SELF-TAPE SOLUTIONS FOR ACTORS

Good. Fast. Cheap.
You Can Have All Three.

TIM POWELL

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Over the years, I've watched actors get fleeced—again and again—by systems designed to profit from their uncertainty.

Fear sells.
Complexity sells.
Dependency sells.

But none of that serves the work.

This book exists because I got tired of watching performers pay for information they should have been given freely.

I lived it.
I paid for it.
I learned it the hard way.

Giving this book away is a deliberate choice.
It's how I push back.

In a business where fleecing the flock has become a business model, this book is my refusal to participate in it.

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FOREWORD / INTRODUCTION

If you're an actor and you're holding this book, here's the first thing you should know. If it's the eBook, it was free.
If it's the paperback, you paid what it cost to print—nothing more. I'm not making money on this. Amazon probably made more than I did.

I'm doing you a solid.

What you're reading is the condensed version of more than 30 years of experience and well over 10,000 hours of hands-on work creating studio-quality self-tapes—first for myself as an actor, and then for thousands of other actors. This is everything you actually need, stripped of the noise.
Once you set up your self-taping process—which I'm going to show you how to do—you can repeat it for the rest of your career.
When I first started teaching this, smartphones barely existed. File sizes were huge. Most people were still using camcorders. I used to advertise my workshops with this line:

"I will teach you how to shoot your audition on your phone, and they will never know."

Fifteen years later, here's the update:

Shoot on your phone. Edit on your phone. Deliver from your phone.

You can produce studio-quality auditions that are indistinguishable from something shot on expensive gear. I'm not saying don't use a camera if you have one. But you absolutely do not need one to compete.
The goal is not to make a film.
The goal is to remove reasons for casting to stop watching.

How We Got Here

In the 1990s and early 2000s, I was a working actor based in Orlando. I drove **40–50,000 miles a year** chasing auditions—Atlanta, Miami, New Orleans, North Carolina. Twelve-hour drives for five minutes in a room. That was normal.
Then a few of us started asking:

"What if they just looked at the first read on tape?"

We FedExed VHS tapes. Ten actors on one cassette. Sometimes twenty. Primitive—and revolutionary.
Within a year, casting offices were accepting tapes.
What started as a workaround became the industry.

What Actors Don't Realize About Casting

Actors don't always see this, but casting directors compete for work just like we do. They submit their résumés. They interview for projects. They're in competition with other casting offices.

In the old in-room model, casting had overhead:

- Session runners
- Camera operators
- Front desk staff
- Scheduling rooms and timeslots
- Managing physical sessions

Self-taping changed the math.

They can now:

- See more actors
- See more precisely

- Spend less
- Work faster
- Save overhead expenses

That means self-taping doesn't just help actors.
It helps casting do their job better.

But here's the key: when casting watches your tape, they are not studying the script.

They are looking at **you**.

They need:

- Your eyes
- Your voice
- Your face
- Your presence

They do **not** need:

- Your room
- Your wall décor
- Your dog
- Your Roomba
- Your kitchen

Nothing makes a casting director stop watching faster than a distraction.

A clean, simple tape wins every time over an actor trying to produce a movie.

Performance vs. Production

This is not about teaching you how to act.

That's your job.

My phrase is:

“Let the hardware do the heavy lifting.”

You don’t have to show the camera anything. The camera captures what’s already there. The best performances come when actors stop trying to manage how it looks and stay inside the moment.

The tech exists for one purpose:
to support performance, not replace it.

Less is more. Always.

For Actors Afraid of Technology

At the end of almost every workshop, an actor—usually an experienced one—comes up and says:

“I have no head for technology.”

If you can record video on your phone, you can do this.
When I teach at SAG-AFTRA, the SAG-AFTRA Conservatory at the American Film Institute, the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and the Television Academy—I tell actors the same thing:

I am not here to get your business.
I am here, so you don’t have to keep paying other people.

Yes, you *can* pay someone. Some actors do. But you shouldn’t feel forced to. For the cost of a few taping sessions, you can build your own setup and never pay again.
You don’t need to be technical.
You need a simple system.

What You Actually Have to Get Right

There are only four things:

1. **Lighting**—making a 2D camera image look 3D, separating you from the background
2. **Audio**—making sure your voice is what they hear
3. **Editing**—clean, simple, invisible
4. **File Delivery**—correct format, correct labeling, easy to watch

That's it.

In production, there's a joke called the Production Triangle:
Good. Fast. Cheap. Pick two.

