

CASTING

COMEDY

CASTING IS MAKING CHOICES

YOUR CHOICES ARE YOUR STYLE

CASTING IS:

- 90% OF THE JOB?
- YOUR #1 INTERPRETIVE ACT

CLICK TWO TIMES

You will learn even if you cast poorly BUT
You will ENJOY much more if you cast well

Put lots of time into casting. Get started early. Be creative. Cultivate Theatre Students. Be nice to actors

“Casting is the Director’s Draft”

BK

GOALS: to find actors who

- #1 - MAKE THE FICTION PLAUSIBLE
- #2 - VALUE PROCESS OVER RESULT
- #3 - ARE FRIENDS OF COMEDY

CLICK THREE TIMES



Is he an enemy of comedy – or did he make the wrong choice...? in this instance, we'll never find out...but we will consider this question again and again.

First let's discuss the goals we must keep in mind when casting

I. MAKING THE FICTION PLAUSIBLE

i.e. BELIEVABLE
in terms of
the CIRCUMSTANCES

PLAUSIBILITY -- BELIEVABILITY:

“I NEVER BELIEVED HE WAS A DOCTOR...”

“I NEVER BELIEVED SHE WAS ATTRACTED TO HIM”

STANDARD CRITERIA USED

- SEX
- AGE
- RACE & ETHNICITY
- LOOKS: “Anatomy is Destiny” S. Freud

CLICK FOUR TIMES

These criteria all come into play....used clumsily they can result in crude TYPE CASTING

ARE WE GOING:
WITH “TYPE” or AGAINST “TYPE”?

WHAT IS “TYPE” -- IS IT STEREOTYPE? WHEN IS IT USEFUL? WHEN DOES IT LEAD TO CLICHE?
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “TYPE” AND “QUALITY”

ESSENTIAL “QUALITIES”

- do we TRUST?
- do we FEAR?
- do we DESIRE?
- does he make me CRINGE?
- do I want to PROTECT?
- do I/can I FORGIVE?

Qualities are thing about a person... “reads” a person gives off at first that are unescapable,

“he’s not a bad guy when you get to know him..”

CLICK SIX TIMES -- THESE ARE CRITICAL to the credibility of your storytelling

People and actors have other sorts of Qualities as well..

ineffable, indescribable attributes most noticeable when we contrast or compare people

(discuss sexual pref read)

ASSOCIATIVE QUALITIES

- WET
- DRY
- COLD
- HOT
- LIGHT
- HEAVY

CLICK SIX TIMES

I can't tell you literally what these adjective mean in relation to a person but few people have difficulty ascribing them when comparing actors
And finally Where does an actor play in the Orchestra of Life?

THE ORCHESTRA OF LIFE

- WHAT IS THIS ACTOR'S INSTRUMENT?
- WHAT IS THE INSTRUMENT'S RANGE?

CLICK TWICE



ALLISON JANNEY



instrument qualities ---- Allison Janney – is she a piccolo? A bassoon?

WHAT DOES AN ACTOR MEAN TO YOU? MAKE PERSONAL CHOICES

Old soul. -- Eleven year old antonio Banderas - per steve levitan

TO KEEP TRACK OF Qualities and personal associations i keep casting files

THE CASTING FILE

i started it when i was 22 -- soon rejected the keeping of head shots and created an index card system

MARION DAUGHERTY CASTING CARDS

Ms. Dougherty called her casting ideas "gut reactions" but also kept handwritten index cards to help her remember the quirks and talents of every actor she thought might deserve consideration. For one actor, she wrote, "Has eyes like Aunt Reba." For the balding character actor Ed Lauter: "Looks like a lower class Patrick Stewart." For a young Al Pacino, whom she saw in an offBroadway play: "Reminded me of Dustin Hoffman."



Which had the advantage of making me do a lot of work – invest a lot of time into thinking about actors --- I HAD MY OWN ROTISSERIE LEAGUE!
my tennis teacher said i should always be practicing – even when i just was asked to hit the ball back...always practice casting

EVENTUALLY the card file went Digital

Paul Feig 1963 ✓

Aud Ray - STINKERS. deep voice very well spoken very Christopher Hadden who see again for Tommy. Char.

AVD: Boomtown - Mr. Skoff

Goofy WASP, Bruegel face

NAME Feig, Paul
 PHONE
 SEX M
 AGENT Adelson/Baumgarten
 BIRTH YEAR 1963
 RACE Caucasian
 SEEN Audition: Boomtown - Mr. Skoff, Stinkers - Roy

HOME BASE LA
 ACTSTATUS Character
 DESCRP. Goofy, Bruegel face, deep voice, longish dirty blond hair, "Munson", very well spoken, very Christopher Hadden, see again for Tommy.
 SELECTED
 AVAILABILITY

one of the very first things i do after reading a script is MAKE A LIST

LISTS

I make lists of who I can audition and, also, who the IDEAL CAST would be
Here's a list of actors i called in to audition — some of whom you'll recognize

John Michael Higgins
Jacky Paul Goldin
Jim McGuirey
Bruce Norris
Michael Rupert
Matt Mulhearn
Richard Psoll
Billy Macy
Brad Whitford
John Slattery
Tom I Stell
Jonathan Walker
John Goodman
Blum
Sgarabotto
Rob Leonard



ideal casting?

