


From  
The Premier Extras Casting Director  
of NBC's Chicago Fire, a Nightmare on Elm St.,  
The Dark Night

DECODE THE MYSTERY OF WORKING AS AN

EXTRA


CHICAGO STYLE!  
BY JOAN PHILIPPO



# Decode the Mystery of Working As An **EXTRA** Chicago Style!

By Joan Philo

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**“Ready, set...  
background!”**

(PSSST! That's you! Or it very soon could be you. The following information will make you quite the informed extra on set. Read with care, and good luck out there!)

## **Decode the Mystery of Working As An EXTRA Chicago Style!**

**By Joan Philo**

### **Welcome!**

You might have just attended an extras casting call, or sent in your photograph, or maybe you want to find out what it is like to work on a film set. Great! You're in the right spot. This is a subject near and dear to my heart. Being on a film set is an extraordinary experience! There are moments of sheer wonder and hours of, (Yawn here.). I would have to say the wonder outweighs by far. At least I think so, and many other extras do too.

My office is filled with thank you notes from extras who have had the time of their life on set. Every time I receive a thank you, it gives me a feeling of pride. Being on a film set is a whole other world, one that's hard to describe— it takes being out there to really know it. On set, I have witnessed remarkable performances from Academy Award-winning actors, I'm dazzled by the brilliant sets designed by eminent Production Designers, and I've stood in awe-gazing at extras in period costumes, sweeping through a ballroom designed by an Academy Award-winning Costume Designer.

It is a thrill to be on a film set – but don't be fooled. It's hard work. You will get hot, you will get cold, you will get hungry, you will get tired. Um, where is the glamour? You might blurt out, “When can I leave?” GASP! Quick, take that back!

The people that survive in film, as actors, directors, producers, crew members, and as extras, are hardy people...

### **Is This You?**

They are people who know how to follow orders. People who know how to work as part of a team. People who can get dirty and work way more hours than any normal person would think of working. People who can laugh. People who jump in and get things done. People who don't complain. And most of all, people who put the project above everything else, who give their all for film.

**Are you still with me? Fantastic!**



## **Poof! You are officially in!** **Here are your notes.**

You probably thought to yourself, wow, there are so many people here. How can they possibly see me? Well, believe it or not, you are seen. The whole process of a casting call - the long lines, the waiting, the going from one table to maybe another, to listening to the casting assistant speak - takes a while. Along the way, the assistant takes note of who does well, or not so well, in this line. If you can't handle waiting in a long line for a few hours, you will never be able to handle waiting around on a film set.

### **A casting person can figure out in about 15 seconds who will do well on set.**

They figure out how well you will fare on set from your body language, from how you interact with other people in line, from how you make eye contact, and how smoothly you enter and exit the line. Don't freak out and think that the casting directors don't see you. They do. They look at everyone. And the harder you try to get their attention, the less likely you stand out as someone they will want to cast.

**Be someone who the casting director wants to cast.** Be courteous when you meet anyone in the casting department: smile and pay attention. Make sure your meeting is short and sweet. Hanging around, or talking way too much, monopolizes the very short amount of time that casting directors have to meet people. If you are too chatty or get upset about any part of the casting process, the casting director will think you might also act this way on set. Or even worse, when you are around an actor, director, or any crew member for that matter. Be professional, and be a person who gives the casting director confidence that you will be great out there on set.

**Casting Directors want to meet great people.** Able to be a part of the film – that's really something. Extras are a gift to the film, and casting directors appreciate that.

**After the casting call, or after sending in your photograph for a film/TV show, the casting director will determine who is right for which scene.** On lots of films/TV shows, the casting director has to submit photographs to the director for approval. Make sure the picture that you turn in is the most current one you have- NOT one from 15 years ago at prom. Your hairstyle should match and also your current weight. Do not submit a picture of you that includes your fifteen aunts and uncles, cousins, and best friends at the Thanksgiving table. NO NUDES!!!!!! For men - facial hair is important as well. If you are submitting a picture having a beard but currently you are shaved, please submit one where you are clean shaven. You might sometimes be asked to shave if needed, or a casting director might be looking for men with a full beard.





Piercings and tattoos. Make sure you state all your tattoos and piercings during the submission. Makeup artists and the wardrobe department need to know these details ahead of time in case you need to cover those up or expose them depending on the scene. We need to see YOU! A nice picture of your face. Closeup. As well as a clear picture of you full size. Your picture doesn't need to be professional, but it does need to represent you as you are.

If you are to be cast in a movie/TV show you will receive a call or email from the casting assistant or casting director, usually a week to a few days prior to the shoot date. Sometimes you might be called up the day of a shoot and asked if you can rush out to set. This happens. Film schedules are constantly changing and to really succeed in the world of extras it's best to be a person who can be flexible.

**It might sound strange, but if you are cast in a film as an extra, even if you are called a week before the shoot, the casting department won't be able to tell you exactly what time you are needed on the particular day that you are being asked to work.** You won't be given the exact time and location of the shoot until the night before. But don't worry! You will be told as much as possible when you are booked for the shoot: what film you will be working on (some casting departments work on multiple shows), what you should wear, what the pay rate is, and the approximate location of the shoot.

You could be called up anytime to work- from when the film begins shooting until the last day of wrap. The casting department casts extras every day throughout the duration of shooting. Don't worry if you don't hear anything for a while. If you don't get cast on one film, your picture stays on file, and you will be considered for the next film. There are a lot of chances to be a film extra!

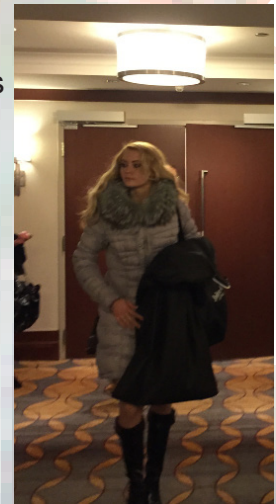
#### Types of castings:

Lead Actors

Speaking Role

Featured on screen

Body Double



Walking into Holding



**Stand in-** A stand-in is a person who is cast to work in place of the actor in order to light the set and to block the camera. Stand-ins have the same hair and skin coloring, and the same height and weight as the actors they are standing in for. As the actors rehearse the scene, their stand-ins watch very carefully how they move on set. When the rehearsal is over, the assistant directors will call “Second Team.” The First Team (the actors) walk off set to their trailers, or somewhere nearby, and the stand-ins (Second Team) take their place and do what’s instructed.

**Stand-ins** must be very quiet on set and pay attention. Being a stand-in is an important job. It is also required multiple days on set. Stand-ins work as part of the crew; need to be dedicated and on time. Sometimes the stand-ins might need to work off of script pages and follow the dialogue with the action. Remember not to talk to the actors or the director. I know it’s tempting, but you’re there to do a job, and everyone around you is there to do a job as well. Being a stand-in is fun; you can learn so much by watching the director and actors. It’s quite something!

