>> Tatiana: Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. I am Tatiana Lee, Hollywood Inclusionist for RespectAbility and we are here - I'm so excited to have our guests today. This is a series of webinars, interactive conversations we are having with different entertainment professionals within the disability space, and today I am so excited to have David Zimmerman and Diana Elizabeth Jordan who are two very very good friends of mine. I'm so excited to have this conversation with you guys today. I just want to remind you guys - just some housekeeping: in a little bit later, we're going to be able to have Q&A, so if you have questions for either one of them, please comment or in the chat box, if you're on Zoom or if you're on Facebook, ask us a question for our guest - I know they would be happy to answer those questions, we'll have time a little bit at the end, and then not only that, we have a few other sessions coming up so check out our website on our events: we have a series of different events that we're having, whether they're entertainment professional conversations with different entertainment professionals or they're even convenings for different communities within the disability community, like Monday we are having a convening of wheelchair-users, so please join us and just talking about what you're going through during this time, how we can join forces and join together during this time of sheltering in place and in the time of COVID-19. So, with all that being said, thank you again so much David Zimmerman and Diana Elizabeth Jordan, and I am just gonna read their bios really quick and then we are going to get into it. So, David Zimmerman has been coaching actors and putting together workshops for more than a decade. He is the creator and producer of "Meet the Biz" Workshops, which looks to make diversity a commonplace and bridges the gap between ability and disability. As a personal coach, he has been hired by production companies, including for Ryan Murphy's groundbreaking series "Nip/Tuck" and Michael Patrick King's "Love You More." He's also blessed to be an acting instructor and entertainment liaison at Performing Arts Studio West. As a casting director, his credits include the Showtime pilot and Star Price Productions "Project X" and "Shadow Point" - those are good - as well as the popular series "Penn & Teller's Bullshit." [Laughter] He also has casting feature film - he has also cast feature films including "Fighting Words" and "Carol of the Bells," produced by Joey Travolta and Inclusion Films and starring RJ Mitte, Leigh Purcell and Donna Mills, Andre Omen, Donna Pascoe and Jerry Jules. Zimmerman has also enjoyed working with Lifetime TV, Mark Walker Productions and Time-Life Productions. And next, our next guest is Diana Elizabeth Jordan, who is an award-winning director, artist, educator, disability inclusion activist and our creative director, artistic director of the Edutainment production company The Rainbow Butterfly Cafe. She has been featured in over 60 plays, 18 films and television shows including CBS's SWAT. She was the first actress with a disability to obtain a master's in fine arts and acting from California State Long Beach in 2001. She is also a resident acting coach at Performing Art Studio West, a professional training studio for performers with disabilities, and is a professional global keynote speaker with speaking of O, Success Incorporated. Diana has been featured on numerous podcasts and produces her weekly vlog series The Morning Cup of Joe. She serves as a SAG actor, a National Performer with Disabilities committee and the advisory board for the National Disability Theater. She is a Hollywood ambassador with Divas with Disability and is one of the disabled advocates for Women of Color Unite. Thank you so much again for both of you guys joining us.

>> David: Thank you all.

>> Diana: Yeah, thanks for having me. Except that I screwed up my bio. It's award-winning actress, award-nominated director, so. [Laughter]

>> Tatiana: That's alright, you are award-winning to me, all the way around.

>> Diana: I wrote the bio at 11 o'clock at night when I was very tired. >> Tatiana; Thank you so much for you guys for joining us. So, I'm gonna go straight into our questions and then we'll have some Q&A. So, I'll start with David. David, you are a casting director and have casted for a long time on a long list of projects as we heard just a minute ago; what to you makes a great actor and what do you look for when you are considering casting?

>> David: When I cast, what - say what gets me off but it's emotionally off - because when I see somebody walk into the room and they nail it, I notice myself tearing up and that is when I know, "yes, this person has to get a callback or they must be seen by the producer and the director," so that is what thrills me - to see somebody prepared and to see somebody bring their own magic to it, not somebody who is trying to please, which, growing up I always did that but I have learned that, if you give up yourself, you can please the others by just being yourself.

>> Tatiana: Thank you so much. That's a good response because I think a lot of times when you go into the casting room, you are, as an actor, contemplating what does a casting director want and especially as actors with disabilities, as some of you may know and some of you may not know is that, as an actor with a disability, you very rarely get a chance to be in that room with that casting director and sometimes we're so much in our head of wanting to nail it - you spend so much time of thinking about what the casting director wants opposed to you just giving your creative all and entrusting those choices, so that's very very interesting that you said that.

