



Ep. 62 - Sony Pictures TV Studios' Executive Director of Casting, Amanda Richards - Transcript

FYI: Timestamps listed here are not correct, but know that all of the content from the interview is here.

00:00.00

BRIAN

Hey, everybody welcome back to Brian Breaks character I'm really glad that you're here and you know I'm always excited about our guests or I wouldn't have them on obviously but today's guest I've actually known for quite a few years today I'm with Amanda and she is the executive director of talent and casting at Sony Pictures Television studios and she'll give you a little bit more of that spiel in a second. But more than that. What I know of Amanda and the time that I've known her is that she's just like loves actors loved acting knows about acting is not somebody who just said I want to hold a pen and fill in blanks where actors just have like she really cares about this process and so Amanda welcome to the show.

00:34.90

Amanda Richards

Thank you so much I'm so happy to be here I am such a fan of yours and like you said we've known each other for years and I love what you do and I always recommend actors and tell them that they have to know you and do your and do your program because I think it's great.

00:47.70

BRIAN

Thank you so much Amanda like this is supposed to be about you. But thank you I appreciate I'll take that in. Um, so um, tell us a little bit just to kind of help our audience in case, they don't know your name already Amanda Riches I don't think I said your first net last name I'm so sorry Amanda Richard you guys sorry about that you heard it in the intro you guys. So um.

00:51.96

Amanda Richards

I'm sorry.

01:05.17

BRIAN

Can you give everybody a little bit of background of you know, a little bit of your story and how it all came to be that this is your job.



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01:09.21

Amanda Richards

Absolutely so I have loved acting for as long as I can remember I have no idea where it came from my mom is a teacher my dad works in tech so I have absolutely no idea how it happened but since I watched Barney I was like who are those kids I want to do that that is the coolest thing in the world and i. Definitely asked Cinderella at Disney World when I was like in like the sixth grade. How I could get her job which how I even knew that was a job I don't know so I've loved exactly so I have loved acting for as long as I can remember so I went to a ton of performing arts camps and schools I went to.

01:34.51

BRIAN

Like I mean yeah yeah I did you not believe it was Cinderella herself right? ah.

01:48.38

Amanda Richards

Mars high school I went to Emerson College for theater but quickly realized about halfway through my college undergrad education that I loved acting but the life of an actor was just something that I couldn't live because I love structure I am very I need to know where my next paycheck is coming from just the. Lifestyle of an actor as much as I loved it just wasn't going to work for me. So I said to myself. How do I combine my love of business and structure and acting and creativity and I said I either need to become an agent or I need to become a casting director so I did a ton of internships at both at both places I interned in Boston at Boston Cast I interned in I la I did the emersonn la program I intern for John Levy Casting and Michael Donovan casting and I realized that casting was really what I wanted to do so I started applying after I graduated couldn't find a job to save my life I was working at the olive garden truly for like six months and I finally after a.

02:38.28

BRIAN

Wow. Okay.

02:46.16

Amanda Richards

Events I finally later did a job at a talent agency called avalon artists group with Craig Holsberg who is amazing. Still my mentor to this day so we still have dinner I absolutely love him. But I just knew that I didn't want to be an agent. There was just something about it that I just knew casting for me was more creative.

02:51.39

BRIAN

Yeah.



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03:05.30

Amanda Richards

And I felt like I was more on the actors side when I was when I was in the casting world. So um I actually then saw a video about Emerson College it was about a building they were building and my boss Don Steinberg was in the video talking about Emerson and as soon as I saw her I was like wait. There's something called a casting executive. And there's somebody at stony that went to Emerson I was like I couldn't believe it so I I found her email through you know, different databases I found her email and I just emailed her and said hey I want to do what you do if you have any advice. It'd be greatly appreciated and I just I just was like I need to know you know I would love to hear any of your thoughts and she so of course said, yeah, we'll set something up. You can come meet with my assistant which is.

03:50.56

Amanda Richards

That level would do something like that and the night before I went in for my meeting with her her assistant emailed me and said I'm actually moving into a different department. She needs an assistant if you're interested tomorrow consider that to be an informal interview and I died I died I was freaking out it was like nine thirty at night the night before.

04:02.25

BRIAN

Um, oh my gosh wait were you freaking? Ah God yes.

04:09.44

Amanda Richards

And I'm thinking I'm just going in for a meeting to like get some advice. So so the next to the next day I go into I go into her office. We hit it off I had like this gut feeling I knew that I was going to work for her I just knew and almost nine years later I'm I'm still there and I've you know had a few promotions and it's been. It's.

