

[(10:52:29)] Male Speaker: Good?

[(10:52:29)] Sean: Yes, it's good. [inaudible]

[(10:52:34)] Danny: Okay. Thank you.

[(10:52:35)] Male Speaker: Just let Sean settle back there, Danny. And we're good.

[(10:52:38)] Danny: Okay. Thank you for taking the time. I appreciate it again. So we've been filming with Liam for many months, since February. All the chemo we've been filming everything with him, his project. For you, what is this movie that we're making? What is the story of what Liam's been dealing with for the last six months? [(10:52:59)]

[(10:53:00)] Miguel Gonzalez: Oh, man, Liam, especially the first time I saw Liam, he was being a great person to me, him being an amazing person. And that hits me hard when I find out when we saw the news and stuff. I text him, "Oh my God, bro, you know, like I feel so bad, anything you need, you just...", but what he has been through and what he has been doing [(10:53:29)] is so special, man. Like he's been inspiring a lot of people, like he is the man. I have no words like to say like how he came back to all he's doing.

[(10:53:46)] Danny: I'm going to ask you for some of those words. What makes him such a special person? He's a different, not just a different player, he's a different person than most. What is it about him? What makes him so unique? [(10:53:59)]

[(10:54:01)] Miguel: Well, he's so special. like he's the guy that always take care of people, you know he is always like looking for people. Like he knows when you feel like, he's so special like he knows when you feel like down, he knows that day that you don't feeling great. And he goes right away, "Hey, what's going on? Like how are you doing? What happened? How's family? How's everything? Let me know if you need anything". [(10:54:29)] He's just special like he's a human being guy.

[(10:54:39)] Danny: That's great. What about as a competitor, I mean his role as the closer or late-ending guy, he has his whole team. Can you just kind of take me through it? I know he comes out to the bullpen in the 4th end and usually takes me through kind of his whole routine because he's very loose jokes and then everything changes. [(10:54:59)] Can you tell me about his routine?

[(10:55:02)] Miguel: Yes. He has a lot of jokes and stuff, but his routine is every, every single day, the same routine every time, every day. The soon as he goes to a field to play catch, we always have 2 heavy balls. He always has 2 balls, two baseballs down on the line. So we start with 4 balls, 2 heavy balls, and 2 baseballs. So he [(10:55:29)] starts with the green ball, there's a heavy one, weightier balls, baseball. He come down, he got a long toss. Like we always, we got a joke like we always tell it like, "I don't know how you do it, bro. I don't know how you long toss every day". And it's amazing because it's hard like whatever he does is hard and that's his routine, and he feels great and we love it. So every day is the same routine, he got to come here flat ground. [(10:55:59)] Even when he finishes playing catch, he have to throw 2 balls out of the stands, out of the stadium, that's his routine like every single day. And when we're talking about game time, he says hi to everybody. If he could, he could say hi to every single person in the stands. He comes waving and waving and gets there, but soon as he throws that bullpen, [(10:56:27)] it is over. He's over there, he is with the iPads, he's watching the report, watching the hitters. He's focused, and his concentration goes like, barely he talks. Soon as he gets to a bullpen, he's just ready to go.

[(10:56:51)] Danny: That's great. I mean you and Luis catch all his pens. I mean what is it [(10:56:59)] like for you to be out there when he starts to get hot? And you know you have a different view of it than anyone else. As he's getting focused in the 7th, or the 8th, or whatever, and then he gets hot. Like can you just take me through that from your perspective?

[(10:57:16)] Miguel: Yes, his adrenaline like he transmits that adrenaline to you. Like, I feel when I warm him in the 9th, like ready to go to the game, I feel like I'm going in with him. [(10:57:29)] Like I'm going in to catch him to the game. Because he's adrenaline like focus, like everything is something else. You can feel it. And as soon as that comes the third out and he goes out, you can feel that energy. Like it's great, it is exciting and I mean, I'm really proud like of him and whatever [(10:57:59)] he does, but it's super exciting to be around him.

[(10:58:05)] Danny: Before we move forward, Just give me that backstory of when you faced him in Rookie.

