

## **#003 The Candace Maxwell Interview (Transcript)**

Charlie Sandlan (00:02):

Hello, everybody, this is Charlie Sandlan, and I am seriously stoked because today is my very first interview. And I chose somebody that quite frankly I am just really proud of. Her name is Candace Maxwell. And not only is she a former student of mine, but this is a woman who put her career on hold in order to spend two years at my studio and learn how to become a first-rate actor. And since she graduated in 2018, she has been working at a very high level. She could be seen in season six of the Stars series Power, playing Cassandra Haynes, a bad ass political operative, which we will talk about. She can currently be seen on The CW Riverdale spin-off, Katy Keene. This woman is a formidable, wonderful human being. She's a first-rate actor, and we are going to spend some time talking about the beauty of this art form. The show's called Creating Behavior. Put the phone in your pocket, we're going to start right now.

Charlie Sandlan (01:31):

Hello, my fellow daydreamer. I'm Charlie Sandlan, you are listening to Creating Behavior. This is episode three, my first interview Candace Maxwell. We're going to get right to it. Just a quick update though, I am still in fucking Guatemala with Trish, we are going to be here for a while I think, we're looking to get a flight, a repatriation flight out of here into New York in the next couple of weeks. I will keep you posted. That being said, let's just get to the interview, shall we? Let's hear what it's like to audition with a sex scene. Let's hear what it's like to sit at a table with 50 Cent who's directing you in your first major piece of professional acting. So let's get to it. Let's learn something today, shall we? Ladies and gentlemen, Candace Maxwell.

Candace Maxwell (02:21):

Thank you Charlie, oh my gosh. Thank you Creating Behavior and thank you Charlie for having me.

Charlie Sandlan (02:26):

Thank you for being here. I mean, first of all, how are you doing? You're surviving the pandemic, as best you can, I hope that you're safe and healthy.

Candace Maxwell (02:37):

I'm safe, I'm healthy, I'm grateful. That's my new adjective every day, is to just even the shit days approach it being grateful. So I'm grateful. And I'm healthy and my family's healthy and that is the most important thing.

Charlie Sandlan (02:50):

I'm curious, are you feeling like an artist during this time? And do you feel like your creativity or your energy or your just willingness to even do the work given all the stress that we all have to deal with? How are you coping artistically?

Candace Maxwell (03:09):

Honestly, in the beginning, I was very resistant to everything, like I got home and my defenses were up, I was in panic mode. It's kind of a long story, we were planning on going on a family vacation right before, we canceled our trip to Jamaica. And it felt really symbolic to me that trip, not to give away too much about myself, but I think it's important. It's not that big of a deal-

Candace Maxwell (03:37):

I'm turning 30 in July, so you know I'm very big on benchmarks. Thank you, I'm excited. But benchmarks, I always look at life as benchmarks and I'm like, "Wow, for 10 years, I've been chase..." Like 10 years of my whole life by being an adult in New York City and chasing my dream and moving around the world and doing all this stuff, it just felt symbolic to be going home to the Motherland, Jamaica, my mom's country and spend time with my family and connect to my roots. I wanted to give myself a higher purpose of what I want to do and set out to do in my life with acting, with art, with everything. So that, again, felt symbolic and also felt like I've

been working nonstop since school ended. School ended and I was lucky enough for things to just go... So now I just needed time to reel it all in and go, "Whoa, what did I learn?" I needed some reflection. So when my trip got canceled, I was kind of hurt and upset and angry, and I come home and I'm just confused, sad, don't have anybody to talk to. It's like a channel of things just cracked open. So not only-

Charlie Sandlan (04:47):

It's a grieving process.

Candace Maxwell (04:48):

Yeah. And that is what I didn't realize until I was basically, not being dramatic, but we basically fled our apartment, so my apartment is still there in New York and my friends and family are all still there in Harem. My sister and I, we just escaped and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I've just left my whole life there." So then realizing that, "Oh, you don't get to go back tomorrow," that threw me for [crosstalk 00:05:14]

Charlie Sandlan (05:14):

And also now you're still getting auditions and agents are still submitting you for things and you've got to be creative and find the time to do kind of artistic work.

Candace Maxwell (05:25):

Yeah, so I had to dig deep because I was being resistant. And then I finally was like, "Okay, what's the bigger picture?" And after just having some time to be upset and to be angry, and to laugh at myself, then I was like, "Okay, we're going to have to readjust and find the new normal." And I think once I gave in and I surrendered, the creativity is now starting to flow and starting to feel better.

Charlie Sandlan (05:50):

That makes sense. Well, what were you resistant to, do you think?

Candace Maxwell (05:57):

My agent sent me some generals to do, and I was like, "I just don't want to do this right now." I was like, "I don't know how I can get up and act and get in front of a camera and hold myself..." I didn't want to pull myself together. I mean, I'm still struggling with it but I didn't want to pull myself together and be presentable on camera, and I was like, "Wow, what am I going to give them? This raw, unedited, just [crosstalk 00:06:23]-

Charlie Sandlan (06:23):

You'd have to shower and get out of your stress.