04:21.72

BRIAN

Mm wow. That is awesome Amanda that is awesome and I want everyone just to track Amanda's awesome smartness of going I know that person's name. They went to my school and going out and putting yourself out. There.

04:28.39

Amanda Richards

And pretty incredible. It really has I Love it. Thank you.



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04:40.50

BRIAN

And then also I know you're like I want to give up the world of vectors and I don't want to have that much I want more structured and like by the way tomorrow is your first interview. It's like you were an understudy thrown into the role the next day so all that acting stuff came to really good use. It sounds like even in that moment for you.

04:53.34

Amanda Richards

Think I do think it's really important for people to remember that that you have to be prepared for opportunities like that to happen because you could think that Oh this just happened for me out of the blue the stars aligned. She's so lucky. Yes I was lucky to an extent but at the same time My resume was ready. My references were ready.

05:07.95

BRIAN

Yeah.

05:11.33

Amanda Richards

I knew what I was going to talk about I knew how much I loved casting I had been casting student films on the side for years. So it's all that preparation I think it kind of can translate to acting as well where you're doing all this preparation so that when the stars do align people may think it's luck but it's really not.

05:24.25

BRIAN

Um, yeah, what is it luck is when opportunity and preparation meet I think or something like that. Ah, that's I'm I'm botching this quote or something so right? So I have a question so and I'm gonna come at you really from the Dummy's mind point right now right? so.

05:32.94

Amanda Richards

Yes, yes.

05:41.64

BRIAN

Tell me that so we see projects and they're like okay this is the casting director and also Sony's is producing it and so the executive director of talent is also involved and we see different names on there. Can you really break down for those of us on the outside what it means when there's a casting director and then there's an executive talent cast director and how those jobs are different. Can you really walk us through.



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05:58.76

Amanda Richards

Yeah, so I'll start from the top down so every television show has a network the network are the people who buy the show distribute the show. It's on their network. So that's your Amazon Apple ABC Fox CBS NBC Facebook whoever is just.

06:00.20

BRIAN

Okay, great.

06:18.11

Amanda Richards

The material and the network at the end of the day they are pretty pretty much the people who make the final decision because it's their network underneath that is the studio and that's what I work for the studio are the people we're almost. We're almost like high high level producers because we're the ones that create the content. The ones that create the content sell the content and specifically for where I work and part of why the reason I love working there is because we're independent so we can sell to anywhere. So if for some reason the show doesn't last at 1 place we can sell it to somewhere else which is really really exciting for us because we're known as the studio that never lets a show die. So the studio.

06:56.20

Amanda Richards

After the network we're kind of the in-between then you have your producers and your casting director that are on the show and they're of course extremely important because they're the ones truly making it all happen and we respect and love them very much I think we especially where I work. We love our producers and our casting directors. So in our department. My boss oversees. Every single show that we do including our international department so she is so busy I don't know how she does it I don't know how she keeps up with her emails but she does and then she has a team of 6 of us that cover specific shows. So I at 1 time probably have 6 or 7 shows that I'm covering as does every single other exact. On the team then each one of those shows has a casting director and that casting director probably only has 1 or 2 depending on how big of the company is maybe a couple more shows that they actually are casting so they're the ones who are putting out the breakdown who are running the sessions who are getting the self tapes. They're watching every self tape and then when they finally have callbacks and then the producers love the actor then the couple actors come to us and we approve either the guest stars. The co-stars. Um, and um and we kind of make sure that um. Kind of make sure that it's all approved and then we send it up to the network and they have the final approval. So. it's kind of it's a lot of hats. It's a lot of cooks in the kitchen but it does get done and that's kind of how we how we're involved so we're like the the step between when you have that producer session. And then you have that studio test at the at the studio.



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08:33.82

BRIAN

So great. So I want to even go even deeper. So for me the actor right? and I'm like excited about my audition or I'm trying to get cast and directors to know me and I'm going out there and do my do and I go to my audition. and and I do a good job for the cast directors who's on the specific show. Do you see every single tape that I also or does this cast character narrow it down to like okay here's the 5 I want to show Amanda or does Amanda even get to see do I just show her my first choice. How does that piece work.

09:01.85

Amanda Richards

I can see every tape which is exciting because we have something called cast it where the casting director will post all of the videos so we can watch everything and sometimes sometimes it does come down to that if we're having a lot of trouble finding a role Sometimes you know we'll woke up. We'll.

09:04.51

BRIAN

Yeah.

09:19.61

Amanda Richards

Basically go you know on a Saturday and watch every tape and you know try to figure it out but most of the time and just because we have so many shows and there's only so many hours in the day most of the time the casting director will probably if it's a series regular they'll send us probably the top 2 or 3 people if it's a guest star. We'll probably see. 1 maybe 2 and then co-stars we generally just see the choice and I generally always always approve those.

