

Castille Landon on Acting, Harvard, and Writing and Directing “Fear of Rain”

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[00:00:21] **Bryan Smith:** Bryan Smith here and welcome to the dream path podcast, where I try to get inside the heads of talented creatives from all over the world.

My goal is to demystify and humanize the creative process and make it accessible to everyone. Now let's jump in. Castiel Lyndon's on the show. Castiel is an actor, screenwriter, and director who wrote and directed the psychological thriller fear of rain, which is now available wherever you rent and buy movies, starring Madison Iseman, Harry Connick, Jr, Katherine Heigl and Israel Broussard. "Fear of rain" is about a girl named Rain. Living with schizophrenia, struggling with terrifying [00:01:00] hallucinations. Rain begins to suspect her neighbor has kidnapped a child, but because of her mental illness, those around her don't believe her. And even she has a hard time sorting through what's real or imagined. When I researched Castiel's background and filmography to prepare for the interview, I marveled at everything she is accomplished by the age of 29. She has 25 television and film acting credits, including a role on the film, "Sex Ed" starring Haley Joel Osment. She has an undergraduate degree from Harvard and a master's from Oxford, and she has written and directed three feature films and just finished directing two other feature films. And the "After" film series, based upon the novel written by Anna Todd. In this interview, you'll hear how Castille developed the story idea for fear of rain. What her thought process was when casting the film, how she dealt with last minute, casting changes during preproduction, why the themes and metaphors and fear of rain resonate with a wide audience and what advice she has for aspiring [00:02:00] filmmakers, wanting to break into the business. You'll also hear Castille's thoughts on the challenges facing actors versus writers and directors and how her experience as an actor has helped her become a more empathetic and effective director. So without further ado, let's jump into my chat with actor writer and director Castille Landon.

[00:02:19] **Bryan Smith:** Castille, Welcome to dream path podcast.

[00:02:23] **Castille Landon:** Thanks for having me.

[00:02:24] **Bryan Smith:** And happy Valentine's day.

[00:02:26] **Castille Landon:** Thank you. Um, are you doing anything special?

[00:02:29] **Bryan Smith:** Probably just more snow shoveling actually.

[00:02:33] **Castille Landon:** Oh, that's romantic

[00:02:36] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, we're kind of buried over here in Washington state. Where are you located?

[00:02:40] **Castille Landon:** I'm actually in Florida right now. So kind of the opposite. It's like humid and muggy and gross.

[00:02:46] **Bryan Smith:** Oh yeah. I've been in that Florida heat and humidity, and I used to live in Houston, so I understand the oppressiveness of the humidity.

[00:02:56] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, oppressive is how I describe it too. And [00:03:00] like, you know, when you're in school, they tell you about the atmosphere of Venus and how it's like so strong. It would just crush you.

[00:03:08] I feel like that's what it's like going outside right now. Not right now, like in a couple of months, it will be like that.

[00:03:15] **Bryan Smith:** I hear you, when I was in Houston, I played football. And, uh, they take their football very seriously there. So I took it as a first period class. They would wash my clothes. Uh, I would come back after school, another practice after school and football in the heat and Florida and Texas are both huge football States, I don't know how they do it.

[00:03:37] **Castille Landon:** Yeah. And your poor parents having to do that much laundry?

[00:03:41] **Bryan Smith:** No, they did my laundry for me. That's how, that's how seriously Texas takes their football. The high schools actually do the laundry for their house.

[00:03:49] **Castille Landon:** Nice. That's really nice.

[00:03:52] **Bryan Smith:** So you grew up in Florida?

[00:03:54] **Castille Landon:** I did. Yeah, until I was like 15 and then, I moved to LA [00:04:00] to act, And I did the whole homeschooling thing, and then eventually went to college, went back to LA and then just like with the pandemic, I sold my place in LA and moved for the first time since I was 15. So like almost 15 years, I just decided that was it. I needed to, and I actually, I didn't move back to Florida. I moved, I bought a place in Kentucky so that I could be near my horses.

[00:04:27] **Bryan Smith:** Wow. Well, that explains the, a horse themed screenplays, I guess.