>> David: Yeah. I love how you said too - simple, trust your choices. You get it beforehand, you work on it and just go with it, allow it to happen.

>> Tatiana: Thank you. I didn't know if you had anything to add because you train a lot, Diana, in coaching people at Performing Arts Studio West and other places - you've even coached me on some stuff.

>> Diana: I agree, both as an actor who's learned to trust my choices and as a coach. And the thing is when you're being called in for role, they want to see you - they called you in, so they want to see... the casting director - I'm sure David can support this - they get, now because of the internet, up to a thousand submissions. Right? 500 submissions.

>> David: Or more.

>> Diana: They're probably not gonna call in 500 people. So - and this is what I want actors to understand - the fact that they called you in for the role, that's amazing, cause out of 500, they may call in a hundred or fifty - I mean, ten percent of - or a small percentage of that five hundred, the fact that they called you in means they want to see you and they want to see what you are going to bring to that role. But I would also like to add, I think we go into the attitude, "oh, I wanna get the role, what can I do to get the role?" and I think if you can go in and play the moment-to-moment work of the character, if the character is not fun to bring the role, we go in thinking like an actor, we need to go into that moment thinking like the character: what is happening for the character in this moment? We need to get ourselves out of the mindset of the actor, which is easier said than done, believe me, but, if we can say, "hey, moment - what do I want as this character? Why do I want it?" If we can really keep that moment-to-moment works, and let go of trying to please - again, like David said - let go of trying to please, but just trying to be in the moment-to -moment work of what is going on in the moment, not even the season - take away those active terminologies when you're auditioning. The moment you hear "action" or the moment that you say "ready," forget you're the actor - you're living the truth of the moment. And when you're back, you can evaluate, but really live within the moment, I think that is one of my tips.

>> Tatiana: Thank you, thank you. With that, my next question is for you, Diana. So, you started the Rainbow Butterfly Cafe, which is an Edutainment production company, and you have an amazing one-woman show that you do, so did you coin the word "edutainment" or - and then also, my follow-up question to that is, what made you want to do that and why did you think your audience needed Edutainment?

>> Diana: No, I did not coin the word "edutainment," I borrowed it from whoever did. [ Laughter ] But edutainment, really to me is that combination of entertainment and education. When I started the company a few years ago, I was at a point in my life where I was like, "how can I start to create more opportunities for myself and what combines everything I love?" I love to teach, I love to perform I'm an activist. It's really important for me that people - to do things that are limiting, that are eradicating those disability stigmas - that eradicate othering, limiting beliefs that - not only about disability but whatever limits us. Thoughts can limit us - when we don't think we're good enough, when we tell ourselves those messages. So the Rainbow Butterfly Cafe was, "how can I use Performing Arts and the effects of arts to find a way to help support in eradicating stigmas" and why did I think this was needed? I'll give a really perfect example. I had been in workshop called "26 Days in April" which was about the 504 protest, and I just did it offered online for a college - Cal State Los Angeles - I was booked to go in and lecture but, our new normal happened, and the students watched a video about the 504 protests and they also watched "Crip Camp," which is amazing, and one of the young women said, "Wow, I thought we always had ramps." Because she was born in 1990. Kids that were born post-ADA think ramps is a normal part of our - they just think that's part of our environment and that's really great but they need to know it's not - they need to know that 20, 30 years ago, it isn't, the same way we're talking about African-American history or women's history - it's very important, I think, for people with and without disabilities to understand their history in terms of civil rights.

>> Tatiana: I agree. I agree that it needs to be a part of just - any conversation of civil rights or history, so I agree, thank you so much. So, yeah, David - so, you started "Meet the Biz" and you hosted, at Performing Arts Studio West - actually one of the first community events, gatherings that I felt very brought in, where I felt supported - was at Performing Arts Studio West during "Meet the Biz," and I felt embraced by our community and that was where it kind of started for me. So, take me through a day of - at Performing Arts Studio West for a "Meet the Biz" session for someone who's never experienced it, and what was your inspiration and reason for wanting to do this.

>> David: Well, first of all, it's such a blessing to be in Performing Arts Studio West - I started there I think - it's over six years now... maybe almost seven. Yeah, and I get to work with Diana and I get to work with - I could list everybody: John Paces, who created Performing Arts - what 20 - almost 21 years ago now -

>> Diana: 22, I think.

>> David: Oh my god, see? [ Snaps ] Boom! [ Laughter ]

>> Diana: Well, I think it was '98.

