

>> Snapshot



Marcus Massey

Actor

Equity

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Can you tell us a bit about your career to date?

I was educated as an Aerospace Engineer, and subsequently developed a career in publishing and marketing, which I really didn't enjoy. I've always loved film, television and theatre and it finally occurred to me that instead of being the person watching it, I wanted to be the person up on that stage.

Once that decision was taken, it was a matter of making it happen. Initially I did some voiceover work, which went very well. Then I got involved in all sorts of productions in any capacity I could, which allowed me to fund my training as well as giving me the opportunity to watch and learn from all that was going on around me.

My acting career began only seven years ago when I completed my training. Well, acting is a living art so you never actually stop training. Since then I have worked in Finland, Thailand, Norway, Romania, Mallorca, Dubai and Milan. I've acted in a diverse range of projects from "Bunny the Killer Thing" to a role as the Medicine Man in a long running set of TV adverts for Gran Pavesi crackers in Italy. I continue to record voiceovers, mostly in my recording studio I have built at home.

Most recently I co-produced and starred in a contemporary comedy drama, "The Witch Hunters are Coming", which has just completed post-production. A previous film I made with the same team, "Bragging Rights" was shown at over 50 festivals and I was nominated for best actor in one of them.

What do you like most about your work?

I love the variety of acting, the people and places, and involving myself with the different characters I get to play. Unusually perhaps, I love auditions. I grant that auditions are not like

acting once you are actually playing the part, but it is undoubtedly acting nonetheless. To me they are an opportunity to perform and the opportunity to meet new people. It is all a bit of an adventure. Even on a quiet day, there is always something to do such as learning a monologue, which I find usually involves learning more about oneself as well as honing one's skills.

I love a live audience - real people reacting in real time. I think it's the jeopardy of it that I enjoy: that possibility of a missing prop, a bookshelf collapsing, or an actor mixing up their lines - you have to be ready to deal with anything. On camera, however, it is all about precision and I love the concentration that this requires.

An actor's job is to bring words to life and bring the reality of truth into the work. When you have well written work, you have a duty to do it justice. When you can feel it yourself, you are able to really convey it, and that is a magical experience.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

As a self-trader, business one must first get work, then do it. Getting the work is the biggest challenge and I spend a lot of time on this. Other areas I find tough are networking and keeping up with the admin. I also used to struggle with knowing what rates to set, but since attending a FEU Training workshop, that is no longer a dilemma.

Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?

I record sound in my studio all the time, so it was a natural progression to do it on set too. I bought the right equipment and learned how to use it. This gave me an extra string to my bow when I needed to make some extra cash or wanted to hang out on set to learn more. These days I do this much less but it has made me



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much more aware of sound issues when I am acting, and I try to help the sound crew wherever I can.

Additional skills I'd like to acquire include horse riding and weapons skills because this would open up some other roles for me.

What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

I think it can be a challenge knowing what it is that I need to learn. I also find it much easier to learn from a teacher and FEU Training has been invaluable in this.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

Several including Effective negotiation, Digital marketing for creative professionals, How to run a successful social media campaign and Finance for Freelances.

What are the most important things that you've learned?

I've learned lots about admin and planning and how to go about the 'business' of acting.

The Finance course has had a huge impact on my daily life. I've used the spreadsheet from that day and keep it up to date, so I no longer get that sinking feeling when I think about finance. It has transformed how I feel about doing my accounts - instead of it being horrible chore, it's just easy admin.

I have definitely negotiated better rates for myself since the Negotiation workshop, which in turn has made me feel better about myself. I feel much more confident setting a price that reflects my worth and find that I get more work that way too. I no longer worry about turning down low paid work. It is very liberating not taking work at any old rate.

I've also learned so much about planning, time management strategies and most importantly I don't feel guilty about taking a break any more. The three-point description of yourself (your 'elevator pitch') from one of the workshops has been very useful too.

What has encouraged you to attend FEU training?

I so appreciate all the training sessions I have attended and every single one has been worthwhile. FEU provides fabulous training and I always learn something.

It's a fantastic opportunity to learn and continue to

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develop. It comes free with my Equity membership fees and I keep coming back because the training is of such high quality.

I always meet interesting people and the workshops are fun. It's a good place to ask questions and, as the tutors are all practitioners, they appreciate your situation. It's helpful meeting other creatives and talking about the different ways you are all dealing with the same problems.

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Do you know any other organisation that offers business skills courses for creative?

I can't think of anything else like it.