IF YOU COULD HAVE ANYONE WHO WOULD YOU WANT? This can be a handy shorthand --BUT
“if you’re told what to look for – you won’t see anything else”

Juliet Taylor says “inexperienced directors sometimes get quite literal and small. But better directors usually have enough confidence to use what’s in front of them, which is often times what they never expected. Casting is very much that way. It’s the process of discovering what the story’s about. When you start casting, the characters can take on a new life. They can become something you never thought they were. That’s one of the fun things about it. What happens often is a director says something like, “if I could only get Al Pacino” and you don’t get Al Pacino. And then you sort of shift a little to the left and a little to the right and you might have to compromise something, but in going through the process, of saying yes and no, you get to the essence of the part, and that’s the essence of the story.”

Making the Fiction Plausible

“RIGHT FOR THE PART”

SO THAT WAS #1 --Now that you've made the fiction believable by finding an actor who seems "Right for the Part"
Now you must determine How good an actor have you got? and Can you work with him?
TO SUSTAIN THE FICTION YOU NEED AN ACTOR WHO VALUES - CLICK

2. PROCESS vs RESULT can they...

- TALK AND LISTEN
- WORK MOMENT TO MOMENT

Values Process over Result – you want to know if they can
CLICK TWO TIMES

MOMENT TO MOMENT ACTING



Which is the technique that sustains the essential fabric of the narrative...

What do i mean by moment to moment — discuss (image weaving...a skein of fabric...made up of stitches. If you drop a stitch you have a hole who destroys the integrity of the fabric.

- RIGHT FOR THE PART
- MOMENT TO MOMENT ACTING
CHOPS

GREAT! but what about funny? Are all a good actors funny?

3. FRIEND OR ENEMY OF COMEDY?

What makes someone Comedy Friendly? What are qualities that are conducive to laughter?

Class discuss?

Look For Bounce

Look For BOUNCE

When an actor's character hits an obstacle he should seem to BOUNCE BACK
YOU NEED ACTORS WHO BOUNCE BACK WHEN THEY HIT HARD WALLS -- AND ARE HARD WALLS WHEN OTHERS FLY AT THEM...

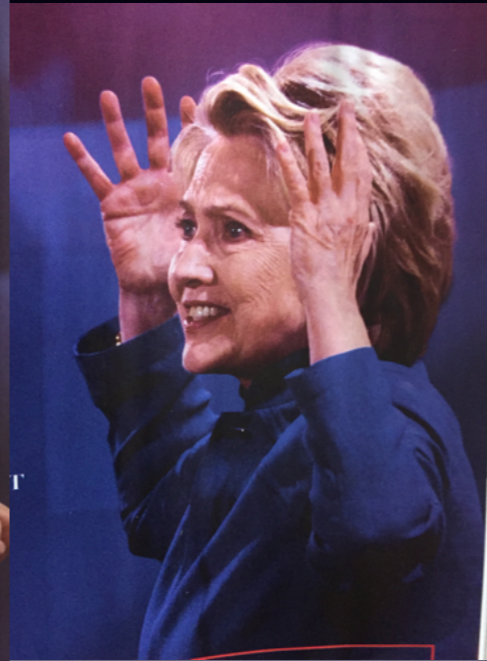
THE COMEDIC BOUNCE

“It’s like a rubber ball:
You have to bounce it against hard walls,
or it won’t come back.”

MEL BROOKS

SO BOUNCE AND HARD DEFLECTING, REFLECTING SURFACES – YOUR ACTORS NEED THIS REFLECTIVE QUALITY- CLICK

Who Has Bounce?



REFLECTIVE QUALITY

AND AT ALL COSTS -- AVOID IT'S OPPOSITE - ABSORPTION WHICH IS THE BLACK HOLE

THE BLACK HOLE OF COMEDY ABSORPTION

FOR EXAMPLE -- CLICK



SADLY IT TRUE – CERTAIN PEOPLE, CERTAIN ACTORS WILL KILL A COMEDY. Some actors find their way to funny places while others do not. **HOW DO YOU AVOID THE TRAP OF CASTING SUCH AN ACTOR? HOW DO YOU FIND ACTORS WHO BRING COMEDY INTO THE ROOM. AND HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE AND USE THOSE THAT ARE IN BETWEEN?**

You Have to KISS a lot of FROGS



SO START CASTING NOW – start thinking, start listing...next week we will discuss and demonstrate our primary tool

THE AUDITION PROCESS

For that we employ the awkward and very very imperfect tool known as THE AUDITION

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PUT TOGETHER A SUCCESSFUL AUDITION?

we will take that up next week