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Behind the scenes of MLB's Yankees championship video (cont.)

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By Kyle Stack, Special to SI.com

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Jonathon Laureano, Editor

Laureano is one of the editors who will be in regular contact with Potocki. From the start of the Oct. 16 meeting, Laureano knows his role: he's editing Game 3 of the World Series. It's a job that requires him to dig through hours of visual and audio footage -- all for an 8-10 minute piece.

Since he has a limited amount of time in which to accentuate his game's storylines, Laureano knows he must capture the viewer's attention from the opening moment.

"I prefer a dramatic piece of music, something cinematic [to open my game]," Laureano says. "I like to use a lot of strings and xylophones and marimbas. A soothing, anticipatory type of music."

Of course, it's paramount that he tell the game's story, to emphasize the emotion and intensity running through the contest.

"I love close-up shots of guys' faces, their reactions," Laureano notes. "The shots that you can get what they're feeling from their eyes. The FOX cameras are always there to cover what you need, but the storytelling shots are ones that are going to express what the player is going through at that point of the game. When it goes to choosing shots, those are the ones that are going to pay off, when the moment does occur and the audience relives it."

In order to grab those moments and reiterate them during the film, Laureano knows exactly what types of camera angles he wants for any particular situation.

"It comes down to what shot is telling the best story," he says. "I like to use the tight center field angle because what you get is the ball coming out of the pitchers' hand. [The camera] seems to follow the ball right into the catcher's glove. If the batter swings, you get a great reaction. You get the perspective of the pitch, how fast it travels and the little amount of time these guys have to react. That's a good storytelling shot. But you might not want to use the tight center field angle for something like an anticipation shot, if a guy is walking up to the plate in a big spot in the game."

Tom Rome, Director of Photography

Rome is one of the cameramen who shoots the footage that Laureano uses to edit his game. The job requires him to be flexible for travel as well as prepared to tolerate the crudest weather conditions.

"Location equals weather equals travel," Rome explains. "Those things are a big deal. The conditions in which we're going to shoot will change. Last year [in the World Series], we had Games 1 and 2 in a dome in Tampa, Florida. Games 3, 4 and 5 couldn't have been in more tumultuous conditions [in Philadelphia]. It was windy, cold, raining."

After shooting pregame warmups and batting practice -- the goal is to find the shots and players' interactions with each other that editors can use to build suspense for the game -- Rome sets up shop in



Getting the sites and sounds of everything from batting practice to the the emotion in the dugout is important to the final production.

Kyle Stack

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the first or third base camera well. He'll work alongside a producer to ensure he doesn't miss a seminal moment in the game.

"You're in the eye-piece, so I'm shooting with one eye closed," Rome says. "If I'm on the batter and there's a man on third, I know where the play is going to occur. So the batter hits it, but I don't know where the ball goes because it's off screen. I need the producer to tell me if it goes through, if the defender bobbles the ball -- because I'm still on that batter going to first base -- and then the producer says, 'Okay, the play is going home!' then I go back home for the play at the plate."

As is reiterated from Rome (and the rest of the MLB staff), the priority is to tell the game's story. He describes one particular sequence from Game 2 of the Yankees-Tigers ALDS matchup in which he did just that. **Alex Rodriguez** had stepped to the plate in the bottom of the ninth inning, moments away from hitting a game-tying, two-run home run that would become one of the lasting images of the 2009 postseason.

"[Twins manager **Ron** **Gardenhire** takes a knee at the top step of the dugout," Rome says. "He's pulling his hat down and chewing on his fingernails. Now, the distance between him and home plate is roughly 20 feet, so I'm racking focus -- focus is distance -- and I'm on [the] first base [side], probably 100 feet away from Gardenhire. And then A-Rod is 20 feet closer to me than Gardenhire. So I go from Gardenhire up to A-Rod, change the focus and that's a storytelling shot. If you have Gardenhire interviewed at some point and he says 'Well, when A-Rod stepped in we were facing a tough hitter,' that's the shot you're going to use to cover that. It's a connection between Gardenhire, the emotion and A-Rod."

Mary Gaynin, Production Assistant

Once Rome is finished shooting the game, the tapes he used must be digitized for the editors. This is just one of many responsibilities for Gaynin, who has to organize endless hours of footage not just from the postseason. She also must delve through Spring Training and regular season footage, which editors will use to tell the story of how the World Series teams reached the final round.

"The biggest priority is communication and organization amongst us [production assistants]," Gaynin emphasizes. "We use XN, a big hard drive for all of our productions, so that's where all the footage gets stored. Once we start digitizing, we try to label everything. All the tapes have numbers and a tape title."

A week later, on Oct. 23, Gaynin gained some clarification on the footage she needed to begin accumulating for the editors.

"As soon as the Phillies clinched (on Oct. 21), the next day we started gathering all Phillies video from this year," Gaynin says "We wired a ton of players for another show -- The 'Pen -- so we have wireless sound."

Still, she didn't have the same convenience with the ALCS, whose winner wouldn't be determined for another two days.

"It's a huge waiting game," Gaynin admits regarding the uncertainty of the next team for which she must gather footage. "That's the most stressful part of it."

She also works closely with the game loggers, who record all the visual and audio game footage from a row of desks in the Secaucus office.

"For radio calls, we have a dirty feed, a clean feed and a melt," Gaynin says. "The dirty feed has a bug so FOX has it, which we can't use. The clean feed has the same thing without the bug. It used to be that the day after a game, we got the dirty feed and someone had to listen to the entire game for calls. But now we get it streamed in live, so the loggers are getting the quotes as the game is going on. What the melt does is it allows you to see the same play but from a different angle, which gives editors more opportunities to show the shot in the best way they can."

It's Nov. 5, the day after the end of the World Series. The Yankees are champions, and the film's vision is finally clear. It's also due in nine days.

"Now it's our time," Check says of the shift in focus from covering the games to putting all resources behind organizing the film.

Check describes the day around the office as "organized chaos."

"Everybody has their assignments; now we are starting to streamline the editorial [process] and determine exactly what the narrative is," Check says.

An early priority that's popped up is to wrangle some of the more prominent Yankees for pickup interviews, which are sit downs where the players look into a camera and answer scripted questions about their thoughts on the World Series.

"We might have had them in the chair once [during the World Series], but we need them again," Check says. "'How does A-Rod feel after winning his first championship?' 'What's the difference for Jeter and Mo with this championship versus the others?' We want to make sure we have all the necessary voices represented in the show. It's an interesting juxtaposition in that we are still shooting, but we're also editing."

A film crew will follow **CC Sabathia** in the Yankees' Canyon of Heroes parade in lower Manhattan the next day, attaining yet more footage as the MLB staff works tirelessly to deliver the kind of World Series film of which they can be proud.

"It's a massive jigsaw puzzle that you have to put together in a relatively short timeframe," Check says.



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