09:44.18

BRIAN

Got it. It is the point in that cycle just kind of like we want to kind of make sure that the person like if we I think about it like in terms of my team and the people who help me with my business right? And my my helping co actors right? Like there's some decisions that Brian doesn't need to know about because. Want to empower them to keep making the decisions and move things forward so that the whole world doesn't come to and halt. So what I'm hearing you say is like we want the cast director to be able to like yes we probably are going to improve your co-stars I don't need to get down in the weeds of you trying to choose those people when it comes to series regulars. We're going to want to have a bigger hand in that is there ever like a surprise in this process where. Suddenly you're like cast director you've gotten it all wrong and the network and we as the studio need to tell you you're way off track and we're going to start over again like does it ever go like that dramatic. Okay, okay.



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10:24.76

Amanda Richards

That just made me anxious because that's that's the worst nightmare like Scenario. No I mean my I am so lucky because I I was trained to not micromanage my my boss always said you know you want we hire Great casting Directors. We work with some of the best and we have to trust them. We have to know that they know what they're doing and we have to not micromanage and I really do try to stay true to that and I do I Do think that the reason that that doesn't happen very often is because we do something in the beginning of the process when we first start a pilot called a casting concept call and that's when we get every single creative person sometimes. And presidents of the studio and network on the phone and we truly just go through every single character and have the showrunner explain the character explain what they're looking for explain who they are explain even some prototypes that they may have of oh this person you know is kind of who we based it off of or whatever that way every single person is on the same page. And everybody knows kind of what we're looking for. Yes, does it sometimes say do we sometimes have situations where we bring through people to the network and they say we don't like any of them for whatever reason? Yes, but more and more I think those casting concept calls really do.

11:36.37

BRIAN

Got it and then so this is so fascinating because I think a lot of vectors will be very confused like how does the executive fit into my ability to end up on a show right? and so would you say it most times it sounds like you get to be in the position of awesome cheerleader. Ah, for like cause you're like yes this is a great choice that's move forward with this.? Do you ever find yourself needing to be the person who's like hey you guys didn't see this actor or hey I want to make sure you see that actor is that ever something that has to come up or is even expected from your position or no.

12:08.77

Amanda Richards

It's not so much the whole process I think and what I love about it is. It's not I feel like we're very collaborative as a team and everybody it's casting's a very small community. We kind of you know I Love going to the artios every year because you really do see how much we all know each other and love each other and support each other so it's never it's never a moment of like. You didn't do this.. It's more like hey did you read this person or hey did you do this because we know that you can't I mean there's so many actors now and there's so much content. There's so much to Watch. It's not like we can expect casting directors to know every single actor in the World. We just can't There's just there's absolutely no Way. So I think that you know it's more. Yes, it kind of happens but it's it's done in a much more collaborative Fun way like I'll be like oh my gosh I saw somebody on this show I was watching this morning. Did you read them for this and if they didn't There's no way that I'd be like oh my gosh. How did you not do that I just I Just like did you you know I know I Always of of course am still quoting my boss but she always says who cares.



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13:06.54

BRIAN

Right? right.

13:06.82

Amanda Richards

The idea comes from as long as it's a great idea. It doesn't matter where it comes from where in the process it comes or when in the process it comes in So I think that I think that yeah sometimes we may have to push things along, but it's always done in a very fun and creative way not to say.

13:24.24

BRIAN

Cool Sure sure I'm sure those days that are busier than others right? Um, and then for you who is like um, are you ever able to like personally like see an actor continue to move up or continue to get new jobs because you're seeing them like.

13:24.96

Amanda Richards

Yeah, doesn't get stressful but after talking about that.

13:39.59

BRIAN

Maybe being submitted for a guest or then sell your sales service series regular like are you able to have your own like little list of like I'm a fan of these people in your head even though if you're not like writing it down but do you have that experience.

13:47.30

Amanda Richards

My gosh. Yes, absolutely we have seen so many people move forward in their career. It's so that is the most fun I think in casting and anyone I work with we really love and I truly have almost found like a niche in the fact that I love discovering new talent I love I work on a lot of the shows that we do that are the YA.Base so we're discovering new talent I also created the first ever diverse. Like your showcase at Sony so that's really exciting um so that's yeah that's like I just I'm all about discovering and finding new people and watching people grow because that's what it's all about I mean yeah, it's fun to make lists of um of high-level actors and we enjoy that too. But I think the the real fun in the the.

14:10.80

BRIAN

Yes, that's what I want to talk about next.



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14:29.21

Amanda Richards

Like part of casting is watching those careers unfold.

