

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, March 8, 2024

**Patrick Dimon**

**Adam Marinelli**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Whether you are joining us in person or certainly virtually on Zoom, we want to say hi and wanted to offer what I think is kind of a rare opportunity to go behind the scenes with, again, Season 2 of "100 Days to Indy" and also I think get to know two of the best in their industry as directors, executive producers as well.

"100 Days to Indy" goes behind the scenes, as you know, with the biggest stars of the NTT INDYCAR Series as they chart their path towards the 108th running of the Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge. The crazy thing is it's going to be here before you know it. You blink, and it's going to be the end of May.

Both are multiple Emmy Award winners. They have a number of credits in television, documentary, films, docuseries. World-renowned for their storytelling. I told you guys, I'm going to be your agent by the time this is all said and done. Highly sought after creative directors and producers.

Pat Dimon on the right has worked with HBO, NBC Universal, and ESPN. Most notably "Full Swing" and the Netflix documentary on Elon Musk, which is a must-see. Thanks for joining us, Pat. Thank you.

PATRICK DIMON: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: And Adam Marinelli has worked with Netflix, Showtime, all major networks. Produced the Quest for the Stanley Cup. His recent project "God Forbid" just became Hulu's most streamed documentary ever.

If that wasn't enough, they're also currently working on, again, again, the aforementioned PGA "Full Swing," which is now into Season 2. Both are co-executive producers for "100 Days to Indy," both now Season 1 and Season 2.

Pat, we'll start with you. As an old TV guy, the thing that gets my thought and blows me away is the turnaround time

that you guys have for "100 Days to Indy." It's different compared to any other entry in this field. How do you navigate the pace that's required and the timeline and the demands and the deadlines and all that to still put together really what is an exciting program?

PATRICK DIMON: So this show is exciting for Adam and I and the team in that it's a little bit different than how some of our other shows work where everything we're filming is in realtime and leading up to obviously the 500 and the races before it, but a lot of the other shows we work on you film, and then post and edit runs months after the fact, which is great. It has its pros and cons for that.

This show, what gets us really excited, is that you see us out here running around. Things that you'll see on television could be things that we've just filmed a couple of days ago.

So basically as the season gets closer to the 500, the deadlines get tighter, but obviously each race has its own episode. Obviously we're here filming, and we do some filming with the drivers beforehand as much as we can to use in the edit for the shows, and then obviously we film the races. Whatever happens, happens, and that becomes an episode.

What is really exciting is that everything is realtime, and it's a true docuseries in the sense of the word that we're just a fly on a wall. We're following the action as it happens, and we have to make due with that in the edit. That's what makes it really exciting. You can't promote a lot of unreal drama on the back end. It's all happening in realtime.

It's a nice change for Adam and I and the team to scramble and run around a little crazy sometimes. We're filming pre-race, race, right after the race, and then we'll go home with the guys days and weeks after the race, before the races, and we kind of put it all together as it comes to us.

THE MODERATOR: The process is amazing. Adam, I know you have done hockey, golf, boxing, as well as many others. What sticks out to you in the world of INDYCAR compared to maybe some of the other sports you've been around?



ADAM MARINELLI: Honestly the first thing I remember was being at Thermal.

THE MODERATOR: Last year.

ADAM MARINELLI: Last year. Never been to any race, and I remember standing in the pit lane and the engines fired up, and they just ripped out of the pit lane. Keith Malone, who is one of our other producers, we looked at each other like, This is bad ass. It was just like the coolest thing I had ever seen before.

I never experienced anything like that, and it was a really exciting thing for me because you kind of get stuck. I did so much boxing for so long. I did a lot of boxing, a lot of hockey, and then USC stuff for years. It was really refreshing to do something new, right?

Then what I loved the most about it is how competitive the series is. You don't know who is going to win each race. Even in some sporting events you know the team that's going to win every week. If this team is playing this team, you think, okay, it's going to be a blow out.

For me the fun part and the challenging part about it is we go into the race, and we don't know who is going to win, so we have to cast a wide net.

Then we start narrowing our focus down. Okay, let's look and see who the top five in qualifying were. Let's follow those guys. That doesn't even mean anything either because someone can crash out, and someone you think is going to win doesn't win.

Then we have to reverse-engineer the show and after the race be, like, okay, we have to tell this driver's story who we weren't even focussed on because we didn't know he was going to win the race.

It's super challenging for us to work on, but it's rewarding because everything is different. It's not like the same characters every week and you're telling, okay, we told this guy's story last week, and he won again, so now we have to tell his story again. As a creative, that kind of gets boring. We just love telling stories. That's what we do.

And obviously everyone in the series has a great story, so to be able to tell many stories each week is super enjoyable.

THE MODERATOR: One more before we open it up for questions. A question for both have you really. We saw some of the drivers you focused on in Season 1. Any insights to the narrative perspective that you guys are on right now, the tracking right now heading into Season No.

2?

ADAM MARINELLI: I'm sure this isn't a spoiler alert, but I'm sure Josef Newgarden will be heavily featured in the show considering he is the defending 500 champion.