[00:04:33] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, the first two. Yeah, it was kind of like an easy, nobody wants to make horse movies or like they don't really make them, well, and they're usually very expensive, but we have horses, so it was very easy for us to get those going. So it was like the best way to learn to do film I think is, is, you know, to make a film, as opposed to just going to film school,

[00:04:58] **Bryan Smith:** Going back to these screenplays of Albion and Apple of my eye, the horse theme to movies, you were saying that not many screenwriters like to tackle these screenplays and these subject matters, but you had access to horses and it sounds like you were following, following the old rule 'write what you know'.

[00:05:20] **Castille Landon:** Yeah. I mean, from a, from a writing standpoint, I don't know how many writers write about horses, but, I guess more from like a production and

directing standpoint, it was easy. So I kind of like my intention wasn't necessarily to set out, to write initially. , really I came at the, came at everything filmmaking, as a way of , Creating my own content in order to be able to act; and then I found out as I started doing that, I found myself being like, "Oh, I do, I have to do I have to go in front of the camera?" Like, can I just watch the actors doing what they do? And so it kind of like all naturally happened.

[00:05:59] **Bryan Smith:** So the writing process itself. I would imagine that there's a technical aspect of it that you can't learn in a creative writing program, even at Oxford and Harvard, like the actual formatting of the screenplay, and that's something you could probably get from books, but what did you get from your formal education, which is very impressive by the way, Harvard, undergrad, and Oxford masters for creative writing. What did you get from those programs? That has informed your approach to creative writing today.

[00:06:33] **Castille Landon:** So, I studied English and undergrad with an emphasis in Shakespearian literature and what I loved about that program was the diversity of just a liberal arts program and being able to learn from basically the best teachers in the world. I think that that's really the only thing that separates, or maybe not the only thing, but that's like the defining characteristic of what separates, you know, an [00:07:00] Ivy league school from a normal, you know, any other college, right is that teachers that are there are like, that is what they aspire to do, they aspire to teach.

[00:07:10] So it's kind of just a different experience learning from people like that. So I'm really lucky in that sense and because the caliber of the teachers, I was really able to sink my teeth into basically whatever I was learning and I think what's great about that. Is it really opened your eyes to a lot of different, everything is a story when you're taught by a great teacher, everything, because no matter whether it's science or even math, it all becomes kind of a story, as opposed to just like this thing we learn because we have to learn. So, I think being able, I'm like such an academic by heart. Honestly, if I could be in school forever, I would and that's because I like to study everything because I like to tell stories about those things, and the creative writing, which I did study at Oxford for my masters I think it really helped because I did this cross-genre kind of thing.

[00:08:08] Um, like it's not a screenwriting program or a poetry program, you're doing all, all of it. , and experimenting and what that does as a writer. I hadn't, realized, I guess because I was just writing screenplays at that time. Really. I learned how important. Different things are to incorporate, like, it really strengthened my screenwriting actually doing poetry, for instance, because poetry is, all about the economy of a language, right?

[00:08:42] Like you can't use too many words. Whereas, you know, when you're writing prose, what happened, you can really go on and on and on. But a screenplay is just like poetry in a lot of ways you have to have, you have to be concise with what you say. So, I think learning to kind of right across the media or genres or whatever, that was really helpful for me.

[00:09:05] **Bryan Smith:** And then the actual technical aspect of screenwriting. Did you take any courses in that or did you just order a few books that said field on screenwriting and all of the classes?

[00:09:15] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, I ordered the classics. I think, you know, "Save the Cat!" Is probably my favorite of them. Um, and I think just getting like a formatting program, as far as like the actual technical elements. Do you mean like the formatting or you mean like doing a beat sheet and getting all of that stuff?

[00:09:36] **Bryan Smith:** Oh, all of it.

[00:09:37] **Castille Landon:** Yeah. I mean, I think the, the format side of it is just easiest to get a formatting program and it does it for you. And as far as the technical like setting things up. I am still learning that because I never want to do it, and I get into a [00:10:00] crunch when they don't every single time.

[00:10:04] **Bryan Smith:** So, when you were 15 and you were acting, were you dabbling in writing at that point?

[00:10:11] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, I would write, like I would write a monologue for myself. I would write my own scenes anytime. There was like an acting class that I would take, where we were supposed to find scenes that we really loved to perform, I would write them myself, because I mean, sometimes I wouldn't, but, but that's really, I think where it started. Was writing that, material to be able to play a character. I wanted to play because I just didn't see myself, up on screen a lot of the time, like, I didn't feel like I was represented very accurately and that there weren't interesting enough characters because I was a teenage girl and really like so many of the portrayals of teenage girls are kind of daft or they're just like a foil, so I wasn't really interested in any of that.

