

Episode #018 (Transcript)

Charlie Sandlan (00:02):

Well, my friends, it's just you and me today. It is a solo episode. So we're not going to go too long. I've just got some stuff on my desk that I'd like to share with you. So hopefully we're going to spark your intellectual curiosity. Maybe we'll even shift your thinking on a few things and my deep wish is that you're going to learn something that you didn't know before you pressed play. So put the phone back in your pocket. Creating Behavior starts now. (singing)

Charlie Sandlan (00:56):

Well, hello my fellow daydreamers. So last week, Friday night, we lost Ruth Bader Ginsburg. And if you were like me, when you heard that news, your heart stopped for a brief second and yeah, got scared shitless. If you didn't think that this election meant something before Friday, it sure as hell means something now. I'll tell you, these conservatives are going to push through a Supreme Court Justice if they can do it, hypocrisy be damned because they want religious conservative bigots on the federal courts. And the reason why I mention this is I'm going to talk about the film Cuties here in a second. But I was laying in bed over the weekend and I was just pondering. I started imagining what this country probably looked like maybe five years, eight years before the beginning of A Handmaid's Tale. What our country was like before that first episode.

Charlie Sandlan (02:14):

And to me, it looks like this. Where we're at right now, when we have the religious zealots that are in power pushing agendas to stifle us, to control us, which brings me to this movie, Cuties, which if you have not watched yet, you've got to watch it. And the reason why is because A, it's a wonderful film, a beautiful film. But B, you need to understand what the controversy is about. You

might have also recognized this film as the so-called pedophile movie because a lot of the conservative right, epiphany, the pedophile obsessed Americans, shout out that this film was about sexualizing women, girls, I should say children. And this is a film that glorifies pedophilia and is for sick men that want to jerk off in their bedroom to this film. And then you watch it and you realize that it has absolutely nothing to do with that whatsoever.

Charlie Sandlan (03:37):

It is a beautiful film that actually everywhere else in the world has been received very well. It has been highly praised and you've got people like senators. We're talking about people in power, Tom Cotton, Ted Cruz, who actually have sent letters to the Department of Justice to begin an investigation. People shouting for the cancellation of Netflix. And this is actually bi-partisan. Christine Pelosi, the daughter of Nancy Pelosi also jumped on the cancel Netflix bandwagon. And these morons, they haven't even watched the film. It is a beautiful film about what it means to be a girl and what it means to be a child caught in between two worlds. And the director Maimouna Doucoure, I hope I'm not butchering that name. Maimouna Doucoure made a very personal film, born out of her own experience as a Senegalese child, living in France. And, she said in an interview as a child, that the question of how to become a woman was my obsession.

Charlie Sandlan (04:53):

And she has translated that into this film in a really beautiful way. It's about a girl, this girl, Amy, who's pulled between two cultures really. She lives in a very conservative Muslim home with her mother and her aunt who is a very driving severe force in her life. And that culture of real conservative misogyny, where women, your bodies are controlled. Do you know? And you've got no choice. You're going to be given off to marriage at a very young age and your job is going to be to serve and care for the man in your life. And so she's growing up in this world and all of a sudden she becomes exposed to modern Paris and she sees this girl in

her basement, in the laundry room, her age, who's dancing, the way children do. It's slightly sexualized, but that's the culture we live in. And so it sends her off in this really beautiful journey of being caught between two worlds.

Charlie Sandlan (06:13):

And it has, I think, something to do also with female rage. You watch this girl who has a father who is absent, who has decided to take on a second wife and you watch her become more reckless, more self destructive, more violent until she finally has this epiphany towards the end of the film. It makes you think about how we raise our children, the meaning of girlhood. It had me contemplating that for many days after watching it. And I just think about the outrage that people have over this film. When you've got eight seasons of Dance Mom, or Bring It, or Step It Up, Toddlers In Tiaras, where we have been sexualizing girls for a long time, dressing them up, putting makeup on them, putting them in short skirts and parading them out to rock their hips and try to act like 25 year old women.