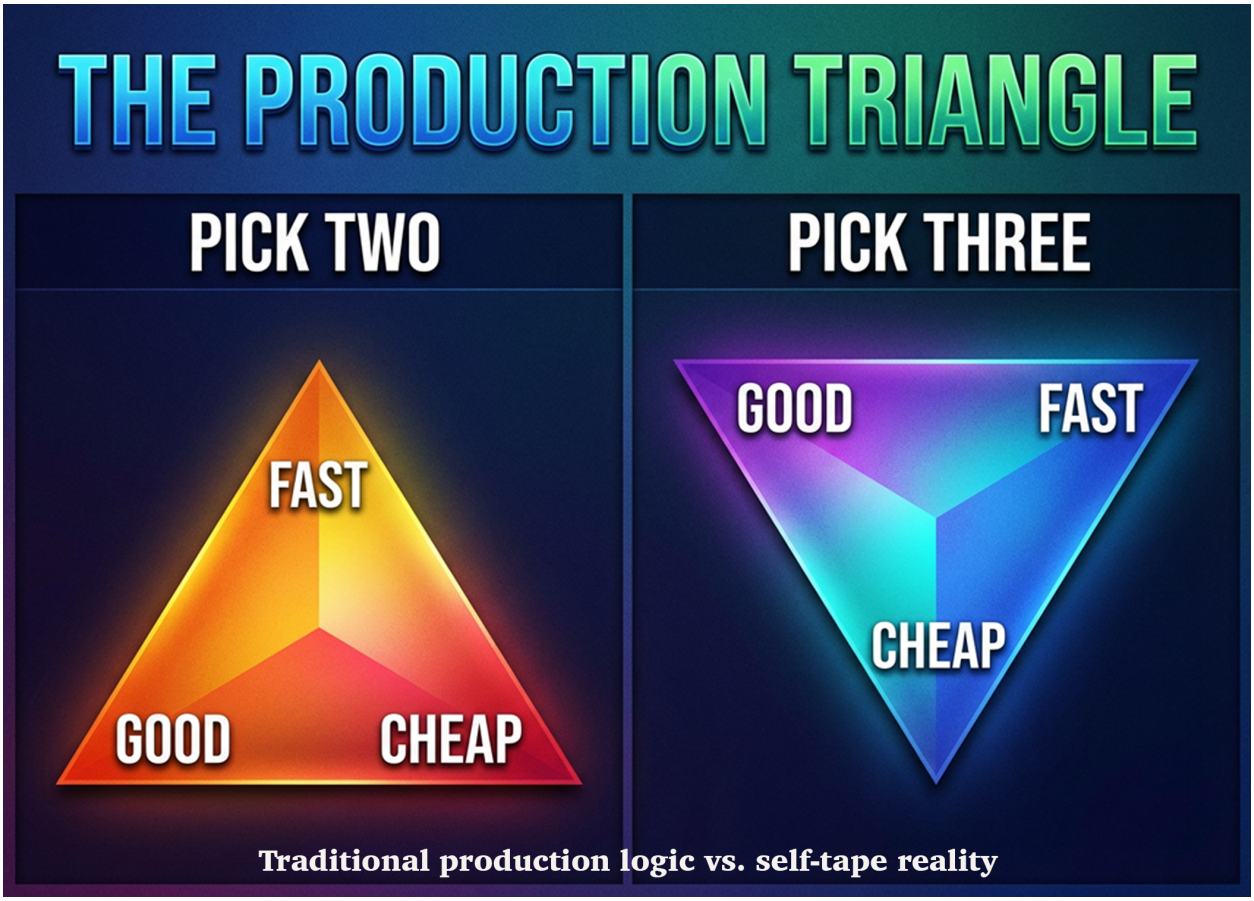
It can be good and fast, but it won't be cheap.

It can be good and cheap, but it won't be fast.

It can be fast and cheap, but it won't be good.

We're flipping that triangle on its head.

Your self-tapes can be good, fast, and cheap.


THE PRODUCTION TRIANGLE
PICK TWO
FAST
GOOD
CHEAP
PICK THREE
GOOD
FAST
CHEAP
Traditional production logic vs. self-tape reality

SECTION 1—LIGHTING

Let Them See Your Eyes

Lighting is about clarity.
Not drama.

The first thing I ever learned in a college lighting class—and this stuck with me for life—my teacher, Jim Davis, said:

"The purpose of lighting is to illuminate the actor."

That's it.

Lighting for self-tapes is not mood lighting.
It's not cinematic lighting.
It's not dramatic shadows.

The purpose of lighting is to let them see you.

Your eyes.
Your face.
Your expressions.
Your presence.

Casting is not watching your tape to admire photography. They are trying to see the actor clearly, without anything competing for attention.

Soft Light Is the Standard

On professional sets, light is softened. You'll see diffusion silk in front of lights, LED panels through soft materials—everything designed to make light wrap gently around the face.

Harsh light creates hard shadows and distraction.
Soft, diffused light creates natural skin tones and clear eyes.