14:32.14

BRIAN

It's great I love that so it's good to hear that like even in the cause we might think of like well they're an executive. Do they? what? Well how do they even get to be a part and what you're just showing with us is that yes you do get to be such a cheerleader and a follower of people as they're moving forward and so. To to that end. You just said you've created the first ever diverse actor showcase for Sony can you tell us a little bit about the genesis of that how they came to be and also what you know inspired you around this and how it's going.

14:56.26

Amanda Richards

Yeah, So um, basically we during you know during the pandemic and then all of the um things that were happening in the world. A lot of us at the company just kind of banded together and decided that you know something needed to be done and we actually started something called time for change at our. Company and it was It was wonderful and I figured you know how can I contribute What can I do and I've I've had this idea to do the showcase for a while but we are We are you know we are a small and mighty company and it's hard. It's we don't have a ton of you know departments and that are a ton of people in our department so it was. Um, it was something that was really gonna have to be thought out and something that I you know was really gonna have.

15:41.91

Amanda Richards

The right time it really was and I um I put it all together I worked with this wonderful person in our department named Lauren Brunson who was on board from the beginning and we just we just started it. We just started from beginning. We knew that we were gonna have to do it all online. We knew was going to have to be virtual and we just kind of made it happen. We it. There's just there's I mean there's something else. So so basically we pick six actors and they.

15:53.56

BRIAN

Yeah, yeah.

16:00.46

BRIAN

What is it tell us what it is tell us how it work. Ttell us a little bit how it works.



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16:09.89

Amanda Richards

They go through a 3 three-week training program where we bring in casting directors and t.

16:17.75

Amanda Richards

We teach them about Sony we teach them about studio versus network. All these things that we've talked about right now. Um, and then at the end we have a live virtual showcase where we actually show some of their work so that's recorded but then they have a live segment of the showcase where they have a 5 minute interview with our host which is. And really some type of Sony actor which is very exciting. Um and they get to have media training with our Pr department to learn how to do that interview and it's basically it's 45 minutes of just of pure joy and just seeing some seeing some new talent and we blast it out. Hopefully this.

16:48.94

BRIAN

Wow.

16:55.28

Amanda Richards

Year to wide across the industry. So we're very excited.

16:55.96

BRIAN

Awesome! That's awesome and you do it? Annually, it's a new thing but you're gonna do every year. Great yes, second time right? Great great! Well I would thank you for letting me come and teach because I'm excited about that myself I know I do it a couple weeks I'm so excited so good. Um, so let's talk pilot season.

16:58.91

Amanda Richards

Yeah, that's the plan. This is our second time we did a pilot program last year and then this year's our our second time.

17:09.56

Amanda Richards

I'm so excited I'm so excited.

17:15.11

BRIAN

Because everyone's always curious and everyone's always um, also everyone's also saying there's no such thing as pilot season anymore is also what everyone else is saying So what is your tell us what's your take on pilot season. Its existence how it affects your office all that stuff. Yeah.



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17:28.65

Amanda Richards

It's so funny because when I first started pilot season was everything like I don't think I remember January through March it was just we were in the office all the time it was that was almost nine years ago yeah eight and a half so it was I mean pilot season was everything that was when we had just I mean we were working.

17:33.40

BRIAN

Wow when you first started so how many years ago we're talking nine years ago we're talking when you first started? Yeah, okay, okay.

17:46.69

Amanda Richards

Crazy over time we were you know it was actually kind of fun because we all banded together and we were spending like every moment of the day together and we we just got everything done. It was like almost like a ah weird high like it was very because you know you're getting things done and it was. It was fun but now it's completely different now. It is like pilot season is all year-round.

17:59.61

BRIAN

Right.

18:06.49

Amanda Richards

And especially because of the streamers and cable and all the different outlets. We can make content at any time so pilot season for us isn't really as prevalent as it was nine years ago that being said I'm working on a network pilot right now. So it does happen. We. Do you know we do work on it. But it's not like. Same way that it used to be I think that you know in the back in the day people used to come out to la just for pilot season and I don't think that's really.

18:30.16

BRIAN

Right? Got it and so for you in terms then share us a little bit what it's like to work on a pilot then since Pilot season isn't necessarily a season but it's more like there's a pilot here and there's a pilot there. Well how is that different for you than what your the Normal. We're on a show and we're casting every week or every couple weeks we got somebody coming out new on what's the difference.



