

BLANCA VALDEZ CASTING

It's Tough to be an Actor.

An Introduction... collected statements from people who have been where you are

The statistics show that only a few percent of working actors actually earn enough regular acting income to make ends meet. That means that everyone who wants to be an actor will also have to have another means of support. Nearly all actors have a "real job" that actually pays money for food and rent. Some are lucky enough to have the support of a spouse or a parent but every person should always know that they could make ends meet on their own if they had to. It is just common sense to be ready for the worse case scenario. It pays to have a plan.

The desire to perform, even in the face of difficulty, is strong in some people. There are people and companies who will take advantage of that overwhelming desire and use it to get your money. Watch out for those people. Trust your instincts about people and situations. If someone offers you a simple way...know that it really is not simple. If someone offers you a fast way....know that there is not any fast way. If someone offers you an guaranteed way...remember that there are no guarantees. Just because someone is in a big office and/or has a big name...does not mean that they are not crooks. The best cons are built upon an illusion of legitimacy. Do your homework and you will be able to skip the whole "I was such a sucker" stage.

You can increase the likelihood that you will work by working hard. Also, if you have someone willing to work on your behalf (that is the definition of an "Agent") they can increase your chances by working hard for you. And then there is luck. Crossed fingers and knocked wood hurt no ones chances and cost nothing.

You can also improve your chances by improving your appearance. Fitness affects how you are perceived in ways deeper than appearance. Energy and vigor are implied by how you look and act. Posture is important. How you act when you meet someone, what you do with your eyes and your hands, your manner and your manners, your volume and tone of voice, etc, etc ...all are things that contribute to your being memorable...in a good way.

Anything that you can do that makes you more than you are will add to the tools that you can draw upon. If you are in school...finish. If you have a way to get more schooling, do so. If you can find a way to get any sort of training you should go for it. Literature, Dance, languages, History, juggling, cooking, accents, etiquette, bricklaying, drawing, painting, etc etc etc. Local theater is a great resource for an actors of any experience and provides food for the soul as well as bulk for the resume.

The larger your range of experiences, the broader the range of tools you can draw upon to flesh out your roles. It pays to be ready. Good connections and luck might get you in the door but your ability to be directed and your ability to fill a role with nuance and personality will be what will get you the job. The stakes are high for producers so the casting process is a rigerous search for "the right actor".

You have heard stories about an actor who knew this person who was a producer and then the producer tapped him for a role....well that does happen, but not very often. And if that producer was wrong in picking the actor he/she probably will not have an opportunity to be so impulsive again. The truth is.... that actor probably worked very hard on themselves so that they won some small roles, established a reputation, and were recognized as a professional actor before being chosen for the larger role. That is nearly always the truth behind the Hollywood Story.

This business runs on new faces. That is both a good thing and a bad. It means that you can always have some hope that there will be room for you...but it also means that you can never rest on your laurels. Time marches on. In the commercial world yesterday's "cute teen" might be tomorrow's "Beer Babe". Yesterday's Beer Babe might be tomorrow's "Young Mom", Yesterday's Young Mom has a shot to be tomorrow's slightly less "Young Mom"....and then the "Woman Executive" and then the "Mother of the Bride", and then the "Grandmother". These are the jobs that pay the bills, that might allow you to have a good life while you keep trying to get that great movie role or to be selected for a regular gig in a sitcom or an on screen host job.

So... trust your instincts, be honest with yourself, work hard in your craft and on your tools, and respect yourself and the other actors that you meet along the way. It is a small world...and you never know how the people you meet on the way up might be in a position to help you later.

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