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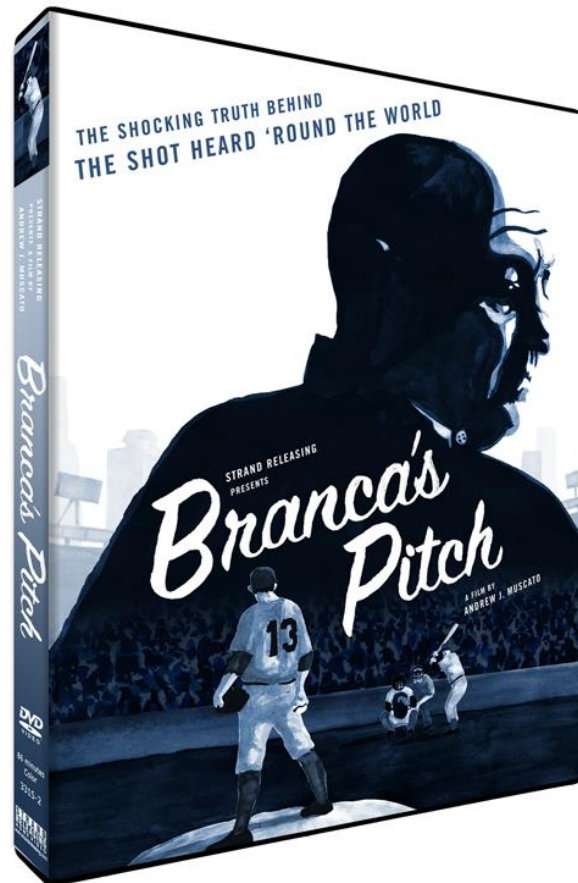
Strand Releasing proudly presents

BRANCA'S PITCH

A film by Andrew J. Muscato

iTunes Exclusive Release on September 26, 2013
DVD and On-Demand Release October 1, 2013

The Story Behind the Shot Heard 'Round the World'



Press Contact:

Jenna Martin/Marcus Hu, Strand Releasing, strand@strandreleasing.com

Please download photos at:

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Synopsis:

On October 3, 1951 Ralph Branca became a legendary figure in baseball history. The 26-year old Brooklyn Dodger pitcher became infamous for losing the 1951 National League Pennant to the bitter rival New York Giants, by giving up the game winning homerun termed "The Shot Heard Round the World." Jeered by once adoring fans and labeled a scapegoat for the rest of his life, Ralph never reclaimed his career.

BRANCA'S PITCH is a feature-length documentary following Ralph Branca's journey to pen a memoir that finally tells his side of the story, to try and restore his fascinating, yet overlooked legacy in baseball's "Golden Age" of the '40s and '50s. Enlisting the help of acclaimed and best-selling author, David Ritz, an unlikely friendship forms. Ritz with sleeve tattoos covering both arms and flamboyant outfits is on a constant journey towards the heart of matters. While Branca is a conservative stoic of a bygone era, needing help to let out decades of pain on to the page. Their poignant exchanges are both endearing and humorous as Ralph begins to trust Ritz with not only righting his legacy but also sharing a secret held for over 50 years – that the New York Giants cheated. At times poignant, tender and humorous BRANCA'S PITCH is an exploration in personal mythology that calls into question the relationship between truth and memory.

87 mins. • USA • In English • Color/B&W • Widescreen • Stereo

ITUNES EXCLUSIVE RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2013

DVD/VOD RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2013

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Pearl Harbor, the Kennedy Assassination, Bobby Thomson's "Shot Heard Round the World." It's difficult for today's generation to fathom, but the New York Giants dramatic pennant-winning homerun against the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1951 was a seminal moment in 20th Century American History. From Steinbeck to Sinatra, folks from that era could tell you where they were when Thomson hit the National League Pennant clinching homerun off of Ralph Branca that October afternoon at the Polo Grounds. Although the moment has been memorialized in great works of fiction from *The Godfather* to Don DeLillo's bestselling novel *Underworld*, "The Shot" no longer holds a prominent place in American History let alone in baseball history. Rather it's clustered together with images of a ground ball through Bill Buckner's legs or Kirk Gibson's pinch-hit 1988 World Series Homerun. While Thomson's homerun may never regain its luster in American History books, understanding the cultural enormity of the "Shot Heard Round the World" leads to an appreciation of the emotional endurance of Ralph Branca. In a sport filled with scapegoats, none before or since have ever accepted the limelight like Branca.

