
Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Daniel Gourley - 2008/11/02 13:35

We have talked to actors around AZ and lots have said that it is hit or miss when they walk into a film audition. One girl told us that a director told her to sit and "shut her mouth" throughout the process.

How can you have that attitude as a filmmaker? We have been so grateful to the actors that donate their time to our projects and we NEVER take that for granted. It pushes us to strive harder to be that more professional in our dealings with such prepared and talented individuals.

So here is the question and opportunity:

Actors & Actresses, what do you like and dislike about acting for indie productions? What can be done better? What has been an amazing experience and why?

We want to hear from you so we can make the experience that much better.:)

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Michelle Winters - 2008/11/02 14:38

Well, I have been on certain independent projects where the extras were treated pretty badly. I think basically everyone needs to treat everyone else with respect no matter their position on the film. When people are taken for granted, any people, they can feel insulted and end up resenting the project. As long as the people behind the cameras are supportive of the people in front and visa-versa I think the atmosphere will be positive and the feeling of a team-environment will be enforced.

-Michelle

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/02 15:15

I have been doing this for over 30 years and for the most part, I have had nothing but great experiences from not only major motion picture companies, but also independent and student films...until recently. I auditioned for an independent film a few weeks ago and was contacted by phone and email confirming that I had a role in the film. I show up to the set and sat there for almost 7 hours and didn't do a thing. I tried asking the PA if they had intended on using us and she said don't ask me, I have no information on anything. She also mentioned that if the director hadn't looked at us and pulled us into a shot, then we most likely wouldn't be doing anything. How rude to say this after 7 hours. I was not the only person who had come to this film thinking that we would be playing a role. A lady drove from San Diego after they confirmed her role. Several other people were told they were going to be extras but they sat around and were never used either. A few of us decided to leave after a wasted day in a hot warehouse. I have no issue with a person changing their mind about not using me in a film. What I have a problem with is that I drove 50 miles to this shoot, wasted my entire day for nothing and gave up an audition for a PAYING commercial to do this film and they didn't even have the courtesy to let me or anyone else know what was going on. They could have said "Go home" earlier in the day and I would have been ok with that. I have never experienced this level of unprofessionalism before and it saddens me that this would happen.

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Tamara McDaniel - 2008/11/02 18:16

Well - film making is like anything else - if the group you're working with is working with integrity and is made up of individuals who have good character - that will be reflected in the tone of the set. Unfortunately, sometimes you can't tell until you get there.

For me - as long as I'm being treated with respect and given updated information - I can forgive the snafus that often happen on sets ending up leaving folks just sitting around. My biggest irritation is when they act like you're some kind of pest for asking.

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Brett Ashley - 2008/11/03 01:40

First, thank you, so much for offering us the opportunity to voice our opinion! It is not often that someone who can actually do something about the issue, enlists the help or advice of others. So, again, thank you!

Now, to the questions at hand.

Dislikes:

1. Lack of organization and leadership within the course of production!

a. If you are going to direct, then do so!! If you are in need of help do not be afraid to delegate. Delegation allows other people to feel needed, while also allowing you, as the director, to remain on task! People love it when they are doing nothing and then the Guy in Charge says "Be the boss of this for me" or "I need you to handle this"! It shows you trust in the abilities of your crew, not to mention, gets them another title on the credits page! LOL

2. "TFC" or "Copy/Credit" Does Not Mean "Take Advantage Of The Actors Time"

a. Simply because I am not being paid, does not mean I have nothing better to do. While some accept a project because they needed more for their reel (Not saying anything is wrong with that), others accept it because they see something in either the script or the director himself. Keep in mind some actors, particularly the ones who have been doing this a while, are more selective, with regard to what unpaid jobs they do. Why? Because they feel it should be mutually advantageous for the both of them! Making people wait around for hours just to be in one scene is ridiculous and in my opinion, unacceptable! This has happened to me on several occasions and in only a select few instances, can I remember ever thinking I was lucky to be involved. All other times I felt used and taken advantage of.

