

# CASTING

## A MOTION PICTURE

WITH JIM SOTO





**“Seventy-five percent of directing is casting.”  
— Alfred Hitchcock**

**Take 2 minutes to jot down this quote and react in your notebook as to what do you think this means. A discussion will follow.**



In the performing arts industry such as Theatre, Film, or Television, **casting** is a pre-production process for selecting a certain type of actor, dancer, singer, or extra for a particular role or part in a script.



IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL...



Thor?!

# IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL...



**Back to the Future?!**

IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL...



Batman Begins?!

# IMPORTANCE OF CASTING

Casting is a crucial process that helps choosing the right actor in a film to make story real and bring it to life. It's very important and it's usually done when the script has been completed. Miscasting a role can have severe consequences on a film.







The casting process involves a series of auditions before a casting panel. These auditions are often recorded, attached with resumes, and head shots and then shared with producers and directors. The process of selecting actors often requires specialized staff. The process is led by a casting director sometimes also called the Casting Associate. The CD remains as a link between the director, actors and their agents to get the characters in the script cast.



While many actors transition to and from the world of theatre and film, there are many differences between live acting and camera acting. To determine an actor's presence and ability to perform on camera, casting directors utilize a screen test. A screen test is a category of filmed audition where actors demonstrate their suitability for a role. Generally, actors are given lines of a script, to perform on camera.



# CASTING PROCESS - AUDITIONS

For live feature film auditions, depending on the role, you may see the Casting Director early on along with the Director and possibly one or more producers or executive producers. For smaller roles you may only see casting subordinates and the First A.D. (Assistant Director). One of the last stages of feature film casting is the screen test.





The final casting decision may come down to looks, coloring, facial or body structure that either confirm they've cast the right actor or sends the production back to casting. Most of the time a production won't spend money on screen testing actors it doesn't intend to use.



# CASTING **BACK TO THE FUTURE**

However, feature film casting may not end once production or principal photography begins. One of the most famous examples of a mid-production re-cast is the 1985 Robert Zemeckis blockbuster **Back to the Future**. Zemeckis shot for five weeks before deciding his very talented lead **Eric Stoltz**, was not quite right for the film's comedic tone.



Director Zemeckis went to Amblin Entertainment producer Steven Spielberg. Spielberg backed Zemeckis's instincts and pled his case to Universal Studios, and Universal agreed.





Michael J. Fox brought Marty McFly to life, and Back to the Future became a summer blockbuster that launched a three-film franchise. Eric Stoltz continued in his critically acclaimed career.



# CASTING PROCESS – CHEMISTRY READS

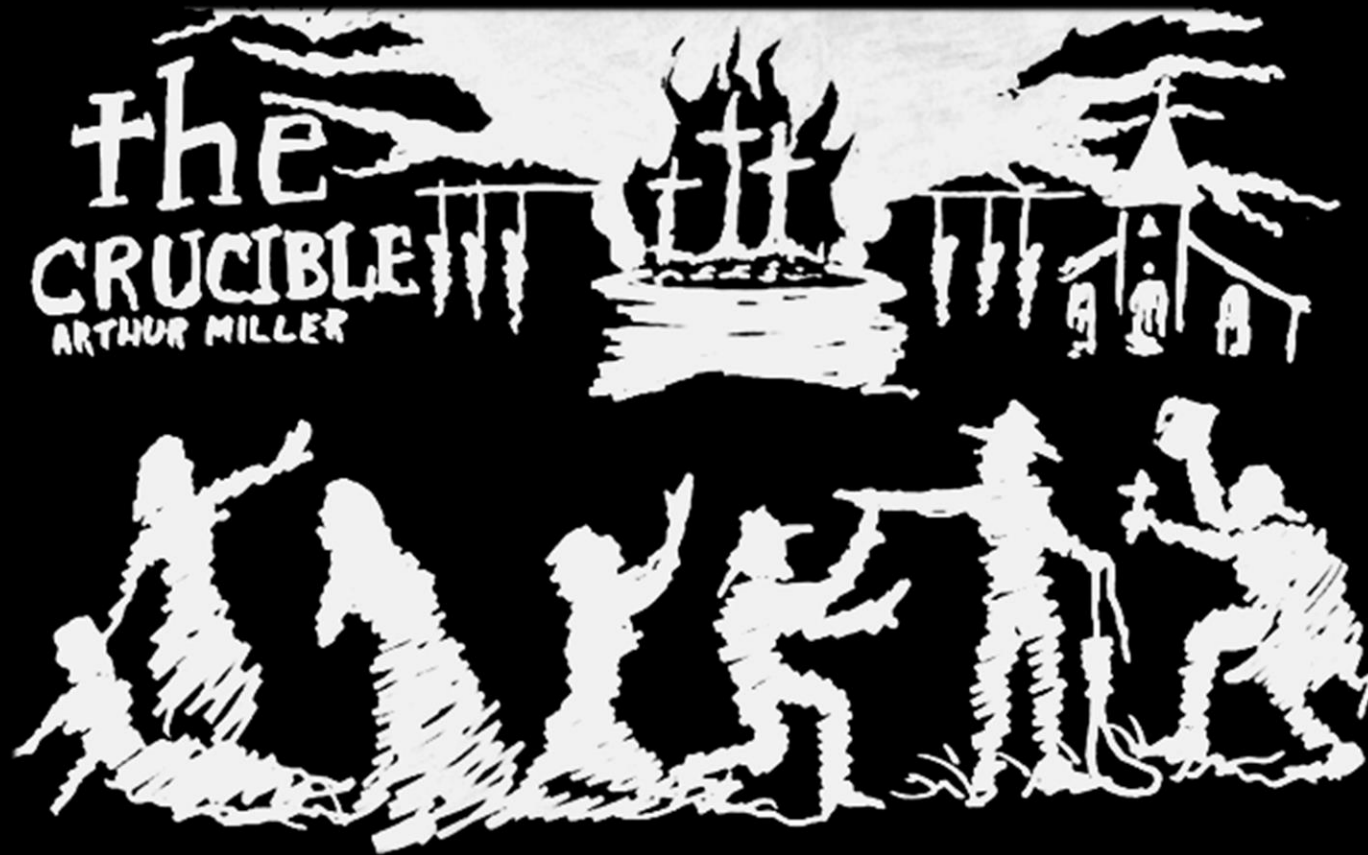
Chemistry is the intangible factor that makes or breaks a co-starring relationship on screen. It's the rapport that draws the audience into the story and the characters. Sometimes, if the chemistry between two or more roles is vital to the film, the casting director will hold chemistry reads—which are also known as chemistry tests. The purpose is to see how an actor instinctively connects and works with the other actor.



# CAST THIS FILM...

In teams, consider the following character descriptions for an imaginary film based upon *The Crucible*.

- **Reverend Parris** - Minister in Salem. He believes a faction plans to force him to leave Salem, so he attempts to strengthen his authority through the witch trials.
- **Betty Parris** - Parris' daughter. Her father discovers her dancing in the woods, and she later accuses individuals of practicing witchcraft.
- **Abigail Williams** - Parris' niece. She instigates the witch trials by falsely accusing others of witchcraft. She pretends to see spirits and instructs the other girls to pretend as well.
- **Tituba** - Parris' black slave. Parris discovers her casting spells and making potions with the girls in the woods.



Based on the descriptions, cast each role with real actors you are familiar with. Meet with your teammates and name at least two candidates giving reasons why you would so. You have fifteen minutes.





Next:

# PRODUCTION DESIGN

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