

GENERAL

First of all I want to congratulate you all for having the courage to remain committed to your role in the production. Many of you have had to juggle personal schedules and devote time and energy to the play. Now that we are one week away from our first show there are a few points that must be clarified and several actions that must be taken, starting now, to ensure the success of our collective efforts.

There remains an unacceptable level of confusion around a number of critical issues affecting the production that have repeatedly been covered at rehearsals. If we are to be ready for our first show, I need everyone to take personal responsibility for the following requirements and learn these basic points. From now on, everyone in the play must follow these rules and be extremely clear about every single one of them. Without your full cooperation, our show will not reflect the time and effort that we have all sacrificed. I want to assure you that I value your contribution to the play, however, I also recognize that due to the lack of experience we are still having considerable difficulties with people not knowing their lines, not knowing their scenes, not knowing their entrances and exits and not knowing their responsibilities for preparing adequately for each rehearsal.

I want to set forth the expectations and guidelines for the remaining schedule and make it abundantly clear what your individual responsibility is for each and every aspect of a rehearsal and a show. It is imperative that you study the following information and follow each of these rules without any further guidance or assistance from others.

Please do not overlook the importance of these rules or dismiss them by claiming either confusion, or lack of awareness, or any other excuse for not following them. I cannot stress this point enough. The role of the Directors, Stage Managers, Producers and so on is to prepare you for the stage and their efforts are like a mechanic who services the aircraft. It is the Player (Actor/Actress) who must fly the plane but more importantly know the rules and procedures for flying before they ever set foot inside the cockpit. What this means is quite simple. If you have not studied your documents (ALL OF THEM) and pulled out the information that pertains to you, then you have not learned how to fly the plane and it is not up to the others to explain to you your role and responsibilities.

I will now spell it out for everyone what each document means, explain why it is important, give you a roadmap of your responsibilities from now on and fully expect that you will follow these rules without exception. So let us begin.

WEBSITE:

1. You are required to check the website at least once a day for new information. the address is www.homefiresplayers.com
2. The section of the website that pertains solely to each one of you is the Performing Now page
3. From that point there are three choices which are:
 - a. Countdown,
 - b. Dailies, and
 - c. Rehearsals,
4. You are required to read and comprehend every document on all of these pages and in particular study and learn the material that pertains to your character
5. The Rehearsals page is critical and gives you the dates, times and places for all events
 - a. The Rehearsal Schedule is to be reviewed daily for any changes

- b. Curtain Times from now on your responsibility and lateness will no longer be tolerated. There are natural consequences for being late and it affects everyone. You must adhere to these timelines especially when the schedule calls for makeup and costume.
 - c. As a general rule you need at least one hour before the schedule begins to go through makeup and 30 minutes before all other rehearsal times
 - d. Get in the habit of arriving and going over your script or reviewing your blocking rather than letting that time slip away from you. I don't expect you to stop socializing, but I do want you to realize that from the time you arrive until the time that you leave you are being "employed" and so the preparation time and the actual rehearsing time belongs to the Directors and Producers
 - e. What all of this means is simply begin to focus and get yourself mentally and physically prepared and have everything cleared away so that you are fully present and you are not having to rely on others to know your scenes, openings, entrances, exits and endings.
6. The Dailies page. It is plainly obvious those who know their Blocking Assignments and those who don't. Those who know their movements on the stage and those who don't. Everything is laid out for you scene by scene along with a stage diagram. Quite frankly, these documents have been available since March and they haven't needed to be changed. The critical part of the Blocking that is missing are the ACTION notes which tell you important pieces of information about your character
- a. Rehearsals are meant to reinforce the ACTION not teach it. they also let you see what else is going on behind the scenes, so to speak
 - b. There are specific notes to the technical people, but more importantly the way to read this document is to highlight the information that pertains to you and this may come from any one of the sub-headings
 - c. Keep in mind that the Blocking for each scene takes place at a very high level. Do not get too literal about the information, but rather at this point grasp the concepts and allow yourself to get a visual image of things
 - d. Refer to them before and after each Rehearsal and make your own notes from now on as to the specific requirements for each scene – that is your primary responsibility for the remaining schedule
 - e. The ACTIONS DOCUMENT and the SET PLACEMENTS are quick summaries of all the Blocking
 - f. Their purpose is to tell you the quick facts for each scene as follows:
 - i. PLAYERS – the characters in the scene
 - ii. WARDROBE – the things you wear
 - iii. MAKEUP – the things you must do to create "presence"
 - iv. SETS – the "hardware" for the stage
 - v. PROPS – the "software" needed for each scene
 - 1. PROPS CARRY ON – things you get before you go on stage
 - 2. PROPS ON STAGE – things placed on the stage for you to use
 - vi. OPENING – what happens in the dark before the stage lights come on
 - vii. LIGHTING VISUALS AND SOUND – technical notes
 - viii. ENTRANCE – the location for going on stage when the lights are on
 - ix. EXIT – the location for going off stage when the lights are on
 - x. ENDING/CLOSING – (mean the same) what happens after the lights go out and the location for moving off the stage