Candace Maxwell (06:25):

... which actually on my way down... Yeah, maybe that would have been really interesting for them, but I just couldn't do it. I couldn't shower and get out of my [inaudible 00:06:35].

Charlie Sandlan (06:35):

That makes sense. Well, I'm glad you're busy and I'm glad you're safe. But I wanted to ask you about that decision you made to start to take yourself seriously as an actor, and there are a lot of actors at work that don't ever come to that point, right? And I'll talk about this in a future episode, but this defining moment where you realize, "Oh, I want to act but I really don't know how." And some actors are okay with that, but you made a huge leap of faith in yourself. And can you just talk about why you did that? What was it that you... Because you were dancing and getting paid and having a career and working at a high level.

Candace Maxwell (07:15):

And it was a beautiful career and I could have, again, kept going up that ladder and found my way in a great place, but it didn't feel right to me, I had this urge to find the voice. And acting to me... I latched on to dancing because dance feels very safe and natural and innate to me. And I was like, "Okay, how do I use my voice? I want to step into something different creatively and I've always loved and admired actors." And that's actually kind of how I started in the business, was as an actor as a child, which is cool, but I just felt like fraud in all of my auditions, I felt like a fraud, like

acting auditions. I told my agents, "Hey, I want to start acting, can you start submitting me?" And they'd submit me for little one liners and this, and I was like, "What is this one line? Okay." But I didn't know that you can do so much with one line. I didn't know that. I didn't know that there were tools, like actual tools that you can do to create a character and see a world and be in it.

Candace Maxwell (08:33):

And I just knew that I was like, "I suck and I feel like a fraud." And I was like, "I want more and I want to be great at something. It's important to me to be great at something," and I just made a choice. I was like, "I want to be a great actress. So what does that require of me to be a great actress?" And I wanted to go to school. That was it. I was frustrated with my career, I was at a low point in my life, it looked beautiful on the outside and I was booking work and I'm paid and I'm traveling here and there, but I felt really empty on the inside. So acting just was something I wanted to do and I had put it in the back of my head for years like, "Oh, I'll figure out how to get there," and I just knew I needed something to change.

Charlie Sandlan (09:16):

Would you say that your... It is a drastic change.

Candace Maxwell (09:18):

A drastic change.

Charlie Sandlan (09:20):

Do you think that your history as a dancer, your dedication to craft and technique, I mean, you can't work and audition at that level without really working on yourself every day and going to class, did that influence your understanding that, "I need to train too as an actor."? Because I mean, a lot of actors don't train.

Candace Maxwell (09:43):

Absolutely. Dance is the formation, for me, for everything. It's taught me how to operate in life, it's highly structured, and there's a lot of freedom within it, but you have to follow the structure almost to get to that place of freedom. And it's similar with

Meisner, you'd learn the steps one by one, step by step, and then all of a sudden you have this sense of freedom. So I knew that I needed that, I actually crave structure, I struggle without it. And structure just gives me everything, and I crave that community that you get when you go to dance class and when you're in rehearsals and when your bare bones with these people, when you're creating because creating is such a magical process, and it's so human and you have to break down boundaries to create beautiful work. And that's what I had as a dancer, I always had these amazing connections to people and stories and life because of these other people that I got to create with, so I knew that that was going to be important for me as an actress, and going into a room and just saying lines was never going to be enough for me. I needed to feel something.

Charlie Sandlan (10:56):

What were you doing? It's pre training and post training, right? So you were auditioning before you really started to train and how were you bullshitting your way through those auditions? What were you doing? Do you even remember? How you would approach getting a couple pages and material and what your process was before you studied?

Candace Maxwell (11:21):

My process was terrible. I would just look at the lines on my phone or print them out and highlight them, and I've had some acting classes here and there, so what have I learned from little classes that I dabbled in? I would just say, "Okay, who, what, when, where and why. Who am I talking to?" But very vague, it wasn't as specific as I am now. So I have a process. And the good thing about dance is that I know how to audition, I'm an audition queen. I'm like, "Auditioning is a piece..." I'm a weird person who loves... I love auditioning Charlie.

Charlie Sandlan (11:54):

And dancing is cutthroat auditioning process, my God.

Candace Maxwell (12:00):

Right.

Charlie Sandlan (12:02):

Right.

Candace Maxwell (12:02):

You could be there all day, you could literally be there from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, because there's callbacks, they don't care if you have a job, if you have anywhere to be, callbacks, do it again, try it with heels on, change your hair, we're going to do it in small groups, now you do a solo. It's like, as a dancer, you're fighting for your life literally, you're in there, it's like, if we were the animal kingdom, this is how I look at it. The lions and tigers and bears, it's like, "Go, who's going to win the spot?" So it's very competitive and cutthroat, and it's in your face, everybody's in the same room, so judgment eyes are on you. I mean, it's just you build this really tough skin to survive that world.

