

PODCAST UPDATE

Hello hello,

I'm Alexa Morden and you're listening to, a very different episode of, The 98%.

If this is your first time listening to this podcast, hello! And welcome. The 98% is a first of its kind podcast by actors, for actors, all creatives in this industry, or those who want to know what it's *really* like to be in it! Only 2% of actors earn their main source of income from acting work but here, we're all about the 98%. Usually, when you watch talk shows, or listen to podcasts that feature actors..they're the ones on the red carpets with well known faces from well known things. We're the antithesis to that...we aren't about the credits, the jobs, the names, or the glitz and glam. But the stories, experiences and voices of the majority that make up our industry, through the lens of realism, brutal honesty and comforting solidarity.

What started in 2018 as a comedy podcast sharing the highs, the lows, and all the in between that concern actors not in full time acting work, has, over the years, turned into a community; a safe space, and a platform to raise awareness and challenge harmful norms, along with raising the voices of people from all corners of the industry. From actors, ex-actors and performers, to casting directors, producers, writers, coaches, psychologists, agents, directors, teachers, and more! Always with a sprinkling of comic relief that are the foundations of The 98%.

The 98% is hosted by me, Alexa, and my wonderful co-host and best friend Katie. A passion project born out of a want from both of us to make this industry a less lonely place. The 98% wouldn't be what it is without Katie's voice, but the production, recording, editing, marketing, emails and social media are all run by me. In more recent years Katie has moved into doing incredible work in other ways in this industry and while she would love to give more time to the podcast, it's not feasible for her...while I have been able to nurture my 98% baby for almost 6 years and am happy to hold the reigns. I wanted to make this point because, aside from Katie being on a well deserved holiday the past couple weeks, what is being detailed in this episode is not something she has been involved with. So if you are reaching out to us personally online or via the podcast about these matters, please bear that in mind!

Over the years we've heard countless amounts of stories from people about how The 98% has helped them feel like they "aren't the only one" with these thoughts, feelings, worries, joys, embarrassments, wants and dreams and we have often been the place people come to with stories and experiences that they feel they can't share elsewhere. Whether we are then able to share their story on our blog, or just be here for support - this is why I have found myself unveiling, and being at the center of, a wave of allegations about a Rogue talent agent that recently hit the headlines. I'm making this episode because I want those affected by this to have somewhere they can come for a comprehensive collation of what is stipulated in the articles, along with next steps, support, and insight, as well as giving a recap for those wanting to be in the know because the issues discussed here today do not begin and end with Bodhi.

For those listening who have been involved in what I'm about to detail, phew. What. A. Ride. I hope you're all ok.

For those listening who will be learning a whole bunch of new things from this episode, strap in folks!!

Thank you all for being here.

This episode is coming a week later than when our episodes are usually scheduled. Normal 98% service will resume after this episode, with a few more episodes before we wrap up season 5, our longest series ever! But it didn't feel right continuing with the series when, for the past few weeks, every waking hour of mine has been spent piecing together the behavior of a conman and rogue trader.

So: grab a cuppa, curl up, and let's get into how I, via The 98%, have found myself in a situation where my interest in true crime, passion for activism, and love for my fellow actors and community have collided by uncovering multiple accusations made against agency Bodhi Talent and its Founder Archie Purnell.

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This episode is a bit different to our casual chats and conversations. Because of legal proceedings and the depth of this, the following has been written by me **with citations sourced by The Deadline, the press outlet who's unveiled these issues**. I'm

being very careful about language used, to ensure that all that is stated is safe to share, for myself and others.

Bodhi Talent established itself as an agency, as far as I'm aware, in 2021. On instagram they described themselves as a, quote, "Leading talent agency, representing actors in Television, Film, Stage, Musical Theatre and Commercials. #BodhiTalentAgency" unquote. On facebook Bodhi wrote they were, quote, "a well established, boutique talent agency known for our dedicated, passionate and proactive approach to artist representation and first class personal management." unquote. Despite rumours swirling for years among ex clients, it wouldn't be until early 2024 when things would come to light that proved "first class management" seems far from the reality when it came to Bodhi Talent...

