

July 27, 2020

ICDN BEST-PRACTICE CASTING GUIDELINES FOR NUDITY AND SEXUAL CONTENT

By their nature, auditions are based on a power imbalance. Some performers can feel obligated to agree to uncomfortable requests to get a job. Casting directors are therefore rightly concerned about performer safety and issues of consent.

To help ensure a professional environment and to enable the director to believe that a performer's 'yes' is freely and confidently given, we strongly recommend following the guidelines set forth below.

AUDITIONS

All rules about nudity and intimacy apply for online and self-taped auditions, as well as for all sessions that take place in-person.

- If a role requires nudity, semi-nudity or simulated sex (including kissing) the casting brief should detail this, enabling the performer to make an informed decision about participating in the audition. This should be done to the best of the casting director's knowledge in the pre-production period.
- Auditions and meetings should take place in professional spaces and within reasonable hours. If a private home or hotel is used for auditions or meetings, separate space should be clearly delineated for professional work. Agents and casting directors should explicitly clarify that these meetings should remain in the lobby or living room, and never move into high-risk locations. The performer should be strongly encouraged to bring along a chaperone, who stays with the performer throughout the entire session.

- Never assume a performer is comfortable with nudity or simulated sex, even if they've done it before.
- Don't treat "adult film" performers differently; everyone deserves consideration and respect.
- When making an offer to high-profile performers who've not auditioned, it's key to brief agents fully. Performers need to know they will be working in a safe environment.
- There's no need to use scenes of sex or violence to reveal character in first auditions.
- If callbacks require sex scenes, these should be done fully clothed and planned collaboratively with an Intimacy Coordinator to work with performers beforehand, using a system of agreement and consent. If touching is necessary, actors should agree what part of their body may be touched, for example.
- Actors should be encouraged to agree in writing to their boundaries beforehand. For example, if there is kissing involved, they can say "I agree to closed-mouth kissing only." Actors have the right to preserve their health and not kiss.
- Boundaries set during the audition phase should not be held against the performer or seen as a refusal to fulfill the legitimate requirements of the eventual role.
- In cases when auditions are conducted exclusively via video conferencing or self-tapes, all the same rules about nudity and intimacy apply.

NUDITY & SEMI-NUDITY

Be sensitive about cultural differences regarding what is acceptable. Always respect actor modesty.

- No full nudity is ever necessary in an audition or callback. Never in-person, never online, never in a self-tape.
- Semi-nudity should occur only at the callback stage, and only if it is legitimately relevant to fulfilling the requirements of the role. This type of “viewing” should take place with the performer wearing a swimsuit of his or her choice and should be separated from performance of the scenes. The agent and performer should be given 48 hours’ notice and the full script should be supplied. If the project is secret, NDAs (Non-Disclosure Agreements, drawn up by a legal firm, that swear the artist to secrecy) covering script content are acceptable.
- If a callback does legitimately require semi-nudity, only minimum key production people (casting director, director and producer) should be in room. All parties should agree to this in advance, and the performer should be encouraged to bring a support peer who remains in the room whenever the performer is semi-nude.
- If the semi-nudity is to be filmed or photographed, the production must obtain explicit consent, in writing, from the performer; agents should always be informed.
- Viewing of filmed or photographed material containing semi-nudity must be limited to essential parties, that is: producer, director, casting director and costume designer. Only those who have a legitimate necessity to view them should do so.
- Filmed or photographed material containing semi-nudity must be stored securely, whether in a physical or online location. All such material must be destroyed after the pre-production period.
- Performers should never be asked to self-tape or photograph themselves nude or semi-nude.
- Performers should never be asked to tape or photograph sexual acts, whether simulated or real, kissing included.

CONTRACTING

- Casting directors should encourage production to issue a nudity rider, detailing the actor's consent to any nudity, semi-nudity or simulated sex required for the role.
- Casting directors should encourage productions to exercise the standard on-set courtesies, such as a closed set and limits set on those viewing video monitors during filming of any sensitive scenes.
- Props and costume pieces should respect performer modesty and should be explicitly described in the nudity rider.
- Casting directors should encourage productions to employ Intimacy Coordinators to choreograph simulated sex.
- Production must note full details of sensitive scenes in the contract, and explicitly state what exposure and publicity is expected.
- Production is obliged to use these scenes only for completion of the project – i.e. cannot be included in publicity and/or making-of package, without the written consent of the performer.
- Storage of sensitive scenes should be secure, whether in a physical or online location; the requirement of secure storage should be explicitly stated in the nudity rider.