**Photo Double-** Photo doubles are used either when the actor is not available, or when a second unit shooting in another location needs distant or insert shots from that particular actor. A photo double is a person who has the same coloring (hair/skin), height, and weight as the actor. A photo double needs to be a very close match to the actor, as a photo double appears on camera. The photo double is filmed as if they are the actor. The shot may be from across the street with the photo double shot from behind, or the photo double driving a car. These kinds of shots are angled so that on film we (the audience) think that the photo double is the actor. Ah... the magic of filmmaking!

**Stand-ins and Photo doubles** make a little bit more money than extras. It’s not much more, maybe \$20 to \$50 more for an eight-hour rate

## Background Talent

**Reoccurring Extras-** If cast on multiple days, it is essential to show up each day. If you don’t show up one of the days, it will mess up the continuity of the shot (for example, they might turn the camera around and shoot from the other direction, and if you aren’t there, it ruins the shot). If you can’t make one of the days, don’t send someone in your place! It’s important to honor your commitment and work every day you have been cast.



## Core Groups

If you are available to work multiple days, there are times we need to cast groups of extras who can come back each episode during a season. On the TV show, “Chicago Med,” we have a core group of doctors, nurses, and med techs who work 3 to 4 days of each 8-day episode. It’s important to have core groups who can work seamlessly together. It’s a blast! Did you know that most of the nurses on “Chicago Med” are real nurses? We love casting extras who know how to do the job that we cast them for. On “Chicago Fire,” all the firefighters you see on set fight fires at their real job! Yep, they are firefighters on TV and in real life! Isn’t that something? Core extras work multiple days on set.

## Repeating extras

If cast on a TV show, you need to wait four to six weeks to submit and get cast again. Don’t send in continuously for work every week if you have already worked. We need to cast different extras, per production. Repeating a certain extra can ruin the entire scene and risks them not getting cast again.

## Special abilities

Many times I have the need to cast people with special skills. For example, an a cappella choir (Fred Claus), a knife juggler (Fred Claus), actual policemen (The Dark Knight), expert teen skateboarders (High Fidelity), professional boxers (Ali), and court reporters (Public Enemies). Firefighters for Chicago Fire, nurses and doctors for Chicago Med and many more...



If you are an expert in anything, and I mean anything, include it on your resume. I never know what the director is going to ask for, or what kinds of skills the film I am working on will need. It might give you a leg up on your competition to include your skills on your resume. But be sure not to claim a skill that you haven’t mastered! I often ask to see some of the skills I read on a resume. Be prepared to show your stuff!

I have also been asked for technical advisors and translators on films. If you have skills like these, let us know. The more the casting director knows about your abilities, the higher chance you have at getting cast in a film, or being part of the production.



## RUSH TO SET

Being called the same day as the shoot. This often happens when the Director finds out that the film/TV shows needs more people that day for a particular scene. Filming schedule changes regularly and to really succeed in the world of extras it's best to be a person who can be flexible.

## The Nitty. The Gritty!

**A typical shoot day is approximately 12 hours long** and depending on the scene sometimes could be 16-17 hours. Sometimes we shoot hours and hours longer, and everyone we cast must stay the entire time. If you cannot commit to a whole day or night of work, please do not accept the role as an extra.



**If you are working a Day Shoot**, your day might start as early as 4 a.m. If you are working a Night Shoot, your shoot might begin as soon as the afternoon and go all the way until sunup the next morning.

**Working as an extra on set is a job.** Please be professional at all times. This means being courteous to all crew members. Please be flexible with any changes that the WARDROBE DEPARTMENT might make with your attire. Be nice to them. Please accept any props that the PROP DEPARTMENT might want you to carry or use.

**Always pay attention and be quiet when you go out on set.** Listen to the Assistant Directors and the Director. You will be placed in the scene and told what your action is – maybe you will walk across the street. Perhaps you will be sitting at a desk. You might cross (walk) right behind the actor. You will always be told what to do, and then you will do it multiple times as the director shoots many “takes” of each scene.

**When you hear the Assistant Director say “Back to one!”**, this means every extra needs to go back to their First Position in the scene. Your First Position is where you started your action for the scene. If you started out at a file cabinet and walked across the set to the coffee machine, your First Position would be the file cabinet where you were at the beginning of the scene.





## A little Set Etiquette

**Do not talk to the actors or the director or ask for autographs!** This might sound harsh, but it is the reality of working as an extra on a film set. Every crew member, actor, director, and producer is busy with their job. Even if the actor looks approachable, do not approach them, as they are at work, “in character,” and most likely going over their lines. Talking to an actor or the director on a set will get you sent home, and most likely never be called again. Be wonderful, be kind, be attentive, and you will get cast in the future.

## Protect Yourself from The Elements On Set

**If you are working outside in the sun,** wear sunscreen – or you will fry! Take care of yourself.

**If you are working in the winter, in freezing weather, wear layers** – or you will freeze. Even if you think you can handle being outside in the winter, think again. Prepare yourself. You might also want to go and buy those little hand and foot warmers at the drugstore. They only cost a few dollars, and they will save you.

**Pack some snacks, and maybe a beverage, for your shoot day.** Yes, you get lunch about halfway through the day – but what if lunch can’t come soon enough? Take care of yourself. Bring snacks!

**Leave all your expensive items at your house, safe and sound!**

Never bring anything valuable to a film set – no laptop, cameras, iPads, etc. The production is not responsible for your items, and neither is Joan Philo Casting.

Do not take any pictures on set of any kind. Do not use your cell phone while you are on set – turn it off. There can be no noise on set, or it could wreck the shot! The only sounds should be from the actors, playback (music provided by the sound department), or street noise.



## Protect Your JOB

Do not talk about your experience as an extra to anyone from the media, or write about it on the Internet. As an extra, it’s your job to protect the integrity of the film and safeguard its confidentiality.



**Give the film a chance to soar on Opening Weekend! DO NOT post on Facebook** or any other Social Media with pictures from set or additional revealing information regarding the filming.

**All film and TV sets are closed sets.** This means you can only bring yourself onto the film set. Only extras that are cast in the film will be allowed to be on set or in the holding area. If you are cast for the day, but you can't make it on set for some reason, **DO NOT** send someone else to fill your place. We understand things happen, and what you are concerned about canceling, but the casting department needs to know that ahead of time in order to cast someone else in your spot. Most importantly, do not commit to a shoot if you are unsure if you can make it on set.

**If you are applying via e-mail, please check your e-mails often,** because if you do not respond in time, you will be very likely replaced by someone who answered faster. The casting department is busy and casts hundreds of people a day for various things.



## Where & When?

**You will be told the exact location of your shoot and parking information the night before, as part of your final information.** The film company pays for parking. The location of the shoot will be revealed to you the night before via e-mail or recorded message for your convenience. You will have detailed instructions for parking as well if you are coming with your car.

**When you are given your CALL TIME** (The time you need to report to set) make sure you are about 15 minutes early so you can be checked in on time. Never be late for your day on set – if you show up late, you might be sent home.

## Holding Area Process

**You will be picked up from the parking area and driven by a Teamster** (Union men and women who drive the trucks) to either the holding area or directly to set. If you are dropped off at the holding area, follow the signs to the table to check in with a production assistant. There will be a line of extras waiting to tell the production assistant their name. Once you check in at the table, you will be given a pay voucher for the day. You will see that your rate of pay is written on the voucher and any pay bumps you might receive will also be listed. You might receive a \$20 pay bump for bringing a bicycle or given a car bump of \$30 + \$10 for driving your car in the scene.



