

Episode #031 Season 1 Finale (Transcript)

Charlie Sandlan (00:02):

So for the last nine months, our lives have just been one big shit burger. What else can you say other than that? And I know for Trisha and I March 14 was the day it all started for us. That's when we had to cancel our wedding 20 minutes before we walked down the aisle. And all of us have had to grapple with death, with anxiety, with a crisis of solitude. We've been forced to adapt, to find some grit and resilience, some way to save our lives, save our art, be creative.

Charlie Sandlan (00:33):

And for me, this podcast has been a lifesaver. It started and was born out of incredible resistance, but a determination to do something creative. And it has become one of the most enjoyable aspects to my life. So today, we're wrapping up season one. It is the Season 1

Finale, 31 episodes in. And I'm excited to share some new things with you, play some clips and share some music. So put the phone back in your pocket. Creating Behavior starts now.

Charlie Sandlan (01:40):

Well, hello, my fellow daydreamers. Welcome to the season one finale. 31 episodes, I cannot believe it. And I am really full circle, I am in Guatemala, I'm in my in-laws attic, I guess, is what you want to call it. I call it the hole, it is surrounded by cement blocks. I've got what really is here a collection of hoarders' junk. And I've got a card table and beach towels as soundproofing. So this is where I started. This is where I was back in May, when we were knee-deep in the pandemic and I was telling my students that they had to adapt, they had to find some grit and resilience and save their life and save their art and find a way to re-birth themselves. And I wasn't doing a goddamn thing. I was feeling a complete hypocrite.

Charlie Sandlan (02:44):

And I said to myself, "Well, I got to do something, man." And this was it. I didn't want to do a podcast, I always rolled my eyes at it every time it was brought up. That inner critic always did a number on me. And I thought, "Well, that's what I got to do." And so I made a commitment to do this podcast and June 9, I dropped my first three episodes. And now we're on Episode 31. I've learned a hell of a lot. I've had some great conversations, I've learned about myself as a teacher and an artist. And I've had a lot of deep reflection. And I hope that for you guys that have been listening to these shows that you are coming away, inspired at times, provoked, and given some insight really in what it means to be an actor, what it means to be an artist. How do you go about creating behavior for a living?

Charlie Sandlan (03:44):

And this show is actually turned into one of the most enjoyable things that I do. It's not paying me anything. I can tell you that. But I do, I really do enjoy it. So what I thought I would do first off is just talk about some shit that's been on my desk, some things I want you to watch, some things to think about. And then I'll play some clips of some of my favorite episodes. But first, listen, make sure you guys all Ma Rainey's Black Bottom. The Netflix show that just dropped a couple of days ago.

Charlie Sandlan (04:23):

It's based on an August Wilson play by the same name. And if you don't know who August Wilson is he is on the Mount Rushmore of American playwrights. He was a prolific writer and a champion of the African American experience and kind of the core of his life's work, really kind of what stands out above all else is his 10 play cycle called the American Century. And basically he wrote a play that covered every decade of the 20th century. And it really brought to light the African American experience. And Ma Rainey's Black Bottom. It was the play that was set in the 1920s.

Charlie Sandlan (05:09):

It's also the only one of the 10 plays that is based on a real person, Ma Rainey. And it's getting a lot of buzz because it has Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman. It was his last film. I think it's Viola Davis's best work. It's an incredible tour de force. Chadwick Boseman is amazing. It's got an incredible cast. It's directed by George C. Wolfe, one of the best theater directors in the United States. He also adapted *Angels in America* for HBO. It's a film script that was adapted by Ruben Santiago Hudson, also a man of the theater. And it's something you've got to see. And it's the kind of work that I think we all aspire to. And kudos to Denzel Washington. Denzel Washington is and has committed to bringing all 10 plays to the screen, adapting them for the film. And *Fences*, of course, was the first one that he put up. And Viola won an Oscar for that. So please watch *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.

Charlie Sandlan (06:26):

Let's talk about Ann Reinking who passed away last week at the age of 71. In her sleep, which I think really is, who doesn't want to do that? She was one of the great Broadway dancers that we've ever had. She was a muse for Bob Fosse, Bob Fosse, one of the great choreographers used her in many of his shows. I was lucky enough to see her in 1996. They had brought *Chicago* back to Broadway and she had choreographed it and she came back and she re-apprised the role of Roxie Hart. God, man, what grace, what simplicity, what style, she had legs for days, and she went to Tony for choreography for that show.

