

Typecast

By

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EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A large office building.

INT. DONALD'S OFFICE - DAY

Luxurious office - fancy wooden furniture, diplomas and degrees adorn the walls, glorious view of the city from the window.

A man, DONALD, sits behind the desk wrapping up a phone call. He's in his 40s, gives off an air of confidence with a hint of sleeze, and dresses a little bit too slick and trendy for his own good.

The PA on his desk buzzes. Donald ends the call and responds to the buzzer.

DONALD

Yes?

RECEPTIONIST (OOS)

Your 2 o' clock is here, Mr. Hayes.

DONALD

Great! Send him in.

Enter TONY, who is a B-movie Bog Monster. He speaks with a refined, almost stereotypical English accent.

DONALD

Tony! How are you?

TONY

I'm doing o--

DONALD

Good, good. And how're the wife and kids?

TONY

They're great. Little Jessica has just star--

DONALD

Marvellous. Now, I believe you wanted to speak to me.

TONY

That's right. I'm a tad concerned about--

Donald's mobile phone rings.

(CONTINUED)

DONALD

Sorry Tony, one second.

(Answers phone)

Donald Hayes, agent to the stars!... Yes?... Yes... No... Well that doesn't sound right... No, he told me he was good at it... Yeah, said he grew up on a ranch... I don't know, I assumed he meant horses... Well if a guy puts "Horseback riding" on his resume you usually assume that... Well, can't you re-write the scene? Have them driving motorbikes or something?... Yes, I know it's a Western. Can...

(To Tony)

Hold on, this'll only take a minute.

(To phone)

Look, how accurate does this have to be? I mean it's not like it's a historical bio-pic, is it?... It is a historical bio-pic. About who?... Well I don't know who that is, so I imagine neither does your average movie-watching patron... Look, look. Look. I'm with another client right now... Yes, he can ride a horse but, uh... no. No, I don't think he's the sorta guy you'd, uh... listen, let me get back to you. Thanks. Ciao.

Donald ends the call.

DONALD (CONT)

I'm so sorry about that.

TONY

What was that?

DONALD

Oh, you know. Another client. Said he could ride horses, but it turns out--

TONY

Yes, I got that. I mean why did you tell them I wasn't the sort of chap they'd want?

(CONTINUED)

DONALD

Well, I don't know. You're not well-suited to that sort of movie.

TONY

Y'know, this is exactly what I wanted to talk to you about. All of the roles I've auditioned for so far have been for monsters, or aliens, or creatures from various colours of lagoon, lake, bog or swamp.

DONALD

I don't know what you're complaining about. I got you that Doctor Who gig, didn't I? When they were filming here for the Christmas special?

TONY

Which further cemented my standing with the viewing public as little more than a two-dimensional monster!

DONALD

Well, I wouldn't say "Viewing public." I mean, how many people in the States watch Doctor Who? Two million, tops?

TONY

That's not the point. Why don't you put me forward for other projects? Romance? Comedy? Drama? Westerns?

DONALD

Well you're better suited to, y'know, to the monster thing.

TONY

Bloody Hell, Donald! You're my agent! You're supposed to be backing me up, trying to land me the roles that will help make my career a success. And I'm never going to be a success if I'm always playing Bog Monsters.

DONALD

You were an alien in Doctor Who.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Will you stop going on about Doctor bloody Who? I want to be taken seriously as an actor, as an artist. I don't want to wind up playing monsters, or creatures, or aliens for the rest of my life.

DONALD

Alright, alright. Fair enough. Now you mention it, I did just catch wind of something you might be interested in. It's for the lead in a period drama for ABC. It's powerful, moving stuff. Set in England, actually. No sci-fi or horror at all. Sound like your sort of thing?

TONY

When's the audition?

EXT. STUDIO LOT ENTRANCE - DAY

TONY drives up to the entrance gates and talks briefly with a security guard, who raises the gate for him to drive through.

INT. STUDIO SPACE - DAY

Large studio space. No sets constructed yet. The Casting Director, Director and Writer sit at one end of the room with a camera pointing towards the audition space.

