career of Paco Rodriguez, and chatted, while the cameras stayed on.

When it was over, and they had a moment alone, Cannamela and Saraceno took a deep breath and looked at one another.

"Wow!"

The shoot had exceeded their hopes.

"As much as you think you might know what it's like to be in that type of setting, I think we were just blown away," recalled Cannamela.

"You can't script that. You could try - we try to control as much as we can - but when these things happen that you couldn't even dream of, and are so natural and organic and come from the heart - and that's what our cameras are there to capture - that was amazing.

"And you are feeling for these people as you see this happen. You've got to stay as unemotional as you can but you can't help but feel for these people."

Said Saraceno: "It's rare when you're in the middle of a story when you have to check your emotions so you can think clearly. Watching it all come together was for me very powerful."

Two months later, in edit, Cannamela and Saraceno experienced another - and unexpected - moment of wonder and triumph. When they queued up Sharon Kingsley's hug of Maria, they heard what the mother of the recipient whispered to the mother of the donor:

"From one mother to another, nobody could understand it but yourself. But I thank you for the gift that you've given us, because without him, she wouldn't be alive, either."

Again, the producers looked at one another.

“Wow!”

(posted by Steve Marantz, April 27, 2011)

Posted by [E:60](#) at [12:48 PM](#)

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

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