Charlie Sandlan (07:14):

If you want to get a sense of her work, something that you can actually see watch the film, *All That Jazz*. It's a great biopic on Bob Fosse. Roy Scheider plays a choreographer modeled after Fosse called Joe Gideon. And Anne Reinking plays really a version of her real life self. It's an excellent film and a great piece of work. And there's one other little gem with Ann Reinking. It's the *Annie* remake in 1982, she plays Daddy Warbucks' secretary, she's got this number. It's called *We Got Annie*. And she breaks

out into this great routine with all the people that are in Daddy Warbucks' office. It's really fun. She just throws herself into the number with reckless abandon. So rest in peace Ann Reinking.

Charlie Sandlan (08:10):

There's a particular artist that I would like you guys to have on your radar, and it's the comedian Hannah Gadsby. She's an Australian comedian. And she's got two shows on Netflix called Nanette and Douglas. Her stand up is not only incredibly truthful, it's just grounded in personal experience. It's vulnerable, it's challenging, it's direct, it's funny as hell. And she confronts misogyny and racism and bigotry and her own autism. And she's got a unique voice, a unique style. And for all of you artists out there that are trying to figure out where's my voice? How do I fit? What can I say? What can I put into the world? You should know who Hannah Gadsby is, and watch those. You'll be thoroughly entertained, you'll be embarrassed, might even be pissed off a little bit, which is what I think any good art should do for you.

Charlie Sandlan (09:17):

I was reading an article in The Guardian. And it was about Olivia Coleman. She had gone to a theater school in England, and she was imparting some words of wisdom. And there were some great quotes. And I just think Olivia Coleman, she's one of the best actresses, one of the best actors period, excuse me, working. I mean, you put the crown up against what she did in fleabag and Broadchurch and the Favorite and her range is extraordinary. But here's a quote from the article.

Charlie Sandlan (09:54):

"All of those hundreds of auditions I did in the first two years, they didn't just say "Sorry. No thank you." You don't hear anything. That's heartbreaking." And I think every actor can relate to that. And here's something else she said that was very important that I wanted to share with you. "There's some amazing actors who don't get asked back because they don't behave very nicely. Learn your lines, try and know everyone's name, be on time.

There's a million people who would have your job in a second, who are better than you. Take your job seriously, and not yourself."

Charlie Sandlan (10:33):

And I just think that's a wonderful piece of advice, especially coming from someone as accomplished as Olivia Coleman. Listen, this is a small business. And there are few things that you can control, the quality of your work and your reputation. And you just don't want to start to become known as an asshole, difficult to work with. People will call to ask about you. Managers, agents will call if they're interested in signing you to get some feedback from people that you've worked with, they're going to look at your resume. And what you don't want is "Oh, yeah talented as hell, but God damn man, she's a fucking asshole. He's a real dick. Difficult to work with, didn't show up on time, didn't always have their lines down." That's a career killer right there, if you started acquiring that kind of reputation, so I thought that was very important.

Charlie Sandlan (11:27):

I also wanted to touch on The Queen's Gambit, real quick. Now, I'm going to start off by saying, I watched the whole thing. I actually enjoyed it. A lot of good stuff came out of that. But there were a couple things that really pissed me off. One is that I don't know why you have the link, a woman's genius to the need for barbiturates, first of all, in order to be successful. And how they approached addiction, and alcohol abuse was complete bullshit. The lead character Anya Taylor-Joy, I mean, she's been popping barbiturates like they were M&Ms and she was the age of nine.

Charlie Sandlan (12:15):

And then drinking very, very heavily. And then she's able to just dump all that right down the fucking toilet, literally. And she's fine. And it does a complete disservice to the real struggle that people with addiction have to deal with. I also didn't like that they tokenized an African American in the way they did. And they bring

her back after she's grown up, and she's just willing to take her life savings that she's been busting her ass to put towards school to stake her white friend in a chess tournament. I just thought that was complete bullshit as well.

Charlie Sandlan (12:56):

But I was impressed by a particular piece of acting, and that is what Marielle Heller was doing in that show. I just thought it was the best work of the entire show. And Marielle Heller, listen, I mean, talk about accomplished. She's first off an excellent director. If you haven't watched her films, *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*, *Can You Ever Forgive Me* with Melissa McCarthy and also the Tom Hanks, the biopic of Fred Rogers, *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*. But she does excellent work in this show. And what she catches, the pain of rejection, of abandonment by her husband, of being childless, of not being able to see the world, of having to rely on alcohol to just numb her pain. It was an incredibly insightful performance. And I just thought that her relationship with her adopted daughter was, I think, the most interesting part of the entire show. So if you haven't watched *The Queen's Gambit*, you should.