**Take your voucher to one of the tables, sit down, and fill it out.** You will need to write in your name, address, social security number, dependent allowance, and also show your current government ID, and your social security card to a production assistant. Don't forget to bring your ID or passport and social security card. If you don't bring these items, you will be sent home.

**As all the extras are filing into the holding area, the Wardrobe Supervisor will come around and ask to see your wardrobe that you have brought to set.** You should have arrived in one of your outfits, with your hair and makeup already styled (women). Men should be well-groomed and also dressed ready to go. The supervisor might have you stay in what you are wearing, or she/he might have you go and change into one of your other wardrobe changes. She might also put you in clothes that she pulled from a clothing rack that she rolls around the room. These clothes are washed and clean and from the wardrobe stock of clothes. Make sure you accept their outfit graciously and be okay with whatever they choose for you. Don't give the wardrobe supervisor a hard time!

**After your wardrobe is figured out, you will go over to the hair and makeup person who will check your look.** They might add a little more makeup, or they might style your hair. Still, make sure you come to set already wearing makeup and with your hair styled.

**Once you have checked in, and been through wardrobe and makeup, you will wait to go to set.** Sometimes the holding area is very near set. Sometimes it is far away, and you might have to go in another van to get there. If holding is close to set, you will need to be very quiet. You might be told to be quiet many times by the production assistant. Ugh!

**The Holding area is a place where you might wait for hours before you go to set.** Make good use of this time by bringing a book to read, or something quiet to work on; homework? The novel you are writing? Your memoirs? Ha! It's always a good idea to bring your own snacks, and make friends with your fellow extras.

**Your day starts in the Holding area and will end in the Holding area.** Once you filmed your day you will be taken back to the holding area to return your clothes (if given any from wardrobe) or props (if given any), and lastly to turn in your pay voucher. You will get in a line, just like in the morning, and sign out at the table with a production assistant. Be patient! Make sure you look at your pay voucher and see that the rate listed is correct. The casting office can't do anything about pay rates once you leave set.



## Wardrobe

**Every extra cast for the scene will receive wardrobe instructions regarding what they need to bring to set.** Usually, the wardrobe on set consists of three complete changes (you wear one outfit and bring three changes with you).

If you're shooting a winter scene, you will also need to bring 2 winter coats, or 1 winter coat and 1 jacket. If one of your coats is black, make sure that your other coat or jacket is a different color (This is because the COSTUME DESIGNER doesn't want to see a sea of black coats in the shot.).

You will also need to bring hats, scarves, and gloves.

**Every film is different, but usually you should not wear the following colors:**

**NO White, NO Red, NO Neon bright colors, and nothing with logos!**

Wardrobe Department loves all darker, neutral colors, like browns, blues, greens, beiges, etc. Here is the breakdown:

**Footwear:**

**You are not allowed to wear open-toed shoes or flip-flops on set.** Sometimes you will be asked to bring high heels (always bring a pair of flats to change into for comfort), or work boots (construction scenes). If you are cast as a server, you will be asked to have black shoes. It's always a good idea to bring a couple pair of different shoes to set!

**Wardrobe requires for upscale scenes:**

It's a good idea to invest in a business suit or two, so you can be cast in upscale scenes like nice restaurants, or offices. If you don't have a business suit, we won't be able to cast you in these scenes. When I first started doing extra work, I went to my local thrift store and inexpensively purchased business attire. I bought my entire wardrobe for set and looked pretty darn impressive!

## Wardrobe for formal scenes

There are many times we cast fancy galas or ballroom scenes. To work these scenes, you will need to have formal attire. For women, this means either cocktail length (to your knee) dresses or gowns to the floor. For men, this means nice business suits or even tuxedos. I have cast scenes for the opera (Grand Piano), for firefighter's galas (Chicago Fire), and for swanky parties (The Dark Knight). We love casting these upscale scenes. It's so fun seeing everyone so dressed up!



## Working Outside in Cold Weather

If you are working outside in winter make sure you wear long underwear, lots of layers, warm socks, and warm boots. You will be working the scene for hours, and we don't want you to freeze! You might even want to bring those little hand and feet warmers that you can buy at the store for a dollar or two. They really help when you slip them in your gloves and boots. If you don't dress for warmth, you will be miserable outside and might get frostbite. Take care of yourself!

## Working Outside in Hot Weather

If you are working outside in the heat, you should make sure that you wear sunscreen, so you don't burn. You should also have sunscreen on your lips and face. Any part of your body exposed to the sun might burn unless you apply sunscreen. Make sure you stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. If you are feeling faint, make sure you tell a production assistant, and they will take you to the set Medic. We want everyone to be comfortable on set. It's important to speak up!

**SUNSCREEN, SUNSCREEN, SUNSCREEN, and WATER!**

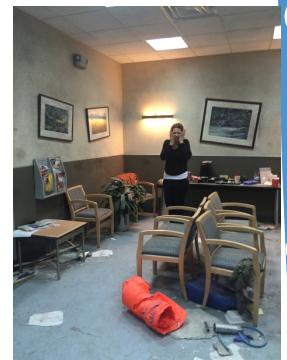
## Out of Season Shooting

Sometimes we might shoot a winter scene in the summer. At this time you will be asked to wear layers and coats. Make sure you drink plenty of water and take off your coats in between set-ups. Don't wear the warmest jacket you have! It's all about taking care of yourself on set.

**You might be cast for a summer scene during the winter.**

**Brrrr!** You might be asked to be on set without jackets. In this case, make sure you have layers and long underwear under your clothes. On "Chicago Fire" we cast a Marathon explosion scene, and the runners couldn't wear jackets during filming. Between each take, the runners ran to their warm jackets just off set and put them on. Near set, the extras filed into buses to get warm. Sometimes we also have heaters just off set for the extras to stay warm during cold shoots.

You will be informed what specific style of clothes to bring. You might be asked to arrive in a business suit or a casual outfit. These are just examples of the wardrobe you might bring to set. Always make sure you have business suit attire. We often find that people who submit to be cast do not have business clothes and that takes them out of the running. We have many scenes that require business attire, so make sure you own at least one.



**You must arrive to set with complete hair and makeup done, ready to work.**

Keep in mind you should avoid strong perfumes and aftershaves/colognes. Other people will surround you, and not everyone likes what you like (cough, cough).

## Props

**Purse, backpack, briefcase, a piece of luggage, a skateboard, iPod, iPad, camera, umbrella, etc.**, you will be asked to bring some of those, so do not forget them on set on your way out. You will be told what to bring when you are cast and given your final information in detail.

Be prepared to hand over your driver's license in exchange for a prop that the prop department hands out to you for use on set. Don't worry; you will get it back at the end of the day.

## Children

**If your child is cast as an extra and works in the state of Illinois, he or she will need a work permit for the Casting Department. Any minor needs it (0-16)!**

**A high school or grade school can issue a work permit** (call to see which school in your area can do that), or the Illinois Department of Labor. You will need to make an appointment and bring your child with you to it.

