

IndyCar Media Conference

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Graham Rahal
David Letterman
Mike Lanigan
Bobby Rahal
Chris Hummel
Stephanie Turzanski

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Hello, everyone, and thank you so much for attending this announcement by Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing and United Rentals. I'd like to introduce the folks sitting at the head table. Here to my far left, the 1986 Indy 500 winner and co-owner of Rahal Letterman Lanigan, Bobby Rahal. To his immediate right is another co-owner of Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, David Letterman; the driver of the No. 15 United Rentals Honda, Graham Rahal; the chief marketing officer for United Rentals, Chris Hummel; the executive director of SoldierStrong, Stephanie Turzanski; and the third owner, co-owner of Rahal Letterman Lanigan, Mike Lanigan.

Bobby, if you would share some background and the team's relationship with United Rentals.

BOBBY RAHAL: Yeah, thank you. Thanks, all of you for joining us today. This is a great day for all of us at RLL and United Rentals, and you'll hear a lot more about that. As many of you know, United Rentals expanded their relationship with RLL this last year, very early this past year. They increased their commitment to us, and this is our fourth year together, and it's been a great relationship. We had the good fortune of Mike introducing us to some years ago, and I just am really pleased. The car is a very popular car. The cause is an extremely popular cause. And so it's -- I thank United Rentals for all their support of our team and continued support, and with that, I'll introduce Chris Hummel.

CHRIS HUMMEL: Thank you, Bobby, and welcome, everyone. So about three years ago we started a program with Rahal Letterman Lanigan called the Turns For Troops program, which United Rentals as the official equipment rental supplier to the IndyCar -- Verizon IndyCar Series. We wanted to do something more than just participate a promotion kind of work with



the team, and we found an incredible partner, and Graham obviously is our ambassador, and the whole Turns For Troops where we donate money for every lap that Graham completes, \$50 over the last couple of years. And we donate that to an organization called SoldierStrong that Stephanie will talk about in a minute, advanced technologies for helping rehabilitation of wounded veterans.

Well, last year during May we tried to sort of expand the partnership a little bit, and we're doing the same thing again this year. As Bobby said, we've taken on the prime sponsorship for the No. 15 car for the Indy 500 and for the Grand Prix here tomorrow, but we said we need to do something more with that. So what we've actually done is we've extended our donation of this Turns For Troops, the \$50, to every car that RLL is fielding over the month of May, so that's two cars at the Grand Prix tomorrow with Takuma Sato, as well, and for the Indy 500 obviously adding on Oriol's car, as well. So that adds a bunch of money to the donations, which is great. We think it's an important thing.

But the other is we continued our process that we started last year of you'll see some shirts around, some very specific shirts that are being sold. All proceeds go to Turns For Troops to help veterans, and then we wanted to expand it a little bit this year to bring in more of our own employee base and bring in the community out there, as well, so I know Graham visited one of our branches yesterday, met with a whole bunch of folks. You'll see some promotion and advertising from us. But there's even some things going on -- for example, right now we have a contest going online on social media where there's somebody trying to design why this cause is so important, and we're going to take the winner from that and actually take that drawing and put it on Graham's car for the race. So we're trying to engage the community not just up the donations that we're doing but actually raise the level of awareness, as well. This is a critical cause for us, an important program as part of our broader effort to support our veterans.

THE MODERATOR: Stephanie, if you want to just talk about the impact this United Rentals program has had in the Turns For Troops on SoldierStrong.

STEPHANIE TURZANSKI: Absolutely. So for those of you who don't know, SoldierStrong, we raise money for medical devices, specifically the Exosuit, which you can see our paralyzed veterans -- Sergeant Dan Rose,

who was injured in his truck. They hit an IED, and he is now completely paralyzed. But with this suit, he's able to stand and take steps again.

It's an impact for us to see that we're helping our veterans see more of an impact knowing that United Rentals and RLL racing are helping us with this mission. To have their support and know that they're behind us 100 percent and trying to help see veterans stand and take their next steps forward not only touches our hearts but touches the hearts of the veterans that we're trying to help.

We love that Graham is a part of this, that he is really helping promote this. Love the fact that we have Dave, as well, who has been a big proponent of ours, but just having both United Rentals and RLL help us is just tremendous.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much. What a wonderful program. Dave, if you want to chat a little bit about how special it is for you and this whole team to be able to give back.

DAVID LETTERMAN: Thank you very much, Jerry, and thank you, everybody, for being here to participate in this. As I get older, and I'm not as old as I look - how could I be - but I can't stop talking. When you've had enough, quietly file out. Don't make a scene of leaving because that'll hurt my feelings.

It's been my good fortune to know Bobby for years and years and years and become part of the team, and through that relationship with the team, only good things have come, and I would say that within the last three years, whatever the relationship has been with United Rentals and SoldierStrong, that represents the pinnacle of goodwill that I've experienced through racing and through my -- the fact that I'm from Indianapolis and know all about this race in particular. So it's been a wonderful thing.