Charlie Sandlan (07:20):

And so is the movie uncomfortable? In moments? In moments, yes. But I'll tell you, the acting is superb. There's this really beautiful scene. It's actually one of the more compelling and heartbreaking scenes I've seen on film in a long time. Amy, she's in her mom's room. She ends up hiding under the bed. Her mom comes in, she's sitting down on the bed and she has to accept the fact that her husband is marrying a second wife and bringing that life back home from Senegal. And so she sits on that bed and she makes this call to one of her friends and she's, as a good Muslim Senegalese woman should do, she's talking about how wonderful it is and how excited she is to have him home and to welcome this woman into their life. She hangs up and then she just sobs. And you hear, and all you see are the mother's feet on the bed. This is all coming from Amy's perspective. And you just hear the sobs,

the heartbreak, the pain that is born out of this woman who has no choice but to accept her circumstance.

Charlie Sandlan (08:40):

And Amy, you see the tears running down her face and she realizes how broken her mother is. And she sobs and then she dials again. And she has to put back on that face, that happy voice, the congratulatory calls that she has to make to all of her friends because she now has to plan a wedding. It is a great scene, a great piece of acting by that young woman. And you've got to see it. And what happens is, is people get disturbed by art. Which is really hopefully our job, is you want to rock the boat a little bit. You want to disturb people. You want to throw them off center. But what really starts to happen when people are thrown off, when people are disturbed, they want to blame the artist. You're the sicko, you're the pervert. What kind of garbage are you creating here?

Charlie Sandlan (09:39):

I think about the work of Robert Mapplethorpe. I grew up in Cincinnati and back in the late 80s, when I was there, the art museum in Cincinnati was putting on an installation of Robert Mapplethorpe's photography. And if you've looked at any of his work, hopefully you all have. If you haven't, you've got to. He was very in your face. I mean, you look on the wall and there's this huge black cock in your face. There's men bent over with their asshole spread open. I mean, it was a very visceral, in your face, kind of take on his experience as a gay man in the late 80s at the height of the AIDS crisis. And everyone lost their shit. The City Council lost their shit. They sued the art museum and it was over this outrage at the garbage that was being forced upon them.

Charlie Sandlan (10:39):

And I mean, that's an extreme version of what I'm talking about here, but our job is to disturb, our job is to challenge and to get people to think. And so hopefully, you'll watch this film and it'll cause you to ponder some things. Perhaps about how you want

to raise your kids, give you a better understanding of what it means to be a child in this country. I mean, how many 11, 12 year old girls do you think have seen the WAP video? Are you kidding me? And what's so uncomfortable about the film is that you're watching these girls try to imitate what they're seeing and these are these sexual dances, the gyrating hips, they're laying on the ground and they're like thrusting their hips up and down. They don't even know what or why they're doing it other than that's what they see. And these girls aren't even in touch with their sexuality yet. And that's why it's uncomfortable. So go watch the film.

Charlie Sandlan (11:50):

Now I was trying to contemplate what bit of acting advice I could give you this week, something I could pass along to you. And I was searching for inspiration and voila. I came across Brie Larson's YouTube channel. Now I'm not a YouTuber. I don't go down the rabbit hole of YouTube videos, but you should go and watch what she's putting out on her channel. It's great. I mean, first off, she's an incredible actress. Oscar winning, *The Room* was an incredible film. And she is a, a role model to millions and millions of girls. Carol Danvers, Captain Marvel. I mean, what, I guess, a big cultural responsibility she has. But she has got this YouTube channel where she's very accessible, very open, very genuine and talks about her life, talks about her career, talks about her struggles and her audition failures. And there's a really great video where she is talking about auditioning.

Charlie Sandlan (12:57):

And in one of them, she lays out seven bits of advice that she thinks actors should take. And I want to share them with you is because these are the seven, certainly seven things that I say to my students all the time. Auditioning, it's an art in and of itself. There are many, many actors that are really good, I mean, first rate actors that don't book work because they don't know how to audition well. It's a skill that you've got to learn. And the first thing

that she said was that don't do what you think they want. And this is a big trap for actors because you get a piece of material and all the sudden you start thinking to yourself, God, what are they looking for? And you start trying to do fit whatever kind of interpretation or choices you're making so that you give them what they want.

Charlie Sandlan (13:53):

But honestly, half the time, they don't know what they want. You have to approach your audition like an artist. This is my take. This is what I want to do. This is born out of my personality and my life experience and my take on something here. And if it's what you want, that's great. And if it's not good luck. So you've got to be true to yourself and to your creativity.

