

LJR TALENT INC.

BACKGROUND PERFORMER
DIVISION.

PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOL

An Introduction

Welcome to LJR Talent Inc. background division. You are now a movie background performer. Please read this in full before you work on set. If you have any questions, feel free to call your agent. Background performers are people referred to on set as “Background Action” (simply meaning movement in the back-ground). You could also be a background performer placed right at the front of the scene. You could be a doctor, nurse, lawyer, etc. So it is important to be clear on set protocol and procedures.

The Phone Call

The agent gets the call from the Extra Casting Director. They need twenty people for a police station scene. Your picture is viewed and you are the perfect detective type. A phone call from the agent will be made to you. You will answer either by your cell phone (strongly recommended) or the call will go to your voice mail at home. Always return calls as soon as possible. Your call has been returned and you are now speaking with an Agent. Great! Have a pen and paper in your hand and your listening skills ready. Your Agent is very busy so be prepared for her/him to be quick on the phone.

1st

The first thing we will tell you is the name of the production you will be working on. The second are the dates you will be needed. When you commit yourself to a day, it is very important that you are available for the entire day. Your start time could sometimes be as early as 5am and then on another production you could go as late as 2am. So make sure you have no other commitments for the entire day.

We will tell you the role you will be playing. Background Performers don't speak, though there have been times when people have been asked to do a line or two. You have the option to turn it down. As a background performer we cast you based on the way you look. Since you are the right age, height and build with a detective like appearance, your agent has chosen you for the role. We need different looks everyday. A few examples are: police officers, doctors, reporters, street people and students. If you present yourself more middle of the road, you have a better chance of being used in different roles.

3rd

As a background performer you are required to bring three changes of wardrobe. Your agent will tell you what to bring according to the role you are playing. Come dressed and camera ready in one outfit then have two other outfits pressed and ready to go. Also have your hair and makeup done for women and clean shaven for men (unless other specified by agent). The colours you must avoid are solid red, black and white. The best colours to wear are neutral ones like beige, grey, khaki, blue, etc. The reason you take three options of wardrobe is to allow the production company to use you in more than one scene, as well give the wardrobe person lots of choices.

4th

Your agent will tell you the address of the location. It is your responsibility to get there on your own. Most of the locations are in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. We try to cast people who live in the area of the location. If you don't and it is impossible to get there then it is ok to decline the job offer. We'd rather you decline at the time of the offer than to cancel at the last minute (not allowed).

5th

We will tell you your contact person. It is important for you to remember this name when you arrive on set and ask for him/her.

6th

We will tell you the wage, which usually ranges from \$9.00-\$19.00 per hour. It may vary each time, so if you are flexible to that, your agent will be able to get you more work.

Last Is Parking. It is your responsibility! If the location is downtown, it would be better and cheaper to take transit.

The Big Day

Your contact will give you a release form to fill out. Basically this states that you are allowing yourself to be used in the film or TV program at the rate discussed with your agent. Fill in your full name, social insurance number and where it says address, don't put your own address. Fill in the address of your agency: LJR TALENT INC., 202-1290 HOMER ST, VANCOUVER, BC V6B 2Y5

Next, the wardrobe people will come around to see your outfits and they will choose which one they would like you to wear. Make sure you have the outfits right with you and you are ready to show them your changes. The make-up and hair people will come around. For women it is good if you do a little make-up at home and the make-up person can apply more if needed. If the scene is a close-up or period piece, wardrobe, make-up and hair will usually be done in full. Your agent will notify you of this.

Time On Your Hands

You have now signed in, been checked by wardrobe, hair and make-up. Now you are ready to "hurry up and wait". You may be waiting for awhile before anything is done, so to keep yourself from getting bored, bring something to pass the time, like a book, cards, knitting, homework.

Most production companies supply coffee and snacks and depending on the length of time, lunch and dinner. Come prepared anyway with some snacks in case you get hungry.

Your Time Has Come

5

Your time has come. The assistant director has come in looking for ten background people. You're picked to go with him/her. Approach the set cautiously and listen to everything he/she tells you. He/she will put you in your #1 position and direct you on what they want you to do. They want you to walk over to the filing cabinet, put some files in it and stay there. Sounds very simple? Well, it is simple so keep it simple! The more simple, the more effective it will be. You rehearse the movement starting from your #1 position. The A.D yells "Background Action". That's your cue to walk over to the cabinet and put the files in it, he/she will yell "CUT". You then hold your position. Don't move until he/she says for you to go back to your #1 position. Then go back and be ready to do the move a few more times. Usually there are one or two rehearsals, then "Picture is Up" meaning they're filming this time. Don't be nervous and don't ever look at the camera. Just pretend you're at work filing papers. If you have any questions on set, ask your contact person. Never speak to the director or assistant directors unless spoken to. They are very busy people with a lot on their minds.

It's a Wrap!

Your day is over and "the background is wrapped". First, any clothes to return, return them to the wardrobe or they'll collect them. Then sign out with your contact person and you are free to go. Go out there, keep the energy level up and have fun! Good luck!

Linda Russell
President, LJR Talent Inc.