A door on the far end of the room opens and in walks TONY. The Director and Casting Director look at each other.

DIRECTOR

Hi Tony. Great to see you.

TONY

Hi.

DIRECTOR

Nervous?

TONY

Never a good question to ask an actor going into an audition.

(CONTINUED)

DIRECTOR

Of course. Well when you're ready take it from the top and we'll go from there.

TONY

Sure.

(Beat)

"Do not think I did not see the way you were looking at my wife, Lawrence."

CASTING DIRECTOR

Uh... "Surely, I have no idea what you could mean."

TONY

"At dinner, as the maid was serving the dessert. You glanced at my Elaine. You smiled. You exchanged pleasantries that were, in my consideration of the events, highly inappropriate."

CASTING DIRECTOR

"I can assure you, good man, I have no intention of."

TONY

"You may have fooled my family and the gentry of Psychingham Hall into thinking you are anything but a dishonest man. But I promise you now, you will never fool me. If I catch you so much as walking in the same hallways as her I will not be responsible for my actions."

DIRECTOR

Good. That was very, very good. Like the energy, the delivery was perfect. It's like you are Mister Bettingrowthe.

TONY

Being British probably helped.

DIRECTOR

I bet it did! Yeah. Well. Unfortunately we are looking for someone with, well, shall we say a different build?

(CONTINUED)

TONY

So that's a "No" then?

DIRECTOR

Yeah. Sorry. Oh, incidentally I have friends at the BBC who say you were incredible in Doctor Who. I can't wait to see it. I'ma ctually handling the casting for a new show for the Sci-Fi Channel called Jump Leads, and we're looking for a creature to terrify the principle characters in episode two. The role's yours if you want it.

TONY

Contact my agent.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

TONY'S car is parked out front.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

TONY sits at the bar, drinking. The BARMAN stands behind the bar.

BARMAN

You okay, Tony? You're looking blue. That is to say you're looking miserable as opposed to an observation based on the colour of your skin which is, as you are probably aware, a very fine shade of blue. Hang on, let me try again.

TONY

No no, that's okay. I suppose I am blue.

BARMAN

You are. That's what I'm saying.

TONY

I don't know. I sometimes think I'm destined to spend my life playing a variety of ill-tempered beasts.

BARMAN

I wouldn't say that. You could get the part of some plaque in a toothpaste commercial.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

I mean, before this morning I could've blamed my incompetent agent. The guy couldn't arrange a barbeque in an Australian Crematorium. But since my audition this morning...

BARMAN

Audition? What for?

TONY

The lead in an English period drama.

BARMAN

Sounds right up your alley. Did you get it?

TONY

Yes. That's why I'm in here with you, drowning my sorrows.

BARMAN

Strange way to celebrate.

TONY

I was being sarcastic.

BARMAN

Well how was I to know? I see all sorts of people come in here. People who drink because they're happy, people who drink because they're sad. All seems a bit of a paradox, really.

TONY

Maybe... maybe I should write something. Yeah, write something and cast myself in it. I mean, it worked for Zach Braff, didn't it? And... that other guy. Wossname. With the hair.

BARMAN

Sylvester Stallone.

TONY

Sylvester Stallone, yes. And he used to be a porn star. Look where he is now.

(CONTINUED)

BARMAN

Was he really a porn star?

TONY

Yes.

BARMAN

Wow.

TONY

Yeah, that's what I'll do.

BARMAN

What, porn?

TONY

No, I'm going to write the best damned show that anyone has ever seen, and I'm going to cast myself at the lead, and no one's going to stop me!

INT. TONY'S HOME - OFFICE - NIGHT

Montage of Tony trying to write and not getting much done. He is surrounded by crumpled paper, coffee, and disappointment.

INT. DONALD'S OFFICE - DAY

Tony and Donald sit, talking. Donald has the script on his table.

TONY

So did you read it?

DONALD

I did, yes.

TONY

Did you like it?

DONALD

Tony, as your agent I'm contractually obliged to like everything you do.

TONY

Are you saying you don't usually like my work?

(CONTINUED)

DONALD

Not at all.