THE MODERATOR: With his shirt or without the shirt?

PATRICK DIMON: Both.

ADAM MARINELLI: Have to give the people what they want, right? Like I said before, we don't know. That's what's great about it. With the partnership that we've built with Indy, which helps us, you have so much great footage.

On golf a problem with us is you have 150 golfers over four days, and you can't follow everybody. You can pick ten guys, and ten of those guys don't make the cut. You are, like, Oh, crap, now what do I do?

At least in this one you have all the great in-car cameras. We have all the coms. We get all your footage. Being able to flip like that is super helpful.

Obviously the main character is obviously Josef. We'll get Marcus's reaction to what happened to him last year. Alex absolutely dominated. There are just so many new faces too, which is great. There are new people that we haven't met yet that we get to introduce the audience to, which we're super excited about.

PATRICK DIMON: I think props to the drivers. They've all been really open to the show and open to us and the crews. That's a trust that you have to build. I hope we built in Season 1, but obviously Season 1s for any shows are really difficult because you're building relationships with the whole team and the drivers.

Obviously the team behind them and everyone, they don't know anything you've done in the past. They don't know you. You haven't really been around. You have to build that trust, and I think with Season 1 we built that trust, and now it feels like a lot of the drivers -- we were just over at autograph signing saying, Hi. They're all excited for Season 2. Obviously we're excited for Season 2.

Yeah, it's a real pleasure to work with obviously Indy, but the drivers and the teams have been really open to us, which access is the key. Being real and being open to access is crucial for these shows. Yeah, thank you to the teams and the drivers. It's been a real pleasure.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. How do you balance telling the racing stories. You**

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**don't want to be a documentary and talk about results; we've already done that -- with all the girlfriends, the wives, the background story? How do you balance that? Is that a conscious thing, or is it whatever story is more interesting that week, you kind of lean there?**

ADAM MARINELLI: Obviously, again, we pick some drivers, and we hope that the results reflect the people we're currently following that week. I think what makes this show great is people don't want to tune in to watch a highlight. You can go to Peacock or NBC, and they'll put that together an unbelievable highlight package of the race.

What we try to do is show the people what they're not seeing. We want to see the wives, the girlfriends, the family members stressed out watching their loved ones go 200-plus miles an hour around a track. That's the stuff we want to show.

When I go back and I watch Season 1, the stuff that still gets me goose bumps are those moments. Ashley Newgarden collapsing when Josef crossed the finish line. Our cameras were right there, and that shot and then Josef coming out of -- I just got goose bumps even thinking about it. Him coming out from the stands and hugging her, that conversation that they had that our mics picked up, that's what the show is about. That's what we try to do. We try that every weekend.

Like last season, we got lucky a lot of times with the wives that we mic'd up. Their husbands warranted that show and that run in the show, and we're hoping to do the same thing this year.

PATRICK DIMON: I think, listen, our goal is if you're not a racing fan, you can still sit with whomever in the room is a racing fan and enjoy the show. That's our goal on a lot of these shows is to bring in the non-die-hard race fans and building stakes pretty much.

I think people will root for certain drivers when they see them in their real life. Like when we went down to Mexico with Pato or we spend time with these drivers off the course, and that builds stakes, and fans get to root for drivers as it's leading up to a race.

We hope to bring in a lot of viewers that aren't the die-hard race fans, and a lot of that is built up in the kind of variate home scenes ^ that we get.

**Q. In the landscape where F1 has their own and NASCAR has their own, what kind of initiatives or ways the NTT Indy Series can stand out where those other series can't?**

PATRICK DIMON: I think Adam brought it up. Obviously what I find interesting is that anyone can win any race, and I think that it's a very international field, so I'm hoping that the whole world gets to see it. It's not just American drivers. It's a very international field.

Listen, I think F1 and "Drive to Survive," we work closely with the folks that make those shows, and the show is incredible, but I think INDYCAR and NTT, obviously I'm not a race expert, but I think the racing and the action is just as compelling. I think the characters are just as compelling and accessible.

I think, like I said, access and relating to these drivers on the screen is something that makes this show stand out.

THE MODERATOR: That international audience is getting a peek at it thanks to the Paramount+ release that happened on February 16th, and the viewing is going really well with that. Already kind of looking back to Season 1 as we look ahead to Season 2, obviously.

**Q. Obviously going back to international, is the plan to stream this internationally quite early on for Season 2, or is it going to be a bit of a delay compared to the American side like it has been this year?**

PATRICK DIMON: I think the plan is -- you'll have to talk to Alex about this. I don't know the ins and outs of all that. I think the hope is that -- obviously it's going back on CW. First episode airs April 26th. Then the hope is to get it international right away right after that.

**Q. Obviously we have a 17-race long season. Would there ever be any intentions of covering more after the Indy 500 is done? Would that ever be something interesting or appealing to you?**

ADAM MARINELLI: Again, that's above our pay grade. We would love to never leave and shoot all season, but it's just kind of how it works right now with The CW and the network and everything. At this particular point in time I'm pretty sure it will be the same six-episode run leading up to the 500.