Charlie Sandlan (14:10):

And there's some other work that I've come across in the last number of months that really stuck out to me. One is the work of Tom Pelphrey, season three, of *Ozark* that arc that character arc of somebody who has bipolar. If you really want to understand what that looks like, the pain, the depth of just the suffering that comes from that kind of a mental illness, exceptional work. I think it's some of the most vulnerable, some of the deepest and some of the most nuanced work I've ever seen by a man on camera. I also very much enjoyed the work of Weruche Opia in *I May Destroy You*. She plays Arabella's best friend Terry.

Charlie Sandlan (14:56):

And it's an interesting part. She's an actress who's terrified of acting. Who is terrified of auditioning. And she catches just a

wonderful aspect of that and her overall personality. And her outgoing, just kind of vivacious sensibility was a joy to watch. I have to say, I really did like High Fidelity, I thought it was bullshit that it got canceled, because I really did like it. I watched all of it. And I particularly liked the work of Jake Lacy. He's had a long career. He's your typical big, athletic white guy, but he brought something really interesting. He plays this guy who is interested in Rob, the lead character played by Zoe Kravitz. It's based off of the film High Fidelity. And he's got a sensitivity about him. That was very, very interesting, and he was enjoyable to watch.

Charlie Sandlan (16:02):

I also think you should check out David Byrne's American Utopia directed by Spike Lee. It's on HBO Max. It's an incredible artistic endeavor. And you don't know David Byrne is, I think he's one of the best writers of music that we've got his lyrics are incredibly poetic. And The Talking Heads certainly was one of my favorite bands growing up. I think you should watch Mrs. America if you haven't, the miniseries, I believe on Hulu. Starring Cate Blanchett, she plays Phyllis Schlafly, a real person who is considered the mother of modern conservatism. The entire show, the entire cast just does excellent work and to see her catch the living embodiment of a historical figure and do justice to her and catch her essence was very impressive. If you want to understand what it means to be vulnerable as an actor, to be open hearted and present, watch Normal People. What they're doing in that show is a masterclass in invulnerability.

Charlie Sandlan (17:11):

I also like the star show P Valley. It's based off the Katori Hall play Pussy Valley. And it's about a strip club, and particularly the work of Nicco Annan and his uncle Clifford is great. I think it's an episode worth watching. There are a few books that have had an impact on me this year. I'm currently reading Barack Obama's memoir, and can't put it down. It's excellent. I highly recommend that. I think the most important book that I read this year was

Caste by Isabel Wilkerson. And what she has to say about the systemic white supremacy that has built this country and to be able to look at it through the lens of the caste system was just incredibly profound. It's an upsetting book. It's an enraging book. And it's also a thought provoking book that will hopefully give you greater insight into the country that you live in.

Charlie Sandlan (18:15):

And on that vein, Claudia Rankine's latest book, Just Us is another real searing look at systemic racism on what it means to be an anti-racist. And there's an anthology that was put together by Kevin Young and it's called African American Poetry. It's a collection of 250 years of, I guess, what you would call the African American struggle. And it's monumental. It's the kind of book you keep on your bookcase and you pull out every once in a while. If you want to read something by I don't know Paul Laurence Dunbar or Amiri Baraka or Lucille Clifton. It's a very valuable piece of anthology, so highly recommend that.

Charlie Sandlan (19:04):

And the other thing I want you to keep your eyes open for is a film that's going to drop on January 7. It's called Pieces of a Woman and it stars Vanessa Kirby. Now, if you don't know Vanessa Kirby, you certainly would recognize her from The Crown. She plays Princess Margaret in the first two seasons. She's an exceptional actor. And there's a great article in Bazaar that you can read by Lynn strong, where she talks about how she approached this, this film. And it's a tear jerker, let me tell you, from what I've read about it. It's a mother who gives birth to a child that dies in childbirth, and how she navigates through the shock, the devastation and the heartbreak of losing a child in labor. The first 30 minutes of the film is Vanessa Kirby in labor giving birth to her child that is dead on arrival. It is to hear and read her words about this an unbelievable tall task for an actor to pull off. And she does it. So watch the film, I'm looking forward to it. Everything I've read

about it, it sounds incredible. So keep your eyes out for Pieces of a Woman.

Charlie Sandlan (20:37):

Now, I thought this would be a good time to have a little musical interlude, if you will. So a couple of days ago, I emailed Lawrence Trailer, who wrote the theme music for the beginning in the end of the show, his song Not Enough. He's an incredibly talented musician, and a first rate actor, former student of mine. And I said, "Listen, do you have a Christmas song? Something I could play for my season finale." And he said, "Let me get back to you." And he emails me literally 24 hours later with this song that I'm going to play for you here. It's called 2020 Christmas. And he wrote it, recorded it in the bathroom of a hotel he was staying in and sent me a rough copy and it blew me away and I just couldn't believe that he came up with this so quickly. And he added some background vocals. He cleaned it up a little bit and I have it here for you now, so just let this be a Christmas gift from Laurence Trailer and I to all of you. It's called 2020 Christmas and I hope you like it.

