Charlie Sandlan ([00:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5kEryLSYCvJjlOzCZhcq8siXkvW9fWQPtFSv5n40exVSQkx4MWWzZn5Nm-w1TzvoTikDAydMMEv5XeKVenHdHH21Zqs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.07)):

Friendships. Man, they make life a lot sweeter, don't they? And if you're lucky you have a couple of those that are the ride-or-dies. The ones that you would take a bullet for, the ones that if they called you at two o'clock in the morning you'd be packing the bag, hopping on a plane to wherever they were, they needed you. And for many of us, those friendships are forged in our early creative journey, right? Whether that's undergrad, grad school, a conservatory program, working on a production together, collaborating in some way, the bonding that can happen between you and your fellow classmates and actors can be profound. What you've watched each other do, what you've shared with each other, the ups and downs. And if you're lucky, you get to watch one of those ride-or-dies fulfill their dreams. That collective dream that you all have when you started out to be working as a professional actor, to make the money, to have the security. We all dream about that.

Charlie Sandlan ([01:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7tV_0a7v9Zl5nVS7meQXOf2vbMhHX2vAcHTQItxbcnK-N6Hfg9FlfKzU514l9RmG07wDlYy9MPxwPpAidbKkJX28j-g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=75.52)):

And I've been fortunate enough to watch that happen with one of my very best friends. Now, I remember back in 2005, living in LA, sitting in my apartment with my former girlfriend, Andrea Andrews, who was also a classmate of mine at Rutgers. And we were watching the Oscars with Mike Colter. One of my very best friends, fellow classmates, Million Dollar Baby had been nominated for best picture. And we were jumping up and down and all of a sudden we hear Clint Eastwood thank Mike Colter for his work and we lost our shit, we couldn't believe it. And for the next 15 years I have watched my best friend carve out an exceptional career. Mike Colter comes on today to share his thoughts about acting. So put the phone back in your pocket. Creating Behavior starts now.

Charlie Sandlan ([02:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vsWl3FLKjWKypiSYCM8iBdRjftcqUY4MMM6dmTcNmvuzNLPYtrMB0IQfFocs3le3QUAgnRBwidC9eERcI1PL4lU1KwY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=153.54)):

Well, hello my fellow daydreamers. You know what's crazy about that Million Dollar Baby job that Colter booked, that was off of a self-tape. He puts himself on tape, sends it out to LA and doesn't hear another thing for weeks. It could have been a couple of months, I can't remember. But there was no callback, he didn't get flown out to LA. There weren't producers sessions, he didn't test. Out of the clear blue he gets a call and his agent says, "Hey, Clint saw your tape. He liked it. You've got the job." Next thing you know he's flying out to LA to train in a boxing gym and get ready for what would be an Oscar winning film. Man, we were so excited, it was such a thrill when that happened. We were so happy for him. Do you know, we were struggling, grinding it out, survival jobs.

Charlie Sandlan ([03:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-3zmaEVS0-GaPYHeh5mheF66DENnwkxUBTi45WweKrXxYcDF8mrgEPAvrZ7nyZvfOGJ8UrTvaInZRAQbCvSpPncJois&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=203.42)):

He's going to talk about the jobs he's had. Working as a waiter, a day laborer, working in a home for disabled children. The guy has done it all. And the one thing he didn't do was quit. And he's carved out a hell of a lot of work. My God, The Following. American Horror Story, Ringer. The television that he did, about the role of Lemond Bishop on The Good Wife, a well-dressed well-educated businessman who also happens to sell drugs. It was supposed to be a small little part, one or two episodes, and it became a recurring role over many, many seasons of that show. And then he ends up in Jessica Jones and then he's number one on the call sheet. Luke Cage. What's that like? Right? To be one of the call sheet. We're going to talk about that.

Charlie Sandlan ([04:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Sto8_dlugFXP8eX3SlIrCOzmx7WMxl9pT9rQSbLA4ipsju8yK1lE7XvYrcS19Iy8SJ5yxyDZTIimk53atvnznFuQwaQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=257.03)):

What are the expectations? What do you learn about yourself? About how to carry a show. What you got to do. What's the importance of training. What's stuck with you. We're going to talk about all those subjects and we're going to talk about his new show, Evil on CBS. If you haven't seen it, it's like a spin on the X-Files, only a little bit more religious in the occult and demons and evil spirits. He plays a priest in training, David Acosta, and he works opposite Katja Herbers. Season two's getting shot right now, it's going to drop here in the spring. So we're going to talk about his experience on that, and he's got some really straightforward no bullshit opinions about the business, about acting, about managing your career, about staying in the game and about making it through the struggles and the rejection. I started off by asking him what it felt like to have your dreams come true, what does that feel like, to fulfill this vision you had of a career back when you were 18, 19, 20 years old? And this is how we started off our conversation.

Mike Colter ([05:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=K3jIQpx6xqlbhOPyxZqY9bdYWCtJZoLJoC8muwp4AkD8PhOYwT9bYDGxpcZgPeb99S3zu5rkoNGVntATKRrI9VO0xPs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=346.53)):

I think had you asked me this before anything was happening, before I was starting to work consistently, I would have said sure. That would have been it. But I guess what happens is as you get in the business, I think the dream changes, I think your idea of what the dream is or success or whatever you want changes. Because you're getting the business and you either appreciate things differently or you set a different goal. I know actors like this, they're really talented actors, but sometimes you get into film and television, you don't get the roles that allow you to really stretch. So therefore you're not really challenging yourself as an artist. As long as you can find a way to keep the needle moving and always doing that I think you can be happy.

Mike Colter ([06:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TBws-CTXXhp6Dmbsr69nDUCLecS1IVcAsopEkQobXE6ijsYArFYXxUl0rsE7xNQ3XvvuHVV5QPCrpAIxW3bVewRBJ6E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=389.38)):

Because I think when I first got into the business, it was like, okay, I need to be working consistently And I'll get myself on a show, do some movies, and I think that I'd be happy. I think that's what happens. I think you get in a business and it becomes a routine, but you don't want to feel like you've arrived. Because once you feel like you've arrived somewhere, then what do you do next? So I don't ever want to feel like I arrived. I feel like really a work in progress. When you talk about knowing me for 22, 23 years, I didn't start working consistently. I was working in restaurants. I was 32. So for me-

Charlie Sandlan ([07:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zE-mQRJ_upMu1FnC5_Og-4kp23DIx7Zymh_AYo8CyeLEqWF0oKBKmDBUnC0lHMnS3VQARqhbjnDyDR0-D--PtKOhrBw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=424.62)):

Talking about struggle, people they look at actors and they go, "Oh man. They just got it made." They just came out of nowhere. They have no idea that you've been grinding some shit out for decades.

Mike Colter ([07:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FyppTbgPk4SVs8QLG4DunKEVMMAoXBo6MEGd90YVbXqAxKopPUo3RwekqLD8qC4GQ5iaodOHNSz8838nVQMxuXU7kVE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=438.01)):

Oh. I did-

Charlie Sandlan ([07:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xm5hSvH9Gyr2B9tJnzfQIqfY9NRGar1_kLwhw60xUL3n7ihUzulb8DJM1ItfSKrHeDl5TFWsimUi6FnvqJnktE3nik8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=438.43)):

And you struggled man, I mean we all did when we first got out of school.

Mike Colter ([07:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zAeeoJ-awsxTIZUkK8x4rp-ADO_lbhWH78RoUA3ATL5u_Qyr4jl2uROSAjXLGHnsgueVA0V0QL6Xt5ojB2g989TRY7w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=440.98)):

Yeah, yeah.

Charlie Sandlan ([07:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZokZZpFmVEMetuQy6bsFmoSOqZ2t2vMqvPJu-17Jz4qRhBagngzcX-aCQq83sdYXU-evguaych_uqcp4OsRxb86alF8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=442.01)):

We got thrown to the wolves.

