

METHOD ACTING

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. WYATT'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Sitting at one side of a dining table, THREE TEEN JUDGES listen in rapt admiration as a YOUNG AUDITIONEE serenades them with his John Mayer-like voice and enchanting guitar strumming.

The three teens are:

WYATT, scrawny and frail, the kid always picked last for kickball.

RACHEL, athletic and pretty darn good-looking.

ZOE, a cute yet standoffish chick. Think a real life version of Buttercup from *The Powerpuff Girls*.

The young auditionee is:

GEORGE, the future object of every tween girl's affection.

Wyatt holds up his hand, indicating for George to stop. Claps along with his fellow judges.

RACHEL

That was marvelous, George. Your voice -- it's so delicate. I loved it.

GEORGE

Why thanks, beautiful.

Blushing, Rachel shies away from eye contact with George, tries her best to hide a broad smile.

RACHEL

(under her breath)
He called me beautiful...

ZOE

(to George)
Well, you're better than the other talentless wastes of life that came through today... so bravo, nice job.

GEORGE

'Preciate it.

George directs his gaze towards Wyatt, waiting to hear his critique.

WYATT

What more can I say? Not only can you act, but you can sing. You're a man of many talents and exactly what we're looking for. You'd make a great addition to our film.

GEORGE

That means a lot. Thanks.

WYATT

(to Rachel and Zoe)
Shall we take it to a vote?

RACHEL

It's a definite yes from me.

ZOE

Ditto.

RACHEL

Wyatt?

Intense silence as Wyatt holds for a dramatic pause, directing a stern stare towards George.

To accompany this nail-biter of an audition, some EDGE-OF-YOUR-SEAT MUSIC streams in. Plays for a few moments... And then:

WYATT

It's a ye --

GEORGE

(re: music)
Holy cow. That's me.

REVEAL that the MUSIC is actually coming from George's RINGING CELLPHONE. George slips his cell out of his pocket.

GEORGE

Forgot I changed my ring tone last night. Sorry 'bout that.

George quickly checks to see who's calling, realizes he should take this.

GEORGE

(re: answering the call)
You guys mind?

WYATT

You're in the middle of an audition. Can't it wait?

GEORGE
It's kinda important.

Wyatt reluctantly beckons, go ahead.

GEORGE
Thanks. It'll only take a sec.
(into phone)
Hey. Wait, uh, can you repeat that
again? Mm-hmm...
(jumps up)
No way! And you're serious? Oh my
God, thanks so much!

The three judges exchange confused looks.

GEORGE TALKING HEAD:

SUPER: "George O'Connor; Tarrytown, NY; Age: 21; Waiter."

GEORGE
I still can't believe it, but I
just got the lead in M. Night
Shyamalan's new movie. Me! I'm
gonna be the star of M. Night's
first ever musical, you guys!

SUPER: "George O'Connor; Tarrytown, NY; Age: 21; Star of M
Night's Next Critical/Financial Bomb."

GEORGE
(mimics an explosion)
Mind blown! It's bonkers, right?
(sing-song)
Hollywood, here I come!

INT. WYATT'S DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Through the large dining room window, George leaps and soars
across the front lawn, over-the-moon about his new leading-
man status.

Wyatt, Zoe, and Rachel remain seated at the table, awe and
confusion plastered all over their faces.

WYATT
Are you fucking kidding me?

EXT. WYATT'S BACKYARD - DAY

A spacious yard, well-kept, gorgeous greenery all around.

OTHER AUDITIONEES populate the area, scripts in hand, each one of them diligently studying their lines, reading them aloud.

Well, except for one...

Sitting off to the side, eyes closed, singing along to the pop music playing on her iPod, bobbing her head a little bit too enthusiastically, is ABBY (16), a feisty little debutante redhead.

Zoe, clipboard in hand, strolls out of the house and approaches Abby. She tries to get her attention:

ZOE
Abigail McInty -- ?

But before Zoe can finish saying her last name, Abby, eyes still closed, jolts up and launches into a full-on dance routine. Head-jerking, arm-flailing, leg-kicking, and more are on full display as Abby transforms into a poor-man's Madonna.

Zoe looks to the CAMERA. She's clearly not in the mood to deal with such tomfoolery.

ABBY TALKING HEAD:

SUPER: "Abigail McIntyre; Scarsdale, NY; Age: 16; Aspiring Actress."

ABBY
Why, hello there! I'm Abby, and for as long as I can remember, I've always had a passion for acting.

With stars in her eyes, she twirls her hair around her finger and reminisces about her childhood:

ABBY
I can't lie, I've had a lot of success so far. School-play stardom, local television commercials, you name it...

Suddenly some tears trickle down her soft, porcelain, quite possibly too made-up cheeks.

ABBY
But, you know, life wasn't always strawberries and cupcakes...
(teary)
I was bullied a lot.