Lawrence Trailer (22:23):
(singing)

Charlie Sandlan (25:04):

Well, thank you Lawrence Trailer for that, that is a Christmas gift I'm touched by it. It's a beautiful song. And I hope you guys enjoyed it. Over the last 30 episodes, I have been fortunate enough to be able to talk not just to former students, to actors and artists that I have a tremendous amount of respect for. And some of them say things that have absolutely stuck with me. And so I want to play some clips from some of these past episodes.

Charlie Sandlan (25:37):

And the first one that I want to play for you is Episode 3. It's my episode with Candace Maxwell. Now she was a former student and right out of school her very first professional audition was for the 50-Cent produced show on Starz called Power. And it was a

sex scene, her very first professional audition and in this clip, she starts off by actually reading the description of the scene and what was actually happening, and then she talks about how she took herself through the audition process, and she ended up booking the job. So here is Candace Maxwell.

Candace Maxwell (26:19):

"Interior hotel, room day, tap, tap, tap a headboard is clapping against the wall, reveal in bed, Tate's bare ass is pumping a pretty young thing doggy style to the same tempo. Cassandra Haynes from his campaign office, in Episode 602 is enjoying herself."

That's what was said, and we're full on in the scene. We're going at it. I'm going to tell you what I did. I got my room, I've set up my room all up. I was like, "Come on Candace. Meisner actress, what would you do?" And I basically like practiced the scene myself.

Charlie Sandlan (26:55):

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

Candace Maxwell (27:00):

Well, okay, so that was me rehearsing but at the day of the audition, now, I get in the room, I do my relaxation technique, immediately. Signed in, I'm ready to go. Laid down in the chair, the couch, tilt my head back, started to breathe. I'm just like just relax. There was no way I was going to do that with the tense body. Walked in. Casting director was like, "Wow, you're very calm." I was like, "Yeah, I'm not going to stress myself out over this." She goes, "Okay, great. Here you go."

Candace Maxwell (27:26):

And I have the paper in my hand. I got the sides the day before. I'm standing in the room, like "How am I going to do this?" And I was like, "Hi," I was like, "Do you mind if I grabbed this chair." Walked over, grab the chair, put it right in the middle room in front of the camera. "Is this good? Is this where you want it." So I had to take a little bit of control, because she was giving me no instructions, which is almost very smart on her part because she

wanted to see what I was going to do. And I was like, "Oh, this is my chance to show you what I would do." So I grabbed the chair, I straddled it, I said, "Begin to move, just be in the scene." And I looked her dead in the eyes, and I did the scene with her.

Charlie Sandlan (28:00):

I'm telling you, that is a great example of how to take charge of your audition. Listen, you got three or four minutes in that room. Don't go in there like a beggar with your handout. Don't go in there worried about trying to give them what they want. You've got your take on the material, you've done some homework, you've made your choices. You've got it all embedded inside of you, and you go in there and you do what you need to do. Great anecdote.

Charlie Sandlan (28:25):

Episode 8, I was so thrilled because I got to interview one of my very best friends and one of my classmates from grad school, Emmy Award winning actress Erin Cherry. And in this clip, she's talking about how she was offered this part on the Amazon show, *After Forever*. And she turned it down, originally, and said, "Listen, it's not how I see this character behaving. I don't like how it portrays black women in particular." And she ended up having coffee with Michael Slade, who was the director of the show and the writer of the show, the creator of the show. And here she is talking about that conversation when she was really standing up for herself and standing up for the character as she saw it. And it ended up getting her the part. So here's Cherry.

Erin Cherry (29:22):

We talked for three hours. We met for coffee, and we had a good conversation. Sometimes it wasn't even about the script. It was just about what's happening in the world, about humanity. And I said to him, when he asked me, because I was a little nervous. I will say that. But he said to me, "So what do you think about the script?" And then this is what I told him, what I just said. And he listened to me. And he said, "Huh." He's like, "Yeah." He said, "I see what you mean." He's like, "And that's very important that

she's reflected in a way that black women who watch the show can recognize themselves."