Charlie Sandlan (12:44):

And auditioning as an actor must be so much more peaceful.

Alright, so you spend-

Candace Maxwell (12:52):

Yeah, it's a different kind of intimacy, different kind of intimacy, it's different levels here-

Charlie Sandlan (12:57):

So you came to Maggie Flanigan studio, and you didn't really know anything, you had Karen in first year and then you had me in the second year, looking back now, how would you describe your relationship to acting and being an artist after doing all that hard work on yourself?

Candace Maxwell (13:22):

Can you say that again Charlie?

Charlie Sandlan (13:23):

How has your vision of acting, your view of acting and what it means to be an artist, changed after putting in those two years of hard work on yourself?

Candace Maxwell (13:42):



I learned what changed for me was that being an artist also meant being, for me, a full person, a full bodied person and acceptance. Being a great artist, for me, requires a lot of self acceptance and love and hard work and depth. So I don't think anything changed, I just fell more in love with it because I knew all of these things that's why I couldn't bullshit myself. So it's not that anything changed, it's just that my love for acting is deeper.

Charlie Sandlan (14:19):

What do you love about it?

Candace Maxwell (14:21):

Okay, I'm Candace Maxwell. I'm only here once on this planet. And I love that I get to live someone else's life fully, live out a version of myself or tell someone's story that's a beautiful story. I love making people feel things, I love making people laugh, I love connecting, I love making people cry. I want them to feel everything, I want them to be able to see themselves through me and me through them. So it's just a reflection, it's just a mirror of each other, of society, it's what I love about it, it makes me feel free, there were, not anymore, a lot of boundaries on who Candace can be and what she can say and how she can do it. And a lot of that has to do with Christian upbringing and programmings of life, what you learn from your parents, this is what I can say, this is what I can do, if I do this and that, if I do this I'm good. Acting and art and dance and music allows me to be free, and that feels liberating.

Charlie Sandlan (15:35):

Yeah, it is liberating. And I mean, you go through things at school that break you so far outside of your comfort zone, and you do things that you probably didn't think you were capable of at first, and there's just something about the confidence of discovering who you really are and what you're capable of, that when you go into the professional world, I mean, how did what you lived through and the things that you did at the studio, how did that shape your own sense of confidence? And how did that change



you from feeling like a fraud to feeling like an artist that can walk in and fucking just create behavior for a living?

Candace Maxwell (16:20):

To be broken down as much as we were in school, which was necessary because of the tough skin, I came in so hard and I'm completely different because of that program. I know it catapulted a lot of change in my life and a lot of growth and a lot of self work, because you can't go through a program like that without facing yourself. You challenged us and all the teachers challenged us to face ourselves, and you only get out of the program at Maggie what you put in, so I was like, "I'm going to put it in my all." And there were times, even now, I'm like, "Gosh, I wish I'd put in more, more and more," but I gave what I could at the time. I gave what I could.

Charlie Sandlan (17:07):

Well, so you get out, and I mean, you're one of the lucky ones. I mean it's luck and also talent, and hard work. I mean, the doors were presented there to you and you walked in, and what's it mean now to grab a piece of material for you when you get three, four or five pages probably, sometimes more, because you're auditioning for bigger stuff now and bigger parts, how does it change how you approach the work? How has even just your own technique changed and evolved as it's kind of settles in you as time goes on? And light bulbs go off, aha moments, you're like, "Oh, that's what Karen meant, that's what Charlie meant."

Candace Maxwell (17:48):

Yes. I love when I get my hands on a script. I, immediately, have to print it out. Reading it off my phone, it deserves attention and love, so I love when I get my script. I'm comfy, I get in my room, I close the door, sometimes I light candles.

Charlie Sandlan (18:08):

That's great.

Candace Maxwell (18:08):

I know it's weird, but it's like play time for me. It's like play time for me. I'm like, "Who? Where am I going today? Where am I going?" So I close that door, I lock the door, I let everybody know, "I'm working, leave me alone." And I feel like a kid again. It's like my playpen, and I love daydreaming, I love imagination.

Charlie Sandlan (18:28):

You have to.

Candace Maxwell (18:30):

And I get lost with my scripts. I print out the lines and then I get my pen and paper out, I'm just marking it up and I'm drawing pictures and I'm referencing things and I'm creating images in my mind. And again, that's a process, it's only going to get better with time the more you do it, but I just love it. I love going, "Oh, okay, I'm going to need a moment before and oh gosh, I'm going to need to particularize this moment or maybe their eyes or how do they smile at me so that I can feel it." So it's nice to get to do that, it's just play time. And I think if more actors approached it with a sense of like, "This is my play time." That's how I approach all of my auditions. The ones that are good at least, I'm like, "Yes, you know what?" You know what I said to myself before the Power audition, which is terrible, I said, "I'm not going to book this anyway, I'm going to have so much fun with this, please there's no way."