What do you need to bring with your child for the required work permit:

- Child's birth certificate
- Child's social security card
- Note from the child's school of good academic standings
- Note from the child's doctor stating that the child is in good health
- Letter of Intent from the casting director/agency

To give your child the best chance of getting cast, it is best to get the work permit first and send it into Joan Philo Casting' or your local extras casting company, so that your child already has a work permit on file when a job comes up. Casting children happens very fast! The children that get cast are the children that have a current work permit on file. Work permits expire after one year.



**Kids who behave and listen to directions well-** do best in film and TV, and are more likely to be called again for future castings. If your child is shy, rowdy, or takes a long time to warm up to people, it is not recommended to work on set. Children are cast to play with other children in film scenes or to act like they are a family member or friend of the actors. We want every child to feel comfortable on set. Talk to your child and ask them if this is something he or she really wants to do.

**Film changes constantly!** Even if your child is cast in a scene, it is not unusual for the number of children needed on set to be cut. Many times this happens at the last minute (the night before the shoot). Just as with adults extras, your child's role could be cut. This is very common, however the Casting Department will keep your child's information on file and under consideration for a future casting when it comes up and your child fits the description.

**Children are treated very well on film sets.** There is usually a studio teacher who looks after the welfare of the children. It is a good idea to bring any quiet toys, books, school work, or special snacks that your children might need. You, as the guardian, might want to bring a book for yourself. Even though children stay shorter hours on a film set than adults, the day is still long. Kids also do school work on set, a minimum of 3 hours, that is why your child should bring some textbooks and homework.



**One guardian is allowed to stay with the child on set.**

The night before a shoot, make sure your child gets plenty of rest. If your child is working a night shoot, make sure he or she sleeps during the day.

## **Extras Cast With A Car**

If you are cast as an extra with your car, this means you will be driving your car in the scene. Please make sure you have a full tank of gas on the day of your shoot. It's also a good idea to put an 8 1/2 x 11-inch piece of paper on your dashboard, and with a Sharpie, write the words "EXTRA," your name and your phone number. This is so we can quickly identify whose car is in the scene.

A car bump of \$30 + \$10 for gas will usually be added to your voucher for the use of your car in the scene. You will also be paid as regular extra. This rate will vary on each film.



Production companies will not cast cars that are RED, WHITE, OR BLACK. Cars need to be in good condition, without any dents or rust, and should not be more than ten years old. Also if you have bumper sticker, you will need to remove them. Your car must have NO bumper stickers, no scratches or any significant dents on the outside. To be booked as an extra with a car, you need to be a great driver. Lots of times you will need to back up, go forward, or follow behind an insert car (the lead actor's car).

## How To Register

If you are sending in a photograph in response to a post searching for extras on our Facebook page, "Chicago Fire Extras, or "Chicago Med Extras", you will send into an email address we include in the post. We ask that you send a recent color photograph (no headshots, no comp cards, no pictures with multiple people, no images with sunglasses or hats – we need to be able to see what you look like)

Along with this picture send in your height, weight, age, phone number, city, and state, including your clothing sizes. Men: jacket size, neck, sleeve, waist, inseam, T-shirt, and shoe. Women: Dress, pant, T-shirt, and shoe.

You can also register to be an extra by going to the [WWW.THEDARLINGSERIES.COM](http://WWW.THEDARLINGSERIES.COM) website and clicking on the registration link.

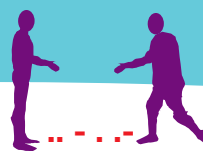
## Professional Conduct on Set

**Once on set you will be spending more than 8 hours there.** Usually up to 12 hours and sometimes longer. If you work more than one day, you will start to get to know one another. You might begin to feel like family. Remember, this is a job. There are boundaries. You must treat one another with respect and courtesy. If something happens on set go directly to the production assistant, who checked you in for the day and let them know what happened. Once you leave set for the day there is not much that can be done; essential matters address immediately. The casting office is not on set and doesn't have control of the set.

## Accepting and Cancelling an Extra Role

**If you accept an extra role, we expect you to be there.** Working as an extra is a job and needs to be treated as such. We are counting on you. However, emergencies can happen unexpectedly. If an emergency comes up, please call the casting department right away and inform anyone in the office.

**DO NOT EMAIL THAT YOU won't BE ON SET.** We don't see the emails right away,





and we need to hear immediately if you can't be on set so we can cast someone else. If you don't call the office and let us know you are absent you are a "no call, no show." Extras who don't contact us will not be called to work again.

## Extras Cast With A Dog

**If you are cast as an extra with your dog, make sure your dog can handle being around a lot of people and a lot of activity.** Your dog should be friendly and not bark a lot or get too excited.

**Your dog should be able to obey simple commands, like "Stop," "Go," and "Sit."** In your scene, you may be walking down a street with your dog, jogging past a corner, or just sitting quietly with your dog on a park bench.

**If you are cast with your dog, bring a leash.**

Bring a water bowl or some type of water container.

**If your dog needs any special dog treats or food, please bring these with you to set.** We want to make sure that you and your dog are well taken care of and have a great day on set.

**A pay bump of approximately 20 dollars for bringing your dog to set will usually be added to your payment voucher.** Be prepared to stay all day with your pet, or all night, depending on the scene.

## Pay Rate

**The rate of pay for an extra varies in Chicago.**

(This rate changes on each film. The casting person that books you for the scene will tell you the rate for the film you are being cast in.) The going rate as of (2018) has been \$96 for an eight-hour day, and time-and-a-half after 8 hours. If you want to see the pay rate grow, never accept another extra position for less money on a major motion picture or TV show. When you accept less pay it doesn't give the rate a chance to grow in the future, because there are still people who are ok working for



less money. Every extra deserves a decent rate and an opportunity for a better rate. Don't sell yourself short: It's just a gig. Honor yourself and your worth. If you say "yes" to a lower rate, a higher rate doesn't stand a chance in this city. **We count. You count!**



**You will usually receive your check about two weeks after the shoot from the payroll company that works with the show.** The casting Department is not the payroll, so when calling the casting office to ask what happened with your paycheck you will get shrugging shoulders and “I do not know” answers. If you have any questions or concerns about your check, please call the number on the voucher copy that you receive when you check out on set. We want to help you, but we do not have any of that information, as we are not the payroll company.

## Payroll Set Information

**Every time you are cast, to get paid, we need your information.** Bring your Government ID (driver’s license, or passport), a pen, and your social security card to set. These are necessary to show to the assistant directors when you fill out your voucher for payment. If you do not bring the needed documents, you will be sent home as soon as you arrive. Make sure your documents are not expired.

## Holding Area

**When you are in the Holding Area** (the area where extras hang out until they are needed on set) please clean up after yourselves.

**This is important.** We want to have an excellent reputation for not only being outstanding, but extras but extras that are considerate of the area that the LOCATIONS DEPARTMENT found for us to stay warm and happy.