>> David: Was it '98? Well, and it's interesting, because I started off at Mary Ring's Bortac Players, and then was introduced to the media access office and I started teaching there in around 2000 - again, don't quote me exactly on the date - but, I started teaching actors with disabilities and then it was like, here we are in LA - let's do an acting class to bring everybody together. So that's what I did - in 2008, I created "Meet the Biz," where I brought in different teachers, directors, instructors, actors from the industry - we started with Corey Allen from "Rebel Without a Cause" and "Star Trek: the Next Generation" and what a blessing it has been because to have people come in - I sort of like say, "here, come to an acting class," open the door and people are like [ Gasp ] or [ Gasp ] and then by the end of the class, it's family. And six, seven years ago now, at Performing Arts Studio West, I brought the program there, and to have everybody there - to your question about starting off the day or - you bring somebody in, you come in, you sit down, you get a feel of the 'family' that is Performing Arts Studio West and "Meet the Biz," and then we introduce so one or two people who are on the panel. And it's not just meeting them, it's not just listening to them, you get to work, you get to - D Wallace came in to a "Meet the Biz" class and this was also in the day when we would limit it to maybe 12 people, sometimes we would have 24 - depending on who was teaching - but she would start off her class in the first hour and a half of the three-hour class, she would do coming from here, the spiritual, the "I am," which I have my lovely poster of over there, painting, and then the second half she brought that into the work, and you did scene work, so, I'm so glad, Tatiana, that you felt welcomed - I remember that first day that you came in, and that is one of my biggest joys - is to see somebody come in and become part of the family and to feel like they are learning and doing. I don't know if that answered all what you wanted.

>> Tatiana: Yes, no, it did, thank you so much. It really was exactly that. When I moved here in LA, I wanted to get involved with the community and I was just searching for just places where things were happening and Performing Arts Studio West came up for me and I said, "I'm gonna check this out" and I think you had sent me a message or something and like reached out to me, and I just came and then that was when actually, I met Diana and we connected and we've been friends ever since and so it really is this family, and every time I come there, it feels like I'm coming home. So, it's an awesome space and if anyone who is a creative out there hasn't had a chance to - I mean, I know because we're in this situation we are right now and everyone's sheltering in place, but if you ever get a chance to go to Performing Arts Studio West and go to a "Meet the Biz" session, it's something to experience and just the love and the inspiration and the creativity that comes out of there is just so amazing, so thank you.

>> David: Well, one thing that I do miss during this time that we're going through is what you and I were talking about before - the hugs. We love to connect physically with people and that's what was so great about being there in person - I mean, we are blessed and this pushed me into something that people have been saying for years, now we have "Meet the Biz" interviews and lessons - shorter ones, because usually it's a three-hour workshop where you get to really connect, where this one, it's maybe a 20 minute, 30 minute workshops online, and they're open to everybody on the PASW TV YouTube channel, so check those out and you're gonna be a guest in about a week or two.

>> Tatiana: I am. I'm gonna be a guest and see all my peeps and stuff so that's gonna be really exciting. I'm excited for that.

>> Diana: Yeah, I actually wanna add that the programming at Studio West has been around, it was founded back then in 1998, so...

>> Tatiana: I was like, that was gonna be my next thing to you, anyway, so. So, I was gonna say, you are a multi hyphenate: actor, advocate, director and so much more and you've been working at Performing Arts Studio West for how many years now?

>> Diana: I started the summer of 1999. I moved back here in 98 to go to graduate school and I was looking for a job in 1999 and I started working there in the summer, and then, after I graduated, I went full-time.

>> Tatiana: Awesome. So, what do you do there and, well you shared a little bit, but take us through a day of like, what your role is there and what inspired you to want to do this position and why does it matter to you?

>> Diana: Well, I'm one of the acting coaches along with David, so my typical day is I teach two to three acting classes a day, rather, I either teach three, sometimes two acting classes a day, and also work out - we offer career management, we manage many of our clients and that's done by our fabulous talent management Carmel Smith - Carmel Wynne Smith - who is submitting - our talent department is submitting our clients for roles in the industry, so sometimes I, along with David, might do project coaching. So, my role is [coaching], and then I do industry - I am the Acting Diversity and Disability Inclusion Consultant, so I have to deal with all of this industry diversity panels on behalf of the studio. But my main goal is to make sure that our guys are ready to go out there and work. So, to me, it's not about having - yeah, it's about authentic casting, but it's also about you have to be ready to be cast. I wanna make sure our guys know what happens when you walk into an audition. David shared earlier, making sure they are prepared, are prepared to go book the role, because they're talented. That's the most important thing. I was at this book - well, I think I got this booked since we opened our talent department, and started submitting them that we were at thousands, we have booked over 2,000 roles and film, television, theatre and commercials. We've had groups of them and they've been on "Secret Life of the American Teenager" and getting - what, David, was it "getting out?" What was the other show?

