



NOTES FROM ACTORS THINK TANK

10/6/21

Kurt Yue
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5:54-

JUST saw Field of Dreams he finally got around to see + Breaking Bad. finally had time to get to it

- great for actors to know their brand, and frequently says
- Bonnie Gilespi says hit the bullseye, we want to help the casting people see us in the roles we are right for, so he liked our slates.
- I've also heard some CDs say they don't watch slates, so follow directions. FELDSTEIN Casting (they are big) and like separate slates, they just want to watch auditions. if they need to know more, they will MAYBE watch slates.

10:00

Follow directions in submission notes and in EVERYTHING- the framing, labeling, separate files, pay attention. Business acumen is just as important as the actual 'acting' we do. Esp with the under 5's etc... your professionalism is even more important to BUILD THE TRUST FACTOR. Esp when it's between you and someone who DIDN'T follow directions.

Has a youtube channel helping actors- taught self tape workshop recently.

believes in networking esp to help with the isolation, we need a TRIBE, a community to support each other and he loves what we are doing here with ATT.

18:17

loves ATLANTA - bc there is so much production here and it keeps him excited.

He only began 13 years ago, worked in Computer Science, found an acting class at 26 for fun in Cleveland, OH. then got a local agent, booked some local things. He was a working actor there, being paid to act. but it felt like a different universe. When he watched Walking Dead or other films he wasn't thinking he was doing the same thing, now it's surreal.

- loves to watch films live with friends who are on the screen, its inspiring and encouraging.

Works with DRAMA inc. in ATL.

talked about an actor whose career took off at 56. getting leads, and good roles, so keep at it, **we never know when your type will hit.**

23:35

Charles Green was busy in teens/20s, then worked for CDC and gave up acting for decades and in his 60s retired and acting again. Brian Cranston is another good example who hit later in life.

26:00

moving from cleveland what went on:

took 6 mo's off from day job, not married, was able to focus on acting, lets see what happens for income.

decided ATLANTA not as costly as LA, so came to visit-

Came for a visit and friends came too.

in Cleveland he started helping others with SELF TAPES, then someone would come in with an ATL audition and thats how he learned about it. knew of WALKING DEAD/ STRANGER THINGS>

31:31

signed with an agent in ATL prior to moving, his COMMERCIAL demo got him his agent. Here the agents share theatrical/commercial depts across the board and that helped him with is good commercial demo. so then had both agents here. his community keeps him going, watching them work more and more.

35:00

He sees people putting in the work in his acting community and that helps keep him going, not watching major stars work.

37:00

CHECK OUT HIS interview on youtube with an actress he helped, and her career is taking off she is really the star of the film, even though #3 on call sheet. this is inspiring over the last 5 years.

40:10

the difference between going to work and enjoying what he's doing however we DO work with crews n cast that are difficult - but we have to remember that some of these crews/casts on films are working crazy hours on set and need their days off too. LONG days can be part of this gig too, most of the time it's a wonderful feeling.

42:47

UNION work in Atlanta

important for people to KNOW aspects of joining a union, this is a right to work state.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A MUST JOIN.

BC of that, it works well for NON-union actors, keep working union and stay NON union. another advantage to being in Atlanta vs a larger market. you can stay NON union here in ATL and get all the benefits of the UNION all you can't do is VOTE.

I probably did 10 union jobs prior to joining SAG/AFTRA.

Cost is also much less to join Sag/Aftra in ATL.

49:00

took photos / headshots / trained on YOUTUBE U.
grew his PHOTOGRAPHY headshot biz,
the only acting he'd done as a kid was in 4th grade bc he had to, he
was a horse in the play, he was the BACK end.
He walked past this acting studio near his home in Cleveland and
signed up partially because it was convenient/close to home. no
idea of agents / working actors etc...
then set out to

TAX CREDITS:

one reason Canadian actors are making it is bc Canadian
productions get tax credits. doesn't think it's true in ATLANTA.

Working locally is great for logistics/ not the money/ tax credit just
production schedules changing etc... and not having to bring
actors in, but them up.

HIS SLATE

I'm a suit n tie type,
Jeffery Wright in Westworld as a scientist and Sam Neil from
Jurassic Park.
he plays a lot of drs lawyers, etc...

when you're TYPE CAST you are STILL CAST!!!!