**The holding area can be incredibly boring, as sometimes you might wait for hours to get out to set.** One time, while working as an extra on a film, I did not get out on set for two whole days. I sat in the holding area for 16 hours each day and never got on set. What did I do? I made friends. I had a blast meeting all the other people that were cast as extras. We laughed. We talked. I made long-lasting friendships. Bring books. Bring a deck of cards. **PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A HAPPY HOLDING!**



## The kiss of Death questions, NOT TO ASK

**Film is unpredictable. You never know how long your day on set will be** – please never ask the assistant directors, coordinators, or any crew member on set when you will get to go home. That question is the kiss of death! It will get you frowns from the crew and make you look unprofessional. Be a trooper, one of the crème de la crème of the entertainment industry. Only the hardy survive. Seriously!

## Role You Play On Set

**Remember what you are cast as when you arrive on set.** Many times the wardrobe people or assistant directors will come up to you and ask, “What are you?” You might be cast as a WAITRESS, or a MOM, a FEMALE PASSENGER, a WOMAN WITH DOG (yes, we cast extras that bring their dog to set to work in the scene), or maybe you are a CAR DRIVER. The casting assistant will tell you what you are cast as in the scene – remember this!

**When you are on set, you are called “BACKGROUND.”** Never talk when you are in the scene: If you are told to act like you are speaking in a scene, pantomime-speak (this means to move your mouth but have no sound come out). The actors in the scene move on “ACTION,” and extras move before them in the scene when the Assistant Director calls “BACKGROUND.”



**Before this you will hear someone call, “ROLLING”:** this means the picture is recording. Don’t start moving on “Rolling”; wait until you hear, “BACKGROUND!” All this will become clear, and you will be directed what to do when you get on set. Don’t worry! You will be brilliant!

Never, ever, ever look directly at the camera! Act like the camera isn’t there, and go about doing your scene.

If you look into the camera lens, it will wreck the shot. Ignore it, and act naturally – you’ll be fine. Even the lead actors ignore it. It’s supposed to be all casual in the scene after all.



## Taft- Hartly

## Chicago Med Core Group

**A Taft-Hartly occurs when a person who is not currently a member of the Screen Actors Guild is cast in a speaking role.** If the production company casts a non-union person for a speaking role, that person is automatically allowed to join SAG. When a line is given to an extra, it’s called being “upgraded.” Once a person speaks in a film and is given Taft-Hartly, he becomes eligible to join the Screen Actors Guild. You never know if this will happen, but it’s a really exciting thing when it does happen!

**If you receive a Taft-Hartly, you do not need to join the union until your next speaking part.** You can wait until this happens or you can join right away. Joining the Screen Actors Guild (as of 2018) costs \$3000.00 plus annual base dues of \$214.32. (Dues are based on your previous year’s SAG earning, and are paid on May 1 and November 1). You can learn more about the Screen Actors Guild by going to their website at <http://www.sag.org/>.

## Period films

**If you are cast in a Period Film – films set in the past, like *Flags of Our Fathers*, or *Public Enemies* – your role will require a haircut and wardrobe fittings.** This will take about 2 to 3 hours of your time and probably happen roughly a week before your day on set. At the wardrobe fittings, you will be asked to bring certain undergarments (make sure you do wear undergarments! You don’t want to surprise anyone). You will usually receive a check for approximately \$25 for 2 a hour fitting, which will be mailed to you about two weeks later.



### **During a fitting, you are most likely to get your haircut.**

The haircut will be according to the film/TV period. It may be a 1940's or 1920's look, so embrace that beforehand. You need to be okay with letting the hairstylist cutting your hair. If you are the least bit nervous, **DO NOT ACCEPT THE EXTRA ROLE**. Once you accept the role that comes with the hairstyle - you must be prepared for changes-like a pixy cut or being bald!

**Working as an extra in a Period Film is exciting.** It's also quite a commitment because once you attend the fitting and get your hair cut, it is then twice as important that you show up on the day of the shoot. If you want to be an actor, you have to be able to adapt to different looks many times. A lot of time and money goes into these films. Do you know that the Costume Department alters every outfit specifically for you? If you don't make the shoot... Ouch! Crew members will scramble, and you won't be cast a second time.

### **Accepting An Extra Role**

If you accept an extra position, please do not cancel your commitment for the set shoot date/s with the casting department if you get offered another gig last minute. This is not only unprofessional, but it is also totally not cool! Be amazing, and believe me, casting directors will remember and appreciate your commitment.

### **Are you still with me?**

**PHEW! This is tons of information, but knowledge is power.** You will be awesome on set. I love casting people as extras who relish the job, that show up on time, stay the entire time and stay to the end. These are the people I cast again. **BE ONE OF THEM.**

I cast many extras for film and TV shows in Chicago. I love doing that because you are the greatest, most professional extras I have ever gotten to know!

### **Opportunities**

**There are many opportunities to work as an extra.** Check out the Talent/Film link on Craigslist, and the film departments of local colleges (Columbia College Northwestern University, and even Facebook ).



**It is a great idea to send postcards** (get some postcard size prints of your headshots!), and write a friendly note to check in and let the casting director know you are available for work. Always include your phone number on any picture or note you send to a casting director. It's not a bad idea to drop a postcard every six weeks or so.

## Catering (a little slice of Heaven)

To die for! I'm serious, the best food around and it is all for us! About halfway through the day on set we break for lunch. Fish. Steak. Sushi. Salad. Desserts. Beverages. Rice. Potatoes. OH MY GOSH! AND THE FRESH SQUEEZED JUICE?! You will love the food and every day we have something new and delicious. When you work on set you will go home and rave about the food. Heck, you might even go home a couple pounds heavier. Caterers are part of the CREW and please be respectful as well helpful by cleaning up after yourself when you're done with your meal.

And the best thing? **The caterers are funny and nice and at the end they drop off the left over food to local charities. Shout out to the caterers!!!**

## Rules

Here is the important part about catering. The crew is on a union time-table and they need to go through the line first, and eat first. This means the extras wait until after the crew gets their food and then the extras are invited to get in the line and help themselves.

Sometimes there is even a different area where all the extras eat, even with a different catering set up.

No matter where you eat lunch please clean up after yourself, keep the tables neat, and throw away your garbage. We need to leave the catering area as clean as possible.



**Hey! Crew only!**





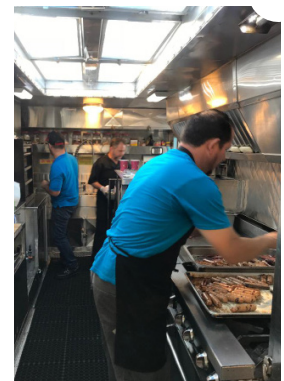
Please don't get busted eating off this table, or believe me, they will tell me about it, and no more extra work. Grrr! In the morning extras usually receive coffee, water and some type of breakfast food. **Yum.**

## Craft Service Table

On every set there is a table set up with food item near set, or there is a food truck that is only available for the crew to eat. EXTRAS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO EAT OFF THE CRAFT SERVICE TABLE, OR FROM THE TRUCK. Please don't get busted eating off this table, or believe me, they will tell me about it, and no more extra work. Grrr! In the morning extras usually receive coffee, water and some type of breakfast food. **Yum.**



## Mario's Catering



### Good advice:

If you get an acting job, send a thank you note. A small thing can go a long way believe me.