Charlie Sandlan (14:23):

The second thing she said is you got to make a choice, which follows what I was just talking about. That's what it means to interpret a piece of material is to make choices. You've got to make a choice about the character, about your physical life, your vocal life. If it's certainly something that needs to be adjusted in you, you've got to make choices about the circumstance, the acting relationship. What am I going to do with this beat? What's my choice in these moments here? And so that has to do with ideas. You need a lot of ideas when you're working on a script. I know I've said this before, but you just can't go in to an audition and give them conversational reality. That is not it. And it's important. Otherwise, you're not going to have any behavior. Making choices is what's going to allow you to create behavior.

Charlie Sandlan (15:12):

She said that you're going to make mistakes. Of course, you are going to fuck up. You're going to go up on lines. You're going to drop the second page of a four page audition. Don't freak the fuck out. She said, you've got to be smooth. And it's important because they will recognize that you're not one to get ruffled easily. You're not going to end up on a set, fucking up and cause an entire crew

to cut and reset because you freaked out that you had missed a line. Improvise, figure it out, stay in the moment. Don't lose your shit. And all of a sudden go, oh God, I'm sorry. Fuck. I dropped that line. Can we go back? And you're already three minutes into your audition. You're going to piss everybody off.

Charlie Sandlan (16:04):

Then she said, ask for what you need. And this has to do with taking control of your audition. You've got your five minutes, you're going to walk into this room and what do you need? Do you need a chair? Do you want to stand? Maybe you've got three different scenes that you're auditioning with. Listen, can I do the third scene first? It's just going to help me emotionally. Don't be afraid to ask for what you want.

Charlie Sandlan (16:32):

Then she said, you're going to have bad auditions. You're going to bomb. You're going to butcher a piece of material. You've got to have a sense of humor about it. You've got to be able to let that roll off your back. And one of the great things about being an actor is that you're always starting over. You got the next audition, who cares? Do you know? And half the time, you'll leave thinking you did a really shitty job. Only like three months later to get a call that you booked it. And you're like, what the fuck? I thought I trashed that audition. Do you know? So have a sense of humor about your mistakes big time. Big time point.

Charlie Sandlan (17:10):

And here's something she said, this was her sixth point. And I love it. She said that the audition begins the second you walk in the room, not when you start doing your acting. It's the moment that you, I mean, I think now, step into that Zoom call or you walk into that room. Do you walk into a room and your whole body is just like apologizing for being there? Do you come across nervous? Are your hands shaking, are you sweating? Or are you confident, humbly confident, excited about the opportunity to act? Do you come across as somebody that I would love to collaborate

with? You just have such a great energy. You've got a sense of humor. You're prepared and you don't look like you have rolled out of bed. I get a sense that you know who you are, by the way you dress. You've got your own sense of style that you look good for you.

Charlie Sandlan (18:10):

And that's important because it's like a first date. You've got to think about auditions as going on a first date, making a really good impression. And part of that is being genuine, being yourself. People, we can all smell bullshit a mile away, someone who is not authentic at being genuine, kind of putting something on. That fake smile, that fake energy, it's all bullshit. Be real, be authentic from the moment you walk into that room and be grateful for the opportunity to act.

Charlie Sandlan (18:46):

And then the other thing she said, which I thought was really great is yes, of course this is an opportunity for them to see you, to get to know you, but it is also an opportunity for you to get to know them and what they're about and the kind of room they run and how they handle an audition process. It's good for you to know and it's important. And I thought that was really great advice. And I guess to follow up on this topic of auditioning, the one thing that is going to give you a chance, that longevity that's going to help with your perseverance and your resilience in this business is not hinging everything on the job. And this is really challenging because sometimes you might not have had an audition for six months and are freaking the fuck out. And all of a sudden you get this audition. You get these five pages for this guest spot on this show and all of your eggs are going in this basket and it is about booking this part. God, you want it. Do you know?

Charlie Sandlan (19:59):

And then you don't because chances are, you're not going to get it. If you can understand that it is not about the job, it is about the relationships that you are forming. If you can just go into that

room, do good work, look like a professional, look like somebody who people want to collaborate with. They are going to remember you. You might not book the job and you might not hear from them for another eight months, but they remember good work. I mean, my God, do you know how much crap they see day in and day out? The amount of shit that they have to delete and sit there and humor when they're actually in a room with people. It's very rare that people come in and do really great work.