Ring lights can work because they're soft—even though I personally dislike them for the specular highlight shape they make. But the best solution I've found over decades is the softbox.

Older lighting was hot, harsh, and brutal. Actors used to melt under lights. Today's LED lighting is cool, affordable, and adjustable. There's no reason to suffer.

Modern softbox kits often use smart LED bulbs or LED panels where you can control color temperature.

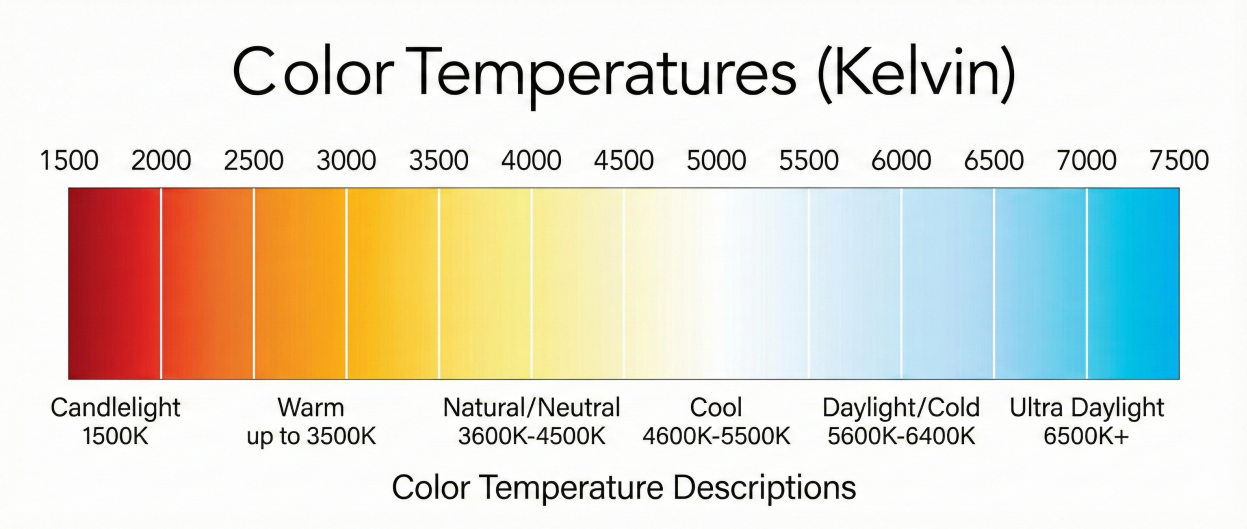
Color Temperature Matters

Light color is measured in Kelvin.

Natural daylight sits roughly between 5200 K–and 6200 K. That's the range that looks most natural on skin.

Too warm → orange/yellow
Too cool → blue/gray

You want your skin to look like skin.



The Biggest Mistake in Self-Tapes

One light. Straight on.

Or worse—too low.

That creates the “ghost story flashlight under the chin” effect. Big shadows, hollow eyes, horror lighting. Not good.

Lighting needs angle and dimension.

The Simple Formula: Three-Point Lighting

If you can count to five, you can light yourself.

1—Key Light
Your main light. The brightest. Comes from above and off to one side. Ideally:

- 45° up
- 45° to the side
- Out in front of you

This creates shape on the face.

2—Fill Light
Fills in the shadows the key creates. Softer, less intense. On the opposite side.

3—Back Light (Hair/Rim Light)
Behind you, above. It creates a glow on the hair and shoulders that separates you from the background. It can come from either side if necessary, but up behind you.