My initial reason for making this documentary was the same reason Branca had for writing his autobiography: to chronicle an accomplished yet unfulfilled professional baseball career that was instantly and forever overshadowed by a homerun Branca surrendered while he was just 26 years old. As the title of his autobiography would suggest, Branca would prefer to think of "The Shot Heard Round the World" as simply *A Moment in Time*-- just one of many happenings in a long and well lived life. Yet as I got to know Branca over the past year, I realized the story of his life bears relevance to generations that don't even know about "The Shot", not because of what he did before the homerun but for what he did after.

For fifty years Branca publicly allowed himself to be branded as a scapegoat, all while holding a vital secret—he was not to blame. The famous moment should have never even happened. Despite gamely appearing on television and at lucrative autograph shows, Branca refused to address the underhanded truth surrounding the New York Giants win until a reporter from the Wall Street Journal finally broke the story in 2001. As I watched the 85-year-old Ralph Branca work on his autobiography and then promote it at bookstores around New York, I couldn't help but wonder, was Branca ultimately contradicting decades of stoicism and becoming what he never wanted to be-- a sore loser? Or as Branca's co-author David Ritz put it, was this break of silence an act of catharsis? Did Branca need to speak out for his own peace of mind? After all, how can someone allow himself to be called a "loser" when they know that the "winners" should not have even been playing the game?

Regardless of right or wrong I hope viewers of BRANCA'S PITCH come to appreciate and respect Branca in the same way that I have. Although terms "patriot" and "real American" have grown tired and almost trite over the past decade, they sound genuine when Ralph Branca uses them to describe himself. Over the past half century Branca could have easily grown cynical and reclusive. Instead he remains grateful for the unique life he's led, despite being ridiculed by fans and the press of his day. Even if history forgets "The Shot Heard Round the World" I hope it will always remember Ralph Branca as someone who succeeded in failure, probably his greatest accomplishment of all.

CREW

Director	Andrew J. Muscato
Producers	Jaclyn Paris Andrew J. Muscato Bill Branca
Executive Producers	Bobby Valentine Ravi Singh Anthony Maltese Terry Maltese Matthew Byrnes
Director of Photography	Juan Crouch
Editor	Chris Kursel
Original Music by	Guy King
Additional Camera	Andrew "Tank" Rivara Trevor Martin Ross Finkel David Ritz
Consulting Producer	Eileen O'Neill
Music Supervisor	Lost Planet
Post Production	
Executive Producer for Lost Planet	Gary Ward
Post-Production Supervisor	Jaclyn Paris
Assistant Editor	Jay Lorenz
Lead Online Artist	James Bohn
Online Artist	Eric Schrecongost
Title Design	Eric Schrecongost
Online Producer	Erica Headly
DI Colorist	Mark Todd Osborne
Sound Mixer	Robert Feist
Music Engineer	A.J. Murillo
Sound Assistant	Edward Santee
Business Affairs	Vincent Cavaliere Robert Musumeci
Legal Affairs	Samaan & Torborg, LP Donaldson & Callif
Archival Consultant	Vanessa Bendetti
Interns	Matt Berardi Rachel Sklar

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

ANDREW J. MUSCATO, DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

While still an undergraduate film student at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Andrew produced, shot, and edited the feature documentary THE ZEN OF BOBBY V for ESPN Films. THE ZEN OF BOBBY V premiered at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival to rave reviews from film critics and sportswriters alike. The documentary aired on ESPN2 on May 13, 2008 and Andrew graduated from NYU the next day.