TONY

Because I would prefer it if you were 100% honest with me when appraising my performance.

DONALD

You would?

TONY

Yes.

DONALD

Well... when I watched you shooting for Doctor Who I felt you were a touch over-the-top.

TONY

"Over-the-top"?

DONALD

Just a touch, yes.

TONY

Well, that's what the Director wanted. I'd originally played the role a lot more subdued. But they wanted "over-the-top". What could I do?

DONALD

Hey, that's not a problem. I know what it's like. I used to act myself.

TONY

Did you?

DONALD

No. Also when you were in that Car Insurance commercial, I thought you could've done it a bit more--

TONY

Alright, alright, Not that I don't appreciate the performance critique, but we need to focus on this script. What did you think?

(CONTINUED)

DONALD

Well...

TONY

You hate it.

DONALD

No, no, no. Not hate. "Hate" is a very strong word. No, it's not "hate-worthy." It's a good groundwork, sure. It's got potential. But it needs something.

TONY

That's your criticism? "It needs Something"?

DONALD

Fine-tuning, I guess. The dialogue needs polishing. There's a plot there, and it's probably good.

TONY

*Probably* good?

DONALD

I don't watch a lot of movies.

TONY

You're a film and television agent. You have clients such as Liam Neeson, Sigourney Weaver, Patrick Stewart. And you're telling me you don't watch a lot of movies?

DONALD

Look, the script's not that bad. It just needs work, is all. In the meantime, the Jump Leads people got in touch...

TONY

Oh for God's sake.

DONALD

They're interested in having you play the great Greknok Beast of Beezer Mox. What's more you don't even have to audition, so it's easy money.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Chase some idiots around on yet another spaceship set? No, thank you.

INT. SPACESHIP SET

TONY is chasing two IDIOTS around on yet another spaceship set.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

TONY'S car is once again parked outside.

TONY (V.O)

Four and a half hours I had to chase those idiots around.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

TONY sits at the bar with his friend, LEEROY. LEEROY is tall, thin, in his early twenties, and is also a zombie. A thin cigarette hangs limply from his mouth.

TONY

Can you imagine how tired I was after all that?

LEEROY

I feel your pain, man.

TONY

I mean, at least when you're doing your thing you just have to shuffle.

LEEROY

Hey, don't knock the shuffling. Shuffling takes effort. You get tired legs shuffling around the set all day. And didn't you see "Resident Evil"? I had to fucking run in that bastard film, man. Twenty-three takes of running down a hallway. No easy feat, trust me.

TONY

Aren't you fed up of being typecast?

(CONTINUED)

LEEROY

I do something different on occasion. Just last month I was filming an episode of CSI.

TONY

Really? What role did you play?

LEEROY

A corpse.

TONY

That's not much different from the sort of roles you usually play. I mean technically, a zombie is still a corpse. It's just a corpse with an agenda.

LEEROY

Hey, it's a step up. Dead trumps Undead.

TONY

I don't know. The Undead can still be half of a horse at Halloween. A corpse can only be a corpse. Or a log.

LEEROY

Whatever. Give it time, maybe another year or two, I imagine I'll get to take some really good roles with plenty of life in them. Why do you ask, anyway?

TONY

Ah, I'm just getting fed up of playing the same rubbish roles over and over and over again.

LEEROY

Jeez, Ton', you're starting to sound like Lewis.

TONY

Is Lewis the robot I met at your son's Bat Mitzvah?

LEEROY

No, Lewis is the werewolf. Remember? He earned a few bucks doing that Harry Potter movie a couple of years back and then

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LEEROY (cont'd)  
struggled to find other work.  
Spends most of his time these days  
chasing people in low-budget horror  
films, when he's not making guest  
appearances in breakfast cereal  
commercials.

TONY  
I need to get out of this rut. I  
want to do some serious work,  
y'know? Proper acting. I've written  
a script...

LEEROY  
Oh?

TONY  
Yeah, but my agent hates it. Says  
it needs "polishing".

LEEROY  
So polish it. I mean shit, son,  
this could be your big break!

TONY  
You're probably right.