>> David: Luke Zimmerman’s show?

>> Diana: Yes, there was - "Secret Life of the American Teenager" and "getting out"... Was that it? There was another show, I'm sorry I can't remember the name. We've had actors on "ER." We've had actors... our actor Isaac has done two feature films, one with Bryan Cranston and one with Alan Cumming, and Isaac got to go to Japan with the film, so we - and a couple of names are failing me right now I apologize.

>> Tatiana: That's okay.

>> Diana: But yeah, to me it's just - it's never just I want that, I wanna be an actor, but it's never just been about me - if we're going to build a community and follow that, because if we're saying we want and have the right to work in this industry, we need to be prepared. And I want to be part of the teaching, because that's something that prepares actors with disabilities to go out there and book the roles. So they have no excuse to say, "We can’t find anyone.”

>> Tatiana: Yes. You know, a lot of times they do say that, so.

>> Diana: They do! And now there is no reason to say that. Because our talent pool is huge and diverse.

>> Tatiana: Awesome.

>> Diana: And they can pull from the diversity of our talent pool as well.

>> Tatiana: Yes, definitely - that's very very important, the diversity in disability. So, we have our first question in, so it said - and this is posed to the both of you - it says, "what are three things people should really know and understand when they walk in the room for an audition?" and I'll ask David first and then...

>> David: Three things that they should know and prepare? Is that the question?

>> Tatiana: Understand... yeah, what should they know and understand when they walk into the room for an audition, so I guess understand would be more of the etiquette side and all of that and the creative, so give us a couple, maybe three good tips you would give.

>> David: Well, I go first of all to bring yourself to it, just like I mentioned at the beginning, to really, number one, to be prepared, to go over your script, be sure you have your pre-life, be sure you know this character, I mean when you're coming in for an audition, I usually write for myself when I do do acting, is I write a history - at least a page, it's like, who is this character, how does he relate to all these other characters. The homework, the homework is very important, and then when you get into the room, you just [ Woosh ] you're flying - it's like flying a plane, it's like - you're not gonna do that, you're gonna fly with it and so really, really do your homework, pre-life, after- life - so many people walk into the room and then they're finished and they're like, end of scene or they're like - they're waiting for a response whether - the thing is, to still be in that moment - you're still living it and then get out of it, so be sure you have the pre- life, after-life. Again, like I said before, be sure you don't try to please, and even don't try to please yourself, because it's all about the moment and the breath, which I do these advanced acting workshops in the breath and in a way it's in the moment, and so really be in the moment, in the breath. So, be yourself, be in the moment and do your homework.

>> Tatiana: Yes.

>> David: And homework doesn't have to be a nasty word. It's fun!

>> Tatiana: Yeah, it can be. It's exploring that character and like you said, what happened before this and then kind of its open-ended, then you can create it yourself and that's when the creative fun comes in of understanding and making that character your own so, no I think those are very good tips.

>> David: And you know, whether - whoever you are as an actor, don't get too much into your mind about this, that or the other, whether it's physical, whether it's mental, whether it's the lines - "will I remember the lines?" let's say that - then that's your subtext. You gotta have the subtext of what's going on.

>> Tatiana: Thank you, those are very very good tips. I really like those. So, Diana, what would be your three tips?

>> Diana: And I totally agree with David. Number one, I would say breathe, breathe, breathe. Trust yourself. I love creating a pre- audition ritual, which can be anything from a meditation to a prayer, depending on your faith practice, but something that I just do before I go into the audition, so what is your pre-audition ritual, but I agree with everything David said. I would like to highlight, when you're doing your pre-life, create a pre-life that supports the scene, so what are the things in your pre-life that really supporting the scene. So, for example, if you're saying I went to high-school when, that's great, and then when we have more time, we can create a more detailed pre-life, but for the audition, where you may have a day or two, create a pre-life that's really supporting the scene. For example, yesterday I taped something, but part of my pre-life was, I knew someone's life was in danger, so that I had to get this information out because someone’s life was in danger. So that was more of my pre-life because I had a shorter period of time, so create some pre-life but also create a pre-life that's really supporting the emotional journey you're taking in the scene. Does that make sense?