On Feb 8th 2024, an article by deadline was released entitled "**Fake Tapes, Lies & Late Payments: UK Talent Agent Archie Purnell Accused Of Being "Rogue Trader"**"

After its release I jumped on an Instagram live and was joined by actor Layla Shirley where we explained how this article came about. I'll give a brief run down now but know that there is more on the live, and more to come about the context of how this came about.

After our own run in last year via The 98% podcast with another opportunist who was posing as an industry professional (more on this on the instagram live) and I was aware of the agency that had represented him. So when I received an email from actor Layla entitled "Advice" and naming this agency in May 2023, I knew to expect to read things I would not like.

"Up until recently I was represented by a seemingly reputable agency. I left them, and by chance I got in touch with an ex-client of theirs. Alarm bells started ringing when she told me her experience. I then started contacting other ex-clients and the previous employers of the guy who owns the agency. The stories they told me about him were shocking."

Layla then went on to share with me the allegations from ex clients, the allegations shared included; stealing money, sending out fake self-tapes, telling actors they got jobs they didn't get, skimming money through his other company Talent Enterprise, lying about his parents having cancer to get time off work... the list went on. Layla

also shared her concerns about the man in question starting an agency for children. She started a support group and compiled an open letter. While some signed their names, others were worried because this agent had a history of, allegedly, being incredibly hostile. People have claimed he bad-mouthed actors to others in the industry as well as claims of verbal assault and the spreading of rumours when people try to share their experiences.

Asking for advice on next steps, we had some back and forth over some months, both so eager to get something done about this. But all avenues were exhausted and nothing was happening. So I suggested that it was time to go to an investigative journalist. I enlisted the help of Jake Kanter, journalist for Deadline Hollywood's international division. I knew Jake because last year I helped connect him with multiple sources for a series of articles uncovering the truth about abuse and abuse of power at UK drama schools. If you have listened to the podcast for a while, you know that safety and mental wellbeing at drama school is a big talking point for us. And it was our 5 part mini-series at the start of 2023 about abuse in the arts that alerted Jake to The 98%.

And so, thanks to his thorough investigation and legal checks to sign off on everything, the first article exposing Bodhi Talent and Archie Purnell was published. I will be referring to this individual as Archie because that is the name most know him by. His real name is Jamie Fisher. I encourage victims to remember this, because the man you know as Archie, isn't really that person at all.

The article reads...

"A British talent agent has been accused of professional misconduct by six former clients.

Archie Purnell, founder of Manchester-based Bodhi Talent, has supplied actors to major productions for Netflix, the BBC, and ITV, but is facing claims he misled clients in a bid to bolster his standing in the industry.

Deadline has uncovered a series of allegations about the agent, including that he has sent actors illegitimate briefs for self-tape auditions, broke regulations on payment deadlines, and failed to observe industry best practice in contracts. Bodhi is currently at risk of being struck off the UK Companies House register for filing its accounts late.

UK agents are regulated by the state-backed Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, but complaints against entertainment agencies are rare because actors worry that it could damage their careers. Most major agencies, such as UTA-owned Curtis Brown, are members of the Personal Managers Association (PMA), which has a code of practice. Bodhi is not a member of the PMA.

Purnell said he was “absolutely stunned” by the “totally incorrect” allegations, claiming they were part of a “witch hunt” being pursued by actors and a rival agent. He did not respond to any specific allegations against him and deleted his social media accounts soon after being contacted for comment.

Purnell — who also goes by Jamie Fisher and AP James — once said on an industry podcast that he considers his relationships with clients to be a “sexless marriage,” in which an enduring partnership is forged through communication and honesty.

But former clients told Deadline that they quit Bodhi after becoming troubled by their dealings with Purnell. Two of the actors said they could not trust the agent amid suspicion about the legitimacy of self-tape audition invitations they were receiving, while others complained about issues securing payment for acting jobs.

Ex-clients accused Bodhi of copying and pasting the details of genuine self-tape briefs from casting directors and supplying them to actors who had not been called to audition for the specific role. Those affected suspected that Bodhi had no intention of passing the filmed auditions on to a casting director.

