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DP SETH MELNICK GIVES PANASONIC'S AG-HPX500 SHOULDER-MOUNT, 2/3" P2 HD CAMCORDER ITS FEATURE DEBUT WITH *CHASING THE GREEN*

** Drama Stars William Devane, Jeremy London, Ryan Hurst **

SECAUCUS, NJ (October 24, 2007) – New York City-based Director of Photography Seth Melnick has just completed production on *Chasing the Green*, a full-length feature slated for 2008 release that was shot in its entirety with Panasonic's AG-HPX500 shoulder-mounted, 2/3" P2 HD camcorder. A drama set among ambitious young businessmen, *Chasing* boasts an impressive cast that includes veteran actor William Devane (*24*, *Knots Landing*), Ryan Hurst (*Remember the Titans*) and Jeremy London (*Party of Five*, *7th Heaven*).

Based on a true story, *Chasing* tells the story of two young brothers who become millionaires during the early 1990s. Their ambition and drive lead them into conflict with FTC officials, where an overly zealous bureaucrat (Devane) attempts to destroy their company. The older brother (London) tries to reconcile the current crisis with conflicts in his own relationships, primarily with his girlfriend. An Igolf Production, *Chasing* was directed by Russ Emmanuel with Craig Frankel as executive producer. The project is currently in post-production.



DP Melnick has specialized in HD filmmaking for the past three years, and as an HVX200 and HPX500 owner has shot dozens of features, shorts and music videos in P2 HD. Two of his projects were just submitted to the 2008 Sundance Film Festival: *3rd of July* (short film shot on the HPX500) and *American Standard* (feature shot on the HVX200). His company, the SLM Production Group, an early adopter of the HPX500, rented it to the *Chasing* production, with Melnick hired as DP.

"I was introduced to the HPX500 at NAB 2007, and saw an amazing combination of features in a reasonably-priced camera," Melnick said. "Most notably, I was impressed with the overall P2 workflow, its professional layout and shoulder-mount form factor, its multi-format capabilities including variable frame rates, and the low noise and depth-of-field control that comes with 2/3-inch chips. The CAC (Chromatic Aberration Compensation) function of the lens was paramount because it affords a lower-cost lens option with much of the same optical output of far more expensive glass."



"This camera was ideal for a feature such as *Chasing* as it shoots beautiful 1080 HD with surprisingly high latitude, especially in the highlights, and delivers the color rendition that Panasonic is known for, as well as a workflow that could help us keep up with a hectic 20-day schedule," Melnick continued. "The ability to review shots immediately helped us know when we could move on without doing several takes. That, in combination with the split-screen function of Panasonic's BT-LH2600W



26" LCD monitor, allowed us to match shots more quickly and check reference footage. Also, we also always had the entire shoot on hand if we needed to reference a shot for continuity or technical reasons."

Chasing was shot over four weeks beginning in mid-August. The shoot took place primarily in New Rochelle and White Plains in Westchester County, NY, at the Oyster Bay Golf Course on Long Island, and in a handful of locations in the Bronx, NY.

"We shot approximately 25 hours of footage, taking up approximately 1.5 terabytes, shooting 1080 24p advanced," Melnick noted. "We had four 16GB P2 cards, and with our workflow we never needed to wait for a card."

"On location, I have a documented procedure that is used by my 2nd ACs for offloading the P2 cards and formally logging every step, which has allowed me to shoot close to 2,000 cards and never lose track of one clip," the DP explained. "We shoot with one card in the camera (for features I find this best, although with longer-form projects more than one card can be loaded), and when the card is full we pull it and put a new card in. The full card is put in its case and immediately wrapped in a strip of red tape signifying it needs to be offloaded. The card is taken to the laptop by the loader and inserted into the laptop. The card is copied to two hard drives connected to the laptop via USB. Once offloaded, a visual inspection of randomly chosen clips is done using a P2 viewer to make sure the data transferred properly. All of these actions are logged, and once the footage is on two drives and confirmed visually, the card is taped with green so we know it is now available for use."