Mike Colter ([07:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_WUs8xH4QdNN7Rgedb2mTp6q_3aYQ1tblcfLefsMPD4o9fs8uAUWWsL0H3OG6hbCmqkDIYGM-DnzMPoFyx-pISw-KgY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=445.38)):

The longer you're standing the longer it takes you to make it to a point where you're comfortable or you're a working actor and you're paying your bills. The longer it takes you to get there, the more disappointment heartbreak you're going to experience, because it's just a part of the game. I can't tell you how many times I show up at auditions and you're feeling great about it, go in the room, and then you see somebody there who's for the most part either a legend or person who you know shouldn't even be in the room maybe they're going to get off or... You start thinking to yourself, "What that..."

Mike Colter ([07:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pMQRQb0x0zAhWVFEhPm-uCaM36Zs7HD191JYvH2yKxhBb1C8VCnxjm3vCTwn0bZX0g7FHRRsskPOoOp7CBZCLrj2i2U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=478.23)):

That's what happens to young actors, you get in a room you start talking to yourself and you come in the room and you go, "Wait a minute," and you've already had enough rejections. So you're already looking for another reason why this is not going to work out. As opposed to building on the positives. And that was the thing about it. I think I found a way to compartmentalize enough where I could continue to go on. I think that's the hardest part. I think I've seen enough people quit the business, stopped trying, stopped going out.

Charlie Sandlan ([08:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zY_ij0pOsrJjpBvHo35OIdxMyUAm6Msu8C88K5y1eeIKv8A88oROB-rzzhi0lef41ly7wKh-8Wn21BwhEilgnpm4eYo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=504.08)):

Well as a black man did you look at work in a different way as well to what you'd be willing to take or not take, or like I'm not going to play a pimp. I don't want to play a drug dealer. I don't want to play a rapist or any tropes like that?

Mike Colter ([08:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZqqT5UI1eX29i9-tRyVDjSRQpcUbIbCbOOB5_Mr98VpXisFVea_Ynxh0uwlqkPLefx-ZUZtiAbrGHUFCmNeYelAxlx4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=519.01)):

Yeah. Yeah. I think so. And I think after a while, I would say these things because I always have... I think young actors do this too. They always go, "Well, this is what I won't do. Like speaking of your product. I'm not going to do this. I'm not going to do that." And then I realized as I stayed the business long enough, I'd have to take things one project at a time and not necessarily give a blanket statement, because one of my favorite roles was I was playing a... I call him a businessman on The Good Wife and it was fun because one of the ways of making money was he had a drug business too. But he already he had a bunch of dry cleaners, he had horse stables, he had check cashing places.

Mike Colter ([09:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=69xtEU1kvfU0wQna6GgRcKiV3hI9vPasfynWty_5Us0QMFerjBKSfIUluZHNF9-OyQE5T7PrSiSwRaEr6nxiOr7S31I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=552.01)):

He had all these hustles, but he also had drugs as a hustle. So he dressed in a suit, traveled in limousines and private jets and had expensive law firms to defend him. So I looked at him as a person who really was more of a businessman who probably could have had an MBA and basically just been a businessman, but because he was black and he had drugs in his portfolio as one of the ways of making business, that's what people would call him. It's like, "Well, he's a drug dealer." So for them that's what he was. For me I didn't play him that way because I felt like this was... And that actually the role grew and it got a little more complex and they explored the guy's family life.

Mike Colter ([09:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jW3EIUzdqHnP9YvAXEYAggcLh-_SEpOyZx7Zq-jBfcMKcTBlEnF2TBLaGpv2talD5LtGQE6M36ooI3nkwFH1c1JjPm8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=588.14)):

So when I did that, I realized that not every role, not every trope is so one dimensional and you have to go one project at a time and look at the writing. And if the writing is good, the character can be more than whatever the thing says on paper. It'd be easy to say that one of my favorite movies, World According to Garp, I think Swoozie Kurtz, was her name. She played a prostitute. That's what you call it. But it's a great little role that popped. When you know you've got what's a prostitute yet Morgan Freeman played a pimp in Street Smart with Christopher Reeve, a guy called Fast Black. It's a pimp. But what you're watching is some really interesting character work that is going to change the way your career's looked at. So you have to take it one role at a time. So you're not assuming that something that's going to be one dimensional or not going to be worth your time is going to be the case. So that's what I've learned about being-

Charlie Sandlan ([10:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_Jom68QzmTodySsRuD7Jm53TPuPHK66Bgy2BbNAL4aZzBEDz1rPvOXzxSnhwF9CmuUXqQ63TESzbrqA9dSuMVbklikM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=644.49)):

So it wasn't a blanket rule, like, "No, no, no. I'm not going to do that. I'm never going to do that."

Mike Colter ([10:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0uPsPFtfwQqn135i28YppJModiVjYLgN3x-jGPJGrM1HtF47PoVMbP-nyoVg_hNsqmCXuO1gUvxujyR94A81crjUMoI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=649.8)):

No. There are things I feel like there's a double standard for men in the black community when it comes to homosexual roles if you're a leading man. I feel like if you're a leading man, you don't have the liberty to play with that because when it comes to perception in the business, when it comes to how your audience and your fans see you, it's a very difficult thing for them to understand. And I think masculinity is not always viewed in the same way in every culture, in every group of people. So I think a lot of times when I look at the landscape of television and film over the years, I've seen times when it was called for, and if you're not leading man, then maybe it works. But a lot of times I've seen guys either refuse to do it because of the reason I'm saying. You don't get a chance to explore that.

Mike Colter ([11:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Q2u_G6lL790MKzrrPKzpYv3gn_OgF0uIJPLf8CfGIp_rZslES0RI67mJNEm_iqFbBvUtRAa5zZKldTOEurM96sXD2gk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=701.64)):

So I don't say no to those roles, I wouldn't say no. But what I would say is what's the role? How's it written, what does the role require? Because at the end of the day... I've no problem with playing homosexuality or anything like that, but it needs to be something that makes sense and it's not just for the sake of... A guy being homosexual that's not the role, what is the role? What does he do? What's his life like? Who is he in love with? What is his day to day? Who is he? I think was it Javier Bardem I believe, I want to say it was him, played I believe one of the bond movies, he played a flamboyant homosexual character out there.

Mike Colter ([12:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ov5PIwULZl8VIMlXZxUDOCsr3f0LYn8Yzz_lW295baMztnqsbMhDWbIp7g7IMUm1bmDFHxiNSlulUaWYviXP1EqdFU0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=737.86)):

I believe that's how he played it, but I'm not sure if that's ever been said this way, but the last thing you think about the characters, his sexual preference. It was about who the character was and what he was doing and that's really what it's about. It's about that. It's about the character, not what the character is defined by in terms of how you label him. So again, every time I look at a role I'm looking at the writing. What am I going to be able to do and what can I act? That's the question. I think we talked about it with Maggie in the class, what can I act? What am I acting? What can I do?

Charlie Sandlan ([12:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8HnrauXTUviYEQBQDIZS9J3Q7RCXgplQeXxdc9jzZm7SOez-IwMpvN9VGhKbHZpg0RHoyjpRbJcg2MS_gLlatohaRAE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=772.27)):

Yeah. It's all about behavior.

Mike Colter ([12:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-bDvAtrSR4VZsgJ3lB7eieLiVA-KMY6s6aeI-vFIafAuoUWvZZIEf29VuTxf2pMd_wPgeOR9g2_9gXCbmIkVKl_vOtk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=774.73)):

Yeah. What kind of behavior can I create and what does this character allow me to do that I haven't done? And what can I tap into and get a hold of? Because I don't care what the character is but how can I connect to and create behavior?