Likes:

1. People, camaraderie and like minds!!!!

a. There is nothing like finding people who collectively share a common goal. How beautiful is that thought, everyone working together and striving to complete a task or reach a purpose through action. Through action, not complacency or slander or belittlement, but ACTION!

This may sound funny but, I am not an alcoholic, I have never done drugs, I am not a single parent and I don't have any sort of disease. So...where is my support group???? Well, it took me a while but I found it! It's right here. Arizona's acting community is one of the best...NO! It is the best there is! Everyone is willing to help one another simply because they want to. Not out of obligation or selfish whims, but because they WANT to! Arizona's film industry is packed full of creative, gifted, innovative and prolific visionaries and I am proud to call myself a member!!!

The Greatest Experience I have ever had was finding sites like PIFMG, Zonie, VerticalBlu... etc.! These sites allow actors to, not only network, but converse and see what is going on in the loop. Not to mention, thanks to administrators like Tamara McDaniel, Debbie Overebe and Daniel Gourley (AKA: G-Dog) you get all the perks of their sites just minus all the fluff and scams you would find elsewhere! And these people work hard and are meticulous when it comes to keeping it that way!!!

So, here's to you Arizona Film Industry!!!! You ROCK!!!! And Keep'em Come'in!!!!

Love you guys

Brett Ashley

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by David Staley - 2008/11/03 03:44

I guess I have been lucky so far in my short film history. The productions I have been on have not been to bad a few have been down right fun, a couple have been a lot of work, but all in all I can say GOD I love this Business. Break a leg or I can do that for you.

Dave

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Rob Douglas - 2008/11/03 06:58

well I think I was at the same film shoot and I agree, Most of the people sat all day and were never used. I was close to leaving a couple of times when i was finally asked to be in the scene. I was asked to dress in all black to play a "Mafia" and just before the scene was filmed I was approached by a PA and asked "do you want to be an extra?" I looked at her and said "why do you think i have been sitting here all day" she then told me I was going to be a tourist. I mentioned the role i was dressed for and when asked the director said "no no...no mafia you are a tourist. As it turned out i was dressed like the "mafia" in the scene...but I was a tourist. I can only imagine what it will look like. It was then i was tempted to leave but i decided to do what i was asked. I always try to be the type of actor people want to work with because i am willing to do what ever i am needed for. By the time i was told i was finished, I felt it was a wasted day. I tried to convince my self at least i will have an additional credit on my resume. Then i thought about what that meant and in the end I do not think it was worth it. To all who were there, I will say most of the production companies I have worked with in the Phoenix area (verticalblu included) are great to work with. I think this experience Saturday was not the norm, So do not let this experience sour you on doing film work here. Just my opinion.

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Daniel Gourley - 2008/11/03 10:03

Thanks fro the props Rob!

I think the worst feeling I get is when we have wasted someone's time. For example, we participated in the IFP 48 Hour film fest and because of the 3 minute time constraint we left an entire character on the cutting room floor and we had to substantially cut another character down in time.

It feels horrible to have to tell someone that they didn't have anything to show for their time.:(

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/03 11:17

Yes Rob we were at the same shoot on Saturday. I remember seeing you sitting there patiently as I was. I do agree with you that this kind of experience should not turn people off to doing these films because it is rare.

Daniel, we all understand the cutting room floor. I recently did a 72 hour film shoot and was barely even in the film after the final edit. I spent two nights filming all night outside in the cold. I can't complain because I met and made some good friends and truly enjoyed the experience of working with talented students.

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by David McIlreath - 2008/11/03 11:18

The most fun I have had on a set thus far was a week ago Monday night for Exit Polls, directed by Beth Alspaugh of F + Productions. It is a short for her thesis and had some fun dialogue. We were laughing whenever we were not doing takes. Plus i got a chance to work with the likes of Lanny Rethabar and Aaron Ginn-Forsberg

I was a little leery of doing it that evening since I was scheduled for a 7 am casting call up on the north side of Phoenix the next morning (after getting 4 hours of sleep)for another scene for Middle Men.

The last time I was up at 4:30 am I was just getting home.

I am so glad I was part of that shoot. I had sooo much fun.