But for me, and United Rentals, you can't go anywhere without seeing -- in fact, everything I'm wearing now I rented from Chris (laughter). They have a lovely men's section that's just perfect for this time of year.

And I've met Sergeant Dan Rose, and I've seen him in the -- I'm not sure what they call it, an Exoskeleton, I think, and it helps a man who is paralyzed, quadriplegic -- yeah, paraplegic, quadriplegic -- yeah, paraplegic, who can stand in this device. What I have taken from this is I don't think we're going to -- in a long, long time, because it's not just United Rentals and SoldierStrong and Turns For Troops, I don't think it's going to be in the next couple of years that we find a quick, easy solution for men and women who are paralyzed, men and women who are paralyzed in battle, men and women -- I don't think we're going to find a cure for this, but what it means to me is the awareness that it creates. It calls attention to an ongoing problem. It

calls attention to a problem that has been with us from the beginning of life, honestly. The more attention that is given to this problem, and everybody knows somebody in the military, and when you send that young man or that young woman off to the military, they very well could come home -- if we're lucky, they could come home. They could also come home like Sergeant Dan Rose. So we have this awareness.

And to me, that's the best part of this program is that constant awareness. It's just, oh, yeah, United Rentals, it's SoldierStrong, it's Graham, it's the race team, it's Turns For Troops. It's that awareness.

I'll tell you a story that brings this home to me every time I do it.

In October I went to Washington, D.C., and I went to Walter Reed Hospital. I've been there twice, and every time I go there I have a similar story. I was there 10 years ago. The nature of the injuries that you saw that soldiers from overseas had received was breathtaking. It was arms and legs gone.

Now because of the different assignment, the different commitment, the different level of conflict and combat, they're not as grim. These injuries that you see, they're bad, but they're not as grim. They're not life-changing, they're not life-altering. I was there with a woman who is the junior senator from Bobby's home state of Illinois -- is it Illinois? I thought it was Ohio. When did you move? Do the folks in Ohio know you're gone?

BOBBY RAHAL: Yeah, they know.

DAVID LETTERMAN: Tammy Duckworth, who was shot down flying an Apache helicopter in combat, and she lost two legs, maybe part of an arm, recently had her second child, by the way. She in and of herself is a miracle. So she is with us, and she's mostly in a wheelchair. And the first room you go into, there was a guy who was injured that training accident. So we all go in and we say hi and good luck and let us know if we can do anything. By the time we get to the final patient at Walter Reed, it's a guy who's lost both legs below the knees and an arm. He's 35 years old. He had seven tours of duty, and as he said with kind of a bit of sarcasm, I don't think I'm going to re-up. Easy enough to understand.

So Tammy Duckworth, when she finds out who we're about to see, she says, I'm walking in for this guy. So she gets up out of her wheelchair, and with whatever devices she has been provided with as a wounded veteran, she walks in to this guy's hospital room, and that moment you could see where there had been no hope for this man, suddenly he realized, holy crap, this woman is actually walking. And now she starts talking to him about his injury and saying, you know, you're lucky, because these injuries you have are below the knee. You're going to get prosthetics. You're going to

walk out of here. You're going to have another life.

And this whole process that I witnessed, and it makes you a little weepy when you're right there and the guy's family is sitting there and he's in the bed thinking I don't have a life ahead of me. I'm 35 years old, I've got kids, I have a wife, I have a family, I have a responsibility, what am I going to do. She comes in and within 10 minutes, she changes his life back to the sunny side, if you can use that expression.

And that's the thing that I like about this affiliation is that awareness. You're not alone. Maybe you'll get the Exoskeleton suit, maybe you won't, but there's a whole team of people who are looking out for you, a whole team of people who know about you, and a whole team of people who are willing to contribute to help get you back on your feet.

THE MODERATOR: Wonderful story, Dave, about how much hope this provides to so many, in years past who would have none and now are able to move on with their lives. Graham, if you want to speak a little bit. I hate to have you be the guy that follows Dave --

GRAHAM RAHAL: No, I'm used to it. But no, this is -- I think what Dave said is obviously a powerful thing. I think for us, the greatest joy that we can have in racing, even in many ways even more so than winning, is to have a partner like United Rentals who's willing to give back and utilize our platform in a way that is far more powerful than any trophy may ever be or anything else.

And to be able to change lives, when this program first came onboard, the Turns For Troops -- I think people nowadays that are die-hard fans are here, they know what it's about. They know what we're doing, and I think that's great. From the first year to where we are today, we've seen steady progression in the amount of money that we raised. Last year I think it was \$180,000 that we raised to help our vets. This year, knock on wood, we're going to keep our string going of completing every lap. United Rentals stepping up to help SoldierStrong and to match the donation on continuing with Takuma and then Oriol is tremendous.

