

Dear Gail,

I was cast in "Sordid Lives - The Series" which shot in Shreveport in late December. This email has been languishing in my "drafts" box since Christmas.

I want to thank you for the training you gave me in your Acting for Film class. I now truly understand the notion that acting on film is the art of me. There simply was no time to work up some elaborate characterization before shots. Making sure you did the same thing for the follow-ups to the master shot was hard enough without the addition of that challenge. Finding what elements of the character were already in me and developing from that made keeping things the same easy.

I particularly remember the one exercise when you had me and another class member almost toe to toe for a scene (which really bothered him a lot.) There were virtually no standing shots in my scenes that weren't marked less than six inches apart. Having already been there during class meant that I wasn't bothered by it at all.

Of course, I won't know until I see the finished product how much I succeeded but the practice at seeing how expressive tiny head movements could be (in class) certainly helped me keep things small for the film.

The director, Del Shores, was very complimentary about my work. He even mentioned that he had seen the dailies from my first day of shooting and they were all good. More telling for me, though, was that a few crew members took the time to tell me how professionally I was behaving and one even went into detail about how he appreciated watching my face during my scenes because it always seemed to be in the moment, reacting to what was being said. (He couldn't know what a huge compliment that was for me.)

Shooting this series (all two days of it before they kill my character) has been a wonderful experience for me and without the training given to me by you and by Jeanne Everton, I can see it being miserable and frightening. I can't thank you enough.

David