OZARK- friend NELSON was a featured background, then this
role grew to a major character.
when you're likeable that also helps get you hired.

conflicting advise will occur all the time and both things can be
true as it is perspectives.

monologue:

He's never been asked to do one outside of class.
prefers a recorded SCENE will be more useful and show more.
transitioning from acting classes to set-
never really was a hard transition for him / first 8 years in Ohio,
and even now STILL GOES TO ACTING CLASSES!

Notes from Actors' Think Tank

9/27/2021

Valorie Massalass

Guest e-mail address:

12:10

Slates are very important. Actors are very lucky b/c they have more control than ever before. You are in control of your slate. You can make changes and fix things. You have the opportunity to present the best you, that you can.

You have a greater advantage doing your own slate. Take attention to every detail. Whoever is watching your slate is watching every detail.

When doing a scene and an action required, your cheating yourself if you're shooting close up and we can't see the action. Widen the lens.

14:32

Your framing is a judgement call based on the material. No one can tell you a specific situation b/c every set of scenes are different. The burden now lies on the actor. You're on your own. Your imagination is all you really have. The burden is on you to be creative when sending in self tape.

In a casting session, no one is going to edit a tape. No one has time. Actors should focus on knowing the material and being off script and being in the scene as much as possible.

17:33

Respect the fact that you're getting an audition. and present yourself in a proper manner. It's important to present yourself in the right possible manner.

People appreciate talent aht comes prepared. Most directors are leaning towards actors with ideas that they haven't thought of. The more creative you can be, the more you can get casting/directors attention. You need to be precise, direct, prepared, succinct, and present. Be engaged.

19:42

I don't consider the bottom the bottom. The minute you get your foot in the door, you're in the business. You have a voice, a say, an eye. Other people are depending on you. Own the position and recognize it as being more important than being on the bottom. The first person you meet at an agency, has a say. Every hand you shake is a person in this business. Doesn't matter what level it is. Look them in the eye, connect and be personable.

21:45

I was always part of a belief system: you can't replace the personal interview. You can't express who you really are b/c someone looks at your tape. It limits how much they get to know you and appreciate you. When you interview with a director, there is a synergy that can't be taken anywhere else.

23:10

People are panicking. Panic is not good. It's a wrong thing for your body to experience. It's equivalent to fear and that doesn't serve you at all.

23:50

The first thing I did was introduce Sutherland to Steven Spielberg. It was his first job in America. It's hard to pinpoint what makes someone stick out. I just liked him a lot and Steven felt the same way. It wasn't difficult. I can't tell you what that formula is. The minute I saw Kevin Costner's first commercial, I knew instantly I wanted to hire him. He just had that thing.

Very key in any interview, is being yourself. If you have to be someone else, you will never pass the test. You have to be exactly who you are. Without any kind of pretense.

My experience has been that the director doesn't see what I see. So I bring in, someone I know is going to be a star, and they wouldn't get the part. To cast an actor in a piece before they are a star is magic. The really good directors, always know the really really good actors. Sometimes it's just about having an interesting persona.

27:45

Sharon Stone came into the room and just dazzled the director. Which led to her being cast in Basic Instinct.

You can't buy genuine. You can't describe it, teach it, put it in a formula... Being authentic and who you are is the greatest thing you can do. "I have to act, be someone else" is a misnomer.

30:15

I think that, when you sit in a room and watch the same scene over and over again, and someone walks in the room and brings something special you can't put on paper, it stands out from the other 15 people who auditioned. It's that one little shining star that comes through the door and leaves a little something behind. You can't just do something to make it happen. That something special is unique. It's indescribable.

Get an opportunity to be the reader in the room so you can watch other actors come in the door and make mistakes. You see the process that they go through that takes them off their game, and see some of the downfalls. That might help actors be a little less intimidated in the room, b/c the more you can be who you are and do the work, the more interesting you become and let casting in. When you're working hard to make it look like magic, sometimes you take away from the magic b/c you're not letting it be.

Being who you are is the most important thing in being in the room.