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18:49.56

Amanda Richards

A pilot. Oh. It's it's fun. It's it's basically starting from scratch. It's like if you were a painter It's like you got your blank. Canvas's I think it's it's super fun. But basically what we do is we start I mean we start by hiring our casting director hiring our you know our team. Getting we have to start from scratch with everything we we have to start with budgets. We have to work with all of our teams to get everything done. Um, and sometimes it's crazy. sometimes you have five weeks sometimes you have ten weeks sometimes you have twenty five weeks so it all just depends on when we have to shoot when the net when we how we sold it to the network when the network.

19:18.85

BRIAN

Wow.

19:27.49

Amanda Richards

Needs it delivered by all of those things come into play. So if it's fast. You know we'll have a casting concept call and like I said go over each of the roles and then hopefully have you know an offer that we want to make by the end of that call that's like that's as good as it can go. That's really exciting. That's a great call. Um.

19:39.55

BRIAN

Wow got it? Yeah yeah.

19:45.74

Amanda Richards

And then we just start by making offers and we start reading people and the casting directors pretty much go full speed to find these characters and it really depends on like I said how much time we have what network it's for all of these different things but we just go. We go full steam ahead and then we're very involved at the pilot. Stage with all of the pilot things. So basically we're helping you know casting will probably show us the top you know 5 or 6 people. We're very heavily involved with the negotiations of the deals when we do test deals and when we also do offers. We're very involved with budget and talking to our production team and making sure everything. On budget and making sure that the you know that everything's in the budget and things like that. Um, and we just we yeah, we just kind of oversee everything and make sure that train the train keeps moving That's what my job really is is to keep that train moving.



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20:31.15

BRIAN

Yeah. And in that process I can see that it is really about We have to find these people to play these characters and so we're really on the hunt. But also that weird War land I Must imagine there sometimes where you're like okay we'll put some offers out and if we didn't get the offers then do you move to this land. Okay, well now we're going to audition people for this role. It must get very like crunchy in that. Base because like we haven't gotten the offer yet. They haven't said yes yet. So We don't know who like you have you have a lot of like holding breath moments in that kind of pilot season Area. We're like we can't make that decision yet because this has to fall into place like puzzle pieces kind of land.

21:05.19

Amanda Richards

Yes, absolutely I mean it's tough because sometimes actors you know, don't want to read if they know that an offer is out which we completely understand so that's that's ah, that's a hurdle sometimes because if you make a bunch of offers and then for some whatever reason those people pass then you don't have any of the.

21:24.70

Amanda Richards

Reads to see so you kind of have to start from scratch in that in that part Some people will read knowing that there's an off-out it all just depends on the actor and the agent and how how comfortable they are.

21:30.69

BRIAN

Got it. What would you tell actors to do? What would you tell actors to do yeah.

21:34.94

Amanda Richards

I Mean if it were me I would just read. You know you never know what's going to happen. So I you know I would just read that. But ah but I also completely respect Why people don't want to so you know it's like it's your career decide What you want to do.

21:39.38

BRIAN

Yeah, got it. Yeah and then right when you're when you're talking to actors who maybe haven't had what they might consider their own pilot season and as we're taking this I mean think like. Um, most trying to take that word out and just say haven't had their own like pilot experience yet. What advice might you give an actor who is suddenly getting their first pilot audition is there anything you'd want them to know.



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22:06.43

Amanda Richards

The biggest thing that I think is super important is to make the audition your own in any way possible I do think that people a lot of times try to do what they think we want and that never goes over well, it's very obvious to tell if someone's just trying to. Play what they think you want to see I think it's always important to do your interpretation of the role bring yourself to the role because 9 times out of 10 the role. The first role that you're going to book but first big series regular is kind of going to be an extension of who you are or it's going to be very much you. Now granted I know that there that's a I know that there's an exception to every rule one time I said this and an actor said to me. Well I always get cast as murderers. Are you saying that I'm that's part of who I am and I was like no, it's not what I'm saying I'm just saying that 9 times out of 10 we see. It's like the person kind of is the character. When you're when you're casting a pilot and in a lot of different ways. So I think that it's important to bring yourself to the role and also to interpret the role in your way and if for some reason it's not what they want to see they'll tell you they'll give you feedback. They'll say and I think it's always more important to do. It's authentically.

23:22.63

Amanda Richards

Your interpretation than to try to be something that that you're not.

23:24.32

BRIAN

Yeah I hear that I also hear like inside of that when a network and a studio is casting a pilot like they want kind of like a sure bet for a series regular because they want the show to run for nine years and so we're like good this person really is what we thought this person like they really feel like they are this per there's like that other. Level of them being hood of what this is So. There's a beautiful freedom in that because the actor can say well if it's I'm gonna do my version of this because that's the best I'm going to be able to do anyway and I hope that the guy next to me does his best version of this because then they're going to find the right person like there's a real.. There's almost a camaraderie or a belief like I can I can. Ah, freedom in that I can do the best I can do and it's going to be enough like I don't have to fill in a blank for them. It should do me? Yeah, so.