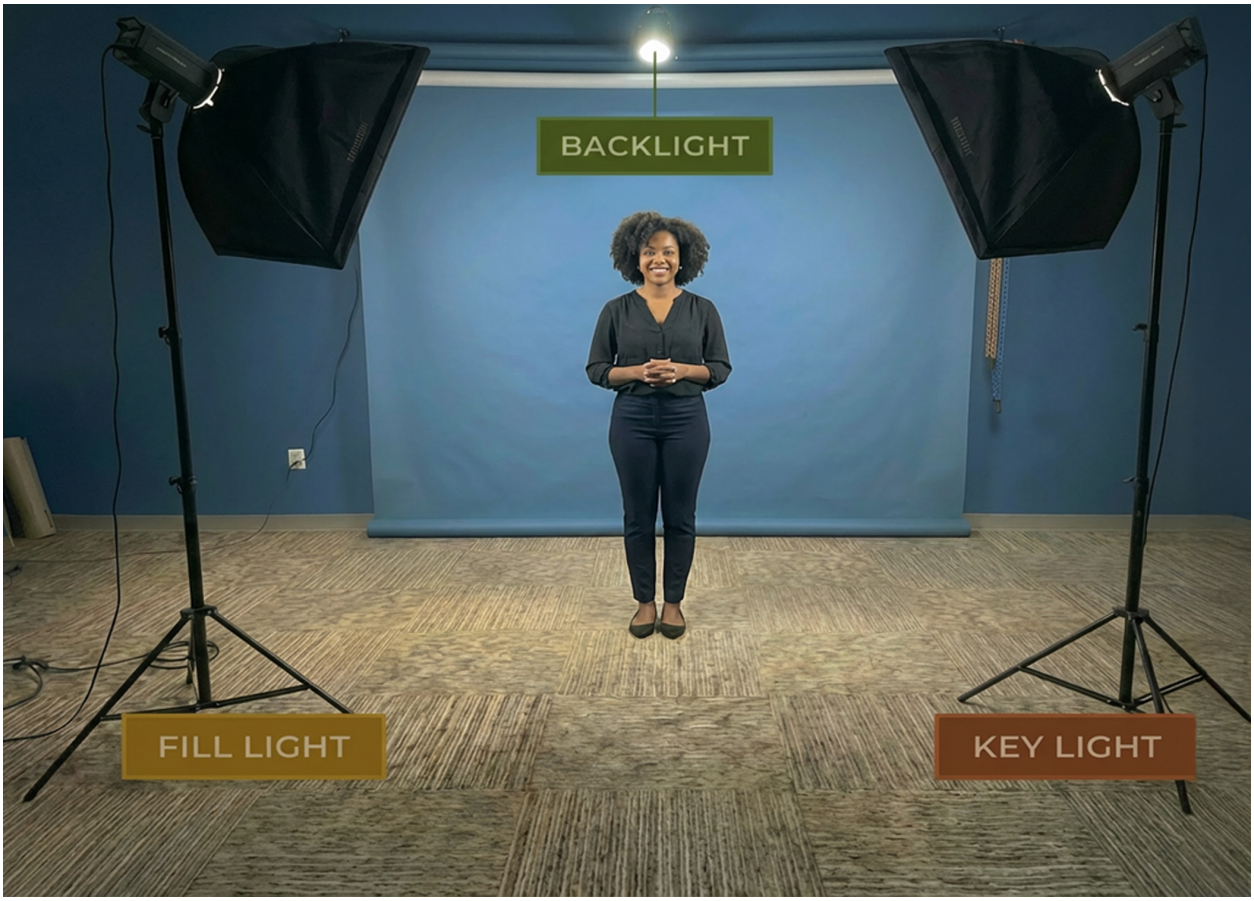
All at a 45° Angle above the eye-line and 45° Angle apart from the center of the eyeline.

1—2—3—45°

This is what makes you look three-dimensional in a two-dimensional medium.

Without a back light, you blend into the wall.

With it, you pop.



THREE POINT LIGHTING

KEY LIGHT + FILL LIGHT + BACK LIGHT

The Specular Highlight

When lighting hits at the right angle, you get a small white reflection in the eye.

That's called a specular highlight.

It's the "light in the eyes." Without it, eyes look flat and lifeless. With it, you look present and alive.

We used to fake this in studios with tiny lights near the lens. Now your key light does it naturally.

Background Matters

Always use a solid color background.

Avoid:

- Bright chroma green
- Bright chroma blue
- White
- Black

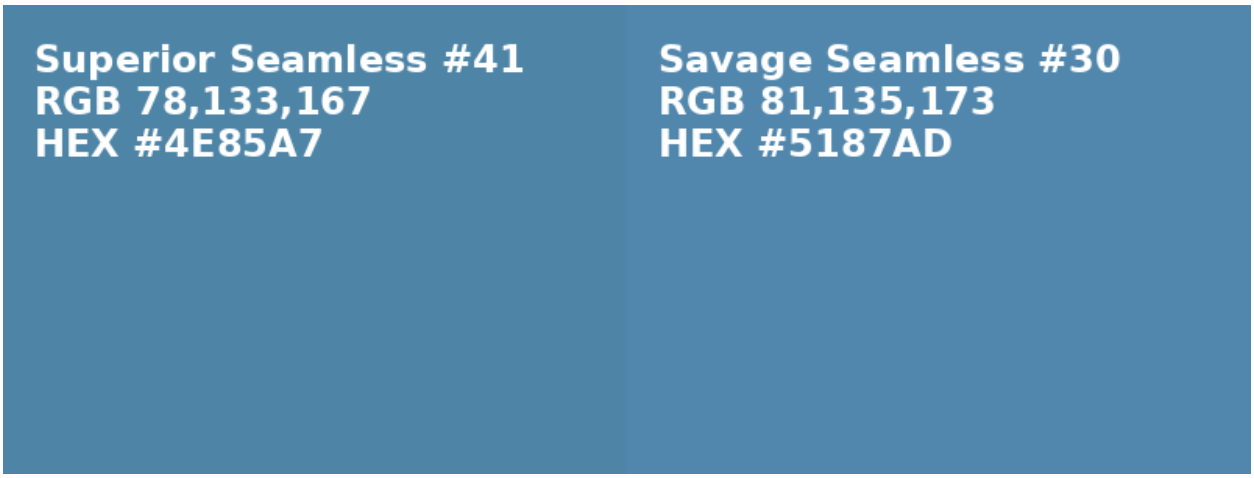
White reflects too much light.
Black absorbs light and feels like a void.