[(10:58:10)] Miguel: We're still trying to find those videos. But I wasn't Rookie ball. I was with the White Sox in 2009, I believe, and he was with the twins. So we face each other. He was pitching, I was hitting. [(10:58:29)] We always play around with this, but he doesn't remember but I'm pretty sure I hit at least a double against him. Yeah, but we got to find those videos about we face each other in Rookie ball. [pause] The volume went off.

[(10:58:57)] Male Speaker: No volume, Danny.

[(10:59:00)] Danny: Sorry, I keep muting. I'm sorry about that. [foreign language] You're a guy who grinded in the minor leagues, then in the big leagues, and he is also, he's not a guy who was a first-round pick who got a ton of money and was in the big leagues in 2 years. He got DFA five times. Can you talk about that struggle, and you know as well as anyone what that's like and how hard that is? Can you talk about how that [(10:59:27)] maybe helped make him who he is?

[(10:59:33)] Miguel: Yes, yes, for sure, for sure, I know how that feels. Like when I was with the White Sox, I went to a different organization, and that's like a move that impacts you because when you're with one organization for so long when you sign as a kid but when you make all those moves and be in DFA all those years, it's hard man, It is hard. And how [(10:59:59)] he's bottled that and how he handled that and he knows right now, and we even talk in the bullpen during the game, like, hey, you know about his past like games and stuff. He is like, "Oh, I should do this, I should do that. And I feel good with this and I feel good with that." We always talk about his, you know about his career and the minors and he says he won't change anything. And I [(11:00:29)] believe it because whatever

happens, I don't want to believe whatever happens in your life for it's a learning process you know, and being where he at right now is amazing. And again, I'm really proud of him.

[(11:00:52)] Danny: That's great. I should have followed up before when you said that he makes you feel like you want to go in the game. [(11:00:59)] It is just him that goes into the game, and when he does, what is his approach? I mean I know he's a hitter, a slider also with the curve ball. Can you talk about his approach on the mound and how he's 100% and just like the intensity, what the experience is like seeing him in the 9th inning, and what that approach is for him?

[(11:01:21)] Miguel: Yes, yes. He's the guy that goes all out at you. If you are not ready, good luck. Because [(11:01:29)] he's going at you and he's always fighting, he's always going whatever he got best, which is fastball, but he's not afraid. He's going at you and he's approach is to attack. And that's why he is what he is because he attacks and there's no panic there, you know. And every time he goes to a mound in the 9th inning to close a game, I feel pretty comfortable [(11:01:59)] like we got this, you know even if it is for a half-round, one-round, two-run lead, it doesn't matter. Like the fields and the bullpen like, he got this and as a group, as a team, like we trust this guy a lot, like pretty much 100% like it used to be.

[(11:02:25)] Danny: I don't know how much you've talked to him about his story like he wasn't always that way. [(11:02:29)] I think he was a starter throwing 91.

[(11:02:32)] Miguel: Yeah.

[(11:02:33)] Danny: And then he had like a change mentally where he, in 2018 in Nashville, things change for him because he changed his mindset and his training. Can you talk...If you know about that, can you talk about that change, what you know about how he became kind of that animal that we see now?

[(11:02:53)] Miguel: Yes. We talk a little bit about that and the big [(11:02:59)] step he took, it was like from a starter to a reliever. And he always says he was a sinker ball guy like to choose him. And he says, "Oh, that sinker sucks every time. That sucks. Fucking headache". So now he got the power for forcing with numbers like we are right now you know, we got super... he got a good ride I mean, [(11:03:29)] breaking stuff is there. And I always tell him, "Why you don't use your Shuuto?" Shuuto is a split. And he's like, "Oh, you know, and this and that." We always talk to each other about that. And he is, "Oh my God, shut up." And I'm like, "No, you should use it." I think that's what we talk about helping to go from starting to relieve again. That's where I'm making [(11:03:59)] who he is right now.

[(11:04:04)] Danny: That's Great. When you think back on last year, I know he was having on 2022, he wasn't recovering as well, he was dealing with a lot and he didn't realize that he had cancer at the time. When you think about that, how amazing is it that he grinded through 2022 with undiagnosed cancer? He got diagnosed in December. But he went through, especially the second half of the season [(11:04:29)] dealing with a lot. Can you talk about any of that?