Erin Cherry (29:57):

Because what I don't want to happen is for like women to watch my character as she evolves over the seasons, and they don't see themselves, that's going to be an issue. If I'm walking down the street in a black woman's like, "Cherry why the hell you playing that part? You know better." I failed. I want a black woman to say, "Thank you so much Cherry, I see so much of myself in your character. As she evolves over the season." And that's what I told him and then he went back, rewrote, came back. And I said, "Yes."

Charlie Sandlan (30:29):

See, I love that clip. Because it's not like Cherry was crushing a career as 1 or 2 on the call sheet. This is an actress who has integrity, and read a piece of material and it didn't resonate with her. She didn't like how that character was written. And she spoke her mind. And it was that honesty that actually attracted Michael Slade to her. And they had that conversation and she ended up booking the part and it ends up getting her an Emmy, a Daytime Emmy Award. Are you fucking kidding me? You got to stand up for what you think is right.

Charlie Sandlan (31:04):

Now in Episode 11, I interviewed my former student Sea Shimooka. Sea did the first year of the training with me and then she got cast as a series recurring in the CW show Arrow. And we talked about that on the episode. But in this clip, we're talking about whitewashing. And particularly what it means as an Asian American to try to navigate through all of the damaging tropes and stereotypes that Asian Americans are just kind of forced to audition for in the roles that they're kind of pigeoned into. And I started off by reading some thoughts that Kal Penn had about his audition experience. So here's Episode 11, Sea Shimooka.

Charlie Sandlan (31:51):

Kal Penn posted some of the racist character breakdowns that he got. Here are a couple, "Gandhi look alike, Snake Charmer, Pakistani Computer Geek in perpetual state of perspiration." And these are character breakdowns.

Sea Shimooka (32:12):

I would definitely say there are stereotypes, especially for a young Asian woman as well. Like I'm a fourth Asian and I consistently go out for hackers, anything in tech, someone who's obsessed with Instagram, fashionistas, there's just like this very social media obsessed, or like tech obsessed, and I'm always going out for that. And they usually want like a fast paced kind of speech pattern or something. And I'm like...

Charlie Sandlan (32:41):

Yeah you got that... That is frustration. That is the frustration that I think all black, indigenous, people of color have been feeling, not just collectively, as human beings in this country, but as artists. And I think one of the good things that have come out of the last nine months, and our social reckoning and the racial upheaval that the summer, and the murder of George Floyd brought us, is hopefully, a much broader understanding of what needs to change in our business. I was also lucky enough to be able to interview some of my mentors. The first one is Maggie Flanagan. And Maggie is the reason that I teach, she is the woman that not only gave me my artistic backbone, she taught me how to act, she taught me how to teach. So I'll just leave you here with some Maggie Flanagan thoughts about acting.

Maggie Flanagan (33:42):

And when I'd work on a part, I would keep a notebook by my bed. And when I was going to sleep, I would daydream, really be open and daydream. And things came to me that were very specific to the character. And I would have a notebook by the bed and would write down what was coming to me from my imagination. And it was oftentimes things you'd never have thought with your head. And the character acting is just to find a part in you, to bring

yourself to a part, live and breathe the part and to breathe life into the part, I thought was wonderful and just to create a character from yourself, that's different than you.

Maggie Flanagan (34:39):

It's one thing to be trained. It's another thing to have artistry. And artistry really is the how, how you approach the character, how you approach the material it's not ever half assed. It is always being open, available and the artistry has to do with attention to detail, attention to the craft. But some people don't have artistry. Some actors do have artistry. Artistry is with the care of how you approach things, not just half-assed. Approach, with great sensitivity, great openness. And if you have a craft, then the craft supports you. But if you don't have a craft, you can be very artistic, you can have what you think is artistry, but you don't have a form that's going to hold it.

Charlie Sandlan (35:44):

A lot of actors, at least understand in some way what an objective is and what it means to have an objective. It's like, you want to have an objective, but you don't play the objective. But yet, you've got to try to achieve something and there can be this confusion about what it means.

Maggie Flanagan (36:01):

Part of the problem is most actors think that the objective goes like that.

Charlie Sandlan (36:05):

Straight line.

Maggie Flanagan (36:06):

Straight line to the objective. But there are many moments to get to that objective, and you may not get there. And the Meisner work teaches you that you must go moment to moment, not in your head, not in how you think it should go. But there's the moment. How do you feel about it? It may have nothing to do with your objective, but you got to truthfully respond to it from your crafting. Meaning that the crafting is lodged inside of you.

Maggie Flanagan (36:40):

And if you're working from your point of view, not intellectually, but from your heart, the truth of you will begin to come to the surface. Acting is doing what the character does under the imaginary circumstances, it's implied. But it doesn't mean you're rigidly adhere to that. First, the actor has to catch the emotional line of the scene from the character's point of view, and the reason you've got to make it second nature because it is the character's response.