The practice of actors filming their own auditions and submitting them digitally became commonplace during the pandemic. Advocates say they have made the industry more accessible, but critics have warned that they are open to exploitation.

Purnell was accused of sending actors fake self-tape invitations to keep clients happy and burnish Bodhi’s reputation for providing people with a steady stream of leads. Some spoke of auditions appearing in their inbox soon after they had bemoaned a lack of new work.

In one example reviewed by Deadline, an actress was sent a self-tape audition invitation for a role 12 hours after the submission deadline had passed. Another

ex-client alleged that they were sent a self-tape brief for a role nearly double their age and only discovered when told by a rival agency.

Layla Shirley, an actress who has appeared in *Peaky Blinders*, was another who suspected that Bodhi had sent her a fake self-tape request. Shirley said she left Bodhi because she felt neglected by the agency, alleging that Purnell rarely replied to her calls or emails.

“We all know the red flags for agents: being asked to pay to join the books, no [business] premises etc. But it may not always be that obvious,” she said. “Bodhi presented such a legitimate and respectable front that they managed to mislead many.”

Purnell was described as a “liar” by those who have encountered him. For example, on his now-deleted LinkedIn profile, he claimed he went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in 2014, but the prestigious London drama school told Deadline it had no record of Purnell or Jamie Fisher participating in a higher education course.

Melanie Ash, a former actress who had a recurring role in *Emmerdale*, was represented by Purnell before he launched Bodhi and has known him for around a decade. “People are scared of him because he gives the appearance of being pally with powerful people, including top casting directors,” she said. “People should not believe the hype.”

Another former client, who wished to remain anonymous, alleged that Purnell lied about them securing a role in an advert. The ex-client said they only realized that they had not got the job when they saw the ad on television and it was nearly identical to the storyboard they had been sent for the audition.

“I was relying on that money,” this person said. “When he told me I was crying [with happiness] because of the fee. It makes me feel sick. He heard me cry and said, ‘You’ve done it, you’re a star, I knew you would get it. And you’re getting all that money.’”

Late payments were another complaint, with Bodhi appearing to have breached UK agency regulations by not remunerating clients within 10 days of being paid by a broadcaster or streamer. Bodhi contracts also state that actors shall receive “all monies due” within 10 days of it hitting the agency’s bank account.

In at least three cases reviewed by Deadline, actors alleged that Bodhi failed to pay them promptly. Purnell would blame the production for paying late, even though the BBC and ITV usually release payments for actors within two weeks of their engagement.

In one of the cases, actors' union Equity was forced to step in to resolve the situation after Bodhi retained around half of a client's fee. Bodhi did eventually pay, but weeks after the 10-day deadline enshrined in the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations.

One ex-client said actors live from paycheck to paycheck, meaning that late payments can create difficulty with the cost of living. "I had a conversation with Archie asking when the money was coming in because I was about to go beyond my overdraft limit," another said. "It was like being on an episode of [BBC show] *Rogue Traders*, in which you're the victim."

Bodhi failed to observe industry standards by attempting to hold clients to a notice period after they decided to leave the agency. The PMA, the membership body for UK agents, states that agencies should not "seek to enforce any time restriction in relation to a client's notice of termination of representation." A copy of a Bodhi contract obtained by Deadline states a client may "terminate this agreement by giving one month's notice in writing, unless agreed otherwise."

On one occasion, when attempting to enforce a client's notice period, Purnell threatened to report a rival agent to the PMA for signing the actor. Bodhi is not a member of the PMA and it is unclear if Purnell understood that by reporting his rival, he would have revealed that his own contracts fell below the PMA's standards.

UK agents are not allowed to charge clients a fee for representation, but Bodhi has been accused of attempting to collect money from clients by other means. When signing with Bodhi, new clients were sent an email stating that they "must attend" paid-for workshops with casting directors organized by Bodhi's sister company Access Workshops.

Bodhi has been charging actors as much as £60 to attend these workshops, according to documents seen by Deadline. UK Casting Directors Guild guidelines state that fees for workshops should not be "excessively high." One casting director

told Deadline that £60 was a “ludicrous” fee, while another said they would not participate in workshops if an agent was profiting.