Abby buries her head in her arms and pours her eyes out. After a moment, her oddly theatrical sob-fest is suddenly interrupted by the CAMERAMAN (16), pretty douchey but has a heart. Somewhere.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Hold on a sec.

Abby looks up, her make-up somehow still intact.

ABBY
(fixing her hair)
What? Can't you see I'm trying to
have a moment here?

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
I know you...
(realizing)
You're Regina George!

Abby's face goes pale white. She breaks eye contact with the CAMERA.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
From Lakewater Middle School!

ABBY
Nope, not me...

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Everyone used to call you "Regina
George" because you were such a
bitch.

A wave of anger suddenly surges through her.

ABBY
Who the fuck are you calling a
bitch?

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Ha, there she is! I remember you
transferred after that video of you
went viral.
(then, excited)
I think it's still online,
actually!

The Cameraman places the CAMERA on a table, allowing him to come into frame. He stands at a computer, typing away.

CAMERAMAN
Let's see here...

ABBY (O.S.)
C'mon, is this really neccesar -- ?

COMPUTER SCREEN:

A grainy, low-definition online video. Cellphone footage.

The subject of the internet video is a decrepit-looking 14-year-old Abby. She stands in a crowded middle school hallway, surrounded by her peers, nearing a meltdown of Britney Spears-like proportions.

ABBY
Eff all you bitches!

She slams her fist against a locker, letting out a ferocious bellow.

A couple of SCHOOL SECURITY GUARDS appear at the opposite end of the hallway. They start toward Abby, running as fast as their hefty builds will allow them.

ABBY
(backing away)
I, Abigail Esther McIntyre, am the
reason for all your boyfriends' wet
dreams! Know that!

And with that, she takes off down the hall, the crowd parting like the Red Sea, giving her room to flee from the approaching security guards.

INT. WYATT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wyatt sits in front of his desktop computer. Rachel and Zoe stand huddled around him as they watch the video of Abby's meltdown.

ZOE
This is the most amazing thing I've
ever seen.

Wyatt turns to the CAMERA.

WYATT
And you're sure that's her?

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Positive.

EXT. WYATT'S BACKYARD - DAY

Abby, still dancing, off living in her own little world.

Wyatt and Zoe chat out on the deck.

WYATT

All right, thanks. Let me know when that nutjob's off my property.

ZOE

(sarcastic)

I live to fulfill your wishes.

Zoe starts towards Abby.

ZOE

Be back in a jiffy.

Wyatt pans the yard, taking stock of the talent occupying it. As he does so, confusion gradually pours over his bony mug.

WYATT

Hey... Zoe?

Wyatt jogs over to Zoe, catching her as she nears Abby.

ZOE

What, what is it?

WYATT

Where's everyone else?

ZOE

What are you talking about?

WYATT

The rest of the auditionees -- the male ones. Where are they?

Zoe motions to the crowd of actors.

ZOE

This is it.

WYATT

(anger looming)

What do you mean this is it?

ZOE

These are all the guys that came to audition.

Zoe's statement hits Wyatt like a punch in the gut.

WYATT

Zoe, I specifically told you what type of actor I wanted.

ZOE

Did you? I don't recall.

WYATT

Yes, Zoe, I did. I told you I was looking for Ryan Gosling-types. Not George-from-*Seinfeld*.

Zoe turns and scopes out the male talent, sees that Wyatt's spot on about how they look.

ZOE

Alright, so they're not the most handsome fellas on the block. So what? Don't be so picky.

WYATT

Don't be so pick -- ?

Wyatt paces around, frustrated.

WYATT

Do you comprehend the gravity of the pickle you're putting me in? Where am I supposed to find the next Ryan Gosling on such short notice? Huh, Zoe? Where?

ABBY (O.S.)

I can help.

Abby, earbuds out and eyes open, dances before them.

ABBY

For a price, that is.

INT. DINER - DAY

Wyatt, Zoe, Rachel and Abby sit in a booth, sipping on drinks and munching on food as they wait for their potential leading man.

Abby attacks Wyatt with a warm embrace.

ABBY

Thanks again for the opportunity!

RACHEL
 (sincere)
 Aw, how cute!

Wyatt brushes her off.

WYATT
 Yeah, yeah. I didn't really have
 much of a choice, did I?

Wyatt checks his watch.

WYATT
 Where is this guy? He was supposed
 to be here twenty minutes ago.

ABBY
 (pointing)
 There he is right now!

Through the diner window, a feeble, bedraggled HOMELESS MAN
 (20s) rounds a street corner and wobbles into oncoming
 traffic, cars honking at him as he crosses the street.

ZOE
 He's a bum...

WYATT
 Yeah Abby, what the hell! I thought
 you said your sister's ex was an up
 and coming actor! Not a freaking
 crackhead!