>> Tatiana: Yes, that does, and hopefully that makes sense to our viewers — we're diving into a really good acting lesson here.

>> Diana: Yeah, I hope that made sense. [Laughing]

>> Tatiana: Okay, so we’ve covered casting and nailing it in the audition room, so what are some tips - so you've now booked the job, you nailed your audition, you're about to go on set, what are some things to think about as a performer with a disability, for you to think about when you're getting ready to go on set?

>> David: As a performer with a disability?

>> Tatiana: Yeah.

>> David: See - I don't even, I think of it as you, the person - if you start thinking about your disability, then you're thinking about a disability rather than your character, so I wouldn't even go there, I would go with -

>> Tatiana: Yeah, or as an actor, but most of the audience are performers with disabilities so that's why I said that but I guess as an actor, but hey, sometimes you know there are certain barriers of accommodation, things like that, so...

>> David: I think, especially with casting, when I was doing the pilots for Showtime, I would call in all actors, I called in Toby Forest for a role of - now, he wasn't correct or quote right for this role, it was a role of a surfer, well, I was thinking - right - so I was thinking, Toby Forest, who happens to be a wheelchair-user, in my mind, I thought, "I'm gonna present this amazing actor to the producer and director," you know it's sort of like the casting director is like, "hors d'oeuvres? Hors d'oeuvres?" in a way, and let the director and producer choose what they like, but I brought him in because I knew he would blow them away. So I had him read the role and then I improvised with him, and later that night, when we sat, the director and the producer and I sat and watched the the dailies, he looked at me and said, "is this a student of yours?" and at that time I was taking - Toby invited "Meet the Biz" in Santa Monica, we were teaching at that time, I said, "yeah he's a brilliant actor" and they said yes. Now, the show didn't continue to go on but it was interesting because - and I know I'm sort of off the question what you're saying, but it led to that about how we got there, but the next day we auditioned the main surfer, I mean the guy that was the best surfer in the whole United States and in fact, we brought in the top surfer from the United States and for that one, the director and producer were in there with me and I sort of stepped back, I was running the camera instead of running the whole session, and the one question that he asked the surfer, he said, "I want you to just tell me a story about something that was very potent for you in your life and in your past." So, this guy starts telling about, "well, I had this wonderful friend of mine and we were surfing buddies and this and that and he got into an accident and he got paralyzed from his neck down," and the producer looked at me like, "what?" So it was like the seed had been planted and then it was like manifest and I tell you, if that show went on, he would probably write that in and there's Toby - especially with that gorgeous long blonde hair, yeah. So, anyway, that was that story about what I do is, for casting, I go out there and I know that that's not what you said about being on the set -

>> Tatiana: Oh, no - I think that was great though because, a lot of times casting directors don't figure out how to incorporate someone with a disability - they see a breakdown and they stick to that and they say, well the writer didn't say we want a wheelchair-user and then they're like so why are you bringing in this wheelchair user, but sometimes if the casting director says hear me out - this could work this way and then, usually the writers have never even thought about including us in certain things, so that was a really great story of how that could work out to include a performer with the disability in a way that the writers never thought about before.

>> David: I want to bring to the producer and the director, when I cast or when I produce, the best actor. And that's what I want to do.

>> Tatiana: Awesome, thank you.

>> Diana: I want to offer a little different perspective. I think it is important that we - obviously, ask what we need in terms of accommodations and things like that - but I think - when I think of the Rainbow Butterfly Cafe, we celebrate disability. I think sometimes disability gets - oh, it's not about the disability, but I think it is enough about the disability, too, and the way that - we are 25 percent of the population, so to celebrate that and our visibility and authenticity, or the authenticity of - some of our disabilities that are more invisible, it's important, too. So I think it is important to ask if you need any help or accommodations, but again, celebrate who you are - you are an actor and you are an artist, You also are bringing in the visibility of one of the most invisible and largest populations we have. So I think it's important - well, I don't wanna be telling you to be activist for disability, but you are activist for disability - this is not a negative identity, this is a postive identity. Celebrate that. Ask what you need. Every actor needs to ask for your accommodations so you can do your job on the set. So I agree with David, but I also agree that we need to kinda change the stigma of - it's always well meaning when people go, "I don't see disability," but I'm like, "why not? I have one." And I'm black. Even the people that say to me "I don't see that you're black," so I would look at you like, "well, I am." So...