Best options:

- Soft blue (industry standard)
- Light gray

My preferred backdrop color after years of testing:

Superior Seamless "Marine Blue #41"



If you can't afford backdrop hardware:

- Get a color sample
- Have a paint store match it
- Paint a wall

Now you have a permanent setup.

Savage Brand Colors

Superior Seamless Brand Colors

Budget Back Light Tip

You don’t need expensive gear. A small, adjustable LED clip lamp above and behind you can work perfectly as a backlight. The one in the picture does 3 color temperatures (the center position is “daylight”). It offers 5 levels of brightness, and is about $20 USD.

The goal is separation, not spectacle.

For Those Concerned About Wrinkles

Some actors add a soft frontal light to reduce fine lines. It can work. I don't push it—casting wants the *right person*, not the most airbrushed person.

But the option exists.

Eyeline Matters Too

Your reader should be just beside the camera, close to the lens. Your eyes should look where the other actor would be—not into the lens, not off into space, but across the lens to the reader's eyes.

We'll cover this more in composition and audio.

Lighting Recap

Lighting is about clarity, not drama.

You need:

- Soft, diffused light
- Correct color temperature
- Three-point setup
- Solid background
- Light in the eyes

When the lighting is right, Casting forgets the lighting.

And that's the goal.

SECTION 2—AUDIO

If They Can't Hear You, You're Done

There's an old saying in production:

You can save bad video with good audio.
You can't save bad audio.

There is nothing worse than recording a great take and realizing afterward that it's noisy or distorted. At that point, there's only one fix:

Do it again.

That's why audio clarity is more important than image quality.

Always.

Start With a Quiet Room

Before we even talk about microphones, start with the space.

Use the quietest room you have. Reduce echo. Sound bounces off hard surfaces, so soften the space:

- Carpets or rugs on the floor
- Curtains on windows
- Soft furniture if you have it
- Sound blankets if you want to go further

You don't need a recording studio. You just need to stop reflections from the walls and ceiling.

Isolate the Actor's Voice

When it comes to audio, think the same way you did with lighting.

There is a key voice and a fill voice.

The actor is the key voice.
The reader is the fill voice.

Just like key light and fill light.

That means the reader should be about 50% of the volume of the actor—not equal.

One of the most common mistakes I see is the reader standing closer to the camera than the actor, so the reader sounds louder than the person on screen.

That immediately pulls focus away from you.

Don't let that happen.

Microphone Choices

Best option: Shotgun microphone

A shotgun lets you aim directly at the actor and reject the surrounding sound. It's the cleanest way to isolate the voice. They work great up close and from farther away.

Second best: Lavalier mic

Lavaliers work well, but you have to watch for:

- Clothing rustle
- Jewelry noise
- Fabric movement

If you use a lav, clip it carefully and do a sound test before rolling.

If your camera is close enough, sometimes the built-in mic is fine. Frame by pushing the camera as close to the actor as possible without visual distortion. You don't always need external gear. But you must listen critically. Learn how to listen to yourself.

Use a Professional Reader

Your mom might be able to read.

She probably can't match timing.

You want an actor reading with you whenever possible. Timing *is* acting.

If your reader isn't in the room, you have options:

- Internet call
- Phone call
- Pre-recorded reader track

If using remote audio, always route the reader through an **external speaker** placed where the reader would physically stand. Don't let their voice come from across the room.

Sometimes actors ask me to record their reader lines. I'll read with them, recording only my side, edit it, and send it back. Then they can tape as many times as they want with consistent timing.

A Note About Actor Readers

One important caution about using actors as readers.

Actors are trained to perform. Sometimes they forget that when they're reading for someone else.

The read is not about them.

The reader's job is to support *your* performance, not compete with it. They should never be more interesting, more emotional, or louder than you. If they start slipping into performance mode, it pulls focus off the actor casting actually wants to see—which is you.

Have this conversation upfront.

Say it out loud if you need to:

"This read is about me, not you. Support me. Don't play the scene."

A good reader understands that restraint is part of the job.

If the reader starts acting, the tape suffers.

Shotgun Mic Placement Tip

Shotgun microphones pick up sound from behind as well as in front.

So pay attention to what's behind the mic.

If it's a hard wall, sound will bounce right back into the microphone.