You know, I've worked with a lot of companies over the years, and I actually said this last night, but one of the things we're very fortunate in our team is that we work with a lot of great companies that are very generous in this way, and I can tell you that that's not necessarily the norm, even if a lot of us think it is. It's not. So to see United Rentals who's so committed to our team and the sport, to utilize it in a way like this is awesome.

You know, as Dave said, when you kind of live it and you experience meeting somebody, and in my case a few people over the years that have been -- a good friend of mine who actually is going to come play at our golf tournament, which is going to be sponsored by United Rentals, is going to benefit Turns For Troops

and SoldierStrong that we're going to host on the 24th, but a good friend of mine lost his legs in Iraq in -- or Afghanistan in 2004, and I met him through the PGA tour, and he's a scratch golfer with prosthetics.

It's an amazing story. And then I get to meet this guy right here. And Sergeant Dan -- you know, it hits home, if you guys haven't met Sergeant Dan, at some point I really hope that you will, because when you meet a guy like that, it's so powerful to see it and to witness the effects that it has on him. And I mean, all along, I'm thinking of the health aspects of this, right, bone density, getting up, just moving, moving your body. You know, all the health things that are powerful about it.

But perhaps the most important thing that I didn't think about and Dan brought to my attention was just for a man or a woman to be able to stand tall again, just to be able to get up, to be able to walk, to move across the stage. Last year at our big sponsor event before the 500, Dan walked across the stage, and I think everybody in the whole place was completely shocked. Even those who were aware and knew what we were doing, to actually witness it is a whole different thing.

It's been an honor to meet Dan. I stay in touch with him a lot. He's always watching. He's a die-hard fan now, and he's a good ol' Wisconsin boy, too, which is fun. This is a program I'm extremely proud of. We think about it all the time. I strongly urge all of you guys to help us spread the message of the shirts, the donations. There's a lot that we all can do here to make a difference, and through the golf tournament and everything else, I really believe that we can -- I know we can far surpass the number that we raised last year and just continue to help make a difference in the lives of all those who risk so much for you and I. Definitely proud to be a part of it.

THE MODERATOR: By the way, just for you who are doing the numbers, when Chris made the announcement a moment ago of the donations for laps completed for all three cars with Graham and Takuma and Oriol, that's over \$38,500 that they will be contributed based on laps completed here just in that program alone, so that's incredible for United Rentals and Turns For Troops. Let's hear from Mike, Mike Lanigan, who's had a lot of experience over the years and understands how important it is not only to have a sponsor but to have a sponsor that's so involved in doing so many things at and away from the track.

MIKE LANIGAN: Thank you very much, and welcome, everybody. I go back, I was sitting here thinking about my relationship with the United people, and I go back to 1999 when they were just a very small company, just starting out. I think they were in existence for about two or three years, and in the next 19 years, they grew up to be the largest equipment rental company in the world. They're literally the big elephant in the room,

and when I sit back here and think about what they're doing today and giving back some of the successes they've had in the past, it just makes me extremely proud to be associated with them, and I salute Chris for this great idea. I just want to make an announcement, though, Chris, that since you just mentioned earlier that you're going to support every driver we enter this month, I'm going to talk to Bobby about entering 25 more cars. (Laughter.) I thank you in advance.

But no, I come from the Vietnam era, when quite frankly, I'm embarrassed to say, we did not show any respect for our veterans coming back, whether they came back emotionally difficult, with amputees or even somewhat of a normal situation. We did not show any respect or any thanking for what they did. Whether or not -- they didn't start that war, just like the guys today didn't start the war. And when I go back and think about what United is doing to help these guys who make our country how great it is today, you can't get a better feeling. Thank you very much, United. You're a great company. I wish you a lot of success, and everybody, reach in your pockets and grab some money; we need it. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mike. Ladies and gentlemen, we will have a time for a few questions.

Q. Bob, obviously you know about how important sponsorship is, but is this like the ideal template do you think when it's win-win-win for all sides?

BOBBY RAHAL: Yeah, I think no question. I think Graham clearly portrayed it in the sense that -- to have a great cause that not only is United Rentals participate in supporting, but we do through our own way, whether it's running every lap, Graham running every lap, the team giving him a car to do that. Last year, 180,000 approximately. That's a lot of laps at 50 bucks a lap.

And so, yeah, I think this is the kind of thing that anybody would be proud to be associated with, and clearly you meet people like Sergeant Dan, and I'll tell you what, you really feel like you're doing something very positive for a group of people.

So we're very appreciative of United Rentals, both as a sponsor of our team, but in doing this, as well. Couldn't be better.