[(11:04:34)] Miguel: Yeah, that's what we say. He is a beast. He is, to be diagnosed like that, or undiagnosed like that, and he doesn't know and every day he was the same. Probably like his number went down and he doesn't know like fast forward wise. But being like that it's amazing because he was the same guy every day [(11:04:59)] from the first day of the season to the last day.

[(11:05:06)] Danny: I think it's still such a scary thing. Cancer, it's so common. Everybody knows people who've had cancer. It's so widespread, but it seems crazy that a 33-year-old healthy professional athlete would get it. But cancer doesn't care who you are. Can you speak to that that [(11:05:29)] this can happen to anybody?

[(11:05:39)] Miguel: Yeah. And I have two big examples, last year and this year. Last year I had my mom with cancer. She had thyroid cancer. She came to visit from Venezuela. And she's like, "Oh, I feel something here, I feel something here." And she called me, it's like, "Go to the doctor." And when we find out she had thyroid cancer. So she has to have surgery, then go back to [(11:05:59)] Venezuela, get chemo and all the stuff. And that was hard. And two weeks ago I had my father-in-law, he had a prostate removed, prostate cancer too. It is a spot like anybody wants to be, but I'm really happy and I believe the people are strong to beat this. And I believe anybody can do [(11:06:29)] it because it's more like hard and determination and like Liam did. And we went through this and now they're good. Now we are okay. But it's such a scary moment. When you hear the word cancer, it's like life is over.

[(11:06:59)] Danny: I think [(11:06:59)] that's really well said. And I hope that they continue to do well, your family. He's obviously a remarkable person, Liam, but what has stuck out about the way that we're filming him go through chemo Monday, Tuesday, and then he'd be a Camelback throwing flat ground on Friday and a bullpen the next Tuesday. He never stopped. Can you talk about the way he attacked it? Because [(11:07:29)] I think that let him get back so quickly.

[(11:07:33)] Miguel: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I was there sometimes when he threw those bullpens. And from my point that I know him, like how he works, how he was throwing, how he was doing. In the beginning, I saw him throwing and stuff and he always makes a face and makes me feel like, I don't know [(11:07:59)] if it can say a bad word right now but made me feel like, "Fuck, fuck, come on, you got this, you got it. Go. Okay, go." So he was long tossing and he was playing catch, he was making faces, he was like... and I can see he's being frustrated with himself because he push himself so hard to go through this. And every time we're on the Camelback and he's throwing. In the beginning, he starts [(11:08:29)] throwing bullpens and stuff, he's going, and going, and going, and I say, "Yes, yes."

And every time I call him, and he's like, "Hey, you know a slider or fastball was it, you know?" And I'm like, "No, it was fucking great." It's pretty good. It's like it used to be. He's like it used to be. So we were always getting that mind going, "Okay, you're good, you're good. You got to go, you got to go, you got to go", and he's the guy that never stops. [(11:08:59)] So that was good that we always telling, "That was good. You're ready". He has even been training, and I don't go to lie to you. I swear all my life we tell the pitching coach, "He's fucking ready. He's ready for the season. He's ready, he's ready". Luis and I, we're always catching in the bullpens like flat ground sidelines and stuff. And we always tell the pitching coach, "He's ready, he's ready, he's good, [(11:09:29)] he's ready." And they're like,

"Okay, okay, okay, let's see, let's see." And we're not. He's fucking ready.

[(11:09:39)] Danny: That's amazing. How important did you think it was to like, not just talk to the pitching coach, but also to Liam, like build him up and give him that feedback that things are going well, was that something that you and Luis both wanted to do?