Charlie Sandlan (19:29):

I tell all my students, "Listen, if you can just accept you're not going to book the job, go in there and enjoy the five minutes you get to act, it changes your whole relationship to the audition," and they see that, they sense that, they know that, because they're seeing your personality and your spontaneity. Well, let's talk about that Power audition. My God, we're talking the Stars show, Power, 50 Cent produced and backed, and season six, you play this badass woman, this formidable political operative who is having an affair, Cassandra Haynes. I mean, the confidence, the directness, and I will tell you, this is what I was so impressed with,

with your work, is because I know that in school that that was one of the biggest challenges for you is to operate from that side of yourself, and you had those breakthroughs, right?

Candace Maxwell (20:22):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Charlie Sandlan (20:23):

So what was that like to get that side and to have it... Wasn't there a sex scene to one of the audition sides?

Candace Maxwell (20:30):

Yes, one of my audition sides... Yes.

Charlie Sandlan (20:34):

I mean, how the fuck do you... I want to know how you reacted when you read that-

Charlie Sandlan (20:37):

And just what was that experience like as an actor of being fresh out of school of like, "Oh, my God, this is a seriously legit opportunity here. I'm right for it. I got to function from a part of myself that might not fully be comfortable in me yet, but I got to do it." So take me through it.

Candace Maxwell (20:59):

Yeah, that analogy of school, second year when I had that scene with Vanessa from Tennessee Williams, I will never forget that scene because I wanted to nail it so badly and I was struggling. And you said it, you nailed it, you don't want to... I did not want to operate from that version of myself because it scares me, terrifies me because it's there, but it's also repressed.

Charlie Sandlan (21:26):

It is repressed.

Candace Maxwell (21:27):

It's crazy. Yeah, and I don't want to operate from that place. God forbid I behave like that, that way. I'm a sweet girl from the South, no way that lives in me, and I was terrified of that. And that's something I didn't realize at the time. When I got Cassandra, I read the character description, pull it... You know what? Can I find

it? Do you mind if I look for it on my phone? I would love to see if I can read this character description.

Charlie Sandlan (22:02):

She is a fierce woman, not someone you fuck with.

Candace Maxwell (22:07):

A fierce woman. "28 to 33, sexy wife of a campaign manager, smart, articulate, has it together and very involved in her husband's career. Recurring: nudity and simulated sex required for this role." They tell you from the jump.

Charlie Sandlan (22:25):

Well, let me ask you, when you read those last two lines, did you have any pause? Did it make you more curious, less curious?

Reticent?

Candace Maxwell (22:37):

I was just like, "I'm not going to get it, so why not?" And I don't know why I was so comfortable, but I was just like, "Yeah, I'm fresh out of being a personal trainer." I was like, "My body looks good." Also on a... I don't know. I'm going to be very honest, okay, with my journey of self love and self acceptance which is really important to me being a dancer, the body struggles are intense. There are times when I'm... I've dealt with eating disorders and problems my whole life career because at a young age or in leotards and tights, you're told, "This is too big, that's too small." It messes with you. So, for me, I was like, "Wow, if I could do this," I was like, "I think I'm over it. I think I'm going to allow myself to shed a little of those insecurities." So that actually excited me. I was terrified, but I was like, "Yeah, I want to just get over this body thing."

Charlie Sandlan (23:32):

How many pages did you have on the audition?

Candace Maxwell (23:38):

Believe it or not, three, but they were three of the most challenging pages I've ever gotten, and I'll explain why. So the sex scene, that's my audition. It's literally... Can I read it to you?

Charlie Sandlan (23:56):

Yeah.

Candace Maxwell (23:56):

Does that work? Okay. Yeah, I want to read this to you guys so you can understand what that was and how weird it is to receive this as your sides. "Interior, hotel, room, day, tap, tap, tap, a headboard is clapping against the wall. Reveal, in bed, Tate's bare ass is pumping a pretty young thing doggy style to the same tempo. Cassandra Haynes from his campaign office in Episode 602 is enjoying herself." That was what was said. And we're full on in the scene, we're going at it. And I start to, "Oh, I definitely think we're going to win the Fulton County."

Charlie Sandlan (24:35):

While you're fucking.

Candace Maxwell (24:36):

And then we still were having a conversation. Yes. So me as an actress, I was like, "Okay," I'm going to tell you what I did, I got in my room, I've set up my room all up. I was like, "Come on Candace, Meisner actress, what would you do?" And I basically practiced the scene myself.

Charlie Sandlan (24:56):

Well, how did you do it? Did you bend over a chair? I mean, what did you do?

Candace Maxwell (25:00):

Well, okay, so that was me rehearsing it, but we're at the day of the audition now, I get in the room, I do my relaxation technique immediately, signed in, I'm ready to go. Lay down in the chair, the couch, tilt my head back, started to breathe, and I was just like, "Just relax." So movement and voice-

Charlie Sandlan (25:17):

Amen.

