Q. Good afternoon, Kiké.
KIKÉ HERNANDEZ: Good afternoon.

Q. Dave has mentioned a couple of times that around the start of September there was a conscious effort to be better in situational hitting and maybe not swing for the fences every time; not just you, the whole team. Was there a meeting where this was discussed? Was there a certain moment where it was like, okay, let's buckle down and do better at this?
KIKÉ HERNANDEZ: I think that's something that we talked about all year. And obviously, it didn't necessarily work all year long, but I think that coming into September not leading the division, following Arizona or Colorado, I think it was time to either do it now or, you know, maybe not make the playoffs. So it was one of the area where we could get a little bit better, and I think there was an improvement, especially in the last two weeks of the season, you could say. And hopefully it carries on to these next few days.

Q. How much did you know about Max Muncy before you guys were teammates, and when you did become teammates what were your first impressions of him?
KIKÉ HERNANDEZ: I knew a little bit about him. I remember playing against Max in High A, Double A, Triple A. Didn't love him because we had a little bit of differences, his team with our team. But not necessarily it was on a personal side because I didn't really know him. And coming into Spring Training, we heard from some guys that spent some time in Triple A last year talking about Muncy, how he's a good hitter, but he's somewhat blocked in his organization. And we gave him a chance to get back into baseball last year, and so he decided to come back, and you know, just proved that he can do it in an organization like this.

And he raved in Spring Training. He looked great, and it was a matter of is this guy for real, can this guy keep it going? And obviously I don't know if it was like late April or mid-April, whenever it was that he got called up, and he made an impact right away. Day one he went opposite field at Petco, which is not an easy park to hit an opposite-field home run. Here we are, he's still hitting homers first day of playoffs. So he's been one of the best hitters in the league. He's proved that he's been consistent, doing it all year long. If it wasn't for him, we wouldn't be here right now, and obviously that big hit for us last night, pretty impressive night. Three-run homer and three walks.

Q. Kiké, you've joked at times about Walker Buehler's confidence or arrogance, whatever you want to call it. How comfortable are you guys sort of just kind of teasing him about that and then also how important do you think the demeanor is to him being who he is?
KIKÉ HERNANDEZ: It's just something that we've been messing with him all year long. It's one of those things that if you don't put it into play, something's gotta change, you know. But I think he uses it to add on to his confidence and to his poise and all that. And the same thing with Muncy, if it wasn't for Walker, we probably wouldn't be here in this situation right now. And he's been huge.

I remember meeting Walker two years ago in Arizona when I was rehabbing an injury that I had, and he was just -- he had just gotten drafted, and one of the first things that I said was, man, you must be really good because you're a first rounder and even with Tommy John. That's pretty impressive. And started messing with him there, and you could tell a little bit that he was pretty confident then. But it was like, little kid, cute kid that just got drafted in the first round, got a pretty good signing bonus. It's all right to be confident now. But he came up last year. We didn't know what to expect. Obviously we knew his stuff was electric, but electric not always plays in the Big Leagues. So he came up here, and things didn't go as planned, and he went to the off season on a mission to come back this year and prove that he's Walker Buehler and he's the real deal. And so far he's been nothing short of that.

Q. Your dad didn't make the roster, but what influence is he still having with you and the rest of the team?
KIKÉ HERNANDEZ: Well, he said it all year. I mean, we've been saying it for a few years now. He's probably one of the most valuable, if not the most valuable person in the clubhouse. It doesn't matter what he does on the field. Towards the end of like last month, things didn't go as planned, but you wouldn't
know that he was struggling. And that’s the type of person that Chase is and that’s the type of professional that everybody envisions and everybody tries to be.

And you know, I had -- I had probably the best season of my career so far, and obviously I’m not going to say that I didn’t have like my talent, my ability didn’t have anything to do with it, but I give most of the credit to Chase, because the work ethic that I created by being around him was what allowed me to have a pretty solid season and contribute a lot to the team. If he doesn’t play ever again, he already played his last game of his career and here we are today, we got here at noon and we worked out like if he was active, like if he was ready to start a game tonight. So I’ll never be -- I’ll never be done saying thank you to Chase Utley.