Charlie Sandlan ([13:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ObPTbxv-_-gI7Ya03i5zd7kFbwdQdMmxLKvgtZgUvZYgaeezimd_5UFUjtnqYCMfjmlaWRqWo3irUJv3-U7aQq_5Mzc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=789.17)):

So when you read a script, do you see the behavior in your imagination as you're reading it? Is your mind already like, "Oh, I could do this. This could happen."

Mike Colter ([13:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MxH54ZIPhRas3q5_VQxr09ExOEIn1wDl5AC_aHiZXVwdChRaqF1hhwDnHcZZ_VxtysvAPLnmzYxx_Zj8QwJ7yV6fN9o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=798.41)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Charlie Sandlan ([13:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4po_aJsdfNjwo3cGYMN3SdwoPMPk2TioaO8uZabn_CluXp_J7cssz-OM512jhsSYSu6qVunBbDbALTUWBO52reqhN70&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=799)):

Absolutely. Like, "Oh, there's a lot of shit here in between the lines."

Mike Colter ([13:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=i0rDfFlD6EHGuFDZM3dIRS-zdHg8918yekRXcmZmAu-vKU7JIdJafylhL4NzCwBuxMdC6wRQE9hsqHu0Z25QwIs4F8U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=802.02)):

Yeah. Yeah. I'm trying to figure, if I can't figure out the behavior, if I don't have a clear understanding of the behavior or the way in which this guy moves a little bit and how he listens... Because I need his point of view. I need the character's point of view. I need to know how he feels about something. And sometimes you talk about you're a teacher, see I don't know how to articulate it to people every time all the time because after a while you just do it and you innately understand it and you look at the script and you look at the material. But what you're trying to find is the point of view of the character.

Mike Colter ([13:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HqCUos8Ym9kbWjnfo6Ynqerb52zma9UeVpuydW3US9Pl8Q6jlt8w3UvN4zixoERp7uICUbLzVitV0CX1u_m3lzJloLs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=837)):

So you can talk about it all day long, but as our teachers have said, do you understand it? Do you understand in your bones? Do you understand what he is or what she is so you know how you feel before you open your mouth, while you're listening, how you take in, what does that play on you? How does that stuff play on you? And do you have an opinion? You got to have an opinion about everything. Everything as director James Whitmore working with those last episodes. He's an actor, so he understands how to talk to actors and how to excite them, how to get stuff out of them. Anyway he said, he said, "Hey, what's going on with you right now? What's going on with you right now?

Mike Colter ([14:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7fbbK9ShvhrGZX6ipc7oNmL0KcK5x7W2D7x4nKAX6E_DYXW7c8aKv8J1kkI1VXxEIdE-ilcigJmuKuXIWsQBI1TqSco&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=873.38)):

When people ask you, you got to know all that stuff. You just know it. You don't have to think about it. You know it. You know how you feel, you boil it down to the simple emotion, a simple response. And the simpler it is, the easier it is for you to act it, when you can find language to understand how to convey what you're trying to say helps you understand how to play it. What do you play in here?

Charlie Sandlan ([14:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iHcrfdFUVXi9cET_OpdsV9AoifNw8gBH-UfhcP3nAFNc84kdonRWbwtHMjkN5Ea_dmAimws9SUvfKHQgqSqQh6nbQdM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=897.4)):

Well, simplicity is so important. I remember even in school Maggie would say, "You're working too hard." How has your work changed from 26, 27 years old doing Million Dollar Baby sitting with Clint Eastwood in a car, and what you're doing now, how have you grown?

Mike Colter ([15:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dey9AW6aIk38tCMEW77JWXAv-o_VvX3nhovUBTKgaw7I-eqYhY6Ep-pcTWCboZXCOpNJooTeVmTdLv-QvBCWjHTQQ24&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=917.2)):

Well, you just have the nerves, when you're younger your nerves and your uncertainty of what you're... You're uncertain all the time and don't get me wrong. Every time you take a new job, you always have a certain amount of uncertainty. It's like first day of school, no matter how long you've been doing it, new director, new show, you know the comforting things about being on a television show or being a series reg or someone who's been in and out of a TV show as a recurring character and you're familiar with everyone, the comforting thing about that you trust yourself, you don't feel like you're like you're trying to prove anything. You just work and you can work with us with a sense of ease, because you're not stressed about it.

Mike Colter ([15:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5p4cC0P-qBHqeoP_65cBe8_tBR3T0Tb_bDJUC680-twEBVxGTvIZ0MOf9abbaNJezdf-VAXairI3cDhruxK4yt0Cd40&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=954.67)):

You're not stressed as you're working a little freer. You still want to be sharp, but you're free, you're relaxed, you can do more. What choices do you choose to make in a scene? That's going to be the difference in a great performance. Because I really feel like not everybody is a great actor, but if all things being equal and people can act, right? If everybody can act, then it comes down to choices you make in every scene. I've had scenes I go just changing the choice, completely changes everything, makes everything much more clear, makes everything make sense, gives a duality to it. It serves a script and serves the character. Sometimes you come in with this idea and you and it works. It can work. It's not quite right.

Mike Colter ([16:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=paoNqWD99ccExWQTXAQgTdBjiVROxM_i9soLLkDuHd2TdkNfCY7UzXH4ukoQEUJVf-e3jm7gYlhycLLRIPf46T9y7Tw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=993.68)):

So that's where the exploration, those are the things you don't get in television and film sometimes. You don't get rehearsals that really allow you to try a few things. It's really about taking a direction and literally changing the next take. You don't have time to go back in your room. You're not going into a room to rehearse it. You're not going to go back and look at the material and work through the moments again. No, you literally got to change it right now. Entire scene, three, four pages, you're going to change it right now. You're going to change your beats right now.

Mike Colter ([17:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vA8e1fj53I2tB3w4mkmdh4EQzC9lv1C3PiNrjsrEFw3pCIcydCvdypxUlyJLD5kJ32smTci9Eq9WNV4W08DoedN0cDo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1021.31)):

And it's going to be completely different perhaps, completely different. And that is a difference between actors who can work in this business, who can't. Here's the thing, everybody's not going to have a director in their ear telling them what to do, right? But if you're directable, if you're able to be directed, if you're someone who can listen and change, you'll be better off because man, I've seen directors try and tell an actor, give him a note or adjustment, nothing changes. Sometimes actors can't take adjustments. They can only do what they've already prepared to do that night before.

Charlie Sandlan ([17:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2-aCblvxHobMlDHg8aFEdRvycSfXzx-REjb5dVfIYTRii4bUJD5CP8zu2nAhOGoaNVOaDDgAxXe_7XpqhnOlBzukkvc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1051.46)):

If you can't take a note, you're not going to work.

Mike Colter ([17:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Qh3hkkUS-K8nyycjDjj5Sk37Vye_qo3xysy753OlqDgoi2AWlbzinNZYXHNOhY2gtkG8DDoLLjsS5W0LxLVeJkDgOME&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1053.34)):

No, it's going to be very difficult because you do a scene, director comes in, try this way. "Oh, okay." But now she's only giving you one line or she's only giving you one idea. But that changes the actual colors of all scene. It changed the colors. Everything changed from beat to beat, from moment to moment. Now because you're coming out from a different perspective as opposed to this perspective that you... Or the angle that you were trying before, changes everything. So all the colors and the tempo can change based on this new direction. And it can become a different scene, but you don't have time to go back and [inaudible 00:18:08] work on it. This is not about, "Okay. I got it. Give me five minutes, give me 10." No. You're going to go again, like in less than a minute. And that's all it is. I can't think of anything more important as a working actor than being able to take an adjustment and know how to work and to understand and to change on a dime.

Charlie Sandlan ([18:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=V1LG0goa0VfpoZ4vXash76loBC7dJLFQKUVk7x5R8buzqdirVSBKyC_RMessznoof4lTtqKhPN_NVDo88pwLu03C3FU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1106.15)):

Can you tell now when you're working with an actor who's trained versus an actor that's not trained?