Candace Maxwell (25:17):

... thank you for all those full jams. Nice deep breaths where I had to relax my body. There was no way I was going to do that with a

tense body. Walked in, casting director was like, "Wow, you're very calm." I was like, "Yeah, I'm not going to stress myself out over this." She goes, "Okay, great. Here you go." And I had the paper in my hand, I got the sides the day before, literally a day or two before, and that day that I auditioned, I was leaving to go to Ireland with my family on vacation. So literally that morning I audition, that afternoon I'm on a flight. So I was like, "Whatever, not going to get it," chilled out, had my sides. She's like, "Okay, go." I'm standing in the room like, "How am I going to do this?" And I was like, "Hi." I was like, "Do you mind if I grab chair?" Walked over, grabbed the chair, put it right in the middle of the room in front of the camera. "Is this good? Is this where you want it?"

Charlie Sandlan (26:05):

Absolutely.

Candace Maxwell (26:05):

So I had to take a little bit of control because she was giving me no instructions, which is almost very smart in her part because she wanted to see what I was going to do. And I was like, "Oh, this is my chance to show you what I would do." So I grabbed the chair, I straddled it, I said, "Begin to move, just be in the scene." And I looked her dead in the eyes and I did the scene with her. And she said, "Okay, cool." And then we went to the next scene.

Charlie Sandlan (26:31):

And that was it, then you left and then how did you feel about what you did?

Candace Maxwell (26:41):

It's crazy.

Charlie Sandlan (26:41):

You made an ass out of yourself, your career is over.

Candace Maxwell (26:48):

I was like, "What did you just do?" I was like, "Get on the flight, go to Ireland, go have a good time with your family. This is not

happening." And I went on the flight and I went to Ireland and I went on vacation, and then I got the call two days later.

Charlie Sandlan (26:58):

Off of that one audition?

Candace Maxwell (27:00):

That was it.

Charlie Sandlan (27:00):

Well, so-

Candace Maxwell (27:02):

That was it.

Charlie Sandlan (27:04):

Are you kidding?

Candace Maxwell (27:04):

Did not have a callback.

Charlie Sandlan (27:06):

And how many episodes did you shoot?

Candace Maxwell (27:10):

No, that audition [inaudible 00:27:10] and then that one episode turned into me doing three, and they beautifully spread my character out through the season, I got to Episode 603 in the beginning, 607 right in the middle, and then 603, 607 and I think 10 or 11, so they really spread my character out, which was really nice.

Charlie Sandlan (27:34):

So what was it like showing up on a set like that? You're fresh out of school, you're trying to put it all together for yourself, it must have felt surreal.

Candace Maxwell (27:45):

Very. My absolute first role out of school was a recurring character on Power. 50 Cent's from Queens, from my neighborhood. I'm like, "Whoa." Courtney Kemp is this badass woman show runner and I'm opposite Larenz Tate, who was in like every movie, especially as a black actor, but just overall his body of work, I'm like, "Is this real life?" So I walk into the table read, nothing feels



real. I get on the subway and then I take the bus over to Steiner Studio, my backpack and I was just like, "Oh my God, how should I [inaudible 00:28:28] me in a black shirt, black jeans."

Charlie Sandlan (28:32):

So what was it like? You actually now have to work, it's time for the table read and you were trained a certain way and so just the artistry, the art of just, "Okay, what do I do with this table read?" What was that like?

Candace Maxwell (28:48):

That was intimidating to be honest. Because, again, all the factors, my first job, my first table read, the caliber, the stars, the pressure, I don't want to mess up, there was a lot going on in my mind. But again, where's the artist in all of that, and that was just going back to the training of, "Okay, this is not about you right now, you serve a bigger purpose, the story, and you have to execute what you did in the audition or more." And I knew that regardless of that pressure, that's my job as an actress. And not only about proving myself, because obviously I wanted to do a great job, but I felt the pressure of, "Wow, this is my first role and they're trusting me with this." So it felt very precious. So I prepared and highlighted and made notes, and gave it my all. That's all you could do in that moment, but it seemed to have worked because they were laughing, and we're not even... I was trying, I was just like, "Just stay in it. Just stay in it and do what you have to do." And it just felt like, Charlie, "This is my chance. I cannot be scared," I can be scared on the inside, but this is my chance.

Charlie Sandlan (30:04):

Yeah, it was.

Candace Maxwell (30:06):

So I'm going to give it my all.

Charlie Sandlan (30:10):

Absolutely. And ultimately, I mean, you're trained, you just go back to the fundamentals, you listen, you put your attention on the

other person, you take in, act before you think, all that stuff that you know how to do.

Candace Maxwell (30:23):

Yeah. And it felt good.

Charlie Sandlan (30:25):

Doesn't it? Didn't it? I bet.

Charlie Sandlan (30:27):

And they were laughing, were you just thrown off by that?