ABBY
 He's not a crackhead. He's a method
 actor.

Title card:

"Method Acting: A group of techniques actors use to create in
 themselves the thoughts and feelings of their characters, so
 as to develop lifelike performances."

~Wikipedia

WYATT TALKING HEAD:

SUPER: "Wyatt Berkeley; New Rochelle, NY; Age: 18; Director."

WYATT

So, it turns out that Jack -- that's his name -- isn't actually homeless. He's just preparing for a role... on *Law & Order*.

JACK TALKING HEAD:

SUPER: "Jack Reginald; Bronx, NY; Age: 24; Method Actor."

Jack, still dressed like a homeless person, fumbles through a small pile of lottery scratch-off tickets. He puts on a rough, raspy voice:

JACK

Yeah, gonna be playin' a dead body.
A vagabond.

He scavenges his pockets and pulls out a coin.

JACK

Won the gig through a sweepstakes.

He starts scratching at the tickets.

JACK

Don't tell 'em that, though.

ABBY TALKING HEAD:

Abby sits in a chair as a GIRL does her hair and makeup. Abby engages her in typical hair salon-type banter, unaware that she's being filmed.

ABBY

Because, like, I think Tinseltown deserves a true redhead. Ya know what I mean? One who has the carpet to match the drapes.

GIRL

Yeah, of course.

ABBY

I mean, like, seriously though, to hell with Emma "Faux-Redhead" Stone. That fraudulent whore.
(then, crazed)
Spiderman should be swinging from rooftops with me. Do you understand that? Me!

GIRL
She was blonde in that movie,
though.

ABBY
That's not the fucking point! Okay,
Stacy? Lots of people still
consider her a redhead. The
redhead, in fact. And I'm freaking
sick of it.

Zoe pops her head in.

ZOE
Just a heads up, we'll be starting
in ten minutes.

GIRL
She'll be ready.

Zoe looks at the CAMERA.

ZOE
How's it going? You getting
everything?

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Always rolling.

ZOE
Okay, cool. I'll see you guys in a
bit.

Zoe exits.

Abby stares straight at the CAMERA, slightly stupefied.

ABBY
You weren't, uh, recording this
whole time, were you...?

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Why of course I was, Regina.

Her face crumples.

INT. WYATT'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - DAY

Members of Wyatt's film crew buzz around, setting up all the
equipment, making the set look as professional as possible.

Wyatt and Jack, who is now clean-shaven and looking quite
dapper, stand by the doorway, discussing the film.

Jack's voice here (aka his normal voice) is smooth, crisp and most of all, dreamy. The kind of voice that makes ovaries explode:

WYATT

In conclusion, what we're trying to convey here is that alcoholism can have a monumentally negative effect on romantic relationships.

JACK

Got it.

WYATT

Any questions?

JACK

Just one.

WYATT

Shoot.

JACK

(rubbing groin)

Any place a guy can empty his tank around here?

WYATT

Uh, yeah. Down the hall to your left.

Jack pats Wyatt's face, using the same hand that graced his nether regions.

JACK

Thanks, bud.

And with that, he saunters off.

Wyatt, disgusted by Jack's obscene gesture of gratitude, whips out a pocket-sized bottle of hand sanitizer, squirts a bit in his hand, and lathers his face.

INT. WYATT'S BATHROOM - DAY

With the door wide open, Jack stands at the toilet, urinating and drinking from a flask. He looks over his shoulder and notices the CAMERA.

JACK

(nonchalant)

'Sup.

He downs a swig.

JACK TALKING HEAD:

JACK
 (re: method acting)
 It's simple: if Day-Lewis can do
 it, so can I.

He takes another sip from his flask, sees that he's running low.

JACK
 (tipsy)
 Where's that bitch with the fire-
 crotch at? Papa needs a refill.

INT. WYATT'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - DAY

Director Wyatt, Zoe, Rachel and the rest of the film crew are in position, ready to cast some movie magic.

Jack stands at the window, his back to Abby. A CINEMATOGRAPHER is stationed near them, ready to film.

WYATT
 Quiet on set!

Not a peep is heard.

WYATT
 Roll sound!

SOUND MIXER
 Sound speed!

WYATT
 Roll camera!

CINEMATOGRAPHER
 Speed!

Zoe walks out with a properly marked slate.

ZOE
 Marker! Scene 1, take 1!

She claps the slate and walks off.

WYATT
 Action!

Wyatt, stroking his chin as if he had some facial hair, sternly watches as his two actors do their best imitation of a Mexican telenovela:

ABBY

Don't lie to me, Joseph! I know you had a drunken rendezvous with that tramp in your aquatic aerobics class!

Jack spins around, leveling a handgun right at Abby's head.

JACK

Do not call Aqua-Aerobics Instructor Lucille a tramp.