An Equity source said the appearance of mandatory workshop fees was against the spirit of the law, which is enforced by the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate. Some former Bodhi clients did make clear, however, that they were not penalized for failing to show up at workshops.

Bodhi Talent has not responded to any specific allegations. After being approached for comment, Purnell deleted his Twitter and LinkedIn accounts and locked Bodhi’s twitter account.

Shirley, the former Bodhi client, said the company’s conduct raised questions about industry safeguarding and a lack of checks and balances for agencies. “How do we keep ourselves safe when the organizations designed to do that are also vulnerable to deception?” she said.

Alexa Morden, who hosts *The 98%* podcast said: “Fear of being blacklisted and missing out on hard-to-come-by opportunities scares many actors into silence. We need systemic change to protect all actors, especially those less recognized.”

End of article.

But Jake wasn’t the first person to publish something about Archie. In 2019 actor and teacher Melanie Ashton Wright wrote a blog post attempting to whistleblow on Archie after her experience of knowing, and teaching him.

Not only was she not listened to, but Mel **said** Archie went out of his way to slander her, vilify her, and try to ruin her career.,, sadly, **seemingly** with some success.

In a long heartfelt online post, Mel alleged that Archie had falsified his CV and those of other actors he represented. Including adding RADA as training, along with imaginary tv credits when in fact, Mel knew that was impossible. She also accused Archie of writing false references and stealing accolades from former employees to make himself look more successful than he actually was. She alleged that he poached clients from other agents at the moment they secured work, and then would use false advertising on his social media saying he had secured the actors credit when in fact, it was the previous agent. Her biggest bugbear was that he had

told industry professionals that he had taught Mel's son - and launched his career. When, in fact, he was just her sons babysitter. **In the blog post**, Mel **said** she couldn't keep quiet any longer, knowing children and their families would be duped by him and all his false advertising. Alleging that he wasn't fit to teach children drama as he had no qualifications to do so, no professional experience, and no training in safeguarding or child protection.

Rather than responding to her accusations and proving her wrong, Archie, **According to Mel, spread rumours about her to clients and acquaintances as well as industry professionals, blaming Mel's supposed poor mental health.**

Which shows, in part, how this scandal has been able to happen. This industry values the word of those higher on the ladder...An agent can say someone is lying and no one thinks twice. But why would an actor go out of their way to lie? When they have everything to lose.

A few days after the first Deadline article was released, a follow up article was posted entitled **Bodhi Talent: Clients Abandon "Rogue" Agent Who Says He Is "Heartbroken" At Misconduct Allegations.** The article detailed some of the experiences of actors who had decided to part ways with Bodhi Talent after the expose. Despite Archie claiming all allegations are false, he has yet to make any comment and has stopped replying to emails, along with deleting all social media and the Bodhi Talent website.

If you are yet to cut ties with Bodhi and wish to now, the above allegations suggest you should be dropping them an email saying you are parting ways and then contact Spotlight immediately to ensure they are removed as your representation on the site.

A few days later I organized a support group for ex-clients of Bodhi of past and present. We were joined by an agent to answer logistical questions, and a wellbeing facilitator to hold space for the emotion that came up. The stories recounted and allegations posed in this support group were nothing short of harrowing. It was clear the Deadline article barely scratched the surface.

What has happened since is nothing short of a true crime documentary in the making. I have been inundated with messages, DM's, phone calls, and emails. Clients

and ex-clients are coming to me with stories and reports, other actors are getting in touch reporting similar bad behavior from their agent, there are police reports, action fraud reports, zoom meetings, and a 30 page - and - counting investigation document put together by yours truly. My hours of true crime podcast consumption have given me the detective hat to be able to piece together the entire con, from start to finish...How the M.O changes depending on who you are and where you're at with your career, the true scope of victims, the shocking amount of money stolen, the depth of the lies and deceit, and the emotional turmoil all this has left behind.

And so, I have started a crusade. Justice for the victims. Conversations and changes for the industry. But most importantly..Support.