Candace Maxwell (30:34):

It's funny because... I don't know, the scene ended up being so funny when we actually shot the scene. I've got to tell you about that, because they kept saying like, "She's really funny." We had some takes that one of the producers said to me, "I can't believe this didn't make it." And that was because we were being spontaneous and you help but laugh in some of the moments, or like I slipped one time and I was like, "This is just hilarious."

Charlie Sandlan (31:08):

Did you know that you were going to rehearse?

Candace Maxwell (31:09):

And I loved it. I loved that they [inaudible 00:31:10].

Charlie Sandlan (31:09):

Did you know that... ?

Candace Maxwell (31:09):

Yes, they did.

Charlie Sandlan (31:12):

You did, you knew that coming in that you were going to rehearse this scene, so you weren't thrown off by that.

Candace Maxwell (31:17):

I wasn't thrown off. So I knew that the table read, day one, that I was going to then have rehearsal right after.

Charlie Sandlan (31:25):

Did they have an intimacy coordinator yet? Or was this before that became really something that's not kind of standard?

Candace Maxwell (31:33):

This was definitely before the intimacy coach, which is crazy to me that they don't have that. Well, now that they're just now starting to bring those into sets, but this show has a lot of sex scenes, so they've been doing it for however many seasons, this is the sixth season. So I'm like, "Okay, they know what they're doing. I've seen the show and I know what I'm in for," so I felt prepared in that sense, but then the reality of rehearsal is like... Thank God I'm somebody who isn't afraid to advocate for myself, say what I need-

Charlie Sandlan (32:13):

So many actresses aren't and that's why it's such a scary thing to try to give over to because you have to be so open and vulnerable and feel safe. Did you feel safe?

Candace Maxwell (32:23):

Yes.

Charlie Sandlan (32:23):

And I'm sure they...

Candace Maxwell (32:26):

I felt safe. I was, don't get me wrong, nerves? Yes, 100%, but it was private. And again, Shana was there with me, who was one of our amazing producers, she was there and as a woman, she reassured me, she was like, "Look, I'm here for you. I'm with you. I'm in the room with you." And then Larenz, 50 and myself. So four people, I had her, I love that they created that equal like two men, two women. I felt safe. I was, we're clothed, we're just rehearsing, how's the camera going to be, what are you saying here during these lines? So it's almost like a blocking, we did blocking physically, what's blocking going to be, and verbally and what are the cues, and just talking about the camera angles so that we could kind of understand what will be happening. And then a lot of, "What are you comfortable with? What are you not comfortable with?" And Larenz and I even had to have private conversation and talk about, again, what we're okay with and what we're not okay with but at the end of the day, there was

always somebody there for me, a woman who was there for me and made sure I was never alone, and I always felt protected. And I'm thankful for that.

Charlie Sandlan (33:38):

Well, what did you learn? I mean, looking back, what did you learn about your acting and about how to approach a set as an artist? I mean, it must have been such a tremendous learning experience. Talk about thrown to the wolves, baptism by fire, my God.

Candace Maxwell (34:06):

Baptism by fire. Definitely got to be fearless. It's like with your stepping into the character, if you're like, "I'm going to do this," you just got to do it. So the fearlessness was something that I had to bring to Cassandra and to the role to be able to do any of that. And also being able to speak up. What do I need? What do I not understand? Ask questions, educated questions, just pay attention, pay attention to what's going on, your surroundings, also just how you treat people.

Charlie Sandlan (34:44):

It's important.

Candace Maxwell (34:45):

Really, from the minute, I mean, every single person on that set is valuable. Whether they're a PA, whether they're making food lunches, wardrobe, every single person is valuable so how you treat people on set says everything about you. And everybody talks. It's-

Charlie Sandlan (35:06):

And the gossip, you don't want to be the problem.

Candace Maxwell (35:06):

It's just the reality.

Charlie Sandlan (35:10):

Right. That's what I tell my students, you don't want to be the problem.

Candace Maxwell (35:10):

No.

Charlie Sandlan (35:13):

Do your work, do your job.

Candace Maxwell (35:16):

Yes. Yep, show up and do your job. And I'm saying if you need to advocate for yourself, there's a way to advocate, there's a way to ask questions, there's a way to get what you need, but come in prepared, do your job. As a recurring or as a guest star, co-star, my job is, I have to take care of the lead, I'm support. I'm there to support and I think when you look at it like that... You know Bill, is it Bill Colieus?

Charlie Sandlan (35:45):

Yeah, Bill Colieus.

Candace Maxwell (35:45):

I mean, he talks about it in commercial, like, "How can I help?" And Bill's approach is so beautiful because it's a team and there's a lot of times people like actors are so conceited and it's all about them, but when you're acting from a place of love and you love the story, you love what you do, you love the challenge, you're there to support and you're there for a bigger purpose and it's to tell the story and it's to entertain or inspire or make somebody laugh or make somebody cry, or remind somebody of their golden years or give somebody hope for the future. I literally look at it as, "I'm here to support and that is my job."