Charlie Sandlan (20:48):

Now you might not be right for it. You're too tall. You're too short. You're not the right ethnicity that they're looking for. They rewrite it for a female and not a male. They decide they want an Asian American or they want a person of color. There's so many reasons why you're not going to get it. But if you go in there and you create behavior, they're going to call you back. And over a couple of years, if you have a stable of casting directors. And by stable, I mean maybe two or three who know that you're good, who know that you're consistent and could walk into a room and create behavior, you're going to get called in again and again. And eventually you're going to book. But the key is to have fun and enjoy yourself. So that's my PSA on auditioning today. Check out Brie Larson. It's great.

Charlie Sandlan (21:46):

Now I have always just been kind of enamored with Steve Jobs. I mean, what an incredible legacy. Changed the course of the world. I recommend for all actors to read his biography by Walter Isaacson, Steve Jobs. The man was an artist, an unbelievable artist with artistry and a standard of excellence and a work ethic that was second to none. And I return to him often for inspiration. I'll read something that he said, an article about him, or I'll go back to the book and just pull something out. He said that really good, successful people are intellectual omnivores. I just love those two words put together. Intellectual omnivores. He said that really successful people are able to explore the world in unique and

interesting ways. And I've talked many times about the need for intellectual curiosity. You cannot bring more to your art than what resides inside of you. And you've got to continually feed yourself, educate yourself about anything and everything.

Charlie Sandlan (23:11):

He said that super achievers are open to new ideas, new experiences. And hopefully there's a part of you that wants to be a super achiever for fuck's sake. You've got to have the ability to be able to zoom out, to be able to see from the 80th floor and not from the street level. And he spoke about a calligraphy class that he took in his 20s, that he studied calligraphy and how it inspired him and affected the way he had approached his products. And I just thought, wow, that's great. Who would have thought calligraphy? But you've got to find your hobbies. You've got to find those things that interest you that have nothing to do with acting. I don't care if it's learning another language or learning how to crochet. If that's your thing and it leads me to this topic of resilience.

Charlie Sandlan (24:18):

I tell you guys every week, stay resilient. And I think that resilience has to do with your ability to commit to a life of curiosity. And that's not necessarily something that just comes naturally to a lot of people, but you have to work at it. You have to be furious. You have to show up with interest and an openness to learn, a student's mindset. Try to approach your life with a student's mindset because you know what? Learning something and you guys all know this. Those of you who certainly have been in my classroom and have spent two years learning something. There is a feeling of victory when you have learned something. When you have figured something out, when you have accomplished something. It is one of the best ways to stay positive. It is one of the best ways, and it is a key to being resilient and living a resilient life.

Charlie Sandlan (25:24):

And we are all dealing with change and our lives being uprooted. And that can be made easier for you if you engage yourself in changing who you are, adding to it, into growing yourself, your mind and your knowledge about various things. I don't care if it's gardening, learning how to trim a bonsai tree. Do you know what I mean? Can open and unlock something for you. You've got to be adaptable and that requires pushing yourself. And the more you push yourself, the more confident you're going to be in figuring shit out. So it's a difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

Charlie Sandlan (26:21):

And I will recommend the work of Simon Sinek to you. And a lot of what I've just been saying here are not necessarily my original thoughts. Simon Sinek is a world renowned author. He's written a lot of bestselling books for entrepreneurs, for creatives and, I guess, the essence of what he talks about is the why. Why do you do what you do? That's more important than the product itself. It's understanding this why do I do this? What do I believe in? And putting that out into the world? And he's got a Ted Talk. So I guess I'll wrap up this little segment here to recommend his Ted Talk, a 2009 Ted Talk. Just type in Simon Sinek Ted Talk, it's got over 60 million views now. It's one of the most top two or three watched Ted Talks of all time. And listen to what he has to say. I think you'll be inspired by it.

Charlie Sandlan (27:30):

And the last thing I wanted to talk about today, this was a really great article by Megan O'Grady in The New York Times a few weeks ago, it was a spotlight profile on the artist Heji Shin. And I'll just spell out her name for you. Her first name, Heji, H-E-J-I. Last name, Shin, S-H-I-N. And of course I'm willing to accept that I've probably butchered her name. What a vivid artist and photographer. I had never heard of her until I read this article. Didn't know her work and went down the rabbit hole once I read the interview, it's really great, she has a lot of really wonderful

things to say about creating and about the purpose of art. She's got a series of photographs in particular that are very raw. I would even qualify them that there's a violence to them. And it is a series of women giving birth. And they are just photographs of a baby crowning out of a woman's vagina during birth. I've never seen that before. I haven't been lucky enough to be in a room with a woman giving birth.