For 9 days straight I worked 14 hours. I took time off work, spent my days off hunched over my desk, and hyper fixated SO hard, I was like a poster child for neurodivergence. It seemed to me, very quickly, that actors felt I was the only person they could come to with their stories and reports. I have been overwhelmed with the real trust people have in me thanks to what I have been able to build with The 98%. I truly thank those who have come to me for sharing your experiences. It's thanks to you we can work to get justice served. *I cannot quite impress the severity of the true scope of what has been going on here.* The article I have cited is merely the tip of the iceberg. I knew that going in, and I DEFINITELY know that now. There are so many heart wrenching, anger inducing, despicable, abhorrent, shocking and disgusting stories and allegations, implying criminal activity, fraudulent schemes...the effect this is having on the victims is not to be underplayed. To be a victim of crime is one thing, but add to that the grief of losing a big relationship in your life by finding out that the person you thought was your champion working hard for you, is nothing of the sort. Discovering what someone you trust has actually been doing, to you and others, has all kinds of levels of emotional fallout. One person I have spoken to says they were having career strategy conversations and hearing exciting claims about what's next for them 4 days before the article was released. And Archie knew it was coming, he had been approached for comment. I realised very fast that for the people I had been speaking to privately about the open letter and subsequent article, this was the end of their hard efforts to get this exposed. But for so many others, the article was just the beginning of something you wouldn't wish on any creative in this business.

Thanks to some amazing people I was able to put together a support package. I am going to summarise what is in my support package here, and I encourage any current or ex client of Bodhi Talent to reach out to me to receive it.

One of the first people who reached out to me was a lovely agent who has become a real trusted support. Not only are they helping to facilitate finding potential new rep for actors and child actors, but they're working behind the scenes on next steps to use this as a catalyst for change. We are both passionate about taking steps to make this industry safer.

I also have a wonderful counsellor and wellbeing facilitator on hand to provide emotional support. These people are pioneers that this industry should take its lead from in terms of prioritising actors wellbeing. They are offering a free initial counselling and emotional wellbeing session for those affected.

I would also like to point people in the direction of Wellbeing in the Arts, a fantastic mental health organisation that offers low cost counselling for ongoing sessions, has also offered its support and encouraged people to get in touch. You can access 6 week sessions for as low as 15 pounds a session.

Other things in the support package are:

Access to whatsapp support groups

Next steps for legal proceedings

Who to contact at equity and spotlight

Reading and listening materials to help comprehend con artistry

Journalist Jake's contact information to share your story, and more.

Next, I had a zoom call with a couple representatives from Spotlight and I have to say, I do feel hopeful. I shared *all* of my findings, up until that point, with them and really tried to impress the severity of what has been going on, and what could have potentially been prevented. I warned them that more was to come, and that pro-active action needs to be taken. They assured me that they are working to implement immediate change in their response to people coming forward with reports, and their offerings for support. They are also arranging future meetings for how we move forward and make change to industry guidelines. This will take time but is being worked on behind the scenes..Assessing requirement standards for being an agent being one of them.

I also impressed upon them that Archie was able to get back on Spotlight and was active even days after the article was released. He used another alias AP James and, from the allegations I've heard and things stipulated in the article, I believe certain credits and pieces of information to be disingenuous.

I told Spotlight that they can be expecting a list from me. A list I've been compiling from people's stories being written to me. Now...all I have to provide is hear-say. And Spotlight really did hear what I had to say!! But, I suggested, if 3 or more people come to you with a story about an agent or agency for example, shouldn't that be enough to warrant some sort of investigation? This Bodhi stuff has shown that *we cannot take people at their word in an industry that favours those higher up the ladder in terms of hierarchical power. Why is an agent deemed more valid to listen to than multiple actors who are too scared to even put their name to a report of seriously bad behavior?*

I have also sent this list to Equity. Equity will be helping with the legal costs for its members who are affected and have a dedicated representative working to receive and file reports about Archie, Bodhi, and other questionable agents.

If you have experienced anything nefarious or disingenuous with an agent, *please please* reach out to both Spotlight and Equity. The emails will be in the episode description. There is also a journalistic route to take. Jake's email will also be in the episode description.