Charlie Sandlan (36:22):

And that why people like to work with you, and that's what I tell my students. I mean, it's a collaborative art form-

Candace Maxwell (36:29):

It is.

Charlie Sandlan (36:30):

... And you have to be easy to work with and don't ever gossip.

Candace Maxwell (36:37):

And open. Yeah, don't gossip.

Charlie Sandlan (36:37):

It's easy to fall into that trap.

Candace Maxwell (36:38):

Don't gossip.

Charlie Sandlan (36:40):

Yeah, now did you get notes? Because sometimes you show up to work and the director doesn't give a fuck what you're doing just do your job, right? But were you getting any kind of notes or were they just, whatever you did was it?

Candace Maxwell (36:56):

So at rehearsal, we definitely had a lot of notes on character, who is the character? And this is 50's first time directing, so there was a lot of pressure on him too and he wanted to do a great job and I'm... Oh, sorry.

Charlie Sandlan (37:12):

Yeah.

Candace Maxwell (37:12):

I'm honored to have been able to be a part of his first episode in his journey stepping into directing. So just took notes there, but when we got to set, it was like once or twice really, he allowed us to just kind of play, there was a lot of trust in that space, it's a closed set. And again, I knew I was like, "Candace, you just have to just go for it." And I was like, "I'm not going to take this time to be scared." I was actually wasn't feeling so confident and comfortable. I had my dresser there, every time there's a cut, she just comes over with my blanket. My co-star was reassuring and anytime there's a break, it's like, "Throw your robe on, I'm going to take care of you. How did you feel about that? How do we feel about that?" So there was notes once or twice, but mainly camera notes. And that's something that... Oh gosh, that's a whole another thing that I'm still learning and it's a little intimidating, your angles and what looks good and stillness because I like to move a lot. So those are new things to learn. So a lot of notes were camera notes, but not so many acting notes.

Charlie Sandlan (38:23):

You want to do a quiz?

Candace Maxwell (38:25):

Yeah.

Charlie Sandlan (38:25):

I'm going to quiz you.

Candace Maxwell (38:27):

Oh, I'm kind of nervous.

Charlie Sandlan (38:28):

Let's see what you remember. What's the definition of acting?

Candace Maxwell (38:39):

Acting is living truthfully under imaginary circumstances.

Charlie Sandlan (38:43):

It's the ability to do truthfully.

Candace Maxwell (38:45):

Okay. The ability to do truthfully, oh my gosh.

Charlie Sandlan (38:47):

That's right, where does your placement of concentration belong?

Candace Maxwell (38:52):

On the other person.

Charlie Sandlan (38:54):

Where should it never be?

Candace Maxwell (38:56):

On yourself?

Charlie Sandlan (38:57):

That's right. What's the bedrock of acting? What's the bedrock?

Everything rests on your ability to what?

Candace Maxwell (39:05):

Listen.

Charlie Sandlan (39:06):

That's right. You know that. Everything has to do listening, right?

Listening, answering and responding. What's the smallest unit of acting? Acting takes place from what? What kind of smallest-

Candace Maxwell (39:23):

Open and-



Charlie Sandlan (39:23):

No, the smallest unit, you can break a script down to what? You'll never work in this business Candace ever.

Candace Maxwell (39:31):

So tell me, give it to me Charlie.

Charlie Sandlan (39:34):

Well, you can break down a script into scenes, into beats and you can break a beat down into what?

Candace Maxwell (39:41):

To a moment. Moment to moment work.

Charlie Sandlan (39:43):

Yay.

Candace Maxwell (39:45):

Moment to moment. Oh my gosh. Okay. Moment to moment, got it. I'll never forget.

Charlie Sandlan (39:47):

That's right. Unanticipated moment to unanticipated moment.

Candace Maxwell (39:50):

Moment. Thank you. You know what? I'm writing this down.

Charlie Sandlan (39:54):

You could. This is a refresher course for you. This is a free coaching session.

Candace Maxwell (40:02):

It really is.

Charlie Sandlan (40:03):

Now listen, Meisner really focuses on what it means to listen, so I just would love to hear you talk about what listening means to you as an actor, and what it does for you. And yeah, the meaning of listening as an actor.

Candace Maxwell (40:25):

When you listen, it takes the pressure off. Because you don't know what's going to happen.

Charlie Sandlan (40:28):

I want to quote you on that, that is wonderful. When you really listen, it takes the pressure off. What do you mean by that?

Candace Maxwell (40:39):

Yeah. Because I'm not focused on myself and on my lines and on the BS, and I'm just with whoever I'm listening to, or whatever, I'm just with it. And I'm in sync, I don't know how to describe that moment when you lock in to something and it's real. I mean, how did that happen? I mean, to be honest, I don't always experience that, but when you do, it's out of body, and that's so freaking cool.