[00:11:03] **Bryan Smith:** So, you're in the acting world for a while. And then you head off into academia. And when you were in college, undergrad and doing your master's at Oxford, were you acting at that point, were you continuing to write creatively outside of school? What was your trajectory there? Creatively?

[00:11:21] **Castille Landon:** Um, so at some point during my undergrad, and I think it was pretty early on, I, I do remember I made, I made my first movie. Back there. I went to make "Albion" in Bulgaria. And I remember that because I would have to get up at like two in the morning to be able to Zoom like this whole pandemic thing where everybody's complaining about like, "Oh man, we have to do college from home", I actually did that a lot. Yeah. Because I was, I was working and, and working in Bulgaria full day, you know, you're 12-hour/14-hour day. And then logging on and, doing classes at that time. I can't remember what year that was though. So, I was working simultaneously all the way through both of my degrees.

[00:12:10] **Bryan Smith:** And the themes of disability in "Apple of My Eye" and in "Fear of Rain", was that intentional on your part to take a character and saddle them with these very specific rules of their world through that disability. And the reason I asked that is that I'm finding as I talk to more screenwriters, that. The more specific the world is the easier it is to tell that story in a compelling way, whether it's a specific setting, they're in a specific religion or science fiction set of rules, but here you've chosen schizophrenia for fear of rain and

blindness for "Apple of My Eye" to kind of create these specific rules and I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that device in storytelling.

[00:12:56] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, I think that's really interesting. I've never actually thought of it that way before. I mean, as far as like having rules set out, I actually, I think I really gravitate towards adapting novels or adapting existing material. So, I would say that's definitely something I love and probably a lot of writers love.

[00:13:17] I don't know, in those instances, whether I was consciously thinking of that though, or not, I think more, it's more a case of like, I had an interest in imagining what it would be like to go through life with something like schizophrenia or, or with, you know, being, visually impaired. And so, I wanted to explore that, for myself and also kind of give other people the opportunity to explore it through film.

[00:13:51] I think there's a lot of. Little communities of people or like niches that aren't represented in film. And that's what I'm really interested in seeing and doing, so I think that's where it came from with those. But I do think you have a really good point.

[00:14:11] **Bryan Smith:** It's interesting, because I read a lot about storytelling and screenwriting and one of the rules that kind of bubbles up to the surface as a common denominator is conflict, more conflict "that character needs more conflict", and when you have a character with a disability like schizophrenia, which is largely not known to the audience. They don't have experience with it for the most part, same thing with blindness. I would imagine that that specificity really gives you a lot to work with as a storyteller and to let that unfold in a compelling way, and I used to work at a psychiatric hospital for teenagers, children, and teenagers, before I became an attorney before I became a podcaster; so it was interesting in "Fear of Rain" to see how you captured that disability and how you portrayed it. And one of the things I noticed that you did really well was the disconnect between the protagonist reign and her dad in terms of him trying to talk sense into her, and he would say, "do you hear yourself? Do you hear what you're saying?" And that look in her eye, like, what are you talking about? Like, there's, they're not speaking the same language. And when I had schizophrenia patients at the hospital, if you try to tell a joke to a schizophrenic who may be there may be their medication isn't right, or maybe they're just in a really low point in their illness um, they don't get it and they, they're just not on the same plane. And so I appreciated the research that you obviously did and put it on film so well done.

[00:15:58] **Castille Landon:** Thank you. Yeah, I have, I did do a lot of research and I think, you know, as you're saying that, I just realized this is actually one of my last scheduled interviews and I am sad that I just am realizing that I have dated two people who have very much spoken different languages because of mental illness or just neurodiversity, and it is very much, it's weird that it just took like, framing it in that way, for me to even realize that that, that is the case, right? Like you're speaking two different languages and yeah, that, that is exactly what John and Rain have going on. And both of them I think, are, are speaking, uh, you know, kind of general language of love, but yeah, the specificity of that, how they express themselves and where they are at any given moment is very different, and I think it was really, really important. For me with, with "Fear of Rain", that we get the accuracy and

not sugar coat things, because that is the reality of living either with a mental illness or with someone you love who has a mental illness. Like you can love someone. And that doesn't mean that there aren't traumatic events that occur or that you don't say something you regret. And there was a lot of temptation or, or guidance from people that I think don't quite, didn't quite understand the project, when we were in development that they would give notes like, "Oh, he kind of seems a little like an asshole here", and it's like, when you're going through something like that, and it's your child, you kind of lose your own self, you know, he's, he's losing his grasp on reality as well. Um, it does things to you that you wouldn't normally do in other circumstances, and the more you love someone, I think that the more kind of irrational you can sometimes be.