Q. You guys had to grind it out this year, week to week against good competition in the division. Last year you kind of ran away with it. I know last year you also had a good postseason. Is the feeling different or do you think you’ve learned a lot about this team by the way it’s sort of had to win this year?

KIKÉ HERNANDEZ: Yeah. I said it when we clinched after Game 163, this is my fourth one already, my fourth NLS title in a row, and this one probably was the most special one. You can say there’s an argument about my first one, my first post-season clincher or whatever. But last year, I mean, it was towards the middle or late August, we were in the middle of like a 13- or 14-game losing streak, and, I mean, we still won the division by like 10 games, which tells you that -- I mean, I’m not going to say we were getting bored. But at the same time we were playing games that we wish we would have had a little bit more meaning to it.

And this year nothing was handed to us. We had to turn in every single game, every single inning, every single out. And you get to know who you are as a person, who you are as a team when you’re going through hard times. And we went through hard times a lot this year, and it seemed like most of the season we were going through hard times. So that resilience, that grit, that grind was what kept us in the race and allowed us to come back. I mean we were 10 games behind at one point, and we were able to make an effort and come back and win the division. And now it’s time to -- the postseason is here.

This is where we want be to. The goal is still the same, to win a World Series. And on paper we have the team to do it, so it’s up to us to keep fighting, keep playing the game the right way and score more runs than the other team.

Q. You mentioned having your best season.

Yesterday before the game, Dave said to us that he can see you as an everyday player now for the first time. What do you think you did to convince him of that?

KIKÉ HERNANDEZ: Hit a lot the last few weeks. I don’t know. You know, I think for like three years now everybody knows what I can do with my glove and my arm or whatever, but it was about putting it together at the plate, and last two or three years I’ve been fighting myself, fighting my brain, you know, trying to -- wanting to play every day really bad and not really focusing on the big picture and focusing -- taking it one day at a time. And you know, with the years with failure, you learn a lot, and this year I think by hanging out with Chase, too, I matured a little bit, and learned how to control things that I can control.

And you know, I’ve been hearing that my entire career, ever since I was 17 and got drafted, everybody telling me control what you can control, and I never really understood what that meant until these last few years that were really hard on the personal side. And, you know, this year I just tried to focus on taking things one day at a time and having fun playing the game of baseball. And I mean, I don’t know. Here we are. It feels good, I guess.

Q. Kiké, I think speaking for the public and probably the people in this room, there was at least mild surprise that Clayton didn’t get the ball in Game 1. I’m curious about what the reaction was for you and in the clubhouse when that news was divulged and what you’ve seen out of Clayton since that decision became public.

KIKÉ HERNANDEZ: My reaction? Man, I don’t know. I think I saw it on Twitter maybe, after the Wild Card game, National League Wild Card game. At the moment I was like, hmm, this is interesting. But, you know, looking back, getting an extra day for Clayton, giving him a little bit of rest, it’s huge. And coming in here the day of the workout two days ago and then seeing him yesterday and seeing him today, he’s been the same guy, you know. Clayton’s dealt with a lot of pressure these last few days -- or last few years, with the injuries and still performing at a high level and doing everything that this club and us as teammates ask of him. And Clayton’s one of my favorite teammates of all time, just not only because of what he does on the mound, but of the guy that he is and the teammate that he is. If you saw Clayton the day of the workout and you saw Clayton yesterday -- you might have noticed yesterday that he wasn’t pitching because you could talk to him before the game. But during the workout, I mean, he was the same guy. He’s a pro, and he handled it as good as you can handle it. And you know, I guess it’s good for us that we’re getting Clayton up one to nothing in the series instead of
putting the pressure on Clayton with Game 1.