Mike Colter ([18:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VrT-TW487qMei6CwoKsTYBvEBw3M_QiUZycwLKbmk6TEd2ZCM6gIunYW8-mUOt2QXTTEFr7zYMI4Sp9tUu_lv4ttmHY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1111.47)):

100%. An actor who's trained, and again it does depend on the technique or how they trained, but I'm finding a lot more people in Meisner. I will say I find a lot more people in Meisner than any other way of working.

Charlie Sandlan ([18:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=r7rSscCaHrDeKTnA8M1EzW6NP5u-qhYzhCZsltOGHjaN1DMh4T0vFpKyo2ViXnx-u487na3oVryCN1hDhrgkGw0XZag&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1126.44)):

Yeah. You got to be able to craft previous circumstance and the relationship.

Mike Colter ([18:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cYOXX7jZah2txQavO2YmGvBLvT115RE2FZBxqxQPqt-0djiBPnEPu_mQ3l8prSO4Nr88g4JwJlQt4CWGNclIz1FnTZA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1129.19)):

Yeah, all that [inaudible 00:18:49].

Charlie Sandlan ([18:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=knUrLgNejthJn3K54gR6BGygPcagC2skWjbSNX937kgdLfcr1NW4TUO8lpSQPJ7n7C23Exn_MnGSJhI50zwIJRZ58IM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1129.19)):

How to paraphrase, how to do an actor's paraphrase and push it in your own words, which is really important. Most actors memorize their lines, that's all they know how to do.

Mike Colter ([19:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LGktxR2vWHAVoA4kls-pJejpJbQsz-eUgP8NOaEYJltp63VCTP0d729_4B2d-Xg3zSflZJbnivxmDLCl4EXgHOIT224&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1140.95)):

Yeah. It's funny because we have a running joke we'll talk about it on set sometimes actors because crew, this is crew. A lot of people around I think 100 people, maybe 50 people on set at any given time. And their job is not to understand what the process of an actor is. Their job may be makeup, their job may be clothing, may be any number of things, right? They don't understand the process of an actor. So sometimes they'll have questions though. They'll say stuff like, "Man, you got a lot of words today. You guys have a lot of dialogue, have a lot of lines today." That's the least you can do with your lines."

Mike Colter ([19:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GI6YHrZfhNpkuyobBm1CCwjmklEXzZHIAf5lH2DhVfhJI8r9zxVae9_aYpHzZVqAeTWqv2g1szWGFlF1AQl2cS8k_vo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1175.91)):

A you impressed with a guy on a roof, if he's been doing roofing for 10 years, the fact that he can nail a nail in with two licks shouldn't be impressive, right? That's what he does. It's repetition. So when people sometimes say that kind of stuff you go... I guess they don't understand the process, but they don't mean anything by it. They just think that that's impressive. That's not the hard part at all, and all the work that goes into before to make it look effortless because the words come out. But if you don't know what you're saying, chances are you got a hard time memorizing those words anyway, I found that out long time ago when I first got in the business. The memorization of words are a lot easier when you have a need to say them. The need for the words was something that finally clicked. It's like, "All right, I need to say these words."

Charlie Sandlan ([20:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=L9wPT9kLuiPno-MmeoZmBhCpdf2qtIZjWryEOQha879CWuExlFrvHldQEE43lrSoZ8cEusOH_Z3zliy_fYUe2bTLKzk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1221.54)):

But you got to do something too, like what am I doing? Like getting further and back to the moments.

Mike Colter ([20:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hHcc4ZFELnrUJoViLwmKCi4cko2ooUG86LQ8jHmV8ZB5jo9m98C9GfINjumFt0N5VCBAN9YW2dssTe0nbRf9bPlEWhg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1226.41)):

Yeah, these words are serving a purpose. How do I create behavior with these words, using these words. Sometimes with our actors or writers they'll write for the actor especially being on the show for a while, they'll watch you and they'll see how you behave and stuff like that, and they'll start writing, even the stage directions, creating this thing that basically feels like they've already seen this thing played out before, and be me as the actor, I get annoyed and there's other actors I know who get annoyed because you're writing something here, inhale here. Now I'm not going to do that because now I got to find a... Maybe it's an interesting choice. Maybe sometimes it works, but I got to be able to look at that and go, "All right, this is not how I want to do this and I want to actually go the opposite way so I can create some other tempo in the scene that may serve this purpose better."

Mike Colter ([21:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Dx29lOjWhZ6aho8Nf9d_6lhaoH8FJGQx-JT77zmua5qxxrI3yBSCFldQK4d_aDj5qBenAbYFu3xEUAmburJ5-duRpDM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1270.96)):

Forget about the punctuation of period means nothing. Dot dot means nothing, the colon means nothing. And I tell people, you got to know the lines so well, because you need to be able to find some way to change the cadence in a scene and get what you want and have the effect on a person. When actors don't know their dialogue well and they come on set and it's like [inaudible 00:21:28] pressure, you to do more stuff, you've got a couple takes wide, you do a couple of medium shots and you get to do the close-ups. If you don't know your stuff well, you can't take adjustments. That's another reason you can't take adjustments because you're stuck looking for the words.

Charlie Sandlan ([21:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_w0Mel-XTVTHRAGb9TFUBNDjoCZCVG15sKf04TnSdhQ-XRKb7erMYzOkSILuz3WqRjngdvCthw4mH6BRqGD6OIF0gdc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1299.9)):

No, you're in your head, [crosstalk 00:21:40] line.

Mike Colter ([21:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_yP_Dz1nobdHD6dZfuatovvC2RyF03eVj4AgXPprgIVz9oMO2MHLVsv2Xw8-rRrhN1a7eUjAmawphE8QgcNOX5kg_eY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1302)):

You're in your head. You're in your head. And see, the difference between a really good actor or trained actor, it's one thing to pretend, to act like you're looking for the words. But when you really, really are looking for the words, you can't change your tempo. If you're looking for the gear, if you can drive a stick shift and you're looking for the gear, really looking for it, then you can only do what you can do. But when you really have a mastery of it, you got to be able to shift when you want to shift. You got to be able to get out of that dialogue, that monologue, speed up, slow down, stop, come back.

Mike Colter ([22:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=l_ZmMQLNmcQ5CfBq7tbCHo91A6oh76qqtasjb_0sGohs18YtZ61yvWxvSFcaMlP77uzkHHU7Nf_RGqnuDND_dmBbEvc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1327.52)):

Look for the words, and sometimes when you're really good, the strip supervisors say, she'll start yelling line and go, "No, I know the line." I'm actually, "Oh, oh" Noble. Yeah. [inaudible 00:22:20]. I've seen people be written off. I've seen people's character diminish or go away. I've seen people-

Charlie Sandlan ([22:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=w1bTnfVyZOh5Nl55ikV_AdbFgWimajV6QcYwWp48PtvDScKbpo8nkGnvPbAO0kxzLKmDxyWi7YbQrsaKz_AipgJBiG8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1348.79)):

Based off the quality of their work when they come and shoot.

Mike Colter ([22:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1fXYrAlQD5Ie4d5YMPKs3qNBUyywpDsZIBuUXC_J2c1yznAqE6sbRaRCPnmda7vmbA14uu1NDIF8JOUxonSK7ScZ2DA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1352.37)):

Either work, maybe the storylines, not working something. It's a lot of reasons but sometimes I've seen that happen. Another actor came on one time and it was painful because we covered the scene so many times and I ended up being the last person because it's the way the cameras work and I was around the other side of the room. You see a scene about 50, 60 times. You're tired of saying the words, the words are coming out, but now you got to focus again because your brain's just doing a different thing. Now it's like about 11, 12 o'clock at night, you're getting coverage and I've seen the actors in that moment can't pull themselves together because they just don't have the technique and stuff, and they're not able to focus and to really get things going.