[00:18:08] **Bryan Smith:** Right, I'm glad you brought that up. There is a scene and I'm not going to describe it in detail because I don't want to give it away, but there's a scene where. I think the audience will likely lose their affection for the dad, uh, because of a conflict that happens with Rain. Uh, and you're right. There's a humanity to that in revealing that duality of man, that classic duality of man we're all capable of good and evil, and this isn't necessarily a good evil situation, but it's just humanity bubbling to the surface with anger and fear, and these emotional situations sometimes result in that type of conflict. And I'm not saying it's excusable, but that's what happens. And I think it's important to put that on film without sugarcoating it.

[00:18:59] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, I think so too.

[00:19:02] **Bryan Smith:** As you may have noticed, there are great resources and advice mentioned in all our episodes and for many of them, we actually collect all of these resources for you in one easy place: our newsletter. You can go to [dream path, pod.com/newsletter](http://dreampath.com/newsletter) to join. It's not fancy. Just an email about each week's episode, featured artists and resources to help you on your journey. Now back to the interview.

[00:19:27] So your casting choices here, can you tell us about the casting process and what you were thinking with Harry Connick and Katherine Heigl? And the most interesting casting choice was Israel for me. And I thought that might've been maybe the most challenging one too.

[00:19:44] **Castille Landon:** Oh, why is that?

[00:19:46] **Bryan Smith:** Because he was, and again, I'm trying not to give anything away on this interview, but his character had to straddle. Uh, certain, um, straddle two worlds, perhaps, [00:20:00] and there was some ambiguity about him in the film that was not present in other characters, at least not initially. And I'm wondering because he was kind of this perfect boyfriend. How did you seek him out or what was that casting process like? And what were your thoughts going into the casting process in general?

[00:20:22] **Castille Landon:** Yeah. So, I think the biggest thing for me with the casting on this was finding the right Rain. Because the movie really rests on her shoulders. If Madison Iseman had not been able to deliver the kind of performance she did, the film would not have worked.

[00:20:36] **Bryan Smith:** Right.

[00:20:36] **Castille Landon:** And of course, I didn't tell her that going into a lot of pressure, But it was, we searched for a long time for that person.

[00:20:45] And it was really important to us to get name actors for the parents, because we wanted to have the freedom to cast, whoever was best for the role with Rain in particular. So we saw a lot of girls. I had like a top three and I think Maddie was actually one of the last people that came in to audition, and as soon as she did, I was like, that's it like. Just you, you knew instantly could be. Cause she is. I've never seen anyone like her. I mean, I work with young actors a lot and she's just so great. But you know, the, the most, um, nerve wracking actually in terms of casting was Harry, because I talked to Catherine, I'm very familiar with her work and that role, I think she really fits and kind of it made sense, but Harry, he doesn't do a lot of movies. And the last movies that I had seen him in were dolphin tale, movies. So while I had seen him do really amazing, I mean, not that he's not amazing in that. It's just so different from this, but I'd seen him do more intense roles, but it was earlier in his career. I had no idea what was [00:22:00] going to show up on set.

[00:22:01] And with those big-name actors, you don't get to audition, man. You just make offers. Um, But what I loved about him was that he is so lovable, because like you said, there are moments in this movie where we don't always love him , he does do some, you know, awful things , that would be, I think, unforgivable in the eyes of the audience, if you have the wrong actor in that role.

[00:22:27] **Bryan Smith:** Right.

[00:22:28] **Castille Landon:** So to be able to go head to head with this young girl who's going through this, but also be someone that the audience gives the benefit of the doubt to and can see how much he loves her, that was a challenge. And it wasn't until the first scene that I, I was kind of sweating it up to that point because he could have been for all I know he could have been in some kind of cheese ball, you know, actor, at this point in his career, but thank God. He's not, he's so good. And he just got better.

