



## Answers

- (00:00-01:10)** What was the name of the visa that Idris Elba got to allow him to work in America, and how did he get it?  
He got an O-1 visa. The 'O' stands for 'Outstanding', and the visa is for those who are outstanding in their field. Idris Elba got the visa because he had appeared in a UK TV show called 'Ultraviolet', and the Fox Network wanted to make a US version of the show.
- (01:10-02:24)** Why was it difficult to get an acting role at first, and what was he struggling with?  
It was difficult for 3 or 4 years. He presumed that his accent would help him to get jobs. However, there was a really 'tough pool' of really talented actors there at the time who were 'killing it', meaning doing very well. He was struggle with his accent and assimilating into the culture.
- (02:24-03:10)** What were the opinions of actors in the UK when he told them that he was going to go to New York, and were their opinions right?  
They laughed when he told them that he was going to New York. They told him at he should at least go to LA, because in New York they thought that he would get 'eaten up', which suggests that he would struggle to make it because of the size of the place and the pool of talent that was there. Their opinions were right at the beginning of his time there.
- (03:46-04:58)** What was Idris' mindset with regards to getting roles in films, and who gave him this mindset?  
He doesn't look at something that someone else has and then feel unworthy because of it. His mindset is that if he doesn't get a role then he will get something else. He has got this positive attitude from his mother.

### Idris Elba's Role in 'The Wire'

- (04:58-05:40)** What was different about this series for HBO, the cable television company which made 'The Wire'?  
They made a 'pilot' episode for The Wire, which was unusual for HBO, because normally they went straight into the first series. Another factor which was different was the fact that the subject matter was quite 'risqué' for HBO at the time, meaning that it had the potential to shock the audience, so it required a bit of caution.
- (05:40-06:21)** What surprise did Idris Elba get after the audition, and do you think that he was pleased with the outcome of the audition?  
He did not get the part that he had originally auditioned for. He gives the impression that he was a little underwhelmed by getting the part that he got, because he had forgotten who the character was from the pilot. Also he was looking through the script trying to find what lines his new character 'Stringer Bell' had.



## Answers

### Meeting Casting Director Kim Misha

7. **(06:52-07:24)** Why did Idris Elba come to New York in the early 1990s, and why did he stand out amongst the locals?  
He used to come on holiday to New York around this time. He stood out because he dressed differently to New Yorkers - he wore 'skinny jeans'.
8. **(07:24-07:42)** What do you think Idris Elba means here when he describes Kim Misha's role as a casting director?  
It is not exactly clear what Idris Elba means here. However, he says that Kim Misha knew all the 'hustle' actors' small parts and big parts, suggesting that she knew how to get parts for small actors primarily, and big ones as well. The verb 'to hustle' means to work quickly and potentially aggressively to force your way into something especially as an inexperienced person.
9. **(07:44-08:03)** What are Idris Elba's exact words during these 19 seconds?  
[See page 5 for mini transcript and accent guide]
10. **(08:16-08:46)** What happened when Idris Elba sent résumés to 50 casting directors in New York?  
He only received an answer from 1 casting director called Kim Misha. She said that she liked his résumé, and she wanted him to come and see her during his next trip to New York. He thought that he had 'made it'.
11. **(08:46-09:08)** What happens in the casting process?  
The casting process is not so special. They make you wait forever, come into a room, sit down, look at you, talk to you, nod, and then say 'thank you' and leave.
12. **(09:36-10:46)** What happened with Kim Misha after Idris Elba moved to the USA?  
When he moved to America, Kim Misha called him and introduced him to another casting director who was casting for 'The Wire'. This happened 4 years after he had sent the original video résumé.



## Answer to Question 9 and Guide to Some Features of a London English Accent

Transcript of the video (07:44-08:03)

### Key - Some differences between the London accent and a standard British English accent:

**Blue text** 'l' replaced by a 'ww' sound

In many southern and central UK accents, an 'l' is replaced by a 'w' when it is followed by a consonant sound. This can be heard also in formal English and professional settings.

**Yellow Text** 'r' sounds before consonants or at the end of the sentence are not pronounced

Received Pronunciation is a 'non-rhotic' accent, which means that 'r' sounds are only pronounced before vowels. This is the same in many British English accents, but not US accents.

**Red text** 't' replaced by a 'glottal stop'

This occurs in many southern and central accents of the UK. When a 't' is at the end of a word or followed by a consonant, it sounds like it is simply deleted. However, it is replaced by a hard stop in the middle of the word called a 'glottal stop'. This causes a lot of difficulties for listeners to understand. This can be heard also in formal English and in professional settings.

**Small text** 'filler' words such as 'are / to / a / can / of / for / from' are reduced to very quick sounds which are hard to hear. Each of these words contains some form of 'schwa' sound, which is a kind of lazy 'uh' sound. This occurs in all accents, including US accents. This lazy 'uh' sound is in fact the most common vowel sound in both British and American English. It is used also in formal and professional settings, and it is in fact essential to maintain the natural rhythm of the English language. You can see it a lot in the text below.

**Grey text** The real transcript of the video

When I <sub>wz</sub> livin in Landon, I sen. like <sub>e</sub> headsho. <sub>n</sub> résumé of a **ww** <sub>the</sub> work I had done in the UK.

When I was living in London, I sent like a headshot and résumé of all the work I had done in the UK.

A. tha. time i. <sub>wz</sub> like only 3 years <sub>v</sub> work but I had li. **ww** bi. <sub>s</sub> <sub>n</sub> pieces <sub>n</sub> I cud i. onto this

At that time it was like only 3 years of work but I had little bits and pieces and I cut it onto this

li. **ww** video. Did <sub>e</sub> headsho., you know whad I mean, I did <sub>e</sub> résumé where my picture was <sub>the</sub>

little video. Did a headshot, you know what I mean, I did a résumé where my picture was the

résumé

résumé