24:04.45

Amanda Richards

And how often I've seen so many times people get roles that aren't that were that weren't even in the script or ah, you know they get put to a different role because the the cast director watches them and goes Wow That's really good. It's not this role but it fits over here or maybe there's someone over here that they could play and so like those pilllet puzzle pieces that you were talking about before.

24:15.24

BRIAN

Ah.



Ep. 62 - Sony Pictures TV Studios' Executive Director of Casting, Amanda Richards - Transcript

24:23.87

Amanda Richards

It's so much about that and it's so much about finding the right pieces so just be just be as authentic as you can truly.

24:29.38

BRIAN

Yeah I love that you're saying that too because it also says like yeah because if you give a really authentic audition. Even if it's wrong. We're gonna remember you for something else for the rev of create or or whatever it is yeah um, are there in this new way of like self Tappe world and I'm wondering if like for pilots and self tapes and.

24:36.45

Amanda Richards

Yeah, yeah.

24:47.98

BRIAN

Ah, virtual so many virtual experiences now is there anything you're seeing as trends that are think are good or pitfalls that you're seeing people fall into because I feel like you must have a different experience than some of the other people we've talked to.

24:58.39

Amanda Richards

The virtual world I think is so it's like it breaks my heart because I hate anything virtual. My boss always makes fun of me that I would go to the opening of a pickle jar like I Love an event I Love going I Love going to things but when it comes to Zoom I. Rather do anything else I Just I hate the virtual world and I think a lot of cast directors.

25:17.18

BRIAN

Just so you know Amanda's saying this to me as we're looking at each other on screeners when everyone does really get that visual so police go to Youtube so she can feel like it. It was least kind of live. Ah, ah.



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25:27.41

Amanda Richards

Ah, yeah, but but you know I think a lot of casting directors. We talk about this all the time and like we didn't go into this to watch a million tapes. We we like being in the room with actors we like having that interaction. We like that's a big part of our job. However, it's so efficient to see tapes. You can. More people I think it's probably better for the environment so people aren't running to auditions all day but better for actors as well because you're not having to leave your job at you know, a random time because to run to Santa Monica to go to an audition. You can make a tape in your somewhat of your own time which is which is I think.

25:55.97

BRIAN

Yes.

26:05.61

Amanda Richards

Because actors then can actually have jobs that fulfill them that you know pay them enough to to have you know? ah ah make it worth it. Yeah exactly. So I think that there's pros and cons to the whole virtual world and I think the only thing that I've seen that you know I think I think for the first of all.

26:10.63

BRIAN

Make it worth it. Make it all worth it. Yeah yeah.

26:24.20

Amanda Richards

I Used to say it doesn't matter about your background things like that I think that's kind of changed I think you do kind of need to invest in some in some type of setup because that's just the way the world is going Um, but I think that you know actors just wait I lost my train of thought I'm so sorry.

26:31.12

BRIAN

Yeah, so.

26:37.17

BRIAN

How it's great about the background I think it's such an important one though because I think so many of us are challenged by that or so many actors are challenged by that. Yeah.



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26:44.30

Amanda Richards

Yeah, but the virtual oh the virtual of the virtual of it all I think the only thing I see is people getting too obsessive about how many takes they do like like people will get a self tape and they'll work on it all night and they'll do 27000000 takes and they'll get like they want perfection.

27:01.14

Amanda Richards

And unfortunately like there is there is no such thing as perfection. So it's like I mean there is but it's very it's not almost impossible. So I think that you know you have to remember like do the work and then when you're actually taping it do just a couple takes because that's all you're going to get on set anyway. So even if you make the most.

27:14.60

BRIAN

Yeah.

27:17.88

Amanda Richards

Perfect tape ever if you can't recreate that on set in a couple takes you're That's not good either. So.

27:21.48

BRIAN

Yeah I think there's a coach that I love called her name is Christine Horn she's been on the podcast a couple times and she talks about you get to tape it 3 times if you're if you're not ready to tape it 3 times and you didn't do your homework beforehand. Like then you do your rehearsal do your time and then you could tape it 3 times and move on just this like that might be that's like at a very generous audition. You'd get 3 takes maybe to like get an adjustment you go so 3 times and you submit one of the ones your best ones so that's it's so important is there anything you've seen any actor do that's kind of like daring. Even like wow that's cool. They use their closet. They use their real kitchen or is there anything like that that you can share with us.

27:52.18

Amanda Richards

Yeah I Actually there was a few times that we've seen actors really take like cinematic risks which it's funny because I know a lot of people that say Absolutely do not do that like you have to just do it The the normal audition way. But I've seen people book off of tapes like that.