On Feb 14th 2024 Jake wrote a second follow up article to his first, this time detailing how Archie has been scamming parents of hopeful children.

It reads...

Bodhi Talent: UK Agent Accused Of “Scamming” Parents For Cash By Promising Kids A Shot At Fame

“UK agency Bodhi Talent has been accused of exploiting the acting dreams of children by charging their parents potentially unlawful representation fees worth hundreds of pounds.

Deadline has been privy to a WhatsApp group in which more than a dozen parents have been left shellshocked by their experience with Luna. The individuals were charged up to £500 in fees to access acting roles for their children, but several complained that jobs never materialized.

The agency staged at least three open audition days last year as part of a recruitment drive. Parents who attended these auditions estimated that around 20 children participated in at least one of the sessions.

“Archie led the session, and was very charismatic, [and] spent a lot of time getting the kids excited about the industry, building up their hopes. I particularly remember him talking a lot about the money they’ll get,” recalled one parent who wished to remain anonymous.

Those who were successful were sent an offer letter and contract detailing the cost of signing, with headshots being the biggest fee. Parents were asked to enclose up to £180 in cash in an envelope and hand it to a receptionist on the day of their child’s photoshoot at Bodhi-owned Access Studios.

UK laws do allow agents to charge for photographs, but the cost has to be comparable to the price of taking the headshots and reps should not make a profit from this activity, according to a source who is an expert in agency regulations.

Anthony Jr, the actor who claims he is owed money by Bodhi, said in a video on X that he also works as a photographer and did four Luna photoshoots as a “favor” to Purnell. In the X video, Anthony Jr estimated that Purnell pocketed £10,000 from these shoots alone, which could mean around 55 children were processed as Luna clients in this period.

Furthermore, a Luna contract reviewed by Deadline makes clear that the client should pay a monthly £12 (£14.40 including value-added tax) fee for the cost of “promotion and publication” of a child actor. This is potentially unlawful under UK legislation because it is not an “accepted service for a defined outcome,” according to the agency regulation expert.

Luna asked parents for an initial fee of £55 (£66 with VAT) for uploading their children’s details to a website, which is potentially allowable under regulations. Luna also took around £120 from parents to set up their children’s profiles on Spotlight, which is in line with what the European casting directory charges for an annual membership.

Natalie Wright, whose 12-year-old daughter became a Luna client last July, said she raised concerns after she “heard nothing” from Purnell, despite making regular

payments to Luna. In an email, Purnell accused Wright of having a “lack of trust” and suggested she move on. “As much as we would hate to lose her [Wright’s daughter], I don’t want to feel like we’re going around in circles,” he added.

Wright told Deadline: “I just feel so angry. I feel like we’ve just been robbed when you look back on what he was saying at the audition, compared to what was actually delivered.”

End quote.

In a new statement, the UK’s Agents of Young Performers Association (AYPA) told Deadline: “The AYPA is deeply disturbed by the practices that have been revealed and saddened by the number of individuals affected. The establishment of the AYPA was driven by the aim to advocate for stricter regulations within children’s agencies. Through our comprehensive code of conduct for members, we strive to reassure parents of young performers about the standards we uphold and red flags to look for when signing with new representation.”

What’s been going on with Luna Kids is criminal behaviour. If you have been caught up in any of what I just cited, please email me for my support package, and get in touch with equity.

On the day the article was released Archie was leading a kids class at his offices in Wigan. *If you are local to the area or have had previous correspondence with Archie, please do not engage. I have every reason to believe we are dealing with a dangerous individual.*

So we’ve got actors, child actors, and parents victimised...who’s next? Ah yes. The casting directors and other industry professionals that **Archie used to legitimize himself.**

A couple of industry professionals who had been approached about leading a workshop for Archie, or had, shared with me the email they received in regards to the workshop. In it, Archie claimed to be battling testicular cancer and cited this when sharing that Access Workshops had joined forces with OddBalls Foundations

- a charity for testicular cancer, and that any profits from the workshops will be donated to this charity, among others.