More often than not, taking all that stuff away and being who you are is what makes you unique. Being unique is innate. Adding to it, is what takes away. The more junk you put on it, the more unattractive it becomes.

35:30

I was in recovery when 911 happened. It wasn't a second starting over, it was a continuation of the first experience. It was difficult. I was in a coma for 3 months, in the hospital for 3 months. I was out of the business for 6 months. Got home and had a job in 1 month. I started over immediately.

When you're independent, you don't work every day. It's never consistent. So being away for 6 months was not so unusual when you're independent.

37:55

I hated being overweight my entire life. Had I been thin and a normal weight, I would never have survived. So there's the moral of that story.

38:30

Social media is a double edged sword. It's a great opportunity to showcase and present yourself but on the other hand it's overexposure. If you use it properly and to your advantage, and promote particular projects and things you like to talk about vs if you overuse it when you're not working it's not as helpful. You have the opportunity to showcase yourself otherwise you wouldn't be able to share..it can be a very wide promotional tool if you know how to use it well.

I always resent when a production company says "how many followers do they have" that's offensive to me, b/c what happens to the actors who aren't paying for more followers just to have a number of followers? I think it's a misnomer. It shouldn't be the criteria that highlights someone. I just think it allows people to be lazy and close minded.

There's a positive to it, but there's also a negative. When a producer says "what are the numbers"...I just think it's another trap.

43:30

The opportunity to leave a great impression --how much more could you ask? You're only going to see so many people for the role, and only 1 person will get it. If someone remembers you, that's a huge accomplishment. Sometimes I would test myself "how many people can you name that you saw today?"-- it's a challenge.

45:00

I can't tell you where you are in life and what you start with, some people just have a quality that you look at them when they walk in the room. I wouldn't want somebody to change them and alter them. But there are some actors that should spend money finding out how to best use themselves. Only actors' can evaluate themselves. And that's the hardest part. If you don't know, at least take an acting class with the best acting teacher you can afford. Rub elbows with the best you can get with. I would want to rub elbows with whoever the Strausberg of the day is.

46:42 - Questions

The less animated you are, the better. Say your name and the agent. And that's it. Don't make it into a novel. You don't have to pronounce yourself. You name your slate and that's it. You're slating. It shouldn't be that difficult. Keep it simple.

48:55

When you're doing a low budget independent feature film, you won't get an agent to submit their actors. Casting directors have to find the needle in the haystack. I rely on those sources --Actors Access.

I think it's imperative if you can, if you're going to read for a motion picture, to get an acting coach and have them help you for that role. That's investing in your career.

It's not shameful to have an acting teacher give you all the clues that you may not have picked up on.

52:00

The joy is being in the room with the actor and director. That's where the magic and process happens-- Chemistry, what's happening in the room, the dialogue between the actor and director. As an observer of that, that is the joy I get out of casting. I don't understand how a director can cast actors they haven't been in the room with. When you banking your project on the chemistry of the actor, and you're not in the room with them? It's just too impersonal. I don't like it.

Being in the room whether you get the job, is another level of growth you get to take with you. That's part of the magic. How do you present yourself, how much time do you put in yourself? Do you give yourself enough time? It's all part of the journey.

56:02

Robert Downing Jr. worked so hard on his character. He just had that character embedded in him. He wanted the role so desperately. He never left the project and the director never let go of him. It was a long drawn out process.

Harrison Ford, Sharon Stone, Michael J Fox, was an incredible person, beautiful person. Kevin Costner, not necessarily a great guy...

59:10

Cathy delivered coffee to Steven Spielberg..those were the good ole days.

My first job was working for an agency in Beverly Hills on Rodeo Drive. I'm greek and (tay-o) he's greek. We had a connection and we became friends. He's my oldest friend. We've been friends for over 40 years. I'm so blessed to have him as a friend. He's a great human being on top of it.

1:01

We make a list, and the director makes choices from the list. Then we check availabilities, and based on that, it would tell you who would end up on the very short list of actors for a role.

1:04:45

The only thing you can do is give us your best: be prepared, do your homework, come to the table better prepared than anyone would expect. To that, you benefit yourself. the better you look, the better we look. We call in actors that we know are going to make us look good. It's a big responsibility. Live up to the responsibility.