>> David: You are, Diana? [ Laughter ]

>> Diana: I am! Didn’t you know that? [ Laughter ] So, again, I'm just offering a different perspective of disability, because we don't want to be denied equity, but I think we also need to celebrate all of who we are, whether it's our sexual identity, whether it's our size identity, whether it's our age - we need to celebrate all of our intersectionality that we bring to our role as artists and that includes what our disabilities are.

>> Tatiana: Right, I agree with that. That was very very well said. I agree because people always say, "well, I don't see the disability," I says, "well, if you don't see that thing, you don't see all the struggle that I go through on a daily basis to do X, Y, Z, or you don't see the accommodations I need to be included," so, I think that's very important so thank you. And speaking of, just having access and opportunity, we have another question. So, Diana who says - she said this is a great panel, she's really enjoying it, she says she has a burning question, and she said this goes to David, and she also wants me to put input, she says she uses an electric wheelchair for convenience and ease and she has no problem using a manual wheelchair, but she doesn't own one, so with that being said, she's curious if going to auditions with the manual wheelchair is better. For some reason, she has it in her head that, most of the time, when she sees actors in wheelchairs on TV, they're normally manual wheelchair-users, and she's had a casting director ask her once if she could do tricks and looked at her her electric wheelchair and wanted to say, "I can beg and wag my tail." [Laughter] She said but it did get her to thinking that manual wheelchairs are more commonly seen on screen, and of course it is a stereotype, but she's wondering if manual wheelchairs are more accepted, and then she says sorry for being long-winded.

>> David: No, it's a brilliant question - it's like, there's so many levels to it. And one of the levels is this: you're gonna - you have, how many casting directors do we have out there, I don't even know.

>> Tatiana: Too many. [ Laughter ]

>> David: But let me tell you, some people, even back in the day, when I really was doing a lot of acting - they would say online, put pictures of you as a doctor, as a lawyer, as as a cook, as a pole dancer - I don't know, so, and my thought was, especially in casting, it's like, can't you see my thing is - and a lot of people, too - is those eyes, those eyes in your pictures will say everything. So, I, personally, personally, don't - in regards to the question whether it's a photo or whether it's wheelchair - I think you can be bringing either one - for me - there might be another casting director that couldn't wrap their head around it because they haven't been exposed to it. That being said, I would also - I think if you have another wheelchair, I know some people who have both electric and non-electric, do what's the best for you and also what is the best for the character. And this connects to that as well as, the previous question about being on the set and being sure you get what you need. I went on the set - and this is Jerry Juhl's story - but I was there with her during the Deadwood film as an assistant... a dear friend. So, during that time, she had just had back surgery and - the way she tells the story is so much better and so much fleshed out but uh...

>> Tatiana: She's an amazing performer.

>> David: Jerry Juhl. As we know. What I'm gonna get to, and I'll get to it quick, is they built a ramp for her - they built a ramp for her... I had a brain fart - for her trailer, so she could have a chair at that time for it and they did her makeup and her costumes in the one place so she wouldn't have to go out, she wouldn't have to walk up the steps to the other one, so you get what you need and - it doesn't - people think - people meaning the producers, the directors, think it's gonna be, cost so much - no no no - you want the best person for that role and you make it happen and it's just part of it. So, I don't know if that connected everything and answered your question, I hope so.

>> Tatiana: That did, and then I'll just add a little bit - actually it cost less than four hundred dollars to make a set accessible to people with disabilities, but Diana, to go back to answer in - just from my perspective as an actor who is a manual wheelchair user, a lot of times casting directors, and this is just my opinion, like David had said, aren't exposed to disability, and so sometimes, they don't know what they're looking for, so you have to show them in your own way, like David had said earlier about bringing yourself and being you, authentically you, and show them that you are the right fit for this role, just being you and your manual wheelchair, your electric wheelchair - whatever that is and show them that, "oh, I didn't see this person, this character being a manual wheelchair-user, but she brought so much life to this character and these choices that I never thought of that I didn't even think about whether her wheelchair was manual, electric or whatever," and that's my opinion but still we have a lot more work to do to educate a lot of casting directors and directors and producers as far as thinking about the broad spectrum of disability, and so we have a lot of work to do but just don't think so much into it, just bring your authentic self to that and just rock it and see what happens.

>> Diana: Tatiana may I add something real quick?