Showing gratitude is important! It's also a great way to get your name memorable to the casting director.

Check in with the Casting Department on the Illinois Film Office website or the Chicago Film Office website (We are lucky to have both places working so hard to get new movies and TV shows in our amazing city filmed).

If you live in another state, check out your home state film office. Network with the other extras on set.

Start e-mailing each other and sharing casting information.

### film happens fast. Are you in the know?

Casting extras means everything to me, and I am honored to be able to work with so many wonderful people.

I believe in treating every extra with dignity and respect.

You paint the palette for each scene; your work is immensely important. I am always so impressed with each and everyone of you. You guys rock! Seriously.

### Thank you for all your wonderful work on set!

To be considered for extra work at Joan Philo Casting go to [www.thedarlingseries.com](http://www.thedarlingseries.com) & click on the Joan Philo Casting link

Registering to be an extra for Joan Philo Casting is free



~ See you in the movies ~  
Joan Philo

Drop by and purchase Chicago Fire and Chicago Med swag. Proceeds go to charity.





# Notes from the front by Chicago Extras

## Favorite Film Set moments and set survival tips

Favorite film set moment – a 3 Way Tie:

**1. Batman Begins** – “Dressing up in SWAT gear next to Katie Holmes and seeing the Batmobile in person was a blast. Literally.”

**2. Flags of Our Fathers** – “A chance not only to be a part of a WWII period piece filmed at Soldier Field but to rub elbows with Clint Eastwood! He’s a great guy. Our shoot also happened to be the night the Chicago White Sox won the 2005 World Series, and we watched the final inning from inside the stadium! A night to remember.”

**3. Couples Retreat** – “I spent the day as a Skycap at O’Hare with Vince Vaughn, Malin Akerkman, Jon Favreau, Kristin Davis, Jason Bateman, Kristin Bell, Faizon Love and Tasha Smith standing right next to me! And I got paid for it!!!”

## Survival Tip

When they say to dress warm, they mean it! Be friendly! It’s a great place to meet people to make connections and friends. Good luck!

**John Porubsky**  
**Product Designer**  
**Kids arts and crafts company**

~



“One of my favorite experiences working in film was one of the three days I was on the set of Fred Claus. On this particular day, my large group of background actors and I took over Michigan Avenue as pedestrians. I will always remember a mother and her young daughter who happened to cross through all the extras in between takes. Not knowing what in the world they had walked into the daughter looked up to her mother and said, “Mommy this is where all the people stand!” Everyone laughed. It was a fun day, and on top of everything else, I got to walk by Vince Vaughn.”

## Survival Tip

“As a background actor, you never know what to expect in a day’s work. You might be busy the entire day, or you might never leave the holding area. It’s always best to walk in with a positive spirit and mentally prepare yourself to be there for at least twelve hours. Snacks, cards, magazines, newspapers, and books help pass the time, but on those boring days, it’s also the people around you who make the day fly by. It is fun work, but not for the immature, disrespectful, impatient people that don’t want to take direction. Remember, sometimes an opportunity might be thrown your way, and you want to make a good impression!”

**Angel  
Guzman**  
**Aspiring actor, writer, model**

~

“... being selected as one of the few extras chosen among a large group to walk next to Vince Vaughn during the filming of Fred Claus. It was a cold winter day in Chicago, but I survived the cold by wearing layers of clothes under my winter coat and using hand and foot warmers to keep comfortable. There were 500 extras that day! I had a fun time making new friends.”

**Debbi Burns**  
**Home Builder Sales Assistant**

(What Debbi really means to say is that she was chosen to be one of 10 extras I chose on set to be group X -- extras chosen to work closely with the actors, whom I knew would not freak out, who would be able to improvise, and who would make Chicago shine. J.P.)

~

“Vince Vaughn walked over to me on The Break Up... put his hand on my shoulder (the left one, LOL) and said, ‘How ya doing?’ Ooh la la! What a sweetheart!”



## Survival Tip

“Maintain a positive outlook, and be grateful when you are booked on a project (Not everyone who submits can be booked). Also, remember that booking does not guarantee on-camera time so don't get upset with the casting director (my beloved JP) if you are not sent to set. Enjoy the fact that you have the opportunity to experience a little bit of Hollywood, hang out with your extra friends and hopefully learn a skill or concept that hones your acting ability.

You will never be disappointed if you act professionally, are prepared for the unexpected, and carefully follow the directions and instructions given to you before arriving to holding/set.”

**Debbie Woo**  
**Kindergarten teacher**  
**Extra work is a nice diversion...**  
**I get to interact with adults!**

“William's favorite film moment happened not while they were filming but when they were not. During downtime. William and Johnny Depp recited lines from the Charlie and the chocolate factory while on the set of Public Enemies.”

## Child Survival Tip

“The best survival tip is to pay attention and follow what the director says. Don't be shy, but don't be rude.”

**William Nero Jr. A.K.A. JuJu**  
**Potential child actor age 7**



## Mom Survival Tip

“Bring books, quiet toys, and healthy snacks. Have fun with the child – it's their time to shine, and it's all about them. Don't forget to bring a book for yourself to read! Seeing William having fun and doing what he does makes me happy and content!”

**Lindsey**  
**Mom of William**



“The first film I’ve done with Joan was “Derailed.” I was a crime scene investigator. True, I never made it to the screen, but the best experience was filming my scene and having to walk by Clive Owen repeatedly. Usually, I’m disappointed at how actors look in person, and think, oh he’s short, or scrawny, etc., Clive was tall and rugged and fantastic to look at. Made the day go by very quickly.”

## Survival Tip

“Always bring snacks. Sometimes the shoots can be long, and you can get hungry. If I’m carrying a bag for the scene, I usually shove a bottle of water and snacks in it.”

“Getting dressed up for *Flags of Our Fathers* was a surreal experience, like stepping into a time machine. The hours spent in hair and makeup were well worth it, and the wardrobe completed the whole look. While I didn’t make it into the film, I had a great time playing dress up. The actors in the film were also very friendly, so it was great to see the camaraderie on and off the set.”

“Movie make-up can be horrible for your skin, so if you know you’ll be wearing make-up, it’s a good idea to bring a cleanser with you to use right after the day is done.”

“Being on set for the pivotal scene in Heath Ledger’s last film, “*The Dark Knight*,” was an experience to remember. The cocktail party at Bruce Wayne’s place took three long days to shoot, and it was interesting to see how the scene was put together on film, and how the actors got into their characters.”

“Make friends. You can be with the same people for 16 hours at a time, so it’s good to spend that time with friends.”

**Emily  
Ilic  
Consultant**

~



“One of my favorite experiences as an extra was working with my whole family as extras and interacting with Vince Vaughn on the set of Fred Claus. He is extremely creative and seems to be a very down-to-earth, all around nice guy. My wife, two sons, and I walked into the scene with Vince Vaughn: he improvised a lot of lines, then he hugged my wife, and both of my sons. When I went to shake his hand, he grabbed it, twisted it up to his lips, and kissed the back of my hand. Then the four of us walked off camera, leaving Vince Vaughn on camera to speak with the next group of extras. Later that evening, my wife teased me that she got a hug from Vince Vaughn... I said, “So, what... I got a kiss!”