[00:23:00] [00:23:00] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. He has so much charisma, I think because of his musical career. And it's a testament to how beloved he is in the musical world that he's still relevant and he's still putting out great music. But when you are performing the way he does and I've seen him perform live, I was actually on his float. In Mardi Gras couple of years ago. Yeah. I thought when I was going to be on his float, I would get to meet him. But this float is like 10 miles long. So there was no, no chance of meeting Harry Connick, but, he is so charismatic that he just lights up the screen, so you're right. There's this instant affection for this character, and that gives him the freedom to kind of make some mistakes. So, um, what a fortunate turn of events for you without an audition.

[00:23:48] **Castille Landon:** Yeah. And such a kind human being. So, to be able to like, because there is a component of this where, when your asking actors to go to such a dark place, especially young actors, you know, they, they can sometimes lose themselves in that. And, and I even lose myself in it sometimes, um, with this one. So to have someone who is

not only wildly talented in front of the camera, but also, kind of elevates the emotion or, or like just elevates the mood, on set every single time. He's there is so helpful, you know, and he put Madison at ease and he kind of became a father figure to her, like an extra parent figure to her throughout the course of, um, making that film, and I think it shows honestly.

[00:24:47] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, and I'm glad you brought up how important Madison's character was in terms of the casting choice. Because, you know, when I was talking about Israel, I was talking more about the fact that with Madison, you know, that Rain's character is real and, you know, there's a certainty to that character and her role in the film, but with Israel, and like I said, he's straddling these two worlds and he's also this very welcome presence amid this world of chaos, and, uh, I thought he just did a great job in that role.

[00:25:22] **Castille Landon:** I think so, you know, what's interesting with him is, we actually had cast a different actor who's a friend of mine and very well-known and he, bailed at like the last minute. And, um, so we had not even looked hardly for other people.

[00:25:39] And like a couple, I think it was like a couple of weeks out. I can't remember exactly, but it was pretty close to shooting and we'd already casted Maddie. And we had a chemistry read between the two of them and they were great together. So, it was a real blow to me, especially since it was a friend. And it was weird because I went back to my notebooks because this film, I wrote like three years before we actually got to make it.

[00:26:06] And as soon as I start writing something, I come up with a kind of ideal cast in my head and I went back to my notebooks to see who I had written down and Israel was on there, like on my list. And so we put the offer out to Izzy and he loved the role and took it. And he's just, he's someone who brings a hundred percent of himself.

[00:26:32] He's not even like, it's so great because. He's he just, he can't lie, you know, Israel can't, and I think that's what makes him such a perfect Caleb, because I think Caleb's kind of like that too. He's just so authentically him, and luckily, authentically Israel is like a wonderful human being, so yeah, I think he just has this kind of like almost childlike magic to him or, or kind of an innocence and an acceptance in that, you know, he's not judgmental and he's very similar to the character I think, or else, I don't know. Maybe he just became more like the character around me because of what it was.

[00:27:16] **Bryan Smith:** Because he's a great actor. So, going back to Madison's performance, did you worry going in that you were going to find an actress that perhaps you were going to be stuck with an actress that was not capable of that balance between capturing the horror of that reality, but also not overplaying it kind of an overwrought performance?

[00:27:42] Because I would think that that would be instinctively where young actors go. If they're trying to play someone who's crazy, quote, unquote, or insane, or going out of their mind, they're just going to go over the top and on screen, it's gonna seem off. So how did you approach that issue?

[00:28:01] **Castille Landon:** I mean, I think that was something that we really looked for in the casting phase when we were auditioning actors, because there is the temptation to overdo it and you see it in a lot of movies and it makes it very uncomfortable to watch.

[00:28:15] I think there's a movie out right now that is facing that kind of issue. I think that that's absolutely right. So, it all came down to auditioning. I mean, I think it would have been something that I would have been terrified of have had, we had to cast some name actress in that role. And there were, there was a producer on prior to this that was like, "we want Bella Thorne" and it's like, you know, I don't know, maybe she would have done it perfectly, but like to just put an offer out the way that we did with the other cast members, without having the opportunity to see someone come in and do it, I think that might be where you get yourself into trouble. As a filmmaker, I think with complex characters like this, you just have to see them do it because even the most professional or talented actors, I don't know that they could necessarily play someone this nuanced in such a way that didn't. Make you cringe to watch it.