Charlie Sandlan (41:15):

It is cool. Have you had a moment on camera where you came to a rich life and you're like, "Oh my god, I just did it, I just did what I was trained to do." Was there a moment you're like, "Goddamn, I'm a trained actor. And this felt really good. I know what I'm doing."

Candace Maxwell (41:33):

Yeah. I definitely had a lot of moments like that in Power and I don't know if it was because of the context of the script and that I was playing this character, but there were moments where I was like, "Oh, I really feel like I'm acting," or I'm trying pushing or I'm trying to figure out like, "Don't push here, figure it out, breathe," but those special moments that happened, they were real because I was like, "Whoa, what just..." When you have cut and you have a minute to yourself, I was like, "Whoa, what just happened?" It's almost I have to take myself out of it for a moment because I'm like, "That was a little too real." So that has definitely happened. And in Katy Keene, when we were shooting that musical number. I [crosstalk 00:42:21]-

Charlie Sandlan (42:21):

Yeah, what was that like? That was so amazing.

Candace Maxwell (42:25):

I had a moment of just feeling like my... I went to a performing arts high school, and it was a very musical theater based, so I felt like a big kid again, and it was so cool being in those rehearsals and

feeling so confident because I'm like, "Oh, I know how to dance." I'm like, "Oh, I'm going to do a two step." I was like, "Great. This is a piece of cake." When it's dance, I'm like, "Throw it at me." And I was like, "Oh, this is easy. So now I can just act and listen to her and have fun and be cheeky, because it's a musical, you got to be a little cheeky," but it was just so fun to be on set and be playing like I did as a kid. And that's what I did as a kid, I would be dancing and singing and putting on shows and it felt like I got to live my best life that day. You know razzle dazzle.

Charlie Sandlan (43:07):

Yeah. Did they write that episode because they knew you could dance? I mean, how did that even happen?

Candace Maxwell (43:13):

Yeah, so my good friend Sandy Greenberg, she is over at Power. She's first AD and she's also over at Katy Keene, which was so great that she loved me over at Power, she took such good care of me. And then I go over to Katy, she's like, "Oh my god." She texts me like, "Candace, you're coming to Katy Keene." I was like, "Wow." So Sandy has fully seen me naked, fully seen me behind the scenes, seen me having my meltdown, so it was so cool to have that support and also another PA from that show, from Power, who was over at Katy. So I immediately felt welcomed. But oh gosh. They asked Sandy, they said to her, "Well, what do you know about this Candace girl? Does she sing? Does she dance?" And Sandy had my back. She was like, "Oh, yes, she's an amazing good dancer, you're in good shape, go for it." And she kind of gave me a heads up, she was like, "Hey, they're writing a musical number. You're going to be so excited about what's happening in the next episode." And then lo and behold, I get to be in a whole number and have my name, I'd be on a Spotify track, I'm Candace Maxwell, and I'm on soundtrack. I'm like, "What?"

Charlie Sandlan (44:33):

What an experience. You've had an amazing two years. We can wrap up this conversation. This has been amazing. I can't believe we've already talked for almost an hour, believe it or not.

Candace Maxwell (44:44):

I know, that's crazy.

Charlie Sandlan (44:46):

I guess I'll ask you one last question, what's a piece of advice that you'd want to give to somebody that wants to be an actor? Given what you've known and everything that you experienced over these many years, do you have anything you'd want to impart?

Candace Maxwell (45:08):

Definitely train. That's the first thing I believe in, training, train, train, train. Two, work on yourself. And three, trust your instincts but in an easier way, fuck it.

Charlie Sandlan (45:29):

Fuck it.

Candace Maxwell (45:32):

Your words not mine.

Charlie Sandlan (45:32):

Listen, you have to, it's the fuck it philosophy. Candace Maxwell, you have been an absolute joy. It is an honor and I want to just thank you from the bottom of my heart for being my very first interview and for coming on to talk with me. You're a real artist and you can hold your head up high because you are not only a wonderful human being and you have a huge heart and you have a lot of empathy, you're just talented and I look forward to just watching your career continue to blossom and grow.

Candace Maxwell (46:09):

Thank you, Charlie. Thank you.

Charlie Sandlan (46:12):

Stay safe, okay?

Candace Maxwell (46:12):

Yes, you too.

Charlie Sandlan (46:12):

Okay, bye. Well, that was my first interview everybody, thank you for sticking around and keeping your phone in your pocket. You can subscribe to this podcast on any platform that you're listening to it. Visit my website, [creatingbehaviorpodcast.com](http://creatingbehaviorpodcast.com). You can email me your thoughts, your questions, your feedback, I'll take it all, [charlie@creatingbehaviorpodcast.com](mailto:charlie@creatingbehaviorpodcast.com). Thank you Lawrence for the music. Listen, we are in tough times, my friends. You need to save your life. You need to save your art and you need to testify and bear witness to your own experience. Go the distance with yourself when you can and don't ever, ever settle for your second best. My name is Charlie Sandlan, peace.