## Survival Tip

“When working outside in the Chicago winter, wear layers and dress warm – you never know how long you will be required to stand outside while they set up the shot with the camera angles, lighting, and rehearsals. Hand warmers and extra socks are essential assets of a background actor.”

## Spo

**Director of Credit for a fortune 500 company**

~

“One of my most memorable experiences as an extra happened when I was working on the set of Batman – The Dark Knight in the scene of the fundraiser party for Harvey Dent. I was standing next to the elevator (unfortunately, behind the camera) when Heath Ledger (The Joker) got off the elevator. Now, I knew it was just a movie, but when the Joker got off the elevator and shot that shotgun, I was genuinely scared!

Standing next to the Joker and looking into his eyes was a very unnerving experience. When you hear that Heath Ledger really got into the part of the Joker, I’m here to tell you that they are right. And it was a surreal experience to see Batman and the Joker actually fighting right in front of me!”

“My favorite moment on set was meeting Christopher Nolan, the director of The Dark Knight. My brother and I were in the scene where he and I shoot our fingers like guns, things start blowing up, and then the batpod comes racing through. Christopher Nolan came up to me and my brother, shook our hands and introduced himself and the Director of Photography, Wally Pfister. Then Christopher told us what he wanted us to do. I was a little nervous, but I had a great time. It was really awesome to see my brother and me on the big screen!”



## Survival Tip

“While waiting to go on set, there is a lot of downtime. Bring something quiet to keep you busy. Don’t bring anything of value (like a laptop), but bring a book, a deck of cards, crossword puzzles, or Sudoku puzzles to pass the time. Speak quietly with the other extras, and make friends while you wait. I have had the chance to meet many different people while waiting to go to the set – people that I, most likely, would have never met – older people, younger people, people of different races, and people with various full time and part-time jobs. Everyone is so nice, and you may see them on set of the next movie that you do!

**Spo**  
**Director of Credit for a fortune 500 company**

~

## Survival Tip

“No monkey business... Be professional. Don’t screw around. Do what the director tells you.”

**Brandon Spoczynski**  
**Student, age 12**

~

“My favorite moment on set was interacting with Vince Vaughn on the set of Fred Claus. It is also fun to see all of the stars. I was also on the set of Couples Retreat, where I saw Kristin Davis, Kristen Bell, Jason Bateman, Jon Favreau, Tasha Smith, Fazon Love, Malin Akerman, and, of course, Vince Vaughn.... Ahhhh... It was nice to work with Vince again.”



## Survival Tip

“Don’t talk to the actors unless they talk to you first. Don’t ask for autographs or photos with the stars. You are there to work – just like the main actors. Also, don’t look at the camera.”

**Logan Spoczynski**  
**Student, age 8**

~



## Joan's set experiences

### Jack & Mike TV show starring Shelley Hack and Tom Mason

About one hundred years ago, um... okay..., in 1985, I was a core member of the newsroom where the lead actress worked on the show. At that time I was a manager at the Ultimate Sports Bar and Grill in Chicago and studying acting at Victory Gardens and Prop Theater. When I landed the recurring extra role as a reporter in the newsroom, I was in Heaven! Two or three times a week we would film at the stage in the newsroom, and I dropped everything when casting called so I could be on set.

There were about 40 of us who made the newsroom come alive. I remember some extras made sure that they got in front of the camera, even to the point of pushing other extras out of the way so they could be "seen." It got to be so ridiculous. We were all talking about it and how we couldn't believe some of the others who pushed and shoved. I remember being so over it that I didn't care about being seen and I sought out the back area of the set. Suddenly I was the "it" extra, and I started getting picked for everything. I made sure I was always watching what was going on, and I was attentive on the set. One day when we were shooting outside the newsroom one of the Assistant Directors came up to me and said, "We are going to give you a line." OH MY GOSH! I couldn't believe it. I was so happy. Finally, I made it! (jumping up and down) So, they never gave me a line (GRRRR!), but I still loved every second of being a core newsroom extra.

### RED HEAT Film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jim Belushi

I was a stand-in for Jim. Yes, he is a man, I am a woman, but hey, when the director of photography wants women to stand in for men, being 5'10" really pays off. I worked the entire Chicago portion of the shoot and then was asked by the producer if I could work in LA. For sure! I jumped at the chance. I quit my job as I was still working nights at the bar, and flew out to LA to work on the show. I roomed with one of the production assistants, and we drove into downtown LA every morning leaving the house at 4:30 AM to be on set by 6 AM. During the shoot the director, "Walter Hill" came up to me and told me he was going to give me a line. Here we go again! For the next month, I made my fellow PA roomie crazy asking her if she thought that Walter would give me a line. Then I prayed like crazy, "please God, please God, let me get a line." Ha! The last week of shooting I got my line. I was cast as a nurse, and after one of the actor's got shot, I walked between a group of nurses and doctors, walked right up to the lead actor and blurted: Oh, my God! It looks like all my praying was my rehearsals. Ha!




## Fast forward to my life in casting...

### Chicago Med TV show

I am sitting in a director's meeting with the director Donald Petrie, and he mentions that he cast the film, "*Richie Rich*". I said, "hey, I cast the extras for you." His eyes got all big, and then he said, "I have the funniest story about Richie Rich." He proceeds to say, "remember how we went down to Atlanta to film all the beautiful mansion scenes?" I'm like, "um huh." He says, "Well, I was at an Academy Award after party and I was introduced to Octavia Spencer who had just won the Oscar for best supporting actress, I reached out my hand to her and said, "Miss Spencer, it's so nice to meet you. I loved you in, 'The Help,' your acting was amazing!" She looked at me and said, "Mr. Petrie we know each other, I was your extras' coordinator on set when you were in Atlanta!" We all laughed at that one, and then Donald said he said to Octavia "I hope I was nice to you!"

### A Few Great Casting Moments

Sometimes whole families can be cast together in a scene. In the feature film *Fred Claus*, I had the pleasure of casting all the snowglobe vignettes in the movie. Each family portrayed Christmas morning as they exchanged gifts, smiled, and hugged each other. We auditioned over 50 families to find the eight that made it on screen. We cast real family members as working together is already natural and believable.



On *Home Alone 2* we needed to cast children who could be part of the Christmas Choir. Do you remember the scene where Kevin McCallister's ears lit up during the song? Remember all those beautiful boys and girls singing? They were actually lip syncing during the shoot. We had to audition 12-year-old kids who could memorize the lyrics and look believable lip-syncing. We held a series of rehearsals once we cast the kids, including a wardrobe fitting for the choir robes. On the day of the shoot, they knocked everyone's socks off! We even cast the piano player who did play the piano!

We cast many kids with different talents, from basketball to baseball, jogging to swimming. We shot an exciting scene on "*Chicago Fire*" involving swimmers as a scoreboard power cord falls near the pool full of kids. We searched for kids who knew how to swim. They needed to send in a video of themselves swimming in a pool for safety reasons. We then cast about 20 kids for the scene. Some were in the pool, some around the perimeter. These kids needed to realistically portray being scared as the power cord snapped and sizzled near the edge. The kids did great, and later I heard the pool they were in was cold. What troopers!