[(11:09:57)] Miguel: Yeah, that's really important, man. And we still [(11:09:59)] telling right now, even when he was pitching, he was like, "Oh my God, I feel this. I feel that." No, no, that was good. That was great. Because I believe a lot on your mind, if you have your mindset like, "I can do this, I can do this, I can do this, I can do this", you're going to do it. So if you doubt yourself a lot, which [(11:10:29)] is happening in my exam- I got many things that happen to me, like throwing MVP, doing this, and doing that. I go like, "Oh my God. I want to do this right. I want to do this", no. And I switch like, "I can do it. I got to do it, I got to do it, I got to do it." So that's why we go with Liam. Every time we, "Oh, you're good, you're good, you're good." Even right now, "Hey, you're going to come back in two days, you're going to come back in one day. No worries. Everything's going to be all right. But let's go". [(11:10:59)]

[(11:11:00)] Danny: How much did you contact him, were you texting during chemo when he was working at a Camelback, but he was on the IL obviously, did you maintain, would you check in on him? Because I know he was going through his treatment and trying to get back, but he was also kind of on his own program, right? He wasn't in normal spring training. Did you text him? Did you stay in touch?

[(11:11:27)] Miguel: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, we did stay in touch. We [(11:11:29)] talk for a little bit, probably twice a week because I don't want to get in his space either. And that was crazy because I live in Arizona too, so before the seasons end, we talk and everything. We plan like, "Hey, we're going to work out, we're snowbrush going to play catch, we're going to do this, we're going to do that." And [(11:11:59)] when the season's over and a month later, I don't hear anything about Liam. And I go like, "Hmm, why he doesn't text me to work out? Something going on", I don't know. So I saw the news and I just text him right away. But we always kept in touch through messages. I never call him [(11:12:29)] because I don't want to get in his space. But we did get in touch.

[(11:12:38)] Danny: I know that you have a love for all the bullpen guys, but I also know that Liam is special and a little bit different in some ways. How did that hit you emotionally to hear that? You never expect to hear from one of your guys that they're going through something like that. So when you heard it, [(11:12:59)] do you remember what it felt like?

[(11:13:03)] Miguel: Yes. Yes. I was at home. I was with my wife, and my father-in-law too. And when we saw that news, I kind of reflected on my mom because that was after my mom and he was the guy that, I probably don't have to say this, but I'm going to say it. He came to me and he's like... [(11:13:29)] Because my mom was visiting from Venezuela and she doesn't have insurance or anything, and he goes to me and the first thing he did is like, "Hey, how's your mom?", and I say, "No, she's going to get surgeries and this." And he goes like, "Okay, I need her name and everything because I'm going to put her in insurance for three, or four, or five, whatever years she needs."

And I go [(11:13:59)] like, "No, man. No, it's okay. It's all right." And I ended up going around that because I don't want to get him involved and all this stuff because that was during the season. And when I find out that he has cancer, "Oh my gosh. He wants to help me when my mom was there. [(11:14:29)] Now, how I can help?". And so I text and I like, "Hey bro, whatever you need." Because when you get about that, it's not about money or anything material, nothing. It's more like support and people telling you like, "Hey, whatever you need, I'm here." So when I saw the news, and I just got a reflection on whatever he says for my mom, [(11:14:59)] and I like that hit me hard. And I was pretty shocked because he's the first guy and one of the guys that say like, "I'm here to help you."

[(11:15:20)] Danny: Wow. I want to move forward. Are you okay on time? Can I...

[(11:15:26)] Miguel: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm leaving at one or 12:30.

[(11:15:29)] Danny: Okay. [(11:15:29)] I just have a couple more. I guess when you heard that he was done with chemo, a clean bill of health, he was going to start a minor league rehab, how did you feel at that point hearing that?

[(11:15:45)] Miguel: Oh I was so excited. Even everyone like Luis and I, we're pretty close with him. We talk a lot with him and we're like, "Oh, man, he's coming, he's coming back, he's coming back." So we saw him [(11:15:59)] throwing. He was in Phoenix before coming back, and he was in a Rookie ball and kind of like an extended league. He was throwing and we were pretty excited. He's coming back. And we text him like, "Hey, hurry up, hurry up, where you at?" And he responds with a joke back every time. But really excited, and super happy for him. [(11:16:29)]

[(11:16:31)] Danny: And then how about, he went to Charlotte and he went to Gwinnett and he was kind of getting his innings in, then he went back to back. And as he's going through that, I know you got your hands full in Chicago with the big league guys, but are you kind of staying in touch? Take me through what you remember from the minor league rehab.