Mike Colter ([23:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wQw8Tfltee_a_rLJTTbeGc7bgw_rLCAuM_GubQ8rDmifxq1jaPWNFrkVCoKmYNeLvQLIGV--2zgFXXF-XTHzr98rVC4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1393.36)):

So you see them come in, this guy one time he came in and just, oh, it was painful because it must've been like 15 takes. Set to come in and say one, two lines, and he was the last person to do it. He was a guest star so he came in, it was his coverage last and he had two lines and whatever the words were he just couldn't get the words out. And the scene became about him getting the words out. It wasn't even about acting anymore, it was just getting those words out. At some point you just feel so bad for them, they're struggling, they're struggling. They come in it's like, "No. All right, go back. And back to one."

Mike Colter ([23:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vn7bwV1R9cCo94u2YTS4NKFbaC7hkhbiFP8M8_jptZJAa6swKMxaFaNOXtjj0yVhJdARtBGnXXQLDmdiLXjvpHpyFuM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1426.6)):

You don't even know if he's ever going to get it right. You're going to have to loop this thing. Needless to say that person never came back, but that's the thing about it. And he wasn't he wasn't an accomplished actor, but he was building a resume, and you're not going to get the next opportunity if you can't do the... You got to nail everything almost every time.

Charlie Sandlan ([24:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4ugxnLaJnS78nWtdjKvbzDe9b8pj7uqE8N0jqCCt8PZBnzVW_9sx09IDCUBuQFXfS5Yaz5WSkdiSwA7vr9gs0zD5mJ8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1447.85)):

You have to. Yeah. You don't want to be the problem.

Mike Colter ([24:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=B-euSM9m7WwtlkCQw3rdyUWZU0P-Kfn-9t5zCifeLYZmPb3jKLc_Q0ZYDvFakF4STycoEHfFlfE_d5uBv6DH7bsG8Uk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1451.39)):

No. Oh God no.

Charlie Sandlan ([24:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ptH0Lr82D4zAOJUYut8JbozFgLLq8OgEfy_gw7SznwXi66zbSxGsMwXS47Na5UnTlyYDCBsp4Ld9BDNhwnuC44RXVhg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1453.79)):

What changes when you get one one on the call sheet? And everybody dreams about that, everybody's like, "Yeah, man, I can't wait till that day happens." And Luke Cage, it was an iconic part, it's culturally woven into the fabric of the comic world and all of a sudden you're one of the call sheet. What changes?

Mike Colter ([24:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Lr1O4fRMRiyZcMFFNsatSNshrRGIEaDO0W4Es1stq46BI-V4wAGUgHpzidL4y3oTc2ynZ4YRPqOv2nuwa4rD7HtRNi8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1472.71)):

Oh man. I guess it's more pressure. I think that the idea that you are the person that dictates the mood and the culture of the set is the thing that you don't understand. Because before that I should've, but I did, and I should have asked a few people who I knew were number one's and I had worked with them like, "Hey, if you have any advice." Because you become number one on the set, you got a few people in on the call sheet who would like to be higher in the call sheet. Some people come at it from a standpoint of, "All right, I'm number one, screw everybody else. I get what I want."

Mike Colter ([25:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U0pH1W8e6fJoYJVFvDAtAXlPYsC0cl-1ZGqcO6DSEJE2qksyRoxP6KHMO-3VOUVUFtW4lbLBYp2g4O8sj2rHmZzUryU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1511.03)):

And when I'm not working, I don't hang out with people. I don't engage. It's me and everybody else. Right? It keep us air of superiority about them. Keeps a certain amount of distance from people. I don't think that's the way to go. It's a steady balance of professionalism and an ability to get the job done and make people feel like they're all of a little bit of value, because you never realize how many people really are... Not only are you their job, their livelihood is tied into your work, but also their recognition that they matter goes without saying, you don't realize that. Everybody's looking up the call sheet. You don't realize that people are paying attention to you and I. That's something that never occurs to you sometimes when you're working actor and you start working enough where you don't really think about the day to day.

Mike Colter ([26:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=s6hqWZ5CtXnY0L-I1XPDO9jqtJkM-uXjnMm8YrST-GqSmbE7BR9FkqrJYpnkuQ-4PUuaAynbbCCPVfKgILdzb52VN6w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1562.28)):

People are there to work on something, and I got to tell you, there's a lot of crew members, there's a lot of people, even actors, that if they don't feel a value, they're not going to put their best effort in. They're not really trying hard. They're not really supportive of the whole project because they don't feel of value, don't feel seen. So as much as number one is about, yeah, you got the most this to do, you're carrying the show as an actor, but you're also creating an environment where people are either going to want to come to work and want to see this thing work, or they're going to hate coming to work. It's just a difference between trying and not trying. Trying to make things work better and effortlessly, and trying to sabotage everything around you.

Mike Colter ([26:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8_SkWeFnPOWkFGHclOMsUf6om7t9EtyU-BlH26KK1iazuYTph4cABlSlBMBo1nCfQ8U1vPwHx_O0KZkErCfP1o_jbkg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1609)):

And I've seen people, they can't stand the number one or they can't stand certain people. And that's something that I didn't anticipate. It's nice being number one for a lot of reasons. I think honestly, now that I've done it, I'm really happy with... I'm more about the role. Because when I mentioned, with Cage, it was more about I need a role that's different, I need something really interesting, I need something different. I was just looking for an interesting role that I was going to connect with and was going to give me the most challenging journey as an actor. So for them to now see me as a priest who was going through this thing as a Catholic, it was a big move for them because they trusted me as an actor going, "Hey, we want you to play this role."

Mike Colter ([27:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=N8pt1LV_Imo6U3ZOA45-o1MD2u4V0KzvUXBcipFGQSR6jV6R_FMTC_7k1CW22eXbi1ishyPvdIBMIsuKm3Csc1s8HPc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1652.24)):

And I couldn't see anything in that role that I had ever necessarily done before they'd seen me do. So I was looking at from a standpoint of they're trusting me as an actor, to find this character and figure them out and make it work. So that's what I was looking for and I think that that turns you into a person who is looking for the right job as opposed to looking for the job that is going to stroke your ego.

Charlie Sandlan ([27:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RJruS0pAoFpS014YesAeOo3_mHOcCC2jF7QyU0fDRlIovyuNpQfAcRGIThw0bI267TWxaqyKR_wA9atOWwpkwofJb6E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1673.96)):

I think everybody knows what is really good about fame. But what's the worst part about being famous?

Mike Colter ([27:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QxF4VYD2-zq9NcQM-j_EPj24HmH6nOG2t2BpzAa7OXb717_kxFQNKn7G_Sr3FbuTuuHcDShd5HtCroa-RBT9VA4NfGs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1679.22)):

I think the worst part about being famous is you're no longer coming in a room with a clean slate without any prior knowledge. Everyone has an opinion about you before you walk in. That's what you got sort of, and as an actor you're trying to figure out how to... You're trying to get another opportunity, another opportunity, and you're trying to figure out how to use the notoriety you have to get more opportunity, but you also as an actor you want something different every time. So what they know you for isn't necessarily what you're looking for. So now you have to play against all of that. That's the hard part. So for me, the fame part it plays in my favor sometimes, but what it does for me and makes it difficult for me is that I would rather people not know who I am a [inaudible 00:28:53] so I can come in fresh without having any pre-conceived notions about what I can do or what I've done or the kind of person I am.

Charlie Sandlan ([29:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=T-NYzgTEGJOmiB-Qxvg5WOGFqJSTCX4tdv3PBniOXDGQASdfckp__WW_3I2kbJGI3FVgQ334XbRR-DPxAaHhC_Akm3o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1744.32)):

Well, how do you keep your head on straight?

