

Talent Agent **Angela M. Hutchinson** Featured on Cover of Backstage West



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Actorfest Profile

A Helping Hand

Agent Angela M. Hutchinson gives back to her entertainment community.

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By Sarah Kuhn

Angela M. Hutchinson is always on the lookout for fresh talent. As a theatrical and commercial agent at RPM Talent Agency, a Los Angeles-based boutique firm, she attends theatre, filters through referrals from trusted sources, and has even spotted a few folks with print-work potential at the local mall. She honed these handy actor-spotting skills as the founder of Breaking Into Hollywood (www.breakingintohollywood.org), a nonprofit organization that helps those in the entertainment industry achieve their career goals. "The whole point is connecting people, matching people with their needs," she says. "A director might call me and say, 'I'm looking for this type of [actor]; do you know anyone who might be interested?' They would come to me knowing that through my membership we have some strong actors."

It was her work with the nonprofit that led Hutchinson to the business of agenting. "We had a panel discussion on how to get representation — a panel of agents," she remembers. "One of

the agents ended up discovering one of the actors at the event and was like, 'You have a great eye for picking talent. We're actually looking for a new agent right now. Would you be interested?' I ended up interviewing with the owner of the agency, and we got along."

This was a new path for Hutchinson, who had moved to Hollywood to pursue her writing career. She penned four screenplays, networked with other industry pros, and served as president of the Scriptwriters Network. And yet, around 2005, she started to feel disenchanted with the business. "I had gotten to a point in my career where I felt like I wasn't where I needed to be as a writer," she says. "I thought, I've [taken] all the right steps. This should equal success. What's going on? When I talked to my mother, she said, 'Are you giving back?' I said, 'Of course I am. I do a lot of things in the community to give back.' And she said, 'No, are you giving back in the field you want to be successful in?' I thought, Hmm." Hutchinson pauses, breaking into a chuckle. "No."

Inspired, Hutchinson started Breaking Into Hollywood, which hosts various panel discussions and events for those looking to jump-start their careers. She still dedicates a good amount of time to the organization, and she's thrilled that her work as an agent gives her yet another opportunity to help actors get started in the industry. When pitching her clients for projects, she tries to keep her approach respectful and succinct. "Generally I know the casting director I'm pitching to," she says. "So it's really just a matter of shooting over an email and letting them know why I think my client is suited to [the role]. I'm really big on email, because I think it's less imposing on the person. I know the person is just as busy as I am, so to get a million phone calls can be annoying. But an email they can read at their leisure."

When scouting talent, Hutchinson takes a few things into consideration. She's a big fan of training, as it shows passion for the craft. She also likes to know that the actor is focused and dedicated to the long process of career building. "I find that most actors do not know if they want to be in film or TV, which is really important to me," she says. "It's okay to do both, but you've got to start somewhere, and most actors just say, 'Oh, whatever comes.' I think it's important to know where [you want to start], because that helps me, as your agent, to target more of those roles for you."

That said, she also takes notice when actors have extra assets in their arsenals. "That's another thing I look for: someone who has another background aside from acting," she says. "If they sing, if they dance — some other strong skill set that's very marketable."

The agent recalls finding one such actor while speaking at a panel discussion. "She's a comedian," says Hutchinson. "And her question was something along the lines of, 'Is it okay for me to be pursuing my career as a comedian, or should I just tell you as an agent I'm an actor?' Sometimes an actor comes into my office, and they'll say they're a writer-director-producer and an actor. That's not attractive to me — that they're doing six different things. So I thought that was a good question to address." But because being a comedian ties in neatly with the pursuit of acting and because this actor was very focused on her craft, Hutchinson saw the extra skill as a marketable asset. "And," she says with a chuckle, "she made me laugh."

Hutchinson enjoys her work as an agent, assisting actors in achieving their dreams, but that doesn't mean she has forgotten her own dream. On the writing side, she has published a children's book titled "Charm Kids" and has a forthcoming tome related to her nonprofit. She says she has put the scriptwriting on the back burner — but not forever. "That's something I want to pursue but a little bit after I master my agent career," she says. "Right now I'm building the toolbox."

Angela M. Hutchinson will offer her expertise at the Actorfest LA panel How Agents, Managers, and Casting Directors Work for You at 1:30 p.m. Nov. 8. Actorfest LA will take place at the California Market Center in downtown Los Angeles. Get more information and register online at www.actorfest.com.

Outtakes

Earned a BSE in industrial and operations engineering from the University of Michigan and a certificate in cross-media journalism from the USC.

Has held a variety of entertainment-industry positions, including gigs at MTV and Warner Bros. Television.

In addition to representing adult actors, Hutchinson is one of the heads of RPM's youth theatrical division: "One of our goals is to grow the children's department."

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