[00:29:15] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. That's a good way of putting it, cringe. So that causes the audience. Oh, ouch. And Eugenie's character. She was her characters named Dani. Is that the name? Yeah, so right out of the gate, the very first scene where she kind of appears through the window of the car. You're like, "okay, now we're in for something pretty fun here", because she's so eccentric and in lights up the screen in her own way. So, what were your thoughts going into that casting choice?

[00:29:47] **Castille Landon:** So that role was actually written as a man Dan McConnell, and the producers couldn't agree on who we wanted. There were two people that we finally, we saw so many audition tapes for that role, and it came down to two men and there were, I mean, just brawls constantly over who it was going to be. And we were down to looking at locations and I saw a picture of this house with the homeowner in it. And my friend who was a location manager was like, "Oh yeah, she, owns the house" and there was just something that immediately clicked for me.

[00:30:24] And he said she was an actress, and she'd done the Hunger Games and I was like, I've never heard of her. I need to see her on tape for this, and she sent in her tape within like 24 hours because she just nails everything she does, I think, and it was perfect, but it was also a huge change to the story because there's so many other elements in that the character then takes on as a woman versus a man, things, you lose things you gain, and I didn't think that given the turmoil over this character that my producers, we're just going to accept it. So, I actually sent her audition tape without her or anyone else knowing to Harry, because I thought "Harry is going to dig this", Harry loves like interesting women and he wrote back and was like, "Oh, you have to do this. This is so cool" and so I just forwarded his message with her audition tape to the producers and was like, "guys, this is a great idea" and because I think, you know, I got his seal of approval. They were on board with it and, um, and then it became Danny McConnell.

[00:31:36] **Bryan Smith:** Oh, that's brilliant. Actually, because once he blesses it, I don't know how you can go back from that.

[00:31:42] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

[00:31:45] **Bryan Smith:** So, the release of the film, it's now available streaming on all platforms, right?

[00:31:50] **Castille Landon:** Apple, Amazon, um, everywhere people can buy or rent movies.

[00:31:57] **Bryan Smith:** Awesome. So, what are your current and future [00:32:00] projects that you're excited about?

[00:32:02] **Castille Landon:** Well, I just finished filming two movies in Bulgaria over the fall and winter. So, I'm in post on those and they're the third and fourth installments of the "After" franchise. So, romance and it's kind of living in a similar world as "Rain". I mean, there's no mental illness. Well, actually there is there's addiction: alcoholism. But I like stuff that is geared towards young women, honestly. And whether that's to kind of open up a larger discussion about mental health or about sexuality and how to express that in a, you know, safe way, both mentally and physically, which I think these films do. That's exciting, and I have, now that I've done, you know, those three movies being "Fear of Rain" and then the two "After" movies, I have a lot of stuff coming up,

[00:32:59] **Bryan Smith:** I would imagine. Yeah. I imagine that this opened up quite a few doors for you.

[00:33:03] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, it is. It's great.

[00:33:05] **Bryan Smith:** Are you going to think about going back into acting? Are you going to stick behind the camera for a while?

[00:33:10] **Castille Landon:** I'm kinda open to doing whatever I did act in a movie last year that Justin Long directed, just kind of as a little fun thing. I love acting the thing is though, I, it wasn't good for my own mental health auditioning because that's what acting actually is. And I think a lot of people don't understand that, like you don't actually get to act very often, you are auditioning and you're selling yourself and it takes a real toll on someone like that's why those people get paid, what they get paid, because it is, it puts you through the ringer, you know, I mean, when I write something, I always get nervous to share it with people because it does feel like an extension of myself, but it's so much more personal even when it's not personal. I mean, when I see an actor come in the room, I want them to do really well. I, like, every single time someone comes in the room, I'm like, this could be the person. And then usually it's not, but I never have ill wishes, but when you're on the other side of that table, man, you just are, it's a lot. You know, you feel like you're never good enough. So, so all of that is to, you know, it's a long way of saying I would love to do other stuff, but I'm not going to put myself through the audition process. So I don't know where that leaves me.

[00:34:35] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, well, does that experience, that personal experience with the emotional turmoil of auditioning, give you something to offer actors when you are auditioning them? I mean, you have that level of empathy now.

[00:34:47] **Castille Landon:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, I think absolutely. And I think it really helps. My background in acting I think is, is really helpful when working with actors, um, particularly with young actors, so I like, I love that I had that background, whether I actually use it, you know, in the future or not. I think it's really helpful.