When reaching out to these charities, that were listed on email sign offs, online platforms and physical banners at the workshops, I received the following responses..

From OddBalls:

Quote

“To clarify, we have never received any communication or donations from Archie Purnell” (Jamie Thomas Fisher) or anyone associated to Bodhi Talent Agency Limited, so it’s bitterly disappointing to hear and see he’s been using our reputation, as well as other brilliant charities, to exploit people for their money, time and skills. We did not grant permission for anyone at Bodhi Talent Agency Limited to use our logo as a means to promote supporting The OddBalls Foundation. We are not against people using our logo to raise awareness; for example, there are hundreds of sports teams using our logo on their kits to help kick the conversation, but we always ask people to contact us first so we can approve the use of it”

End quote.

From George House Trust, a charity providing HIV support, advice and advocacy.

Quote

“We never had any direct contact with Archie Purnell or Bodhi Talent. We did not grant permission for our logo to be used on these banners and we have never received any form of donation.”

End Quote

More allegations indicate that Archie may have been lying about having cancer, and undergoing treatment, as well as suffering from various other physical ailments.

A few people have expressed disappointment at the lack of vocal support from people involved in the workshops, or wondering if they knew anything about the dodgy dealings going on..I want to state very clearly in regards to these allegations that everyone is a victim here. I have reached out to all the casting directors and other industry professionals who were involved in Access Workshops and those who have got back to me have all shared shock, upset and disgust. They did these workshops to help actors, as well as important charities. The realisation that they have been a victim of intense dishonesty, and unwittingly involved in others being victimized, cannot be understated.

Please don't jump to any conclusions about anyone who has been involved with Archie and Bodhi Talent, even those closest to him.

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In amongst all this, Bodhi talent was at risk of being struck off of companies house next month for not filing its accounts. Thankfully, this was suspended until later this year, because people objected. If the company is dissolved, it ceases to exist so cannot be sued. However, Archie has now himself applied to have the company dissolved voluntarily. Despite the law stating that an application to strike off must not be made if, in the last 3 months, the company traded or carried on business. Which we know Bodhi was doing, until these articles broke. So now, anyone owed money may wish to object, whether or not they did so before, to try to stop the company from being dissolved. Google "object to company strike off" and click on the Gov.Uk link

From the stories I've heard and corruption I've seen such as proof of skimmed money off of payments to clients, lies about the amount of payment due, word from charities that they received no funds, confirmation actors have received from casting directors that their auditions were fake, I have encouraged people to continue to speak to Jake in order to keep this investigation and exposé going...

So on Feb 19th another article from Jake at Deadline was released. This one entitled **'The Crown' & 'Bad Education' Actors Say They Are Owed Thousands In Withheld Fees By "Rogue" Agency Bodhi Talent** detailed some of the shocking extent of Archie's financial corruption.

The article reads:

An actress who featured in the final season of *The Crown* and a series regular in Jack Whitehall's *Bad Education* have said they are owed thousands in unpaid fees by scandal-hit agency Bodhi Talent.

Thea Beyleveld and Jack Bence were both loyal Bodhi clients but said they discovered that the agency had withheld money from them following the publication of a Deadline exposé on the company. Beyleveld also alleged that Bodhi “skimmed” money from her paycheck.

Beyleveld and Bence are among around eight Bodhi clients in contact with acting union Equity as they attempt to secure their money. Equity believes the cases are actionable and the union will go through civil courts to fight for cash. It is unlawful for UK agents to pay actors later than 10 days.

Beyleveld said she was owed nearly £9,500 (\$12,000) by Bodhi, including more than £2,000 from her work on Season 6 of *The Crown*, in which she appeared as a speech therapist to Princess Margaret, played by Lesley Manville.

Separately, Beyleveld said she was owed more than £7,000 from a Motorway car sales advert she filmed with Wonderhood Studios, the production company founded by former Channel 4 CEO David Abraham. The cash was paid to Bodhi by Wonderhood on August 25, 2023.

Beyleveld received more than £3,000 of her payment from *The Crown*, but after contacting the show's accounts team, Beyleveld discovered Bodhi had withheld around £2,000 for more than a year, according to remittance documents.