## Best Moments from Chicago Fire Set

I had the pleasure of working the booze cruise episode last season at Navy Pier and had a blast, but playing a Firefighter for 3 days was EPIC! I was an Infantryman in the Army and putting on all the fire gear really brought back some great memories of doing something with a purpose. I have so much respect for our first responders and loved working alongside them, even if it was just for TV, lol. The crew was amazing, the PA Hailey is such a great person and always busting her ass for everyone. The actors are always fun to watch in their down time, Kara Killmer cracked me up when she busted out her little guitar and started walking around playing it a bit. Also met and made new friends that are just awesome and funny people. Im a huge fan of the shows and I love when I get picked for being an extra on them. Thank you so much for the opportunities.

### Mike Vasile

~

My best moment so far was getting the call to act as a “stand in” on the 19th for “Tony” Tony Ferraris.

So for being a retired, somewhat young guy with quite a bit of free time I was estatic for the 5 days already booked but this was cool!

Gotta admit I was a bit nervous.

But it all seemed to go away as soon as I got outta my car in the parking garage and met one of the crew. He kinda filled me in on what was going on that day. So then I arrived at holding and then I hear my name being called and “my Tony stand in.”

So, I’m led over to wardrobe and (I forgot his name) but he’s like cool, you’re our Tony guy and he hands me my gear.

I rush back to holding and change and then I hear my name being called again, so I walk up and they say we’re going to rehearsal. Now the nerves kick in again!

I get over there and it’s right to work.

We cut and I’m like, where should I go and someone points to a room. I walk in and there’s the cast. I was like WOW, how cool. So I walk in and stand for a while and then Randy “Capp” says go ahead and sit down. I’m like that’s not my name I dont wanna sit in that actor’s chair, and then one of the actors says it’s ok we’re not like that. Take the open chair and take a break.

I sit down and I’m like, this is pretty cool! The cast say hi ask me my name and gotta admit I was like, is this for real?

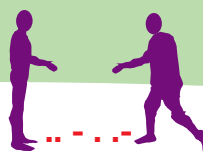
So as I sit I keep telling myself to mind my business and not to listen to conversation’s. But then I found myself cracking a grin because some of the stuff and the way the cast interact is so funny you just can’t hold back.

What an awesome experience!

I gotta say everyone involved with the show are great!

I wish I remembered all the names. Hopefully I will on future episodes.

A couple I do remember besides the cast are Hailey (prob spelled it wrong) and of



course Chief Chikerotis!

I love hearing the stories. He's one of a kind!

So I'm grateful for the opportunity and experience, I feel I got my 15 minutes of fame in my eyes and also a great workout.

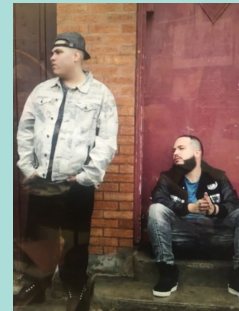
Thanks to everyone for being so nice and hope to make it back

Also want to thank Tim Weinert, welcome to Chicago and wish him the best of luck in his career!

**Thank you all again,  
Mike Slabenak**

I am a newbie to the world of "extras" so had no idea of what to expect or anything to compare. So, rather than a single best moment, here are five reflections (written after a 15 hour day close to midnight - silly me):

1. Pro crew who treated us like we truly were a key part of the production.
2. Surprisingly high and positive energy from all - fellow extras and crew - even after mega days (and I only worked three - know many worked several more).
3. Hydration and chow never an issue - the gentleman offering water each day was a joy - upbeat and friendly - and the meals and snacks kept us filled and happy.
4. Loved interacting with the real firefighters, paramedics, and police. So pleased to see you use the city's incredible safety providers regularly. Adds so much depth to the show and they were great. (see Photo below with one encounter - got to know this firefighter's story - great guy)
5. Early starts are tough but easy to rally when you are greeted with positive energy, patience and a smile - call out to the wardrobe folks, the PA's, the team that signed us in and out.



**Call out to Stephanie (hope I got her name right from Peoria).** She was excellent with clear instructions, timely communication and high energy.



Great time. Would love to do it again. Can't wait to see the "magic" of the finished show.

I had the great opportunity to work on Chicago Fire this past Saturday in the hospital scene. All I have to say is I got to play a visitor in the main entrance of the hospital and I was pretending to read the Best Home magazine in the waiting area trying to look busy and concerned while all the main actors prepared for their step into the hospital scene. All I can say is I had to hold myself back from tears of laughter as these guys prepped and were screwing around with each other. I was very inspired and lifted up with the amount of energy they brought to that set. All I could think to myself was what a great collection of brilliant artists and the energy brought everyone else in the room their energy. I walked off that set inspired and wanting to dance all the way back to my car. Thanks for the great opportunity and having me work with such a professional, talented, brilliant team from production to actors!!!

Blew me away and lifted my soul. :)

**Anna Mroczek**

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**Taco Day. Who wants a Fanta?!**



**Award winning short film "The Roof"**



## Congratulations!

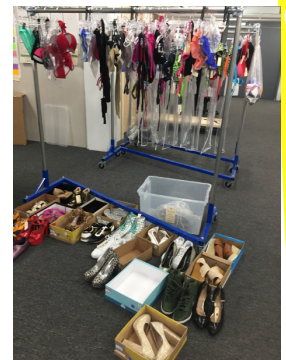
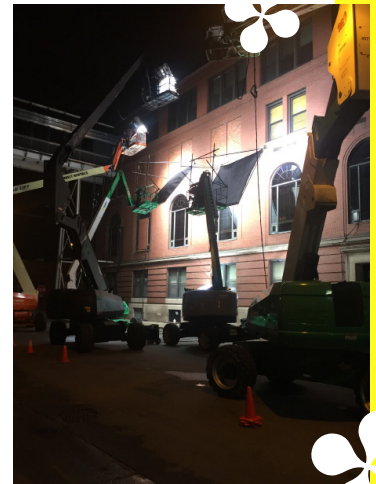
You are now up to speed with what it takes to be an extra and how to act on set when you are cast. There are many TV shows and feature films shooting in Chicago, and all across the country. Take what you have learned from this e-book and add your sparkling personality, professional work ethic and go GET THAT EXTRA'S GIG!

To all the extras who have worked as extras before, and who I have had the privilege to meet, it has been an honor to cast you on our shows. I am blown away by your passion, kindness, and ability to roll with the constant changes that is Film. You show up early, you work late, you change dates and call times with us (when changes are made), and there is still a smile on your face in a world of, "hurry up and wait" when we see you on set.

### Until we meet again;

May all your days on set be great, may you wrap your day by making new friends, and may the casting gods' shower you with future work. Just like in life, it's what we do with the moments that shape our lives. **Make the most of them – BE AN EXTRA!**

**JOAN PHILO**  
**EXTRAS CASTING DIRECTOR**  
**[WWW.THEDARLINGSERIES.COM](http://WWW.THEDARLINGSERIES.COM)**



**Swimsuits and shoes, oh my!**