[00:35:08] **Bryan Smith:** What was it like? This is kind of a random question, but what was it like working with Burt Reynolds before he passed? That must have been one that must've been one of his last films.

[00:35:16] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, it was. And, you know, he, he, I loved working with him. He's such a sweetheart, and at the same time, like it made me really sad because he was this huge movie star. And then to kind of see, I guess, him at the end, you know, going towards the end of his career and he had to use a prompter and, honestly through, through like the month that we had him onset, I wasn't fully sure if he even knew my name, even though he was like that we constantly talked, he just was kind of a little out of it. But then I heard afterwards, he, he was like, constantly talk about me, which was really cool. and like we did a film festival thing together and he kept mentioning working with me instead of the film that he was there to promote. So, um, I mean, he was so lovely, and he used to tell -God, I have this obsession, I guess you could say with, old Hollywood and like the kind of machinations, uh, and he would tell me all of these stories about how he would date, Lucille Ball's daughter. Even though Lucy was, you know, about the same age as him and he's like, no, I wouldn't date her, her daughter. Yeah.

[00:36:36] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. It's, it's the kind of stuff that doesn't really date well, but. In terms of the jokes or the humor of people from that generation, but still you, you kind of have this reverence in this appreciation for the fact that he is this legend and, and that was the humor back then, that was the movie star approach back in the, back in the day and you just can't ignore the performances of deliverance and Cannonball run and kind of the, the cultural impact that that guy had.

[00:37:07] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, and honestly, like I love working with older actors. There is a difficulty working with older actors because, um, it's hard to remember lines. I mean, it's hard for me to remember lines, but once you start getting into your sixties, seventies, eighties, it is hard but there's just something so genuine. Like I got to work with John Cleese and, uh, I've worked at several older actors and they, they, they also just can't lie. I guess that's a kind of through line with what I look for in an actor is like, it doesn't necessarily matter like all of the homework that people do and like the stress, a lot of actors place into their work, all the research and stuff at the end of the day, it's like, can you just be genuine in front of the camera, and be vulnerable enough to just be yourself without judging it and without these walls. And that's very difficult, but the older actors just kind of, they don't worry about it.

[00:38:11] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah., you did such a nice job with fear of rain. I I'm sure this film is going to go some great places and get awards consideration. I enjoyed it. And thanks for sharing your story with my listeners. I have one last question for you for my listeners. And that is this. What advice do you have for young, aspiring screenwriters' filmmakers to break into the business? And it can be educational advice. It can be motivational. It could be

whatever approach you want to take to talk to these young people. Pretend they're in a room they're about to graduate from high school and they're looking right at you.

[00:38:53] **Castille Landon:** Yeah, I would recommend studying anything but film in college, honestly, I think looking around and consuming as much material outside of your realm of expertise. Is the most beneficial thing you can do being a voracious reader and consumer of film, and also studying, you know, theater physics, if that's what excites you or, or really anything that you could then bring to a film is more interesting because we get in a place where if we're not exposing ourselves to different worlds, then we are only writing about writing or about filmmaking. And there's a lot of filmmakers that do this, right? So I think having a breadth of experience to draw from and keeping kind of a, an eye on living a life of learning is really important. That's what I would recommend.

[00:40:00] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. Well, that makes a lot of sense because if the rule is write what you know, the more, you know, the more you can write about.

[00:40:07] **Castille Landon:** Yeah. Yeah, and I think that there's always metaphors and for like different ways of living that people can see themselves into, like with "Fear of Rain", I think Rain having schizophrenia is relatable to any teenager who is experiencing as you know, going to high school and feeling awkward, like social awkwardness or the experience of being a woman in this world where people don't automatically give you the benefit of the doubt. You have to kind of prove yourself, that, because that's what rain does in the film.

[00:40:44] Right. And she's having to prove herself to get someone to believe her. Right. And so even, even as someone that doesn't have schizophrenia, you can relate to that. Or I can relate to that as a woman.

[00:40:58] **Bryan Smith:** Well said and great advice. Castille, thanks for being on the show.

[00:41:03] **Castille Landon:** Thank you so much for having me.

[00:41:07] **Bryan Smith:** Thank you for listening and I hope you enjoy today's episode. If so, I have a favorite ask. Can you go to wherever you listen to podcasts and leave me a review? Your feedback is what keeps this podcast going. You can also check us out on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook with the handle @dreampathpod, and as always go find your dream path.