Mike Colter ([29:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bddyKYRVRcXqNLZ2r6Lp0Gt47u0hQP9zRcyHvN4FEwPM_2lRRLdFHKzNsGaImhK7gWCoCSRZv1OfHskzyztIo0Ce7rU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1745.67)):

You got to sniff out some bullshit. And you can hear it. And somebody tells you you're great, take a big grain of salt. I'm not a very good person to take compliments so it never really works the same way with me. I can't take a compliment for shit I'm working on for years and trying to figure out how to be at peace with it. Let people say what they got to say, take it in and not try to deflect or... Just take it and move on. People will say shit sometimes just because they feel like that's what it's going to take to make you comfortable because they want you to do your best work.

Mike Colter ([29:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JKgfZNuh_FmLiHjBW6dJIFu9D8wGa9bAcWc_dvJSulh9ePHN06c3pxB_z9ZglLhVAzUjP5wo31sOZ1Vc8iDyYkEUZNU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1772.09)):

You got to be to work without feedback, got to be to work without having someone pat you on the back or tell you that this is going well, starve yourself of approval because that's what you're going to be doing most of the time. Most of the time you're starving yourself of approval. And if you get stuck in the mindset of constant feedback, it's going to be a heartbreaking thing because you're constantly going to be insecure and constantly searching for someone to say, "Well done."

Charlie Sandlan ([29:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=06WVB51zWulY6_ZOlxQLoq6rWqGTLkS2AVXY30Leef-GgHL0oqevhtvdBcQpkAau67VcC5IMCXZEZnMGlmnSz2mXQTw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1794.63)):

Now, you just shot an episode where there was no dialogue.

Mike Colter ([29:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TZJyea2gEO58Fnevaxf2vuP6-QZUjh3eabSD_2Ba8g9XmaRwMIs4xA398dUnXzlTvAKIsU7Oc1nLGWT2UeqYVDXbbLw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1798.18)):

Oh yeah.

Charlie Sandlan ([29:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=itUStDFz5dHkqK6HeDYJFACgaGMCaA2Txp5zxyM3Lky9HyjQmu4_u-JuVfbiFuAti24q3K4in3PdM2OL9pwjrh3nGjw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1798.5)):

What was that like? An entire episode, right?

Mike Colter ([30:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bQmRQnksslR-RKkGeUJustlLZXjSghgATUI2kY5z72KzOaDzcaZJTDuDxw51RXSycG6_6GB3_efU7FAjOplhSqYBWFQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1802.54)):

The camera does the work. You don't have to try. You got to be able to know the camera is... Trust the camera's going to get what you're thinking or what you're feeling or what you're, I dare say indicating, you don't want to say indicating, but you got to trust this camera. I don't know if you've never acted before your, or sorry, if you've just gotten a business that would be the worst thing I would think. Most actors would want to have as a scene where they have no dialogue. But I remember Jim O'Connor as you know, head of your program at Purdue, he did a bit of production of Frankenstein and I got to play the creature. And it was an experience that really made me look at acting in a different way, because the creature when he woke up he was created in this play for the first, I don't know, first 10 minutes or so. I don't know.

Mike Colter ([30:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=h9QuwJtM6qDzRj0vmr-eHWHzE6htR5WfxBc3WilOZlm67r2NBjmS95HsEFYqGP4ua_8Lm5jUvL5UJjP7eOi6wXDcUFE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1854.34)):

He doesn't have dialogue, he can't speak. He makes sounds, but he can't speak. And for a while, but it's a while before he forms words, right? But the opening sequence of him waking up, being born, discovering the world for the first time, opening his eyes, sound, lights, surfaces, texture, like a baby. That is an acting exercise. That is beat by beat. And at the time I was doing it, I hadn't had any Meisner yet, but he was directing me. So talk about directors directing performance out of you, you don't know what you're doing or why you're doing it, but you understand it because they're breaking it down to you. Now, when you study Meisner, all this stuff makes total sense. You know how to go moment to moment, beat to beat, scene by scene.

Mike Colter ([31:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LTKhd6OVCK0XbkORQJAagoEvOlWheLyck3_cG8ufrDJe3Ns_Dck0a77pp-KxA-OU9LzpHrNjVB427cpBzgt7OjXBuwI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1894.63)):

You got to be able to think it, feel it, and trust that the camera will catch that off of your face. They'll catch that or just the story will be told in your body posture, the way you move and things of that nature. And that was really cool. Actually it was one of the most fun episodes I've had in a long time and it really brought it back to the basics of acting. Before you get dialogue, you should know how to do something without dialogue. I think dialogue is a heightened skill, the ability to command language, think on the line.

Charlie Sandlan ([32:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Gpi0FdhMNTBHkbt81E3jdf7MmLso4po0AyC_YJQtfLyNWEz6g2kS5RrVQxjjznJPMyDl_QZwmD_GR9sZMXSu6tyhpYo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1928.73)):

Well I don't think that people probably wouldn't know that you are a theater guy. That's where you started out doing theater, in a lot of New York work-

Mike Colter ([32:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hQH-y2nHuQLh4SVOGL1SWq3lZtvXF8GvPlSgsY71G1GCI2e-CzbjCM_LeYqvufYg7jyw-N04I4AIgSnYdIm3W7DcQ7Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1936.88)):

Yeah. I-

Charlie Sandlan ([32:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZWiDQnhawOtuj5K1WBD6-YENLmPXErMT60IlfI_iRxdCbY27H_5tKfouu149UtWsGbFRwlh60O5IoRbmjqWoE-gLEgA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1937.79)):

What did you take away from... And do you miss it? Do you want to get back and do something?

Mike Colter ([32:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dOlri0il1NZezzIL2zvzlrUJhv5gdp_SD9DTkPoO8gREYZfoMBZ39FUS4_Mk2Rvk9Y0tU7AH6eHCQGE35wb5OFoEUsY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1941.9)):

I do miss it and I do want to go back to it. I don't know, when you do a lot of television film, a lot of people just don't think you do theater, but I just don't think you started in theater. They don't understand the training part of it. Because most actors or people who want to be actors, you try and tell them how to become an actor and you start talking about training, you're starting to get this blank stare. That's the last thing they expect you to say. They're thinking, yeah, you got to go to this agent. This is where you got to drop your headshot off it. That this is the person you should talk to. They're looking for these shortcuts that are like, it's like, "What? You mean to tell me I got to train?"

Charlie Sandlan ([32:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=E317rM3MJTOCiwyU2fkNMw2kdAC0QJQSBQyquGv3p5vsEDHwbI7HV1kWythG7dJ5dLsvKEanzH7qYtTQ7kwUNT6r0fs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1975.25)):

Most successful actors have seriously trained themselves. The actors that are working, that are carving out careers, you look at their resume, they're coming out of grad programs or coming out of conservatory programs, BFA, MFA programs, you name it. What's the worst survival job you had? Because you've had a lot. You've had so many.

Mike Colter ([33:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EvoUwlfrqGwihAiCYDf9RxWWEXmsPt7qc_iD1rbrFqc0HFqrqG_KFWpxvfE5J-0HBz65VaF_5f5WlwYomq7NJOIt1a8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1992.61)):

Worst survival job. Oh man, I'm going to say I labor-ready. Yeah. I'm working day to day. Get my state ID, my license. Showing up, waiting for a person who needs laborers for the day to do something that's menial labor, manual labor. Picking up rocks, pushing stuff, moving boxes, acquires no skill whatsoever, just able body, able bodies. That's what you need. It was a 2001 all day long, and back then minimum wage was about $8 an hour. So I'm working eight hours a day, that's $64, and I'm taking home 40 bucks.

Charlie Sandlan ([33:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hwc1GRgWo1axBnEouQV7M78UIgwYQ24hi4C9ZlmXWGFrjrCIw_1gE0JI1npwuZCxJO00G8Hg98NpVRWgKhjQ1q0dR-g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2032.08)):

How would you describe the importance of listening?