Charlie Sandlan (37:19):

Right, So what are actions?

Maggie Flanagan (37:21):

Actions are doing. Meaning what are you doing? What are you doing not physical, but it could be physical. It's written, a scene is written with cause and effect. I do this, which causes a response and the other person, which causes them to do something to me, which causes a response in me, which causes me to do an action, that causes them a response. And that is how playwrights write. Cause and effect and the actor has to deduce the cause and effect and for themselves, work out the inner life of that character.

Charlie Sandlan (38:02):

And that was also able to in Episode 15 talk to one of my very first mentors, Rich Rand, he was my first acting teacher, when I went to Purdue University for my BA in theater. And in this clip, he is talking about the difference between watching a performance that is good, but superficial, and the difference between work like that, and something that's far deeper and far more richer when it comes to what an actor really should be able to do with a piece of material. So here is Rich.

Rich Rand (38:38):

We all know plenty of name actors. And we see them and their marvelous virtuosos. But we don't feel viscerally engaged, we don't really feel that they are deeply grounded in the world of the

play, in the body and the history of the character. We don't feel that and we come away and we say, "Yeah that was good." But the great actors, there's this gripping degree of engagement that you feel in the audience, because the forces at play within the character, are working through their bodies.

Rich Rand (39:19):

I see good actors, competent actors, and they come off stage after doing some knockdown drag out scene, and they just shirk it off. And they come out for their bow and they go... And that they really haven't been touched. They haven't been taken on the journey. And you can kind of feel that in the audience. But if you really go on the journey, you're going to take that journey with you. That journey is going to change you, every role you do. If it's meaningful, if it's complex, it's going to alter the way in which you live your life just a little bit.

Charlie Sandlan (39:57):

Now in Episode 16, I had a great conversation with two time Emmy Award winning actor Norbert Leo Butz. If you want to really understand what kind of an actor this guy is watch Fosse/Verdon. He plays Paddy Chayefsky and watch him play Kevin Rayburn on the amazing Netflix series Blood Line. Here he's talking about the last theater he did before the pandemic, he was playing Alfie Doolittle in a remake of My Fair Lady. And it was directed by Bartlett Sher.

Charlie Sandlan (40:34):

And in this clip, he's, he's talking about this idea he had and how it found its way into rehearsal. And I'm always talking to you guys about ideas, you need ideas when you act. You're never going to be better than your ideas. And it's born out of the homework that you're doing on the character, on the world of the play, on the script itself. And this is a great anecdote that Norbert shares about his rehearsal in My Fair Lady.

Rich Rand (41:08):

It allowed me to take risks on stage, to try things that were just downright weird, weird ways that I could try to assert my power over Higgins, which Alfie had. For instance, in this scene, in the big library scene that I have, we're in Higgins' massive apartment in London, and he's got this enormous desk. And one day in rehearsal, I just, I'm filthy. I've got lice in my hair. I was just such a mess. And I'm doing the speech and I just turned, went to the desk, and I just sat down in his desk, and sat back and started playing with the different things on his desk. And then I just sat there, this one day, in rehearsal, and just sat and looked at him for like, 45 seconds.

Rich Rand (42:01):

And I knew Bart was loving where it was going, with just this smile on my face. It was reading about those guys Kesey and Kerouac that was just sort of like, I don't know, it just allowed me to kind of... What are ways that I can really fuck with this guy in rehearsal, he allowed me to take a full minute pause and just stare at this guy. When we got into tech I couldn't take a full minute pause. But he'd say, "Okay, we got to move that along now, I want to keep that." But then I didn't need the full minute, I could do it in four seconds.

Charlie Sandlan (42:34):

Now, one of my favorite shows on television right now is Ozark. I know, I've talked about the work of Tom Pelphrey and season three but it is an incredible piece of ensemble acting. Jason Bateman, Laura Linney, Julia Garner, and my guest on Episode 19, Trevor Long who played Cade Langmore in season one and season two. And there's a particular scene in Ozark where Cade Langmore is coming home drunk and his daughter is lying in bed. And the script just called for Cade to just get into bed and pass out. And they shot that, but he had an idea. And he approached Jason who was directing that particular episode, and "Hey, listen, I've got an idea. Can I try this?" Jason Bateman said, "Sure, why

not?" And here's Trevor talking about that moment of improvisation and what happened.