[(11:16:52)] Miguel: Yeah. Every time that he was pitching or throwing anything, we always saw like, "Hey, Liam's [(11:16:59)] threw one inning, threw two innings." And we always go to a pitching coach who has the reports and, "Hey how was it? How's his progress? How's everything going?", And they're just like, "No, he's fine. He is coming back". I'm going to say it again, we always say in a positive way with him. We're always positive, "No, he's fine. [(11:17:29)] He's going to come back, he's fine. He is going to come back". That were all the words we were saying every time during his rehab.

[(11:17:39)] Danny: Then he kind of rejoined the team, but he wasn't activated. And I think he threw three or maybe four live BPs, and he was like raring to go. He's like, "Activate me. Activate me."

[(11:17:51)] Miguel: Oh my God, that was every single day. I'm ready, I'm ready. Actually, even we call him the live BP [(11:17:59)] games when the simulator game. Luis and I, we alternate all those games and he was pitching, "I'm ready", he would scream, "Let's go, put me

in, I'm ready, let's go." And people like, "Hey, hey, relax, the time is coming." So he went like... probably, he get sooner than when they want him to go, [(11:18:29)] because he was like, I say again, "Let's go. I'm ready, let's go." And he pushed it, he pushed it and that's how he get it through that.

[(11:18:43)] Danny: And I know that was a decision that Ethan Katz and Rick Hahn, and that was a big decision that the organization made, went to bring him back. plicene And you guys went to Cleveland, and he went to Detroit, and he kept throwing the live BPs. [(11:18:59)] I guess, what were you seeing from him? Did he feel like himself? Did it seem like the fastball was his firm and the slider was good? Was it in and out? Tell me about his stuff since you and Luis were catching him.

[(11:19:18)] Miguel: Yeah. We knew that his fastball and breaking stuff was a little bit different or off. It wasn't like he was [(11:19:29)] two years ago, but we always talk and we always tell him, and even we talk to the pitching coach like he can make it through with that stuff. His stuff is going to come back. He's going to be fine. He's going to have, with whatever he has, he going to make it through. He can pitch one or two innings easily. And that's [(11:19:59)] what the mindset is every time to him.

[(11:20:04)] Danny: I know he talks about it, I'm sure you do too. How much is adrenaline a factor there? It's one thing to throw in Cleveland in the afternoon, an empty stadium. It's another with 40,000 people.

[(11:20:19)] Miguel: Oh yeah, big time. Big time. With that adrenaline, he can go, I believe like three miles up. [(11:20:29)] He wears, he's 97, 98. And I believe, I know he's in the aisle right now, but I 100% believe he'd be back and he'd be again with 98 and a hundred miles an hour that his throw, even if I hit a double against him, he will kill me. But he'll be back.

[(11:20:57)] Danny: I want to go to the day that he came back to the big [(11:20:59)] leagues. Those are really emotional days in a lot of different ways, but it was May 29 Memorial Day at your place in Chicago. Take me through what you remember from that day, even pre-game, or if you remember when he came out in the 4th inning. When you think about that day, what do you think about it?

[(11:21:18)] Miguel: Yeah, that was a pretty really amazing day. We were waiting for him to get in the game [(11:21:29)] so badly, like, "Oh my God, please, please put him in the game. Put him in the game." And when he gets there, we got tons of cameras and stuff, and talking to him. And he never loses his concentration, People want to talk to him and stuff. And one thing that I was not surprised about, I was like, "Wow, [(11:21:59)] this is amazing." bullpen and even right now, people saying, "Thank you, Liam, you inspire me", so many peoples around the stand saying that. And every time I hear Donna[?] say like, "Wow, this guy's a hero." And I can tell you how many times I hear it, [(11:22:29)] but everywhere we go it's "Thank you, Liam. You inspire me", even when they have letters and stuff, it's amazing. That day was an amazing day, a really special day.

[(11:22:44)] Danny: Do you remember, did you catch him or did Luis catch him?

[(11:22:46)] Miguel: Luis did. Luis did.