>> Tatiana: Yeah, go ahead. >>Diana: Diana, you also need to think about your self-care on the set, and if it is better for you in terms of taking care of yourself to use an electric wheelchair, and if a manual wheelchair may be more exhausting, I don't know, then you just need to always think about what's best for you in your self-care on set in terms of your use of a wheelchair. And then if the electric wheelchair is best for you in terms of what you need, then go with that. It's just - it also has to be about your self-care. So, I wanted to add that.

>> David: And - I love that - also, if the role is for a manual wheelchair, you can have both on the set - for the on the set is the manual, on behind the set is an automatic.

>> Tatiana: Yes, yes. But - don't feel like you have to do this complete song and dance just to book the role, it's like do what authentically works for you in that moment, and if they love what you're doing, they'll book you.

>> Diana: Yes. Be who you are, Diana. And I know you, and you're amazing, so just be you.

>> Tatiana: Yes, so - go ahead, did you have something to add, David?

>> David: One other quick thing on that, is that, some people learn skydiving, some people do this, do that, the other - if you happen to be a wheelchair-user, you can expand yourself - see, I'm not a wheelchair-user and I don't know exactly the differences, but, you can expand yourself on certain ways to use the wheelchair as well, whether it is a regular one or that, you could say, "oh, yeah, I could do both," like some actors say, "sure, I can ride a horse," and then they run out and learn to ride a horse [ Laughter ] which I could [never] do - I mean, because that could be dangerous - but a lot of people do that - you know how they do that. So, sure - I'll do it.

>> Tatiana: So, we're coming up close to the end - we have another question, but I have a question I wanted to ask you guys... being creative during this time of COVID-19, we're all in shelter-in-place, what are you guys doing with yourselves personally, and also with Performing Arts Studio West in staying creative and staying going and staying positive during this time?

>> David: Well, I'm cooking. [ Laughter ] I'm learning how to cook more. I used to know how to poach eggs, make soup - I'm a good soup maker, and salmon, I like to make salmon - but now I'm learning how to do everything because I do everything myself. That's on that part of the thing, and by doing that, it's a catharsis and a meditation in a way - I do do meditation, but - and also the meditation of cooking, I have gone through 60 boxes and now I have 20 - of stuff that I want to keep, and in regards to creating, I have stuff that's been on the back burner that is now coming up to the middle burner, the front burner - creations, and Performing Arts Studio West - I am again blessed, blessed to be there, because it's keeping me sane. To connect with people - I'm, Monday through Friday, I do an interview a day. Today, I'm interviewing Roose Falange, who I love dearly and who is, as we know, one of the top writers in Hollywood - he worked for the Oscars for how many years? I don't know. So, it's fun. I get to visit and at the same time, these are going out to everyone, so you could watch it, and there's so many one - Diana does an amazing, wonderful acting class every day, Monday through Friday, we have a music class, we have dance classes and then the "Meet the Biz," so.

>> Tatiana: Nice.

>> Diana: Yeah, I'm loving doing the acting classes - I'm very grateful that we have been able, even though with the format, I'm very grateful that we've been able to stay open, and that I have - and that I am working and I'm so so grateful for that. It's been really great to learn, to - doing acting classes is - I say it’s like doing five webisodes a week. [ Laughter ] Producing five webisodes a week. It's been really challenging, but great, and then, just learning more about online formatting for things I want to offer through the Rainbow Butterfly Cafe. And reaching out to friends - I absolutely think it's important that, for me, taking it a day at a time, we're in a really new - we're in a very new normal that no one has any experience at doing before - so yes, we have our creative days, but if there's a day where you don't feel creative, be okay with that. I reach out to my friends I talk to David once a week, I talk to you once a week. So, this is a thing where I think it's really important to do self-care and take it a day at a time. So even if you are creative, if Tuesday you don't feel like being creative and you wanna binge-watch -

>> Tatiana: It's okay.

>> Diana: - Netflix all day, do that. Because Wednesday you can be creative. So, really focus on making sure that you're doing what you need to take care of yourself, and that's really important, too.

>> Tatiana: Thank you.

>> Diana: Creativity. And find art: listen to music because it's fun. It doesn't always have to be creative, it can be the healing process of the arts and the therapeutic process of the arts. So, I'm doing all of that.

>> Tatiana: Yes, all those creative things. So we have a question, someone says, "do you have any advice for autistic actors and actors with IDD going in for neurotypical roles? I want to go in the room authentically and not mask my autism, but I found that often time casting directors don't know how to react to me or frankly how to deal with an autistic actor." Do you have any advice for them? Either one of you.

