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Editorial Contacts:

Stacy Moore
(201) 392-4458
moorest@us.panasonic.com

Pat Lamb
(518) 692-8150
patalamb@aol.com

SPIKE TV SHOOTS ORIGINAL COMEDY, 'PLAYERS,' WITH PANASONIC'S NEW AG-HPX300 P2 HD CAMCORDERS

*** Half-Hour Show is First Scripted Series to Be Shot with HPX300, Game-Changing Shoulder-Mount with Native 2.2-Megapixel Imagers and AVC-Intra Recording ***

SECAUCUS, NJ (August 19, 2009) — Spike TV has just wrapped production of 10 episodes of an original comedy series, *Players*, shot with Panasonic's new AG-HPX300 P2 HD shoulder-mount camcorders. The HPX300 is the industry's first affordable 10-bit, 4:2:2 professional HD camcorder, featuring independent frame AVC-Intra recording and variable frame rates.



Players, scheduled to premiere in late 2009 or early 2010, follows two brothers with opposite personalities trying to run a sports bar. Created by Matt Walsh, one of the founders of the acclaimed improvisational comedy troupe, Upright Citizens Brigade, *Players* is a Principato Young Entertainment Production, with Kevin McMahon as Director of Photography.



DP McMahon, a member of Local 600, is a veteran sports and reality-show cinematographer, and has worked on many high-profile comedy projects. He worked as a cameraman on *Mind of Mencia* and *The Hollow Men*, both for Comedy Central, as well as on television series for comedians Andy Dick, Orlando Jones and Greg Behrendt. As the director and DP for the 2007 and 2008 installments of the televised "The Mediterranean World High Dive Championships," McMahon became familiar with tapeless P2 production while using the

AG-HVX200 P2 HD handheld for all his slow-motion work.

"The producers of *Players* were committed to network-level production but it wasn't in the budget to rent top-tier cameras," said McMahon. "Just as I was looking for a less expensive but full-featured alternative that could do the work of a bigger camera, the HPX300 was introduced. Based on my favorable experience with the HVX200, my preference to shoot tapeless and the HPX300's specs, my rental company, Mad Dash Video, Inc., purchased two of the cameras.

Mad Dash Video is renting the cameras to the production. *Players* is being shot single-camera style, with the two HPX300s used for coverage. McMahon operates the "A" camera, with Tom Hejda on the "B" camera. They are shooting 1080/24p in



AVC-Intra 100. A sound stage in Santa Clarita, CA stands in for the *Players* bar, where most of the series' action takes place, although there is a modicum of location work. McMahon and Hejda are shooting entirely handheld, using the HPX300's standard Fujinon 17x HD lens, with supplemental use of Fujinon 3.5 wide angle HD lenses (which McMahon had purchased for previous work with 1/3" camcorders).



"I like the fact that AVC-Intra has a higher bit rate and that there are no rectangular pixels," McMahon said. "It's 1920 x 1080 for real, with no stretched pixels, better compression and no long GOP. The resolution is great, especially with the Fujinon 3.5. The picture looks very good: it's the only way to go when shooting video right now."

McMahon has customized the HPX300's Cine Gamma D mode to shoot the bar interiors. "The customized file is really working for us," he said.

"We took the blacks down from the original Cine Gamma scene file, which has made it easier for the gaffer and me to light. You can get all kinds of range with this camera when you customize with waveform monitors, vectorscopes and color charts, as we did. We're shooting through a 1/2 black frost filter, which gives a nice glow to everything."

The DP said that his four-person crew includes two first ACs who are also functioning as "data wranglers." "Our procedure is to record one 32GB P2 card at a time, which gives us a comfortable 44 minutes per card," McMahon explained. "When we're done, the ACs take the P2 cards to an office we've set up off one side of the stage. We have a laptop assigned to each camera, and each laptop has an AG-HPG20 P2 Portable recorder attached to transfer material off the card. We export redundant Express eSATA cards to an external SATA hard drive: we keep raw data on one SATA drive that resides in the camera office, and transcode material through Final Cut Pro into ProRes422 on the second SATA drive, which is then sent to post."



Players is being edited in Final Cut Studio 2; post-production is being handled by The Dorm (Los Angeles, CA).

"The HPX300 is proving to be the perfect tool for this job," McMahon said. "The consensus is that *Players* measures up to the look of network programming. Essentially, the HPX300 lets smaller cable operations create content rivaling that of the big boys at a fraction of the cost."

About Spike TV

Spike TV is available in 97.7 million homes and is a division of MTV Networks. For more information about Spike TV and *Players*, visit www.spike.com.

About the AJ-HPX300

Incorporating a low profile shoulder mounted design, the AG-HPX300 incorporates advanced 1/3" 2.2-megapixel 3-MOS imagers to acquire full native resolution HD images. These advanced 3-MOS imagers provide exceptional image quality while minimizing any noise or sacrificing dynamic range. A new 20-bit digital signal processor (DSP) enhances the HPX300's image performance. Delivering the quality of AVC-Intra 100 and AVC-Intra 50, the HPX300 also records independent frame images in 100Mbps DVCPRO HD and in standard definition in DVCPRO50, DVCPRO and DV. The HPX300 offers the security of a five-year warranty program (1 year + 4 additional years with registration), ultimate quality and flexibility in an affordable (\$10,700 SLP), full-size HD camcorder. For more information about

the HPX300, visit www.panasonic.com/P2HD.

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