**Q. What do you think you learned most from going this first season and what you're going to be applying to this second season? What key elements do you think that you learned from and are going to key in on going forward?**

ADAM MARINELLI: That's a tough question. We learned so much over the course of the first season. Obviously most of it's just stuff on our end, things that we wish we did better.

I always believe that every season I've ever worked on for any show that the second season is always a little bit better just because you make a lot of mistakes the first year. Obviously we didn't really -- we kind of knew what we were doing, but we were kind of flying by the seat of our pants and learning on the fly.

I think as far as character development what I'm excited about this season is, like Pat was saying, it's that fine line of bringing in new fans and not alienating the hardcore fans. Obviously I'm sure the hardcore fans last season were, like, Okay, we get it, we know what the Indy 500 is, but we also have to explain that to people who might not.

Last season was a lot of table setting. These are the teams, and these are who are on the team, and this is how racing works, cars go fast. I'm sure there were some hardcore fans rolling their eyes at that.

This Season we kind of did that, right? This season Pat and I are really focused on characters. We want to be in the meetings that we're not supposed to be in. We want to be with the drivers at home more. We really want to build up the lives of the racers and not so much getting into the nitty-gritty Xs and Os kind of stuff.

I think that's the thing Pat and I are most excited about for Season 2, and that's how we're approach this go-around.

PATRICK DIMON: For me and for the team the races always speak for themselves. We cut together. We have all these amazing -- there are thousands of cameras around. We cut amazing race highlights, but for me it's still always building the trust with drivers and teams that we've worked with on the last one, but then opening the door to new drivers and new teams and new characters this season.

So that is on Adam and I to make those relationships and build that trust and that comfort to be sitting in their living rooms when they're having these hard conversations or be in the trucks when they're going over a race plan without giving too much away.

It's really about showing the viewers what our teams and our cameras are seeing in the paddocks and in the pits and at home. I want the viewer to be as if they're standing there seeing and hearing what I'm hearing. That's always my focus is kind of giving everyone that experience.

**Q. As a follow-up, between the changes in the teams and also the coming on of some more interesting rookies, it seems like you're going to have a lot to choose from in terms of story lines. Is there anything**

**out there that seems to be catching your attention?**

ADAM MARINELLI: It's all interesting, right? Like Pat was saying earlier, we kind of have to cast a wide net and shoot as many people as humanly possible.

Obviously the race results kind of dictate our show. Unfortunately, a person who comes in 10th place, as a viewer that's not what you kind of want to see. You want to see the guy that just makes it or the guy that comes so close and comes in second place or the driver who has been working his ass off for six months and then crashes out during qualifying.

That's kind of normally how we pick a lot of our characters is basically race results. We kind of reverse-engineer a lot of it.

We have our eye on a lot of new drivers and a lot of drivers that we filmed with last year that we really liked and had a great story lines, but we never had the time to really give them their shine. I know it's a 40-minute show, but you would be surprised how quickly that time fills up and how much great stuff we get that hits the cutting room floor because we just don't have time for it. I wish the shows were three hours long, but they're not.

PATRICK DIMON: The good thing about being in a second season is we can tell the drama of the second half of the season, a lot of the changes in personnel. Obviously there's been a little drama since we stopped filming at the 500, and we're going to lean into that as much as we can.

We're excited to kind of tell the two-year story arc from obviously last year and then going into this year. So we're definitely going to tell that story as much as we can.

**Q. Talking about drama, how do you avoid overly dramatic portrayals in this series because we know that some motorsport series have been criticized about the over-drama. How do you avoid this?**

ADAM MARINELLI: We don't have time. We don't have time to make anything up. Like Pat was saying, as we get later in the season, we have so little time to put these shows together that we do not have time to craft drama or make things up that aren't there.

There's already enough drama baked in that we don't need to. We don't have time to, Oh, let's make these two drivers hate each other even though they don't hate each other. Then we have to figure out a way to make that happen. We can't. We don't have time.

PATRICK DIMON: But we won't shy away from it. If it's

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there, we're in.

**Q. You do this show, and it's about the 100 days to Indy, and then the guy wins the race, and then it's over, and you don't really have any follow-up until the second season starts. Is there any way to sort of adapt to that?**

ADAM MARINELLI: Well, yeah, that's the thing is adding an episode. Again, that's always up to The CW, and it's also obviously budgetary things.

In a perfect world I would love for us to keep shooting for that week after, and we're going to try to figure that out this year. We didn't do it last year. Again, we made some mistakes last year, and we're learning from those too.

I think this year we'll get on that private jet with whoever the winner is, fly to wherever they're doing their media tour thing. I don't know. We wouldn't have the time to work that into Episode 6, but if we did that last year, I could see us starting Episode 1 with that.

Like Josef whisked away to media obligations. Boom, boom, boom, fly to New York, do this thing. I could see if we did that last year, that would have been a cool way to open our first show, and we didn't.

I think we're probably definitely planning to try to make that happen this year.

THE MODERATOR: We'll wrap it up. Great luck this weekend. Can't wait for Episode 1 of Season 2. Thank you, guys.

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