[(11:22:48)] Danny: Okay. And we interviewed Luis for this also. And what's amazing, partly, Liam cares about people, and it doesn't matter who you are. [(11:22:59)] He was like, "You got to talk to Luis and Miggy, those are my guys", he told me that. He said, "You have to talk to them. I love those guys." What emotions do you think he was feeling? When he ran in that night, as you said, everyone's saying thank you, there's the sign, there's so much going on. For you to see him go through that on May 29, what do you think he was experiencing?

[(11:23:29)] Miguel: He probably was like, [(11:23:29)] I don't know, he got more excited, and I probably feel like he was saying like, "I did it. I went through this, I'm here right now." But I think he got really excited pitching that day. And probably his heart was meltdown. He was feeling it. He was, [(11:23:59)] I don't know the right word for this, but he was more emotional than pitching probably, than worried about where he was at, and what he was doing. And we can feel that. It was amazing.

[(11:24:23)] Danny: You just said a minute ago that he's inspired so many people and he even called him a hero, which is [(11:24:29)] I think a lot of kids and people look at baseball players as heroes, but we're talking about something different here with the way that he's inspiring other people to either go through cancer or just deal with difficult things in their life, right? So can you talk a little more about that? Why you would use that word, why do you think he's a hero and so inspirational?

[(11:24:54)] Miguel: Yeah, because and I always say this, he's a good [(11:24:59)] player, but he is a better person. He's a good player, but he's a better person 100%. Because of what he does, like in and off the field, and I know this because a lot of people say, "Oh my", and even going out of the field, I saw him in the parking lot stopping there, signing people, signing stuff. And [(11:25:29)] I think one day he was talking with somebody that said, "Thank you, Liam." And he goes, and I believe he says, "Hey, contact this guy, or contact me." But I don't remember who he was, but he's always there helping people. He can go in and out 20 times from the dugout to the bullpen. [(11:25:59)] He will say hi to the same people, security guy, bullpen guy, everybody. He would see them coming back, he would say hi.

And he inspire a lot of people because obviously with whatever he went through. But like I say, he's a better person than he's a player. [(11:26:29)] And he's a superstar. And I always tell him, "No, you are a better person. You're a better person than a player", and he's a superstar. So you can't imagine how far it is for him. And I love him, man. I love Liam. And he's always worrying about people. Worrying about people, like helping people. He's always looking and he's the guy, like I said earlier, he knows, "Hey, how do you feel? What's going on? Tell me, talk to me." He's kind of that guy that always be there for you. [(11:26:59)]

[(11:27:02)] Danny: That's great. If someone said to you, "Liam Hendriks? I've never heard of Liam Hendriks. What's the deal with this guy?" For someone who didn't know about baseball, what would you say to them overall about him and about what he's just gone through?

[(11:27:18)] Miguel: Bro, people say that they don't know Hendriks, then they don't watch baseball. And I always play around with Liam because I always say, "Cricket? What? [(11:27:29)] What is that?" And he's like, "Come on Papi, you don't know anything about that." But he has inspired a lot of people and it's not because of this happening. And I bet a lot of people know who he is. And you know what's funny when we talk about things that he has been there, that he has been pitching [(11:27:59)] and we talk about Hendriks, everybody says something positive about him. Nobody saw any negativity against Hendriks.

[(11:28:17)] Danny: That is everything I got. Do you have anything else to say that we didn't talk about? I feel like we did it.

[(11:28:23)] Miguel: Well, all I can say is obviously thank you guys, but I have to say thank [(11:28:29)] you Hendriks because we always talk about things, games, and stuff, but when we talk, again, about my mom and he was there for me, that's more valuable. And I have no words or anything, thanks Liam. And [(11:28:59)] I really love that guy.

[(11:29:04)] Danny: [foreign language]

[(11:29:07)] Male Speaker: Tone.

[(11:29:08)] Miguel: [foreign language]

[(11:29:09)] Male Speaker: Miguel, sorry to pause you. Please, we just need 20 seconds of room tone. So we just record the sound of the room with no talking for a moment.

[(11:29:16)] Sean: Thank you, camera marked it.

[END]