Sometimes you can get excellent results by placing the shotgun slightly below frame, angled upward. The floor absorbs sound better than walls, giving you a cleaner read.

Audio Recap

- Audio matters more than video (really!)
- Use a quiet room
- Reduce echo
- The Actor is the key voice
- Reader is the fill voice (50% volume)

- Use a shotgun if possible
- Lav works if handled carefully
- Professional Reader whenever you can
- Make sure actor readers don’t outperform you
- Always test before recording, check playback every time

If they strain to hear you, they stop watching.

Make your voice effortless to listen to.

SECTION 3—EDITING

Invisible Means Professional

When it comes to editing, there are literally hundreds of directions you could go.

When I first started teaching these workshops, I used to say:

I'll teach you how to secretly use your smartphone, and they'll never know.

Now I say:

Shoot on your phone. Edit on your phone. Deliver from your phone.

You can do everything you need with the device that's already in your pocket.

Resolution: Keep It Simple

Most audition platforms are built around 720p video.

That means:

- *720p = 1280 × 720 pixels*

You may also be allowed to upload 1080p, which is:

- *1080p = 1920 × 1080 pixels*

1080p files are larger and slightly sharper. That's fine if you choose to use it.

What you don't want to do is shoot in 4K or 8K.

Those files are enormous. By the time they reach casting, they've been compressed multiple times anyway. Bigger files take longer to upload, longer to process, and introduce more opportunities for failure.

Audition platforms usually convert your upload into a small preview version, sometimes as low as 360p (on Actors Access)— for browsing, while keeping your larger file available for download by Casting if they want a higher-resolution file to share.

If your upload feels like it's taking forever, it's often because your device doesn't have enough free space to write temporary compression files. Make sure you have free space to work.

So here's the clean workflow:

Shoot in 720p.
Edit in 720p.
Deliver in 720p.

That's more than enough resolution for casting.

Do as Little Editing as Possible

Even though your editing software gives you spinning cubes, page turns, wipes, fades, and special effects —

Don't use them.

This is not a music video.

Trim the beginning.
Trim the end.

That's it.

Sometimes actors warm into a scene with a feed line. That's fine. Just cut it out.

Your final file should start with the scene and end with the scene.

Nothing else.

About Ad Libbing

General rule:

You can ad lib at the beginning.
You can ad lib at the end.
Never in the middle.

The middle belongs to the writers.

A room full of professionals argued over every syllable in that script. They chose those words deliberately. Respect that. They'll notice if you don't.

Writers are often producers.

They want to hear what they wrote.

Use the lines.

Always Do Full Takes

Even though you *can* cut together twenty takes to manufacture a perfect performance, don't.

That's for movies, not auditions.

Casting wants to see that you can carry a scene from beginning to end.

They want rhythm.
Consistency.
Presence.

Let the camera come to you.

Let the hardware do the heavy lifting.

Hold the Ending

This is critical.

After your last line, **hold**.

Count silently:

One thousand one…
One thousand two…
One thousand three…

Then cut.

Editors need that space to transition to the next scene. Casting needs to see where you're going emotionally.

Never drop out immediately.

This is also good on-set practice. Editors will love you, and you'll find they keep you on screen longer in the final edit.

RULE OF THIRDS

Orientation and Framing

Always shoot scenes in landscape (horizontal).

Never vertical.

Use the rule of thirds:

- The actor fills about two-thirds of the frame
- One-third becomes “virtual space” where your reader lives. Your reader should stand beside the camera close to the lens, but far enough back that your voice is still the key voice—not theirs.

Camera should be:

- At eye level
- Or slightly above
- Never too high
- Never too low

You are not filming a selfie.
You are not shooting a horror movie.

Never Enter the Frame (First Scene)

Casting often sees dozens of thumbnails at once.

They need to see your face.

Not an empty blue background.

If you feel you must “enter,” pivot into position or turn toward your reader. That gives the feeling of entrance without leaving the frame.

End With a Strong Beat

Always hold your final moment.

No fades.
No dissolves.
No effects.

Just a clean cut after your three-second hold.

Editing Recap

- Shoot in 720p (1280×720)
- 1080p (1920×1080) is acceptable
- Avoid 4K/8K
- Trim start and end only
- No effects
- Full takes only
- Use the written lines
- Hold the ending
- Landscape orientation (except full-body slate)
- Rule of thirds
- Never enter 1st frame
- Follow slate instructions exactly

You can edit directly on your phone using built-in tools like iMovie or lightweight apps such as Adobe Premiere Rush / Adobe Express. There are dozens of free choices. Use the free ones before you buy anything.

Slates and Vertical Framing (The Only Exception)

The only time you normally shoot vertically is when a full-body shot is required—whether or not it's part of a slate.