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/03 11:25

I agree. I had a blast working on Exot Polls on both Monday and Wednesday night. Tammy, Brett and I laughed it up all night long on Wednesday. These two women are a blast to work wirh and I would hope to work with them again some day! The crew was so awesome and professional. I can't wait to see the final product.

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Greg Attaway - 2008/11/03 12:21

Well, I have been very fortunate. All the non paying sets I have been on have been very polite and always aware of me and other sitting waiting.

The only paying set was at the dog track where a bunch of us sat and sat and sat. lol But then again we were being paid to sit untill called!

Got to meet a bunch of you all too :woohoo:

Can't wait to get back on a set to work and mingle ... :silly:

I'm Voting ME!

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Daniel Gourley - 2008/11/03 12:26

Lol. I am of the same mind. If you pay me to sit in one place...I have no problem with that!

Random question but since it keeps coming up, what do you feel are acceptable daily rates for pay for acting? What is a good day rate for extra pay?B)

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/03 12:36

I was paid \$50 for my first extra role in Used Cars. The last picture I worked on from the 90's was Nervous Ticks and I made \$75 a day. I just recently worked on Middle Men and was paid \$64 for an 8 hour day...but will most likely have to pay tax out of that. All the films I worked on in the 80-90's I was given cash every day. I am not in it for the money but to get paid a little stipend for gas would be cool. I understand that most indie films and student films don't have the kind of financing major pics do, so the money is not the most important thing to me.

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Rob Douglas - 2008/11/03 12:43

I have accepted jobs in LA because I was paid enough to cover expenses. I did an episode of Crisis point on Trutv and after they edited the shoot I was only in a couple of seconds and they showed the back of my head. But I was paid and received the credit so it was worth it.

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by William Connor - 2008/11/03 13:15

No one should act like that for any reason. Lets not forget that its the entertainment aspect that lures most of us and the fun element. Anyone that treats people that way should be boycotted, which we can do at our level very easily. I personnally have had great experiences with the people I've worked with. Check out helenwheels.net/wconnor for a list of whom I've worked with and in the case you get the chance to work with these individuals, you'll have some feed-back! Someone treats me like that I'll walk! And if we all do that, good luck making a movie with-out us!

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/03 14:15

Bill, I'm glad you had a better experience than Rob, myself and all the others had on the set Saturday. :)

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by William Connor - 2008/11/03 14:30

I know what you are refering to! I had no idea people were being treated like that there! I never was treated bad, the only issue I had was a language barrier! We won't do anything for them again!

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/03 15:04

I just feel really bad for the lady who drove from San Diego and didn't get cast as promised

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by james stickel - 2008/11/03 16:15

Robin Cote wrote:

I was paid \$50 for my first extra role in Used Cars. The last picture I worked on from the 90's was Nervous Ticks and I made \$75 a day. I just recently worked on Middle Men and was paid \$64 for an 8 hour day...but will most likely have to pay tax out of that. All the films I worked on in the 80-90's I was given cash every day. I am not in it for the money but to get paid a little stipend for gas would be cool. I understand that most indie films and student films don't have the kind of financing major pics do, so the money is not the most important thing to me.

I was on set for Middle Men on Friday for the picnic scene... were we on set together?

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/03 16:29

We worked on the same set that day, not sure I recognize you. There were so many people there.

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by james stickel - 2008/11/03 16:33

Yeah, there were quite a few people there. I was in a god awful yellow and pink plaid shirt... haha.. but it did get me prime real estate right next to luke so I'm fine with it.

B)

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/03 16:34

Not bad, up close and in the shot while most of us were filler :)

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/03 18:52

Wow, get this. I sent an email to the director on Sunday morning and she just called me. She said had no idea that all of us were sitting around waiting to be used. I'm not sure if I believe that. She said her PA gave her a list of names and she had used all of those on the list. Apparently my name and many others weren't on it even though they sent us an email saying we had a role. Anyway, I did give her a piece of my mind-gently of course so not to be too disrespectful. She says she is going to put out a mass email to all the talent and apologize for the problems. She also claims that she is going to cast me in her next film. I'm not sure if I even want to. I may consider it if she gets herself a new PA who can act respectfully and more professional.