THE MODERATOR: By the way, just so you know, donations can be made easy by texting @T4T to 52014, and that's texting @P4T, Turns for Troops, to 52014 for donations, and we have a question in the back.

Q. Question to the lady. The money the team is raising in reality, how is it spent? Do you have a priority list to which it goes first?

STEPHANIE TURZANSKI: So we get a list of VA hospitals who are asking for the Exoskeleton device. So how our program works is these Exo devices are

not given to individual veterans, they're given to VA hospitals so multiple vets can use them. So we have a list of VA hospitals that request it, and then we go through that list of priorities for that VA hospital, and then we donate the suit to the hospital.

CHRIS HUMMEL: And that was one of the reasons I think we chose and we started working with SoldierStrong was it reached more people. It was able to actually rehabilitate and work with and gain that confidence that Graham was talking about and all those kind of things for more individuals, so it was a cause that we thought was really worthwhile.

STEPHANIE TURZANSKI: We want to touch as -- reach as many veterans as possible. We don't -- we would love to give one individually to each of them, but in reality, for as many vets that come through the VA system, we want to be able to reach them.

CHRIS HUMMEL: If I can just add, each of these suits cost a significant amount of money, right. It's well over \$100,000 for any one of these suits, so we've raised just about \$300,000 in the three years so far, so we need more to get more suits out there to cover more VA hospitals.

THE MODERATOR: Yeah, no accident, by the way, that the first word is United and the colors are red, white and blue. That says a lot about where their heart is.

Q. Bobby and Dave, with Graham finishing second here several times in the Grand Prix, Takuma Sato, the defending Indy 500 winner, you've got to feel like this year you have a real good chance of taking United Rentals to Victory Lane here?

BOBBY RAHAL: Well, I think we've do. I think we've got as strong a group as any team out there with Takuma, Graham and Oriol. Last year Graham was in great position, got unlucky, got a flat tire. Oriol was right there, too, right at the end, got involved in an incident. Of course, and Takuma won. So I think with the group that we have, we have three very strong prospects for the 500, and pretty excited about that. Pretty excited.

We haven't really had a group like this since '04 when we won with Buddy and Vitor Meira, we had Roger Yasukawa and three guys in the top 10, and we had first, fourth and tenth. We were on pole. It was a heck of a month. As I say, we haven't had as strong a group since then that we do today. So I'm pretty excited about the possibilities.

DAVID LETTERMAN: I just want to add one thing and maybe I was asleep and this was covered earlier. But the focus, the showpiece of this program is, of course, the suit and Dan Rose. But SoldierStrong provides a wide variety of rehabilitation services and emotional care and physical needs across the board. So it's not

only this. I'm right about that?

STEPHANIE TURZANSKI: So the way that we like to position it, Dave, you are correct, because this suit not only helps the physiological aspect of that person but the psychological aspect. So on Graham's point of Dan saying, you have no idea what it's like to stand and take a look at someone, that is a psychological component of this.

We have expanded our mission in addition to the suit we do have a physical recovery program. We're helping pay for the physical rehab of paralyzed vets at a third-party outfit. So that is another program that we've just implemented.

But our biggest proponent has been the Exoskeleton device. And again, both missions are hitting multiple veterans. The purpose of this is not only to help the physiological aspect of it but also the psychological.

Q. Is there any plans to put a paint scheme of the entire car for Turns For Troops or the other organization on one or more races to make the whole paint scheme of the car or fire suits to match that?

CHRIS HUMMEL: So last year we introduced a Turns For Troops car actually here in Indy, and what we've done this year is we've tried to find a good balance where Turns For Troops is always on the car, right, and actually the team's commitment. That's one of the great things about what Bobby, Dave and Mike are doing is really committing not just for us as a partner but they've committed to Turns For Troops, as well. Turns For Troops shows up on every car, and you'll see in the United Rentals car tomorrow, SoldierStrong and Turns For Troops is very prominent and is part of the delivery and the design.

GRAHAM RAHAL: And I think, too, the red, white and blue, the stars and stripes, it's always extremely present on the car to try to continue to spread the message, and that's why this is so remarkable, because clearly United is -- like everybody, they're in this to -- it's our job to bring awareness to their company, right, and to continue to take care of their current customers, find new customers. That's a huge part of what we do.

But yet they are still so willing to -- really if you look at delivery, it's just as much SoldierStrong in many ways as it is the United Rentals car, so it's a pretty remarkable thing that they're willing to do that.

THE MODERATOR: I was told years ago by a wise old man that you cannot live a perfect day without doing something for someone who can never repay you, and I think if you look at this program, you realize that United Rentals, Rahal Letterman Lanigan and SoldierStrong are living a lot of perfect days, and they're giving back -- as Dave said they're giving back

to people who have already sacrificed so much. How special is that for this motorsports connection to be able to make the difference in the lives of so many? Thank you so much for coming, and we appreciate your attendance.