First rule:

Don't slate unless they ask you to.

If they do ask:

- If they don't specify order, slate at the end.
- If they say slate first, slate first.
- If they say separate slate, that's its own file—you're home free.

Often, they'll ask for a full-body shot.

That's difficult in landscape (horizontal) unless you back way up. So here's the solution:

Shoot the full-body vertically, then place that vertical clip inside a horizontal timeline.

That creates black bars on either side and gives casting a clean, head-to-toe view.

You don't always have to show your feet. Below the knees or just above the ankles is usually fine.

At the time of this writing, vertical video (portrait framing) is becoming standard in the industry—SAG-AFTRA is now writing contracts around verticals. So vertical is an accepted format.

Still, most auditions remain horizontal—even for projects that ultimately live in vertical formats.

So read the instructions carefully.

Bottom line:

Follow instructions.

If they say shoot vertically, shoot vertically.
If they say shoot horizontally, shoot horizontally.

If they ask for:

- full-body slate
- Then name and height slate

Do it in that order.

A typical workflow looks like this:

- Medium-tight horizontal slate (from collarbone to just above the top of your head) for name and height info
- Cut to a vertical full-body placed inside a horizontal frame

Make sure the composition is clean:

- Small space above the head
- Head not touching the frame
- Not too low in the frame

Clear framing always.

Shoot. Edit. Deliver.

Which brings us to the final section.

SECTION 4—FILE DELIVERY

Professionalism Before Performance

We've come a long way.

There was a time when we shot auditions on VHS tape. You'd back the tape up, freeze it, switch to record, shoot the next actor, repeat, then put that cassette in a FedEx box and send it to Atlanta or New York, or LA or London for twenty-five bucks or more.

That was normal.

The progression from tape to digital to compression and file delivery has been phenomenal. In just a few years, we went from physical plastic tape cartridges—literally sneaker-ware—to this:

Shoot on your phone.
Edit on your phone.
Deliver from your phone.

No physical media. No shipping. No waiting.

That's extraordinary.

Read the Instructions. Carefully. Every Time.

Here's rule number one:

There are no universal standards.

Every casting office does things differently.

Some want:

- Your name first
- Then the character
- Then "Take 1"

Others want:

- Character first

- Then your name

A simple format I use if there are no specific instructions is this:

“Actor Name - CHARACTER - Sc1, Sc2, Sc3, Slate”

Simple. Elegant. Readable.

Some want separate files for each scene.

Some want it all in one file.
Some want slates embedded.
Some want slates first.
Some want slates last.

There is no consistency.

So always read submission instructions carefully.

Never assume anything.

Pay attention to:

- File naming conventions
- Slate requirements
- File size limits
- Delivery method
- Deadline times

Every detail matters.

Get It In Early

Every submission has a deadline.

But here’s the reality actors don’t always understand:

Once Casting finds what they’re looking for, they often stop looking.

Yes, many casting directors say they watch everything. Sometimes they do. But especially for smaller roles, once they’ve found their choices, they move on.

So timing matters. Just because the deadline is in a week doesn't mean you should wait the full week to get it in.

Here's the pattern I've seen repeatedly:

Same day: perfect.
Next day: great.
Third day: probably safe.
Fourth day: maybe.
Fifth day: risky.
Day before deadline: bad.
Deadline day: forget about it.

They've already moved on.

Don't rush your performance—never send garbage—but once it's ready, get it in.

Early beats late, every time.

Platforms and Uploading

Most casting services now provide direct upload portals.

Actors Access pioneered this model. Your entire audition history lives on servers you never see.

Think about that.

Today, the workflow is simple:

Shoot on your phone.
Edit on your phone.
Upload directly.

Before finishing:

- Confirm files play back completely
- Confirm uploads finished
- Double-check file names

Then you're done.

Other casting platforms work similarly. Each has its own requirements.

Learn them.

When You Need File Delivery Services

Sometimes you're not uploading directly to casting services.

Often, auditions go to an agent or management first.

In those cases, you'll use a file delivery service.

There are many out there, and most have free versions.

My personal favorite is WeTransfer.com

Here's why:

- You can send files to multiple email addresses at once
- You can upload several files in one send
- You receive an email when the upload finishes
- You receive another email when the file is downloaded
- It's FREE

Those last two parts matter.

If you get a confirmation that the file was downloaded, nobody can say they never received it.

That's peace of mind others don't give you.

WeTransfer is free for small sends and limited recipients, and that's usually all you need. Use the free one first before you pay for anything.

Other options include:

- Dropbox Transfer
- Hightail
- Google Drive
- OneDrive (Microsoft users)

- Box
- Send Anywhere
- FileMail Pro
- pCloud Transfer

Many agents also provide their own Dropbox folders.

Use whatever system they request.

But my default recommendation is still WeTransfer.