Mike Colter ([33:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=au5O74Nzj29Xz6v1n7tFNzThFXWt5gAYcr4OtbEV2dIk-wpvzpSIhRpFVUU3Xlgv9CqrjvP2ZZIAgrrRrEi4dXj412Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2035.46)):

You can't really overstate the importance of it because we joke about it. Sometimes I'll say, everybody says, "Oh, your dialogue, talk, talk, talk, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, my line."

Charlie Sandlan ([34:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4ckFQhQwL-SLY-x1lpPP2P8RbUMQPKl8y0N3SSWz1w0TQxozCTL8NzgEO8fn27wNY2DqtdPOxnrYrjCa20GmiDqorIY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2045.7)):

Right.

Mike Colter ([34:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cA4-F0qgH3S5XFpNNNjkSTimOuYwuCGVzUCIWB2dGKNT8JL-0qdEIWsyvKKqHyTvTj3mt99LBV3Dee5V1dn_CgGCj_Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2046.24)):

And if you're not listening, it's apparent because I'm a better listener when I'm working than I am in life. And the reason that is, is because you have to be there times when I'm listening. I know a person is saying their lines wrong because it's not what I need to hear, and I almost stop a take and go, "Well, that's not..." But they didn't say what I needed to hear. So maybe he'll say an operative word that my character is supposed to repeat. Well how about I'm listening. I hear that operative word. Then if I'm using that word in my argument against them, I'm going to use the word he said, not the word that's on paper that we were supposed to say.

Mike Colter ([34:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kNIpHiKR0HS_bBti-TlDpD2pZbezkbMXSIsMM8ES2fLzXLCuzq1suVSJZBVDMIknDt5qPU21og4lnM5OBl915eoTli8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2085.7)):

But I got to be listening to hear that. And if a person's not a listener, they don't hear it and they didn't say what's... So it could work just fine in the tape. If you were actually listening, that person said the wrong lines. We know, he said the wrong word. We know. If you're listening, now you take that word he said, and use that one. I've done that many, many, many times. The words close, not the right word, similar word, sending a synonym for the same word. But you got to be listening to pick that up. There's no way around it. You got to constantly be listening because it's a ball, it's a ball, it's energy. Sometimes a person is throwing the ball and the energy in the scene requires you to listen so you can pick up the pace, pick up the cues, know when to come in.

Mike Colter ([35:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MlPxQ7pm4gc0zL4lr-2sJWlffBESt7_vjRAQbFpGINAEDbm5gjvwaFNFcNgBoc8DiNcLhojHvaVxIwGQiIfEl3nxnuw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2124.98)):

Simple thing is, in general, not always. It's not always this way. But there's one person that's driving the scene, right? You got two different energies. Everybody. Both people rarely can be hot in the scene same time. Can't come in with the same energy. There's a yin and a yang, there's a staccato-legato, and that works in most scenes. You got to balance each other. And that usually plays that well otherwise the scene will implode on itself and it won't make any sense, you can't even listen to it. So inherently you got to know which way your character is going. If it's well written sometimes it's obvious, but sometimes it's just that simple.

Mike Colter ([36:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5Ma1CtlQ-XJwKgpYtIh0nAihQmKRjw_K_yfXIDo_wXnSf5Z_rpbVZ3BlUcOPDGuTyHVeWfZFaN8x_dQ5SW1_PXaQVPk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2164.26)):

And maybe it goes back to training sometimes when a person makes a choice, that choice may be the wrong choice. You as an actor and you're seeing with them, make a choice that you think serves the scene, serves the character. This person comes in and scene might not be working because that person is not in the right pitch, not in the right note, he's not hitting the right note. So when you talk about a scene has a start somewhere, it has a beginning, a middle and end, when you start the scene, you should be in a different place by the time you end the scene, that's usually a good way to find out whether you've done your homework, because every character is in the same exact place when the scene is over, nothing happens to the character. And that was the hardest part about training. It's scary as hell. You think, "Oh my God, character has got to be someplace different? How am I going to get there?"

Charlie Sandlan ([36:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=C3C9g0yyHiFtsU5XJLJKlAF_GctvHzJ7-8H2ltOOghQkKmmzvS34E-E4UapwrAw0ydPMqOepUeyW1PCAQUdXpiRrj_8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2216.42)):

Well, you do your homework. But then you don't know what the other actor is going to give you, and you got to be able to take in, and you've got to be able to listen, and they're going to give you something, a moment that like, "Oh, I didn't even see that coming." Didn't even see that coming.

Mike Colter ([37:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xDcRLLRlGUST6UI2pLMyMj4wkATkYe6uoeRITE8rqLtR6WmtbSWkd4YOraNq6_XVtr8A_4FAzu2-umxNx1Kp3wMjs2Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2228.73)):

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Charlie Sandlan ([37:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=tmEhG1i2OJ1TvRfS_RHCzpEMZ6X0qOdQtZEVw49NxeDVmMiLGNjA4ZRyS31oFhEnNGBjQrUHQ94hPAl4sSfkwDLSPPM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2229.81)):

it changes me.

Mike Colter ([37:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EKVMGBub9lT1Pr54PjSUIX_J4hfvLVasE1UnxNHo0Gehff4AsCN9V0742Jcr4-6OVGRTen07X_pSw2EsSeZk2chGojg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2231.07)):

Yeah. Yeah. So you plan something and you go, "Oh, this is what I think is going to happen." But then that person has a really specific thing that you didn't think about. So now that's actually something that now the way you take in, the way you listen, is much more alive. It's something that you didn't, but it justifies a scene, it makes sense, it makes sense. Then that person's going to do it that way, now I got to do it this way. You can't stick to your decisions before the scene starts and never shift. Somebody does something to you, and I see actors do that's another thing you know they're not trained. A person gives them something, and you go, "How the hell can you respond in that manner based off of what that person just gave you?". That's not possible. If you're being calm and you're trying to be charming, and everythings are going great, at least that's the way you thought it was going to go, or you're trying to seduce this woman and she's supposed to be giving in to you, if she laughs at you-

Charlie Sandlan ([37:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ts7KAV4b_uHK_HQdlqIpXYiw92H2e5r1dty81vXeBbHTLSwG-tcScIHve_GGq5YNjJrWlOnEP3BxbT8hixzOo92TM14&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2279.73)):

You got to work off that.

Mike Colter ([38:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yDLbMC9F13uJIphgt0rM1LPo424eC5QQIs5XDpNwFC2ir9lXVQ2L7XmMBw1D-Wg0BgxJ_soEqtPdTYYJ00P7eu0xglo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2282.18)):

She's laughing at you. You can't ignore it. You can't just keep talking. You can't just keep going as if she's supposed to have sex with you or give you her number or leave the bar with you. But in the middle of her... She laughs at you or she just-

Charlie Sandlan ([38:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oDWQ1cpbJJxdDZWaaTx5aZMHQNTMJnanz9kgveQuxERXv0NAGVAtObPner5uARP3mf7HWSHafwRlyrGIaqh1ddEPYWM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2296.91)):

It's the worst acting, those are bad actors man.

Mike Colter ([38:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ibS5F8tLrWxwpJ67Sc_KaifdYNsnSUqdxdg7ikd-c8vY6T1UvpQ26utoKiMoyaW5FJ-rN8mKsZ6qP4CVG0blhd0abTw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2299.1)):

That's bad acting. You can't do that. And listen, again. As actors, we were in the moment we start a shift, but there's the director's job to say, "Hey, we got to direct the scene to serve the scene to make it work." Maybe that choice isn't the right choice. Maybe she can't laugh at you in that moment because it doesn't make sense and we can't... So there's certain things, but you also got to be ready to go with wherever she goes or wherever that person goes or how that person decides to seduce you. I had an actor come in, I wasn't in that scene. My co-star said, some actor, very young, very green, comes in, supposed to seduce, is a very short scene. He doesn't even know how to come on to a woman at a bar. She's literally trying to tell him do it like you do it in life. It was like he had an idea of how he thought this should go.