28:03.90

BRIAN

And here.



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28:08.43

BRIAN

Yeah, tell us what they did. Yeah.

28:11.10

Amanda Richards

Like I saw well I saw I saw I saw 1 girl 1 time actually um, she was actually sitting on her couch on her computer because that's what the character was supposed to be doing. Be sitting on their couch on the computer and it just worked. But I think truly I think that she must have had someone film it that was a great cinematographer like was like worked in film because it was very It was very well done and even like because the the scene was somebody walking into the room. So then they walked into the room. The lights were off and then they turned it on and you could.

28:28.63

BRIAN

Oh really.

28:41.90

Amanda Richards

Her way better because in the beginning I was like oh no, what's happening We can't see her. She's in the dark. She's on the computer I can't see her I was just like oh no and then it turned out to be great. So I think and this is ah something that I always say all the time I think that every single person that you hear and speak to they're going to have some opinion about.

28:46.15

BRIAN

Ah, this is gonna be horrible. Okay.

29:01.42

Amanda Richards

What you should do what you can't do but what I love about this industry is that there is no way to do it. There's no one way. There's no right way. It's all kind of what you feel and what you believe and how you want to present yourself to the world and so if you want to take that risk. It could totally not work. And you could be like okay that was that was silly I shouldn't have done that or it could be the best thing you ever did and you kind of have to just decide in just like in any profession how you want to present yourself to the world. So if you want to you know some people are going to tell you absolutely don't do that. Some people are going to say you have to do that and you have to take what everyone says with a grain of Salt truly.



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29:30.45

BRIAN

Yeah.

29:37.83

BRIAN

Yeah Amanda when I think about this you know because I have a lot of actors who talk about this and say like I tried this or I tried that to me it feels like if it isn't motivated. You would second-guess the actor. Right? Like if it was just a scene where the person is standing anyway and having conversation. Why did you bother to like light your whole kitchen and make it happen in a kitchen where you were just gonna stand there anyway. But if you were actually gonna turn around and touch the stove for a second and then like otherwise we're like what otherwise it can be like you're doing a trick of some kind have you seen any like super flops.

30:03.75

Amanda Richards

Yeah, okay.

30:07.37

BRIAN

This process are you never getting to see the floppy tapes. Ah.

30:08.23

Amanda Richards

I Don't get to see the floppy tapes but but I have I have when I've done when I've back in the day I don't do this anymore. But back in the day when I would do like student films and things I had saw some pretty some pretty gnarly tapes. But you know but listen watch it back. That's the beauty of all this.

30:19.84

BRIAN

Yeah, yeah, any yeah.

30:26.11

Amanda Richards

You can watch it back. So take that risk and we all we all are so virtual now and watch so much social media and so many tapes that you kind of know what works and what doesn't so maybe take the risk and see if it works Ask your best friend ask someone you trust mirror your manager you know.



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30:37.80

BRIAN

Yeah, yeah, and I think that what I'm hearing inside of this is also is feel free to not always play it safe if it's something that's gonna inspire you and let you not not look like I said there's a difference between like taking a risk that is motivated or like taking a risk that makes sense versus I'm just doing this to be weird with. Which case we can all see that you're doing this to be weird that you're trying to be different as opposed to I really feel like this seems going to be better when I put it on tape if I do it like I remember hearing the story of a woman who booked ah booked two broke girls I think it was or a series regular recurring or recurring guest star. And she shot her audition tape is standing in her walk-in closet because she was supposed to be at a store and she was like I just need to pull at the thing and look at it and look back at her and just feel like I can do that and booked off of it and it was awesome. Obviously but part of what is also like her acting wasn't like and now I'm gonna be like shitty acting with this.

31:32.64

BRIAN

Like you can't you have to like live up to your set in some ways I think you can't right? So her rehearsal before that wasn't just like great I'm gonna do this in my closet I'm done like she had a reason why it worked right? So I think it's interesting to think about that and I think too I Really encourage actors to like you said like take the risk and just make sure it's not a kooky one. Um.

31:50.68

Amanda Richards

To be weird. Do it and be weird and then just don't send it in I'm all about being weird and you know I be like if if you need to go and do the scene that way because there's something inspiring you to do it like that do it and then if you watch it and you go Okay, that was just be me being weird great. You got to do it and then make a normal type.

31:52.23

BRIAN

Right? Totally? yes.

32:04.52

BRIAN

Great. Ah what? And also maybe that rehearsal helped you get better at the scene. You know there's also that right right? Yeah yeah, can you tell us a little bit just because the world is virtual like we talked about what is testing look like these days is it still is it Okay, talk walk us through.

