

RESOURCE:

Here is a YouTube video link for “Worst Improv Audition Ever. Audition Fail.” All credit goes to the original YouTube creator: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rvFExaga98>

ACTIVITY:

Watch this video, and then try to answer the following questions yourself (2nd page has my ideas, followed by my 3rd page notes on the Casting Directors**):

1. WHY is this considered a “bad” audition?

2. WHY is this specifically considered a “bad” improv audition?

3. WHAT would you have done differently?

4. WHAT did he do *well*, though?

MY IDEAS! (“WHAT would you have done differently” is integrated into my answers)

WHY is this considered a “bad” audition?

1. He began slating his name before he was properly on the marker.
2. He did not know where the camera was, nor did he pay attention to any marker.
3. Poor inner visualization. There were many moments where it looked as if he were completely lost in space (no clear eye-contact with any other imaginary character, no eye-line created for what he was “supposed” to be looking at in his environment). Try to develop that inner visualization, and find your eye-line for various elements created in your imaginary scene.

WHY is this specifically considered a “bad” improv audition?

1. He was not mindful of the props! “Fake” drink from a cup in an audition.
2. He did not know where the camera was, nor did he pay attention to any marker.
3. Asking TOO MANY questions of uncertainty causes the casting directors to lose confidence in you. Guiding questions are okay, but not when you are completely uncertain of performing those “random activities,” that are natural in improv.
4. When asked to try something new with the first prop, he failed to escape the bounds of his previous attempt. If you are asked to do something new in improv, DO SOMETHING NEW! Don’t even just “branch” away from something you’ve done, JUMP onto an entirely different tree if you can!
5. STRONGLY AVOID fixating the scene on the prop or suggestion. The props/suggestions are just supposed to inspire a feeling, environment, phrase, etc. When the scene becomes entirely fixated on the prop or suggestion, it becomes monotonous. **Think of a lawn-mower sound when it is trying to start: if that sound lasts too long, it means the lawn mower isn’t working, and has failed to start. AND, that sounds becomes painful to hear after time.**

WHAT did he do well, though?

1. He waited for initiation from the casting directors to determine if a handshake was appropriate.
2. He was polite upon entry.
3. After he was centered on the marker, he did not slate his name. Normally, this would be a negative. However, this is actually the fault of the “casting directors,” who failed to re-ask it of him. This was simply because they left that part out in their skit ;)
4. He was polite when he exited the audition.

****NOTES on the CASTING DIRECTORS:**

As this was a skit planned out to intentionally exemplify a poorly done improv audition, the “casting directors” were acting as well. To get a well-rounded perspective, I want to briefly point out some things the casting directors should have done differently, so that my students understand how they should *not* be treated in an audition.

At the end of the audition when he had the alien head, he was discouraged from being a “fire fighter,” at first. The Casting Directors quickly changed what they had said and said, “okay, sure, you’re a firefighter.” If they weren’t already acting, I would have said they just got so frustrated that they started negating the actor. This is a huge NO in improv; as long as *you*, the actor, are not negating your scene partner (if you have one), or even negating yourself, then *you are doing well*. This is critical in an improv audition.

In any audition, if a casting director should never try to act out how they want you to perform the scene. For example, they should never say, “Okay, but do it like this instead,” and then proceed to *act out the scene for you*. This is extremely unprofessional. Casting directors can *direct*, but should never *do for you*. Good direction is in terms of emotion and good guidance. “Try it again, but allow yourself to feel more restrained,” or, “Try it again, but this time with the given circumstance of having an abusive father,” are better directions that is the *actor’s job* to decipher.