In 2010 Andrew formed Makuhari Media with Bobby Valentine. The company's mission is to create character driven feature documentaries set in the world of sports. Andrew and Bobby Valentine were Executive Producers on Makuhari Media's first feature documentary, BALLPLAYER: PELOTERO, which was released theatrically in July 2012 by Strand Releasing to critical acclaim. Andrew is currently producing SCHOOLED: THE SHAME OF COLLEGE SPORTS, a critical look at the business of the NCAA, which will air this fall on Epix. BRANCA'S PITCH marks Andrew's first feature documentary as a director.

JACLYN PARIS, PRODUCER

Jaclyn Paris is a freelance producer based in Los Angeles. She has worked on national commercial campaigns with top agencies such as Chiat Day, Wieden + Kennedy, Goodby Silverstein, BBDO, and with directors such as Spike Lee, Janusz Kaminski, Ellen Kuras, Jon Favreau, Olivier Gondry and Alex Gibney.

Formerly Associate Producer at Isotope Films, Jaclyn served as Post-Production Coordinator on Spike Jonze and Lance Bangs' 2009 documentary TELL THEM ANYTHING YOU WANT – A PORTRAIT OF MAURICE SENDAK and their 2010 documentary THE LAZARUS EFFECT (HBO). She was the Production Coordinator on Ellen Kuras' Academy Award Nominated documentary, THE BETRAYAL/NERAKHOON and Jill Andresevic's debut documentary LOVE, ETC. (HotDocs, IDFA, Audience Award Winner Hamptons FF, 2010). In 2007 she was Assistant to the Producer on BILLY THE KID (winner of Best Doc at L.A. FF, SXSW, Edinburgh FF and Melbourne FF) directed by Jennifer Venditti.

Jaclyn graduated from NYU's Gallatin School with a concentration in Creative Writing.

BOBBY VALENTINE, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Bobby Valentine is one of the most recognizable baseball personalities in the world.

In 2000 Bobby managed the New York Mets to the memorable "Subway Series" World Series versus the New York Yankees. In 2005 Bobby became the first foreign manager to win the Japan Series when he managed the Chiba Lotte Marines to the franchise's first ever championship. In 2008 Bobby's successful career in Japan was the subject of the THE ZEN OF BOBBY V, a 2008 Tribeca Film Festival Official Selection. From 2010 – 2011 Bobby was lead baseball analyst for ESPN's Baseball Tonight and Sunday Night Baseball Broadcasts. In 2012 Bobby managed the Boston Red Sox. In addition to his work in baseball and television, Bobby is also a noted restaurateur and humanitarian. In 2002 Bobby was awarded Rotary International and Major League Baseball's prestigious Branch Rickey Award for his contributions to the 9/11 relief effort.

JUAN CROUCH, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

BRANCA'S PITCH marks Juan's debut as DP on a feature documentary. He has worked as Best Boy and Key Grip on numerous features including the 2011 Sundance World Cinema Audience Award Winner KINYARAWANDA and the upcoming Kristen Wiig dark comedy REVENGE FOR JOLLY! A native of the Dominican Republic, Juan is a graduate of NYU Tisch School of the Arts.

CHRIS KURSEL, EDITOR

Chris Kursel was born in Milwaukee, WI. He graduated from Boston University's College of Communication with a degree in Film/TV. As an editor, he has worked at top advertising agencies Modernista! (Boston) and Evolution Bureau (San Francisco) on award winning campaigns for Cadillac, Hummer, Product(REDD), Wrigley and more. He currently works at renowned edit house Lost Planet (Los Angeles), where he has cut spots, music videos, film trailers and other long form content for clients such as Levi's, Toyota, Adidas, State Farm Insurance and Spike Lee. His work, as a writer/director/editor has appeared in Creativity, Adweek, FWA, FuseTV, numerous literary magazines and the Cannes Film Festival.