Trevor Long (43:29):

So that was an improv. So in the script, that wasn't written, it was written, I just lay next to her. And kind of like, we're talking and I pass out. And we shot the scene. And Jason Bateman was directing and I'm like, "Can I just try something?" And he was like, "Yeah, yeah, go." He was totally open to anything. He'd say, "Yeah, go do it. Go, let's try it." I come in the room. And I get on the edge of the bed. I'm like, "I'm just going to get over her like I'm going to mount her." He's not really conscious of it. But he's on top, you think he's going to maybe. And then he rolls and they kept it. It was a total improv like, and I'm like, "They're never going to use that. It's too dark." And that was great about Jason. He opened the door to that freedom.

Charlie Sandlan (44:14):

Now in Episode 23, I had the pleasure of talking to Jessica Blank. Jessica Blank and her husband, Eric Jensen really kind of have defined the genre of documentary theater. She collaborated with her husband on the play *The Exonerated*, on *Aftermath*, and on a play called *Coal Country*, which opened and closed right at the beginning of the pandemic. She's an exceptional versatile artist, and teacher. And here she's talking about her thoughts on the word inspiration.

Jessica Blank (44:51):

That's another one of those bullshit words that like keeps artists paralyzed and stops them from making their work because we mystify it and we romanticize it. And we think of it as a prerequisite. It's like, I can only work if I feel inspired. It's not that there's no such thing as feeling inspired. Like we've all felt that feeling. It's like equivalent to like being in the zone. But for some reason we mystify, romanticize whatever that feeling and put it on a pedestal. And think that we need to feel that way in order to make good work. The real writer is the one who really writes. If

you're doing it, you are the thing. There is no career milestone that's going to make you the thing. Are you making the work? Great. You're doing the thing.

Charlie Sandlan (45:42):

Episode 25. My former student Rebecca Knox, she studied with me. And then she left to go join the cast of Orange is the New Black, she played the oxy addict, Tina Swope. And what I love about this particular clip, and about the whole role in general, is that she came in, she auditioned for one line, that was it. That was the audition, one line. And it turned into two seasons as a recurring role. And here, Rebecca is talking about how she approached the audition.

Tina Swope (46:16):

I auditioned one line. I said one thing in the audition room, and I was like, "Hey, Daddy, look at this." That's all I had to say, "Hey, Daddy, look at this." And it was supposed to be a small character for three episodes, two episodes, like a little blip or something. And so I went in, and I was like, "Wow, it's awesome I just get to be here for, whatever, a couple days." And then I just get kept getting called back and all of a sudden, two seasons go by. And well, that was very unexpected. Truly.

Charlie Sandlan (46:50):

So what was it about that audition that was different than the other ones?

Tina Swope (46:54):

Right before I went into the room... I mean, first of all, I didn't have any makeup on. My hair was disgusting. I wore just gross, like baggy wife beater. And I sat there, something I always do before I go on to auditions is I don't look at any of the other actors, I don't make small talk, I have my headphones in, I usually have a recording of the other person's lines. I don't look at anyone. I go, I find a seat and I sign myself, but I sit down and I just focus. And so what I was doing before I went into the room was, "Okay, so this chick is an oxy addict." So what I was doing was sitting there

imagining being completely drenched in very heavy honey. And I'm very happy but very heavy honey, I was just thinking about honey dripping down everywhere. So that's all I did. I sat there and I really focused honey, honey, honey, honey.

Charlie Sandlan (47:49):

I love that because when you are approaching impediments, whether that's drunk, high, you're on coke, you're on meth, you're on heroin, you're dealing with pain. You've got to know how to craft those. How are you going to be able to create that kind of vivid behavior and actable metaphors like that, being covered in honey, dripped in honey, if you give yourself over to that, it will change your behavior. And they're incredibly helpful when you're approaching impediment work like that.

Charlie Sandlan (48:21):

Now, Episode 27. This was a special one, another former student. Her name is Kiera Allen and Kiera stars opposite Sarah Paulson in the Hulu original film Run, which dropped back in October. And the wonderful thing about this particular movie is that it cast Kiera as a wheelchair user. And Kiera is a wheelchair user in life. And she's the first wheelchair user to be cast as the lead in a major studio film since 1948. It's groundbreaking, and it's just an incredible testament to kind of where we're heading. Hopefully, when we think about diversity in casting, so here's Kiera talking about that experience.

Kiera Allen (49:13):

The filmmaking team was adamant about casting a real wheelchair user in the part. I went after it as hard as I could because I felt so strongly about this art and about this character. Like you said her journey is not defined by her disability, but it's also part of it, which is how I feel about myself. My disability is part of my identity, it's part of my journey, but it doesn't define it. It's not who I am. It's part of who I am.