Abby cautiously backs up, fear gradually building in those dopey eyes of hers.

ABBY

(stumbling onto the bed)
I don't remember this being in the script...

She looks to Wyatt for guidance.

WYATT

Just go with it, Abby. Like you said, he's a method actor. You'll be fine.
(to cinematographer)
Keep rolling.

Jack crawls onto the bed and climbs on top of Abby, the gun still pointed at her. Abby musters up enough courage to keep going:

ABBY

She is. Aqua-Aerobics Instructor Lucille is a floozy, little tramp.

Jack's face turns red, fury raging inside. He slaps Abby across the face.

JACK

What did I say...

That's it. Abby's reached her limit.

ABBY

Mm-mm. That's it.

WYATT

Cut! What the hell, Abby?

Abby escapes from beneath Jack's weight and leaps off the bed.

ABBY

I know he's a method actor and all -
- hell, I'm the one who told you
guys -- but this is too much. I'm
done.

All eyes are on Abby as she proceeds with her little tirade and heads for the door.

ABBY

He's not OJ, and I'm not Nicole. I
didn't sign up for this shi --

JACK (O.S.)

Not so fast...

Jack kneels on the bed, aiming the gun directly at Abby. He FIRES A SHOT at the wall.

JACK

That one was a warning.

Zoe drops her clipboard.

ZOE

Method actor gone crazy! Everybody
get the fuck out!

All chaos breaks loose as everyone rushes out the room, scrambling for safety.

Before fleeing herself, Zoe scampers over to Jack and smacks him across the face with the slate, knocking him off the bed and onto the floor, the gun sliding out his hand.

INT. WYATT'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Abby, hauling ass down the hallway, clumsily trips and falls. Everyone rushes past her, not giving a single thought to helping the firecracker of a thespian.

Well, everyone except one...

The Cameraman stops and offers Abby his outstretched hand!

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

Take my hand!

Abby, surprised at his kindness, takes hold of his hand. The Cameraman pulls her up.

ABBY
You saved me...

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Why of course I did, Abby.

Jack walks out the bedroom and sees this heartfelt moment between his movie-wife and the Cameraman.

JACK
Stay away from my woman!

He zeroes in on the Cameraman and charges down the hall like a linebacker.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
We gotta go!

The CAMERA crashes to the floor as Abby and the Cameraman flee for their lives.

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Wyatt, Rachel and Zoe stand at the front of the classroom as they address their health teacher MS. SAUNDERS (27), decently cute but nothing exceptional.

WYATT
... And that's why we don't have
our project.

MS. SAUNDERS
That was an engrossing tale. Truly,
it was. Had me on the edge of my
seat the whole way through.

Ms. Saunders rolls up her sleeves and holds out her arms.

MS. SAUNDERS
You see? Goosebumps. It was
mesmerizing.

Wyatt cracks a smile, proud of himself for earning praise from his teacher.

WYATT
Really?

MS. SAUNDERS

No, Wyatt! Of course not! Not one thing in that little story of yours constitutes as a viable excuse for not getting my project done. You all get Fs!

The gang can't believe this.

RACHEL

But we were shot at!

ZOE

We could've died!

WYATT

You can't be serious!

MS. SAUNDERS

Look, guys. You were shot on a film set... by a method actor. He wasn't going to hurt you. He was just getting into character! A method actor's whole deal revolves around being intense and electrifying!

Ms. Saunders leans back in her chair.

MS. SAUNDERS

(to herself)

Hell, I wish I had a guy who could get me all worked up like that.

Ms. Saunders remembers she's being filmed, looks up at the CAMERA.

MS. SAUNDERS

You guys didn't hear that, right?

Title card: "Two months later."

INT. ZOE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Zoe, Wyatt and Rachel sit on the couch, watching the news.

NEWS REPORTER (T.V.)

... Jack Reginald was given five years. He will serve his sentence at the Sing-Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining.

Wyatt grabs the remote from Zoe and starts flicking through the channels.

WYATT

Well, at least that's over.

The front door opens, revealing Zoe's MOM (50s), groceries in hand.

MOM

Any of you teenagers wanna give an old lady a hand?

RACHEL

Sure thing, Mrs. Davis.

Zoe clicks off the T.V. as Wyatt and Rachel head outside to collect the groceries.

Zoe's mom heads to the kitchen and begins putting the food away. Zoe approaches.

ZOE

Got anything for me?

Zoe's mom searches inside her purse, pulls out an envelope, and holds it out to her daughter with a smile.

MOM

Good luck, honey.

ZOE TALKING HEAD:

SUPER: "Zoe Davis; New Rochelle, NY; Age: 17; Newly Accepted College Student."

Zoe holds up a college acceptance letter.

ZOE

Who knew a documentary about a high school project could be so interesting?

FADE OUT.