- g. From now on you must know all of the information above and you will be expected to follow the BLOCKING and ACTIONS without any further assistance from anyone
- h. It is your responsibility to know your character, your scenes, your carry on props, your openings, entrances, exits, endings/closings and manage these details precisely

CARRY ON PROPS AND WARDROBE

1. Another part of the confusion is the difference between what is a prop (short for “property”) and a wardrobe item
2. A wardrobe item is something you wear on your body
3. A prop is something you carry with you
4. Examples:
 - a. if you only carry a coat and do not wear it – then it is considered to be a prop
 - b. if you wear the coat as part of your costume then it is part of your wardrobe
 - i. costume means what you wear as you enter the stage
 - ii. wardrobe means the things that you wear for which you are responsible
 - c. if you wear glasses because you need them to see – then they are part of your wardrobe and so you are responsible for wearing them
 - i. no one else is going to hand you your glasses so that you can see which means that now they are also a part of your costume since you need to wear them
 - d. from now on you will be responsible for keeping track of your own wardrobe which means you must keep all your clothing and wardrobe items together and with you backstage so that you can change into your costume before you go on stage each time
 - e. there are two kinds of carry on props:
 - i. items that are part of your wardrobe BUT they are used as part of the scene
 1. a wig is a costume piece if it is merely worn in a scene
 2. a wig is a prop if it gets used somehow in the course of a scene
 3. a ticket, email, purse, wallet and money are all examples of wardrobe items that you will be responsible for BUT because these items are required for a scene and are used on the stage rather than form part of your costume – they are considered to be props
 4. there are also carry on props that are not part of your wardrobe and are given out immediately before the scene for example
 - a. the children’s flashlights
 - b. a purse containing a wallet and money is not considered to be art of the wardrobe because this item is too large to be carried all the time in a pocket for example and may only be used once and to leave it lying around presents a risk that it goes missing or gets forgotten
 - c. all carry on props that are not wardrobe are given out at E before the scene and are to be returned following the scene to the Prop Manager
 - d. we will sort out the carry on props that are wardrobe and keep control over the carry on props that are not wardrobe
 - ii. from now on when I call for costumes it means that everything in your wardrobe must be worn or carried and you are fully dressed for the part
 - iii. when I call for wardrobe it means that you are only responsible for having your carry on props from your wardrobe and you are dressed in your street clothes

- f. from now on all rehearsals will be using wardrobe (which means carry on props that are part of your wardrobe) and when we want you to be dressed for the part we will instruct you to wear costumes.

OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. one of the biggest areas of confusion is over the commitment expectations from here on until the final show. back at the beginning in January when most of you were cast for your parts the expectation was set that we would attempt to prepare so that there would only be one week of daily rehearsals leading up to the show. It was also emphasized that everyone needed to ensure that they were free of all other commitments for the last two weeks “just in case” so that we could finish our work. Obviously, things change and adjustments must be made. There are military taskings and other events that will take priority. Certain work obligations need to be factored in as well. On a personal level you must decide where you will be and which functions you will attend if they conflict with rehearsals. Every effort has been made to give you as much advance notice as possible.
2. Regardless of the choice that you make, and for the most part you are making a choice whether or not it seems apparent, there are going to be consequences on either side of your decision. What I want to strongly emphasize is the importance of catching up if you are absent from a rehearsal from now on. Here are the expectations:
 - a. you will follow up with either Daniel Hoffman or myself to learn if there are any details that you missed
 - b. you will review the scenes you missed and conduct your own practise session so that at least you are currently familiar with the scene because what has been happening is that people soon forget their Openings, Entrances, Exits and Closing/Endings
 - c. all absences must be arranged in advance with the Producer (Nicky) and this is to be done from the website using either the form located on the DAILIES page, or the PERFORMING NOW page ONLY
 - i. do not use the forms that are showing on the navigation bars of the website as they are for the use of the General Public
 - d. this may seem awkward for you to have to comply but we cannot find someone to “fill in” for you when we are trying to keep pace with the show. It is extremely difficult to conduct a rehearsal without everyone there and the confusion and the disruption that this causes is now a serious problem
 - e. we want you to make good choices regarding your participation, but at the same time you are also asking that other people carry on without you and take up the slack
 - i. that is why we need to have complete cooperation from you in order to plan each rehearsal and prepare people when necessary to step in
 - ii. not only do they need to read or know your lines – they also need to know your openings, entrances, exits and Endings/Closings – because if they do not then we have to stop the flow and get them on track
 - f. attendance at rehearsals is all about fairness and when we have such a large cast it becomes even more complicated to keep our schedule running
 - g. there are two very important scheduled events you need to be aware of and commit yourself to attending:
 - i. Thursday 4 June at 6:30pm we are having our first complete full costume run through
 1. I will be there working only with Nicky, Carol Ann and Marie-Anne and this rehearsal will be done under show conditions which means there

- will be not extra talking backstage and the show must flow as it naturally would for a performance
2. following that rehearsal my team will assess things and determine if we need to rehearse on Friday 5 June and which scenes will be called
 - a. the notice for scene calls will be early Friday morning and until you are notified – all persons are on standby
 - ii. Saturday 6 June at 1:00pm we arrive for Makeup and Costuming to be ready for a Showtime start of 2:30pm. This time I will be out front and it will be up to Nicky, Carol Ann and Marie-Anne to run the show on their own.
 - iii. Likewise from here on the same will apply as together this team produces the play
 1. you will not be allowed to take up their time with questions about your responsibility for knowing your scenes, lines and controlling your wardrobe
 2. you must be fully prepared and know where you are to be at all times
 - h. Next week 8 June is when Bev returns we will be concentrating on helping her to adjust to the stage and the movements she has to make on the stage.
 - i. On 9 June we have our last rehearsal which is Makeup and Costume. This is the last time before the show on 11 June to get things right
 - i. On 10 June we will be walking through the scenes so that the Lighting and Sound people get familiar with the play
 - ii. they will be conducting sound checks and getting lighting cues from me
 - iii. this is not going to be a run through where we use lines and actions because its purpose is to assist the technical people
 - iv. on your part you will need to be fitted and sound checked for your headset
 - v. you will experience the real blackouts between scenes
 - vi. you will see the completed stage with all of the curtains in place
 - vii. you will be able to prepare yourself fully for openings, entrances, exits, and endings/closings
 - viii. we will do a final wardrobe check and then finish off until we reassemble at 5:00pm on 11 June for the first show.

CONCLUSION:

I hope that I have clarified things so that we can move forward. Nothing that I have outlined here should be new to anyone. These are the expectations that we must all adopt to be successful in combining our efforts. Everyone is gaining valuable experience and making a difference. We stay focused and take care of our own personal responsibilities as well as support each other and the performance will be everything and more than what we imagine it will be. So I urge you to spend more time reviewing the documents, knowing your lines and especially studying your actions.

Keep the Home Fires Burning.
Don