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Tamara McDaniel - 2008/11/03 19:16

Seriously? She blamed the PA? That is the lamest thing I've ever heard - ever! She's the director - the buck stops with her - period. She can talk to whoever she likes after and let them know that kind of thing is unacceptable - but when she gets a complaint - she takes the blame because it is her set and ultimately she is responsible. I don't know how big of a production it was - but it's really irrelevant. I can't believe she blamed the PA - she ok'd the people who hired the PA and 9 times out of 10 the PA is taking their direction from the AD and if the AD has a nasty attitude they will encourage it in their PAs - and who oks the AD? The director! I mean really - to blame the PA? OK - I totally have to go have a smoke and LMAO!

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/04 05:37

She said that I should have come up to her and asked what was going on. Her PA was instructed not to let us near her but she said she had no idea this was going on. I think I scared her when I said that us actors communicate with each other about things going on and many of us were not happy with this situation. I think you did the voiceover for her promo. I mentioned to her several times that this was the most unprofessional set that I had ever been on and that maybe she needed to educate herself on set etiquette.

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Re:Actors! This one's for you!

Posted by Tamara McDaniel - 2008/11/04 08:47

Oh my goodness - I know who you mean and the project...one word - ugh. Nice person really - however, completely and

I mean completely no knowledge of film making. I tried many times to talk to her about how things should go - and got nowhere. Because of that, I backed off the project.

Well - hopefully she'll get some education and actually take it to heart somewhere along the line. She's actually a very nice person - just really needs to learn about film making - in general. Maybe this experience was good for her and now she'll do what she needs to so that the next shoot will go better.

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Daniel Gourley - 2008/11/04 09:19

LOL. I can't wait for the "I Hate Working with Daniel" thread that is bound to start up soon.

Funny thing is Cori and Joy would be the ones to start it!:laugh:

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Brett Ashley - 2008/11/04 10:32

Hey Everyone, Lets Start the "We LOVE Working With Daniel & VerticalBlu!" Thread!!

I have had the chance to be on 2 of Daniels sets and they were professional, timely and most importantly connected! They were all on the same page and new exactly what was going on from scene to scene!!

Thanks Daniel, for being one of our "Likes"!!!

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by David Staley - 2008/11/04 11:45

I have not had the pleasure of working with Daniel yet so when I do we will have a HAPPY set? or a CRAPPY set? LOL

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Carolyn Knott - 2008/11/04 12:24

Whatever it is that I don't like about working on indie projects, I no longer have an answer for. All that matters to me is that I love the work and am finally doing what I wanted to do since I was a kid. About 18 months ago I finally quit my job and committed to acting and after ONLY 2 projects (and 1000 emotions), I'd wondered why I was doing this. I decided that "how" was more important than "why" and that I'd forgotten about making choices. I can bend ears complaining with the best of them but hate wasting energy. Problems/issues are part of it regardless of the type of project. And the unchecked ego thing is everywhere. So I chose to focus and remember that I'm doing what I always wanted to do, and like anything else, there's always the not-so-good. Indie projects allow me to feel really involved; I don't get tense. Less is more. "Feature film" has this "oh wow" thing attached, but I've found that unless you're supporting, it's like being in rush hour. Everything is an emergency; not much feels in sync. Being involved in any creative process as part of a team is ideal to me and this is like the foundation of indie work; it doesn't get much better. Amazing? I was asked for my insight into a mental health disorder that a character had; the director said he knew a lot about it but wanted to know not just what I'd seen/learned as a counselor; he wanted me to explain and then show him how the character would act i.e., body language; then he used my stuff exactly it in the film. gold star on that day.

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Robin Cote - 2008/11/04 13:07

I haven't worked with you yet Daniel but we love the idea that we can come here and purge ourselves and feel better LOL. All kidding aside, I hear you are a great person to work with. Maybe some day I will get to find out :)

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Re:Actors! This one\'s for you!

Posted by Daniel Gourley - 2008/11/14 03:43

Definitely, Robin. If we can get our fundraising organized here we could be casting in December. That would be great!B)

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