

Actors Think Tank
Special Edition with Brad Ingelsby
Friday, August 13, 2021

Friday, August 13, 2021, was a special edition of the Actors Think Tank with writer of the Mare of Easttown, Brad Ingelsby, a native of Philadelphia. Ingelsby's Philadelphia roots, as well as, other places he has encountered, are a big part of his writing.

Per Rich Henkels to Ingelsby, the actors of Actors Think Tank (ATT) slates represent who we are. Each ATT member slated. Per Ingelsby, the slates were wonderful. He admires that actors can slate daily to put themselves out there versus being a writer. Ingelsby said the slates showed great personalities. He commented on having grown up near Argyle Road in Philadelphia. ATT's Tyler McKenzie said he is working with Ingelsby's cousin in Orlando, FL, a cousin whom he could not recall.

When asked about the impact of the Mare of Easttown, Ingelsby said the screenplays he now receives daily are overwhelming. Ingelsby's dad gives his contact information out freely which contributes to the excessive number of materials he receives. Ingelsby said they were still editing Mare of Easttown when the show aired. He said you never know the impact a show will have. Ingelsby said he was happy to tell the story of his hometown and grateful for the overwhelming response.

Ingelsby was asked to explain what "in the weeds" means to a writer. He explained that for a movie it means to write the movie and send it to a director who may or may not be on set, depending on the director. For a television show, however, it means being on set daily, being there for pre and post production, and to edit. It is more intense. Ingelsby said he writes alone, then expands when the cast, crew and all who work on the project get involved and then edits alone. The project is lonely at the beginning and the end.

Regarding when to ask for help, Henkels asked Ingelsby if it is a gut instinct after spending so much time on the project. Ingelsby said it is a judgment call. Certain people you trust for their honest opinion and who this is varies from project to project. The help can come early or late in the project. Some actors he can trust with the script in advance and others not. Ingelsby uses one producer all the time. What he does with the project depends on the person, however, he needs someone he can trust.

When asked how attending the American Film Institute (AFI) reinforced his goals, Ingelsby said after graduating from Villanova University with a degree in Marketing, he attended AFI. AFI gave him an introduction to screenwriting and taught him structure. Ingelsby said he had no writing program when enrolling at AFI. He was using Microsoft WORD to write. AFI has intense workshops that taught Ingelsby how to write and develop a daily routine. He said AFI was an amazing two years.

When asked if he uses the skills learned at Villanova in his writing career, Ingelsby said the marketing degree is useful because he has to sell the script each time; he has to have an awareness of marketing demands; he needs investors; and has to use the business side of his brain. Ingelsby's assistant, Nicole explained that on a day to day basis, she receives the screenplays. Nicole knows the stories Ingelsby wants to tell, so she reads the stories to determine if they are a good fit for Ingelsby. If it does not fit at the time, she may hold it for a future project.

Henkels asked Ingelsby to discuss structure. Ingelsby said he had to restructure some scenes in the Mare of Easttown. He said you have to know that things change in editing. Editing shows what

people want to see, as things work on the page that don't work on the screen, so you have to fix what doesn't work. Ingelsby loves structure, set ups and payoffs, beginnings and ends. Nicole said Ingelsby's best quality is his ability to restructure and that he is patient with himself. Ingelsby discussed how the music around the character Kevin in Mare of Easttown is a cue for emotion, playing in the beginning, middle and end.

Henkels stated that structure for actors is specificity; be who you think the character is. Per Ingelsby, in writing, it is telling the best story. The only way to know if it works is to jump in and commit to the story.

Gabi Faye commented on how grounded and open Ingelsby is, having worked with him on the Mare of Easttown. Henkels called it humility learned at Arch Bishop Carrol School. Gabi also asked about the origin of the concept for Mare of Easttown and the killer in the show. Ingelsby discussed his desires to write about his hometown. He said he uses nuggets from various people and experiences. For Mare he used nuggets from a policeman who worked at a little police station. He said pennies deposited in the bank add up. Ingelsby said he also pulls from his own life. For Mare of Easttown, Ingelsby said the killer had to be emotional enough to get Mare out of her shell. Mare's best friend also lost a son, which got her to the next scene in life.

Henkels asked Ingelsby how he saves nuggets. Ingelsby said he scribbles ideas down daily. Everything is about moments. He gathers information to use in the future, as you can use a character in another story.

Dina Laura shared with Ingelsby that she is writing a plot with Sundance and wanted his opinion about beats and outlines. Ingelsby shared that his goal is to get to the end, that beats remove room for discovery and that he does not use outlines. He discovers the character versus outlines; he lives with the character a while before writing anything. Ingelsby said the fun in writing is heartache and torture.

Kelli McCaughan asked if there is anything he is dying to write. Ingelsby said "Breaking Away." He said it is more an ensemble and that it is easier to market a movie with a star. Ingelsby also said there is now great demand for content.

Lisa Minakowski wanted to know how Ingelsby's family reacts to his writing. He said that they wonder if his head is in the clouds or present at home as he can get obsessed when he is working on a story. Ingelsby said he is always gathering moments, which takes a toll on the family. Regarding content, Ingelsby said there are many ways to get things out there. The currency is a good script, as Hollywood wants something good and hot. Write something you're passionate about. Ingelsby has written about 12 movies that were never made. His luck changed when he wrote something he was passionate about.

Colleen Wyse asked if Ingelsby was influential in the name change of "The Way Back" and he said no. He said Ben Affleck did not want to star in a movie called "The Has Been," so the name was changed. Ingelsby said in fact, almost everything he has written has had the name changed. Rich Henkels told Ingelsby that there would be a takeaway from ATT and thanked he and Nicole for being our guests. Henkels also thanked Colleen for connecting Ingelsby to ATT.

Submitted by,
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