

Casting Scams To Avoid

Who is legitimate? Who is not? Before you spend ANY money, start here! Are you looking for work? Do you want to "register" with "casting companies?"

Any of these sales tactics below sound familiar:• Huge Fees

- Too Many "Promises"
- Advertiser-Driven
- "Unique" Sales Pitches
- Unexplained Or Unnecessary Name Changes
- Supposed "State-of-the-Art" Technology
- Too Good To Be True...

So

you just got off the bus (plane, train or automobile) from Wichita, Harlem, Harrisburg, or some such place in between... now what? Maybe you've been here in Hollywood for years, but have only just realized your dream to be in the movies. Whatever the case, you've got those stars in your eyes and a few pennies in your pockets, and you wanna break into show business! What do you do? Well, you put on the brakes, sit down and read the pages that follow – before someone tries to shake you down for all your hard-earned dough!

Your

uncle's boss' baby brother's poker partner says you got the look to make it as a successful model or actor and you jump at the words and decide a career in Tinseltown is just what you're after. Well, what you need to take with a grain of salt is the "promises" that certain individuals or companies may throw at ya claiming they can get you work in this tricky industry. There are lots of sketchy and unscrupulous so-called talent or modeling agencies in this town that will lead you to believe they can make you a "star."

Unfortunately, starry-eyed consumers are all-too-often victimized by such fraudulent agencies promising mucho money and instant stardom. When you walk into a place and they ask you to pay BIG up-front fees for pictures, screen tests, photography, consultation, classes or other things of that nature – beware!

Remember, Hollywood OS® was founded because we fell prey to such unscrupulous tactics and sales pitches. You'll want to do some investigating before signing your life (or your small fortune) away.

If

it's an agency you're signing with for representation, ask the agent for their license number and verify the status with the State Labor Commissioner's Licensing Unit at (415) 703-4846 or check online at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/databases/dlseIr/Talag.html>

If

the company is offering classes and charging tuition, contact the Council of Private, Post Secondary Vocational Education at (916) 445-3428 to determine their licensing status. And while photography is a tool of the trade and you may be required to provide your own photos, you should not be required to use a photographer that the agent recommends.

In Chapter 9 of our directory "EXTRA" WORK for Brain

Surgeons®, we've done a lot of that investigating for you, but ultimately it's your decision to find the place or places that are right for you. In our kids' book, KIDS' ACTING for Brain Surgeons®, we also dedicate an entire chapter to casting scams and detail a very scammy high-profile company in an outrageous undercover report!

There are many different types of businesses operating in this industry:

extras
 casting agencies, acting schools, talent agencies, modeling schools, photography studios, management companies, and most recently the huge glut of on-line casting resources that promise the world, but deliver significantly less.

For the 24th edition, we have done some significant trimming and reassessing of those companies listed here. Simple reason being: THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY and they DO NOT deserve recognition. With this said, please understand, we have tried to include ONLY those that predominately target newcomers, while also listing companies who specialize in specific timeless "tactics."

Your duty is to know what you want going into a situation AND finding out what the company does before signing or paying anything. Those too-good-to-be-true verbal promises they made? Chances are, they're words spoken to get you to pick up the pen and sign on that dotted line. Make sure they put all their "promises" in writing so that if and when you do sign an agreement, you know EXACTLY what you're getting.

Reputations are built and earned. Good or bad. Don't fall prey to promises. Look at their productivity. Do they have a track record? And if they're "new," who are the players involved? Are they just has-beens and rejects from five other unsuccessful, scammy companies under a brand-new banner or are they trusted, legitimate professionals?

Some other warning signs that should tip you off are small offices with pictures crammed into every crevice – especially those with walls covered with pictures of celebrities to make you believe they've worked with or been represented by this particular place, even though they're not and never have been.

Some companies will also use names which sound so similar to well-known agencies that you can become confused. Don't fall for it. Fraudulent companies are trying to confuse you and give an impression of legitimacy that they are by no means entitled to. And the biggest, flashing-red warning sign of all? Phony ads placed in the help wanted section of newspapers like L.A. Weekly that read: "New Faces Wanted," "No Experience Necessary," or the most obvious "Be A Star!" Yuck, come on people!

While not ALL of the companies listed in Chapter 9 of "EXTRA" WORK for Brain Surgeons® are unscrupulous, sketchy or otherwise scary, they're listed to make you aware of their existence. So just heed our words as "a heads up" of sorts – so you know what you're getting yourself into. Decide for yourself which company or companies you want to contact! Good luck!

DISCLAIMER:

Legitimate questions, concerns or complaints about a casting company, modeling school, casting website, agent or agency may be referred to the following places:

- Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs (213) 974-1452
- Los Angeles City Attorney's Office - Consumer Protection Agency (213)
978-8070 (or in the city or town where the company is located)
- Better Business Bureau (Southern California) (909) 825-7280 or check the website www.bbb.org to find other city or state numbers

If
at anytime, however, you come across any new and/or interesting
companies not listed in on our website or our directory, feel free to
let us at Hollywood OS® know. We'll do our part to try to help you in
finding out more information. If you have had any "quality" experiences
with companies not included or listed in our book, fill out our casting scam report or drop us an email detailing your
experience. It's important to share information with others. . .

Isn't that what "EXTRA" WORK for Brain Surgeons® is all about anyway?! Thank you for reading, enjoy!