Kiera Allen (49:41):

And so to see a character that's so reflected that, I got so lucky that for this opportunity that it was a character like that. And I think it's a really, really fortunate thing in terms of what people see. Like the first time since 1948, I think that a real world user is featured in a major thriller for people to see that, and to see that character being so fleshed out and having a fully defined perspective and not being reduced to just the chair. I mean, how often do you see a disabled action hero, and played by a disabled actor. Like that's just not something that happens.

Charlie Sandlan (50:25):

Now, Episode 29, I was a little bit starstruck, I was lucky enough to have a conversation with Caledonia Curry, the artist known as Swoon, and this is someone I've been following for almost 20 years now. And I've talked many times, not just to you guys on this show, but to my students about this idea of being a suffering artist, that you need to be wallowing in your pain, in your addiction, in your grief, in your trauma, in order to produce good, interesting art. And in this clip, Swoon is talking about this particular subject. She grew up in a house of addiction, both of her parents were heroin addicts. And there was a lot of trauma born out of her childhood, and she busted her ass to mine through that, and it really did change her art. But here's her thoughts on how navigating your trauma is a good thing.

Caledonia Curry (51:30):

You know, there are various reasons in our culture, specifically, why sometimes people develop coping strategies to trauma that our culture really rewards. Workaholism is one of them. Being kind of unboundaried in a way that sometimes trauma can lead to, it can have this upside of meaning that you are making unlikely connections. But I just think it's certainly not the only way that happens.

Caledonia Curry (51:58):

And as I am somebody who like works to heal, I'm like, "Oh, and this isn't the only way that this story goes." I think for me, it's not

just that you don't have to not have reconciled your pain to create. It's also that, I almost think about like rebellion. And I think that we have this image of rebellion, which is very often actually an image of a person who's falling apart in a very high spark way, before our eyes. And they're doing rebellious things, of course, but I was like, "What if there's a deeper form of rebellion, which has to do with questioning the domination culture that we live in, that crushes, vulnerable people under and that causes these kinds of meltdowns, these like beautiful meltdowns that we see." What if there's like a form of rebellion that involves healing and pushing back against that culture as a whole? And that's, I think, where I get really into questioning the kind of dramatic burnout model of being creative.

Charlie Sandlan (53:07):

And just last week, my friends, Episode 30, I brought on my wife, Trish Barillas. Someone that I have a tremendous amount of respect for. She is a published author. She's a professional life coach. She is an expert on anxiety, and she also suffers from generalized anxiety disorder. And she's been medicated for almost seven years now. And last week's episode was a very raw talk about mental health, mental health awareness, about anxiety and how to find a way to get yourself on a path of healing. And it was also an episode that taught me a lot. She is someone who will call me out on my stupidity and my ignorance. One of the reasons why I love her so much. And here's a clip of her doing just that.

Charlie Sandlan (54:01):

All right, so then what happened to you? You find out "Okay, this is my problem. And how do you get from that to getting-"

Trish Barillas (54:06):

Obstacle. This is my obstacle.

Charlie Sandlan (54:08):

As opposed to a problem.

Trish Barillas (54:10):

Correct.

Charlie Sandlan (54:10):

Ah, see, listen to this. I'm learning something every minute with you. You're giving me the evil eye, why can't I call it a problem?

Trish Barillas (54:16):

Well, I'm teaching, it's a teachable moment, sir.

Charlie Sandlan (54:17):

Why can't I say you've got a problem?

Trish Barillas (54:21):

Well, because the problem is negative. A problem means that you're going to fix it. A problem can be solved. Anxiety is not solvable. It is manageable.

Charlie Sandlan (54:32):

Well, my fellow daydreamers. Thank you for sticking around and keeping that phone in your pocket. You're probably saying to yourself, "Wait a minute, where's the theme music? Where is that? Where is Lawrence Trailer's Not Enough?" Well you know what, I'm going to play you the full version now as a send off for my season finale, but first I want to thank all of you for sticking around for being loyal to spreading this podcast and sharing it with your friends, to reviewing it on iTunes, it means a hell of a lot to me. I do not take that for granted.

Charlie Sandlan (55:06):

You can follow me on Instagram @creatingbehavior, @maggieflanaganstudio. You can go to my website, <https://www.creatingbehaviorpodcast.com> for every episode and all of the links to the content that we speak about on every episode. And yes, Lawrence Trailer thank you for this music. My friends, I will see you in a couple of months. I want you to stay healthy, wear your fucking mask, play full out with yourself when you can, and don't ever settle for your second best. My name is Charlie Sandlan. This is Creating Behavior. Peace.

Lawrence Trailer (55:43):

(singing)