Charlie Sandlan (28:47):

I think next to being with someone as they die, it's one of the great privileges that you could have as a human being to watch someone give birth. These photographs are amazing. They're so private, but yet they're so human and so universal. I love them. And she's got this series, it's fairly recent. It's called Big Cocks. And what it is are these beautiful, beautiful photographs of these aggressive, active roosters, and just the details she catches and the beauty of these roosters as you see them kind of caught in kind of mid-flight, kind of ruffling their feathers. Maybe even, it looks like they're bracing for attack, are beautiful. You should check out her work. There's a violent intensity to it. And in the article she said, at one point, "To create is always a step into the unknown." She said, "Artist is the playground for the cultural subconscious." And then she said, this which resonated with me and has made me think. She said, "Artist is theft. Art is armed robbery. Art is not pleasing your mother." Now I'll just let that sink in. You can ponder that quote for a couple of days.

Charlie Sandlan (30:16):

Now I want to wrap things up with this. I went back to a great interview in Playboy with Michael Shannon. I think it's August, 2018. And yes, I do read Playboy for the interviews, as you should as well. Go online. He has this to say about Trump. It's just great. So I'm going to read both. I'm going to read the interviewer and then I'll read Michael Shannon and the interviewer starts off. "So there's no part of you that would want to play Donald Trump?"

Charlie Sandlan (30:47):

"No."

Charlie Sandlan (30:49):

"Just to get inside his head. You talked about being fascinated with bad men who are suffering."

Charlie Sandlan (30:55):

"How do you mean? How is he suffering?"

Charlie Sandlan (30:59):

"You don't think Trump struggles with demons?"

Charlie Sandlan (31:02):

"He's having a blast. Are you fucking kidding me? The guy is having so much fun and there's no self doubt or fear. He's having the time of his fucking life. He doesn't even have to work. All the hard work that most people have to do to get to be President of the United States. He just skipped all that. The fucking guy doesn't even know what's in the constitution. He doesn't have any grasp of history or politics or law or anything. He's just blindfolded, throwing darts at the side of a bus."

Charlie Sandlan (31:31):

"So Trump is where your capacity for empathy ends?"

Charlie Sandlan (31:36):

"What's there to be empathetic towards?"

Charlie Sandlan (31:39):

"Well what do you think is going through his mind at 4:00 AM, as he's lying in bed and staring at the ceiling?"

Charlie Sandlan (31:45):

"He's probably thinking I want some fucking pussy. I don't know. I'm not going to remotely contemplate the notion that Trump is capable of deep reflection in any form. In any form. It doesn't happen. Fuck that guy. When he's alone with his thoughts, he's not capable of anything more complex than I want some pussy and a cheeseburger. Maybe my wife will blow me if I tell her she's pretty."

Charlie Sandlan (32:06):

"Well how about his supporters? Do you think their minds can be changed?"

Charlie Sandlan (32:10):

"Somebody who thinks Trump is doing a good job, there's no conversation to have with that person. I know they say you should reach across the island, all that crap. But to me it feels like putting your hand in a fan." (singing)

Charlie Sandlan (32:25):

And isn't that the truth? I don't think I could've said it better than Michael Shannon. So my fellow daydreamers, we're getting the hell out of here. Thank you for sticking around, keeping that phone in your pocket. I hope you learned a few things. You can follow and subscribe to the show wherever you get your podcasts. You can follow me on Instagram @creatingbehavior. You can follow my acting conservatory @maggieflaniganstudio. I use SpeakPipe on my website, <https://www.creatingbehaviorpodcast.com> Go to the leave a comment page and all you've got to do is press a button. Leave me a voicemail, ask me a question, share some thoughts. Let me hear what you're thinking. I'd really appreciate it. And Lawrence Trailer as always, thank you for the music. My friends, come on now, be intellectual omnivores, be resilient, play full out with yourself, and don't ever settle for your second best. My name is Charlie Sandlan. Peace.