Always use free options before paying anyone for file delivery.

File Size Problems (Easy Fix)

Sometimes your file is just slightly too large.

Don't panic.

There are excellent free tools:

- HandBrake (open source, free)
- VLC Media Player (also free)

HandBrake doesn't edit video—it simply compresses. So does VLC.

You can reduce file sizes by 50–70% with almost no perceptible loss in quality.

If your upload limit is 50MB and your file is 55MB, HandBrake fixes that in minutes.

Final Delivery Recap

- Follow instructions exactly
- Name files correctly
- Respect file size limits
- Don't slate unless asked
- Follow the slate order precisely
- Use vertical only for the full-body shot when needed
- Upload early
- Confirm playback
- Confirm upload completion
- Use HandBrake or VLC if files are too large
- Use WeTransfer or requested services when sending to agents

Professional delivery tells casting one thing:

This actor knows how to work.

A Final Word—and an Invitation

If you've made it this far, thank you.

Everything you've just read is real.
None of it is theoretical.

This is distilled from decades in production—over 10,000 hours on sets, in studios, and behind cameras. More than a hundred films, television projects, industrials, and countless commercial and corporate shoots. Years of watching what works, what doesn't, and why. Years of fixing problems in real time. Years of putting out fires.

Production teaches you quickly.

Most of the job is removing obstacles so the work can happen.

As actors, our job is simple and profound at the same time: to convey universal truths inside a fictional setting. To bring characters to life by being fully present as ourselves. If technology gets in the way of that, it becomes a problem.

Everything in this guide exists for one reason:

So technology disappears.

So all casting ever sees is *you*—living inside the life of the character.

That's it.

Yes, self-taping can feel like a hassle. I understand that. I lived through the era of VHS tapes, FedEx envelopes, and handwritten labels. Riding your bike to the agency to grab mimeographed sides taped to the door. Showing up two days later to read with paper in your hand. Driving around in a panic trying to find a place to park while the clock runs down. Two minutes or less to show a room full of people whatyou can do.

Now you can shoot, edit, and deliver from your phone.

You can do as many takes as you need, but there's a diminishing point of return if you keep chasing perfection—usually two or three is plenty.

You can be seen in rooms thousands of miles away.
You can audition for opportunities that would never have been accessible before.

That matters.

This process gives you access. And now you know how to use it.

Let me be very clear about something:

This information is completely free.

No paywall.
No hidden upsell.
No obligation.

Share it. Forward it. Give it to your classmates. Send it to your friends. If you teach, make hundreds of copies. Let every actor you know have it so they don't have to spend years wondering how to do this "right."

This is simply my method—developed over more than twenty-five years. Other people will have different approaches. That's fine. Take what helps you. Leave what doesn't. If even one piece of this makes your life easier, then my job is done.

I'm not here to exploit actors. I got tired of seeing that happen. I got tired of it happening to me.

This is about clarity.
This is about access.
This is about letting the hardware do the heavy lifting so you don't have to.

If this material helped you—if it saved you time, stress, confusion, or guesswork—and you *feel* like expressing gratitude, there's a QR code here that links to my PayPal.

That's an invitation, not a requirement.

Buy me a cup of coffee.
Or don't.

Flip me a few dollars.
Or don't.

You owe me nothing.

Truly.

I'm happy either way.

If you'd like to bring me in for a workshop—online or in person—reach out. I'm fully nomadic now. Wherever I happen to be on the planet, I'll come teach. I have a tight two-hour presentation. All I require is expenses. I don't request big speaking fees.

And if you simply take this information and run with it, that's perfect too.

That's the point.

Let this work serve you.

Let casting see you.

Let the hardware do the heavy lifting.

About the Author

Tim Powell is a professional actor, producer, and educator with more than three decades of experience working in film, television, and digital media. His career spans over one hundred projects across narrative film, television, industrials, and commercial work, with more than 10,000 hours spent on sets, in studios, and behind the camera.

Alongside his work as an actor, Tim has spent years helping other performers create professional, studio-quality self-tapes—first by necessity, then by design. His approach focuses on removing technical friction so performance can remain central, clear, and unencumbered.

This philosophy was formalized in a course he designed and taught titled Technology and Minimalism, presented through the SAG-AFTRA Conservatory in Residence at the American Film Institute, as well as in workshops for the Television Academy, the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and professional actor training programs nationwide. The course examined how thoughtful, restrained use of technology can support truthful on-camera work rather than distract from it.

The principles behind that course form the foundation of this book.

Tim's work is guided by a simple belief: technology should disappear, so casting can see only one thing—the actor living truthfully inside the life of the character.

He currently works as a digital nomad, teaching workshops internationally and continuing to support actors in building sustainable, repeatable self-taping systems that serve their careers rather than exploit them.