32:09.97

Amanda Richards

Exactly yeah.



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32:19.11

Amanda Richards

It's so different it used to it used to when I started. It's I'm I'm like aging myself. But when I started it was such a thing. It was all live and it was I actually kind of liked it because I'm a theater girl and it was almost like a show. It was like we you know everyone would come down to the testing room and the actors would do their scenes and.

32:30.12

BRIAN

Yeah, yeah.

32:36.66

Amanda Richards

I As the casting assistant back in the day would have to like bring them in and announce them and it was like I don't know it was almost like a production in a weird way like a theater production Now it's way more. It's way more tape. So your your producer session where you tape or your chemistry read will then be sent to the to the network and.

32:43.92

BRIAN

Aha.

32:56.22

Amanda Richards

Studio. So basically you don't have to like go in for a test you just the tape gets sent and what used to happen what used to happen is we would be in a room and we'd all watch it together and then now it's on Zoom and the casting assistants will.

32:57.50

BRIAN

Got it. So when you go when? So yeah, do you do it on Zoom then is this happening all? Yes yeah.

33:13.31

Amanda Richards

Will share their screen and everyone will watch the tape together.

33:15.20

BRIAN

Got it. Got it got it and so if I'm the actor who's testing am I testing on a am I I'm testing on Zoom with just the assistant. You guys aren't there at the same time you're gonna watch the tape afterwards got it.



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33:26.70

Amanda Richards

Yes, you will you do the zoom with maybe the producers the casting director. But then yeah, then it gets sent to the studio and network.

33:32.77

BRIAN

Got it. So in all this so I don't want to I appreciate all your time and really what you're shared with amanda pure people are like minds are spinning right now. But if you were to say you know in the past eight and a half years of doing this what has being ah, being in your position and being in this world. What is it? What's the biggest lesson. It's taught you.

33:51.46

Amanda Richards

Ah I actually said this at my thirtieth birthday party. The biggest thing that I've learned is that no one cares as much as you think they do and no one is judging you as much as you think they are and everyone is just trying to get by and everyone is doing this they because they love this and I think that. So often in all of this we get in our heads and we think about oh no, like they they didn't like me or boa but and it's it's truly you know, funny enough I really think I went into casting a lot to kind of know what was going on on the other side because as an actor you don't know and that drove me crazy and now that I am on the other side I'm like oh. It is not as bad as I thought it was no one's sitting there with like you know with like their cigarette being like oh my god she's terrible. This is horrible like it's it's not like that like like I said everything is very collaborative and kind and maybe that's just the experience I've had because I've worked at a very very you know great studio and I've worked on a great. Team and I have a great boss but it's not I just don't think it's as um, it's as intense or pretentious as I once thought it was.

34:58.14

BRIAN

Yeah I love that you said there's a yeah, no one cares I mean we have a song we sing over here Brian Industries which we say no one cares? No one cares no one cares no one cares as soon as you get too far in your head we got to remember people are just not thinking about you as much as you're thinking about them. And it gives you this kind of freedom not in a not a like no one cares about you but in a very like it's gonna be so much freer for you I want to write exactly a man I want to thank you so much for your time today and 2 questions I have real quick if people want to either stay in touch or track. What's going on at Sony especially regarding to the diverse showcase.

35:15.59

Amanda Richards

You're really not.



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35:21.36

Amanda Richards

They're thinking about themselves.

35:32.55

Amanda Richards

Yes, so the breakdown will go well it already. It's already it already went out and is done by now. But the breakdown goes out once a year on on breakdown express and actors access and then as far as I mean you can follow me on social media. My Instagram is Amanda Fta 31 but then you're also gonna see you know pictures of me and my dog.

35:32.56

BRIAN

Can you give us places to do that?

35:50.47

BRIAN

Great. We love that we love we love dogs that Brian breaks character great and annually just everyone knows and they clock it in their head what time of year did that breakdown usually go out for the diverse showcase.

35:52.44

Amanda Richards

Well, but but you sometimes I'll post sometimes about like what's going on. But yeah.

36:01.38

Amanda Richards

This year it went out. Um the second week of February so usually in the winter but that could change things change every year so

36:04.92

BRIAN

Great and they' turn. Okay, great. So keep your eyes on actors access you all know to do that anyway and this people listen to this podcast. So right great Amanda thank you so much for your time today and I know that we will have you back again sometime soon.

36:12.19

Amanda Richards

And you all did we got a lot of submissions.



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36:19.98

Amanda Richards

Brilliant. Thank you Thanks everybody.

36:22.62

BRIAN

Ah, right, take care Amanda alright bye bye.