LEEROY  
Damned right I am. So what're you  
sitting in here for? Get back home  
and start polishing!

Tony rushes out of the bar. The BARMAN approaches Leeroy.

BARMAN  
Hey, weren't you in Land Of The  
Dead?

LEEROY  
Strangely, no.

INT. TONY'S HOME - OFFICE - NIGHT

Another writing montage. This one more upbeat - Tony is  
determined, resilient, defiant. There's still plenty of  
coffee.

INT. DONALD'S OFFICE - DAY

TONY and DONALD talking once again.

TONY

So what do you think?

DONALD

It's great stuff. Top-notch,  
A-grade writing. In fact I've  
already called NBC Universal with a  
rough outline and they love it.  
Want to start getting a crew  
together as soon as possible.

TONY

That's brilliant, if slightly  
unbelievable!

DONALD

There is, uh, one proviso.

TONY

Oh?

DONALD

Well, they're aware of you and  
aware of your work, and they don't  
think you're best suited to play  
the lead.

TONY

What?

DONALD

They don't feel the part was really  
written for you.

TONY

It was written *BY* me!

DONALD

Sorry but they've got someone else  
in mind.

TONY

Really? Who?

DONALD

Matt LeBlanc.

(CONTINUED)

TONY  
Matt LeBlanc.

DONALD  
Or Jerry Seinfeld, one of the two.

TONY  
Good Lord. I mean, I like Seinfeld  
but he looks less human than I do!  
Surely we can negotiate something?

DONALD  
I'll see what I can do.

EXT. NBC UNIVERSAL BUILDING - DAY - ESTABLISHING

INT. NBC UNIVERSAL BUILDING - MEETING ROOM - DAY

DONALD and TONY talk with two NBC EXECUTIVES.

DONALD  
He'd prefer Matt LeBlanc over Jerry  
Seinfeld.

EXECUTIVE #1  
LeBlanc it is, then.

TONY  
Hang on, no, that's not what I  
meant. I'm supposed to play the  
lead.

EXECUTIVE #2  
We here at NBC don't feel that the  
part was written for you.

DONALD  
That's what I told him!

TONY  
It was written by me!

DONALD  
That's what he told me!

TONY  
Donald, with all due respect, shut  
your mouth before I tie it shut  
with your small intestine. Look, I  
wrote that script out of despair  
for my career, out of a thirst to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TONY (cont'd)  
do something more. People like me  
get the short end of the stick when  
it comes to television and movies.  
We always end up playing monsters.  
You forget that we're actors. We  
have range. I can do much more than  
just chase people down a corridor.

DONALD  
That's right! He can also raise  
from the depths of a lagoon waving  
his arms about, sort of going,  
"Auuuuuuuuugh!"

EXECUTIVE #2  
That sounds impressive.

DONALD  
It is good. Go on, Tony. Show him  
the arm thing.

TONY  
No, I mean... I'm capable of more  
in terms of actual acting. I'm fed  
up of being typecast!

The Executives look at each other.

DONALD  
I tell you what. Let him play the  
lead in the pilot and show that to  
a Focus Group. If they don't like  
it, then we don't need to push on  
with it.

EXECUTIVE #1  
Hmm. It's an interesting idea. I'll  
run it by the other Executives and  
we'll call you. How does that  
sound?

TONY  
It's a start.

INT. DONALD'S OFFICE - DAY

Caption: Several Months Later. TONY and DONALD watch the TV.

TV CONTINUITY ANNOUNCER (V.O)  
Coming up next, NBC's exciting new  
show starring Matt LeBlanc!

(CONTINUED)

Tony turns the TV off.

DONALD

Well at least you got paid for the script.

Awkward silence.

DONALD (CONT.)

Incidentally, NBC called back this afternoon.

TONY

About the show?

DONALD

About their next wave of Sci-Fi Channel original movies. They're looking for a couple of monsters and they reckon they can get away with using you twice, so I said you're up for it. And "Jump Leads" need you for a reshoot on Thursday, which I've said your schedule should allow. Oh, and Warrick Marketing want you to play a haemorrhoid in a lotion commercial.

TONY

I hate you.

THE END