Charlie Sandlan ([39:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wZyHZseediNxzkUi-Wl_2JJ89Q-5liAEhP7jaOBWgasI2Gl9lo4mkSYBhJnB9y5F1nonapda6Fr_HLatJMOjWro1K_M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2348.2)):

He can't do actions also. You're not going to be doing anything.

Mike Colter ([39:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7J0J5tNJtJCYom6rrjmI084JVMXJAoS1WKp1uITeZcLzJs-xpnShxayJD56VvuO9MLs3Maid9lmXiCOF8y5znvYHjMA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2352.12)):

Subtlety is something that people don't get sometimes. Subtlety. You don't have to hammer every moment, beat, every action.

Charlie Sandlan ([39:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=976bxrWdYUa0IrWFXZ8oOqDU8QQlMab-W0iRBs9Va1pPRHruhzY8EJ4ZHdyGlkihmVr93giuQnGl50v1UvSBTM5CCsM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2360.87)):

No, you got to be able to work off subtext. You got to be able to work off meaning of what someone's saying to you. You got to be able to work...

Mike Colter ([39:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WYuuWSSvM7HEwBVnewTewTl662WEO_PHhwXl-TgeZJ57Kz5dcfsmGXro6NlUq3Xy53vGnv_yThXKXSpFzL5VxtPiyd0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2365.86)):

Yeah.

Charlie Sandlan ([39:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=W6PR37RwABIp9hwg--T3QQTdO1NlVZX3lQ4kAkQkiRiCFikOe1tLkCR_IPlXp9fSMgVtRbV93icNn5Kekx6-ciuTLFo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2366.82)):

Yeah, you got to be malleable to the nuance of the moment.

Mike Colter ([39:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GqAlTLqTcUzcsFkUUqsRSKJqailGwMPP1MvuY1NcNhr8aEqedd0iCr5TuLccqgYb6UqKMCJ6dXm7GCE1bdmFq66Oto8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2370.59)):

Absolutely.

Charlie Sandlan ([39:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LrEWdKUmfIxBigAVOb8mhVaWw4GLAwiyKbYTK7QqDrFUs91hID2JTVpZqeuPh89myezHz0frqBgRSh__kA2foFQCVQ8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2371.32)):

Right?

Mike Colter ([39:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XS0__iTo7Oc11D20Gtxru3erWUpo4aHbW2KXRY4yoHznJOfladU-Wcl8vVOtz3_ZqeV-B4f3__4k3ShE6A3g15AFDKc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2372.96)):

No response is almost as big a response. No responses. What does that do to ya?

Charlie Sandlan ([39:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=alq-x4W1NQK4f5jatDP9FHCutmJlkQKtMzFkrbU4affehilUsTBRFO3wJmaxEtgbwIKIacnZt2CAAZFJeU_A7wHWhI4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2378.77)):

I wanted to jump in here real quick before I give you the closing part of our conversation. I just think it's really refreshing to hear a working actor, well-trained, like Colter, just talk about how in an actor's terms, right? It's not the same as a teacher, but what it means to be able to work off another human being, what it means to listen, to be able to respond in the moment to what you're getting, not doing your homework at the other person, not acting at the other person, not going from cue to cue to cue to cue, but from going to impulse, to impulse, to impulse. And listen, the last thing you want to be is a problem when you get onto a set or in rehearsal. So we were closing out our conversation and I just straight up asked him, how about some advice. What do you got to say to everybody out there who is grinding it out, who's got this dream, this vision of living the life of an actor, and this is what he had to say.

Mike Colter ([40:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U8hKQBiia5O1WLOC5NhAci-lkGc-mxPTPQg5-5p1WpPT4U91GuV5awjdU14QF910miQFW9NtGnC6-H4NbpHFZqsLnm8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2452.16)):

Actors are not normal people. So when I tell actors you got to want this and you got to be able to do this and not have any other desire, but this. Even if it means you're going to not have health insurance, you're probably not going to be able to pay your bills. You might be on the road. You're on regional theaters. You got to be doing this because this is all you know. You don't know how to do anything else, you can't see yourself doing anything else. You have no desire to do anything else. You have to be so stubborn, so focused, singularly focused on this journey and this desire to be an actor that no matter what I tell you, no matter how I tell you how hard it is and how unlikely it is and all the bad stories and the people that didn't make it, and the things that I did, and no matter what I do to talk you out of it, you have to never be afraid, or at the very least you have to say to yourself, "Well, that's not me. It's not going to happen to me. I'm going to make it."

Mike Colter ([41:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Qy33Zo6IaioKdq3xlJtTaAFxOjpfURyaOTTd0k24L9JjkQ2DxKD4NhIHck-wljANiPrds6pgRFYcfGjo7sUaUjl_DYU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2504.92)):

If you can find a way to, no matter what a person tells you, that's to deter you from doing this job that is 98% likely to fail, and you see yourself as a unique individual and somehow you're different. If you can tell yourself that and you believe it, then that's half the battle. You got to believe what nobody else believes because I got to tell you, there's almost nobody when you're telling them you're an actor that's going to believe that you're actually going to make it. There's almost nobody who meets you as an actor, I don't care what stage you are in your life. They don't believe that unless they know you that you're famous, they don't believe you probably don't...

Mike Colter ([42:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PFDpnYyd52YtxxMT5hTRIqTIzowp3ITgtZRInFKPXFjCAjuN5synGo_6cO_Q5z4VfpusTKWLhy6muhDjymRi07f6cKc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2538.41)):

You tell somebody you're an actor, probably think you work in a restaurant. Everybody thinks they can be an actor. You play a flute. People go, "I can't do that." It's apparent that you can't do that. Singing, certain skills, playing an oboe, violin, harp, you can't do that. We'll see somebody who's a really good actor, somehow they believe that they also can do that. And they don't know that they can't do that until they actually get in there and try it. And you may be on that journey as an actor for four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 years before it finally dawns on you, that you don't have the capability or capacity to do what you thought you could do.

Mike Colter ([42:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wS38XMPZr7t7-tsVvmTb491xXhs445fExbLjlLen-ZCKq2NeYEzIM70gVkMlfEUMoZUdRxhavN5_OBO-KE3mjT4nW7U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2577)):

And by that time you've dedicated 10 years of your life. So good luck, good luck exploring this thing that you can't live without, because if you're wrong, I guess the best case scenario at least you tried, right? At least you're still in it. And I see people that still... Any level of success is good for them. But I warn you, find your success level, ask yourself what does success mean to you and how much is really success and what figure that out because it's going to change, it's going to change. So we prepare for that. Whatever you decide, you prepare for the change, and be prepared for the hardship.

Charlie Sandlan ([43:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AIW06c0TeJa3p8Eam-pW_kbW41taczFyUrVTCRWMJ4RngjYZ57XyrPl5Wj4S4P9JIXyq7j32SUbSGx_asumntUGj9zc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2613.52)):

Damn, I told you that he was going to give it to you straight. He has no bullshit. I hope you are appreciative of that. My fellow daydreamers, thank you for sticking around and keeping that phone in your pocket. You can follow the show wherever you get your podcasts, subscribe to it, review it, please on iTunes, that would really mean a lot to me. You can go to my website, https://www.creatingbehaviorpodcast.com for the links and content to all of these shows. You can leave me a message, you can sign up for the newsletter. You can schedule private coaching with me. You can follow me on Instagram @creatingbehavior. You can follow my acting studio @maggieflaniganstudio This song, Not Enough, given to me by my former student Lawrence Trailer, thank you for the song my man. My friends, stay resilient, play full out with yourself and don't ever settle for your second best. My name is Charlie Sandlan, peace.