"When time allows, the cards are then copied from one of the hard drives to a third hard drive location," said Melnick. "At the end of each day one set of drives went with production, one went with the line producer and one stayed with me so I could review dailies (which is another benefit of P2). At that point a fire couldn't even destroy the footage – this is where P2 is clearly stronger than tape."



"The HPX500 has a significantly greater dynamic range than the HVX200, and I was taken with how well it held the highlights," Melnick said. "During this shoot, after looking at the monitor, I was often surprised at how often we didn't need to gel windows. Highlights seemed to be held until the zebras hit 105%, and we were able to recover detail at 100%."

"The HPX500 is shockingly clean in terms of noise," the DP added. "We tested some underexposed images and were able to recover detail with far less noise than the HVX200, which allowed us to use a greater dynamic range of the camera artistically without worry about noise ruining the shot."

"The camera recreated color beautifully and even very bright, super-saturated colors seemed to hold very well," Melnick continued. "The cine-d and cine-v gamma settings gave the great contrast that so many people have valued in Panasonic cameras beginning with DVX100 series. For *Chasing*, we shot a lot of footage on a golf course, and the greens reproduced by the camera looked truly rich and beautiful."



"The HPX500 is a professionally-built camera," Melnick said. "It sits very nicely on the shoulder and has a good balance with the Fuji lens on it. Being a P2 camera, it is lighter than other shoulder-mount models--and that is a welcome feature. All switches and knobs are well protected against accidental bumps, and all the controls



seem to be where you need and expect them to be.”

The DP had the opportunity to test the green-screen capabilities of the HPX500 on his 3rd of July shoot, directed by Ben Chace. “That film relied extensively on green screen shots, which the HPX500 helped make easier with the 4:2:2 color space and lower noise characteristics,” Melnick said. “The shoot included a taxi driving scene with a composited background, war footage composited with Iraq backgrounds with multiple elements, and most notably, a 360-degree green-screen shot with a dinner table in the center - it was this shot that people were talking about most after the first

screening of the film in Manhattan.”

Melnick's equipment package for *Chasing* included a Fujinon 17x7.6 BERM CAC-enabled lens, lightweight rods, Chrosziel follow focus, Cavision mattebox, assorted filters, Sachtler video 30 tripod kit, Super Falcon II dolly, BT-LH2600W production monitor and a 7” onboard monitor. The HPX500 was used for the entire one-camera shoot, other than some B roll shot on the HVX200 that will be composited in post onto television sets in the frame.

In terms of post-production, initial plans are to edit on a Final Cut Pro HD workstation.

“When I first shot with the HVX200, I performed a film-out test--one of the first in New York--with the help of Postworks NY,” Melnick said. “We projected 720P on a large screen and were extremely happy with the results. I am highly confident in DVCPRO HD as an acquisition format to print to film, and the picture enhancements offered by the HPX500 over the HVX200 can only make it look better.”

“Once you embrace tapeless workflows such as P2 and understand how to make any limitations of high-definition technology work as assets, you open up a new world of lower-cost, high-quality production,” he added.

SLM Production Group is a New York based production company owned by Seth Melnick (Director of Photography) and Lauzanne Nel (Makeup Artist), and specializing in HD photography. For more information about DP Melnick and his production company, visit www.slmproduction.com.

About the AG-HPX500

The AG-HPX500 teams the full production-quality of 2/3” 3-CCDs, DVCPRO HD, 4:2:2 sampling and independent frame encoding with the versatility of interchangeable lenses and the creativity of variable frame rates. Offering the highly popular features of the incredibly successful AG-HVX200 P2 HD hand-held camcorder but with many new enhancements, the 8.2-pound HPX500 features progressive 2/3” 3-CCDs that provide a larger light receiving area resulting in increased resolution and sensitivity, superb low-light performance and wide dynamic range. The HPX500 records in 32 high definition and standard definition formats, including 1080i and 720p in production-proven, 100 Mbps DVCPRO HD. The HPX500 records on removable P2 solid-state memory cards in 1080/60i, 50i, 30p, 25p and 24p; in 720/60p, 50p, 30p, 25p, and 24p; and in DVCPRO50, DVCPRO and DV. For more information on the HPX500, visit www.panasonic.com/broadcast.

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