>> Diana: Yes, I do. Yes. People learn through experience. So you being yourself allows people to learn through experience. It is important - it's kinda like a double-edged sword: people may be uncomfortable, but they feel uncomfortable because they haven't had the experience. So I think you, showing up, unapologetically as who you are, that's really important, because it gets that casting director to experience being with you. And that's really important because, through experience, that's how people learn - that's how people learn. So you showing up as who you are, being proud of who you are, just being you, be you.

>> Tatiana: Yes.

>> Diana: It may not always be easy, but I think it's really important. That's how we break down those barriers and stigmas, by saying, "this is who I am, this is how I sound, and I'm not gonna apologize for my speech, but this is how I sound, and -

>> Tatiana: Yes.

>> Diana: - and when you deal with me, this is what you hear. When you deal with me, or someone else, these are the behaviors, or this is how I am as a neurodiverse actor - this is who I am."

>> Tatiana: Yes.

>> Diana: That's how we break down those barriers and eradicate the stigmas, by showing up and being who we are.

>> Tatiana: I agree. David, do you have anything to add really quick? >> Daivd: Yeah, I think - right on the money, exactly on the money, and being you, and being the whole you, when you do take acting classes or when you do study and learn from your own work, the more open you are and you come through your vessel, that will get you even a higher quality you. So just bring the whole you.

>> Tatiana: Nice. So, we'll have our very last question and this has come to us from Facebook - they said they're glad that we're doing this and they support all of our work, they said, their question is, "what is your favorite actor or actress of all time?" [ Exhasperation ] [ Laughter ]

>> Tatiana: No pressure.

>> Diana: No pressure, you go first!

>> David: Oh, great. Hang on. Okay, I'll go first. It's very hard, very hard, very hard - I grew up loving Peter Sellers, I mean, I loved the joy and comedy he brought. I loved Robin Williams as a comedian. Dustin Hoffman, I know I'm listing, but - Ian McKellen, I mean - there's so many and, to tell you the truth, the actors that I love the most are actually women, and I didn't mention any of them because of their complete availability and I'm going beyond the acting, but I think women should be in charge of the world so, but that's another whole hour.

>> Diana: I agree.

>> David: I agree. We would... anyway, I'm not going there. But yeah, there's just - Judy Dentch - oh my god, I can't list one.

>> Tatiana: Too many. How about you Diana?

>> Diana: I think I'll say the same where I have so many people and Viola Davis, but honestly, the one actress who was my favorite who I never got to meet was Rosa Carmichael - Rosa Jordan Carmichael - who was my aunt. She was an actress, she died a year before I was born. But I grew up hearing stories about her from my grandmother, I hear from my aunt and my dad, and how talented she was, how amazing she was and so I often imagine what she might have said to me, had I gotten to actually meet her - I mean, I feel I know her but I never - but so she came out as - she is my favorite because she is - hearing her stories from my family that inspired me and still - even my aunt who is my dad's youngest sister was like, "oh, I wish you could have met her," and it's like, "I have, through you."

>> Tatiana: Awesome.

>> Diana: So she is my favorite.

>> Tatiana: Thank you.

>> David: One last thing.

>> Tatiana: Go ahead.

>> David: Just to put a button on that is, as I've gotten older - and more beautiful - the people who I love the most as actors and my favorite actors are the people that I know, and two others that came to mind are Jerry Juhl and Jamie Brewer, so I - anyway.

>> Tatiana: Yeah, there's so many talented people, so. Alright, we are wrapping up. Thank you both so much for sharing your knowledge, your wisdom and sharing with us about Performing Arts Studio West and "Meet the Biz" and the Rainbow Butterfly Cafe and all the amazing work you guys are doing. Thank you so much for everything that you do for the community as a whole and really advocating for disability inclusion in entertainment - it's very much needed and I want to say thank you so much for your time and thank you for joining us to all our viewers, thank you for your questions and this has been great. We have a couple more series coming up - they will be on our website, we have one with Jonathan Murray talking about unscripted television and we have one coming up with the Geena Davis Institute and talking about gender equality in media and reviewing their study and so many other ones, so please check out RespectAbility's website - oh, yes, and then we have one with media Access Awards, they're going to be talking about media access and talking about all the work there that they have been doing and so please join us for all of those coming up. Stay tuned, signed up and so that you'll get all the updates on RespectAbility. And thank you so much for joining us today, and one more round of applause for our guests. Thank you.

>> David: No, thank you! Thank you all!

>> Diana: Thank you, Tatiana for having us!

>> Tatiana: Thank you!