Beyleveld said Bodhi founder Archie Purnell repeatedly lied about receiving full payment from *The Crown* producer Left Bank Pictures and Wonderhood. In a WhatsApp message in January, 12 months after receiving payment from *The Crown*, he said he was sending the companies a “death threat” to secure Beyleveld's money.

Beyleveld said it was evidence of “immense” deception. In an email demanding her paychecks this month, she accused Bodhi of bringing “highly respected” production

companies into “disrepute” by claiming they were later payers. “Words cannot express the rage, betrayal and hurt you have caused me,” she told Purnell.

The actress, who has featured in *Casualty* and *Coronation Street*, also claimed that her paychecks showed that Bodhi had not paid her certain fees for *The Crown*, including costume fittings and holiday entitlement.

Beyleveld told Deadline that she had a good relationship with Purnell after signing with the company in August 2022, adding that his communication was “disarmingly” better than bigger agents.

Beyleveld felt that she received prompt payment on some jobs and trusted him when he claimed to be chasing money. “The ease and the casualness of the lies means it all made sense,” she said. “He emotionally manipulated me and as soon as I saw the [Deadline] article, and I saw late payments, I thought now I have to check this.”

Bence, who played Frank Grayson in BBC comedy *Bad Education*, claimed that he was owed more than £3,000 from a £5,400 fee for a Hilton ad filmed with Paris Hilton in fall 2023. Bence sent Purnell a WhatsApp voice note on February 5 chasing full payment after previous attempts to obtain the cash.

Purnell replied saying it was “annoying” that Bodhi had not received the fee and promised to chase again. He offered to pay Bence an advance of £2,000 from Bodhi’s reserves so that the actor was not “stressing” about the late payment. “I don’t mind as long as it’s kept between us,” Purnell said.

At the time, Bence said it felt “very touching” that Purnell had paid the advance, but he now feels like he was being manipulated. Bence said he had been told by a fellow actor on the Hilton ad that they had been paid in full.

“I was at a big agency before, but I got swallowed up by the system. To go to an agent [in Bodhi] that was so warm, loving, supportive, and seemed to be opening the right doors, it blindsided me. I just never had any reason to disbelieve him. Looking back on it now, there was a hell of a lot of lies,” he said. “It was very naive on my part because we operate so much on trust.”

End of article.

Shout out here to Jack and Thea, who join the brave actors putting their stories, names and faces to this ongoing scandal in an attempt to raise awareness and have steps towards justice taken.

Throughout the past couple weeks, people have been getting in touch with me who have been represented by Bodhi Talent, either currently or formally, who said they were compensated, but now, since checking with production, they've updated me that they found out they were not compensated fully.

This has apparently been happening in a number of ways...

People have told me that pay has been withheld outright, money has been skimmed off of payments, fees were paid in instalments with the final instalment being held back (citing late payment from production), the fees cited in emails and contracts were altered so the actor thinks they were paid the correct amount but were actually owed more, or lies have been told about how much the pay was to begin with. If, at any time, Bodhi handled any of your finances you may wish to do the following...

First, check your remittances. Email the production offices directly of the job/s you did and ask for proof of payment to the agency, how much the payment was, and when the payment was made

Cross reference this amount and date paid with the financial statements you received from the agency and the financial statements from your bank citing this payment

If the amount of payment you received does not match the amount of payment that was paid to the agency (minus VAT and commission) or if you never received the payment that was made to Bodhi, you need to file some reports...such as with the police, HMRC, spotlight and equity. Make sure you compile all records such as emails, invoices, voice notes that could be used as evidence. There will be a crime number and other information to cite in your reports which I can help you with. Once you've heard back from production, drop me an email and I can help you with next steps for reporting. There are also more details in an instagram post already available on the grid @the98percentpod

Please contact Equity with your findings as they will also be helping members with legal fees.

If you have anything to report about Archie and / or Bodhi, or any other agent for that matter, please reach out to Martin at equity...

mkenny@equity.org.uk

This investigation is ongoing, and I really cannot stress enough that the information that is out there as public knowledge now *is nothing compared to the things I have been made privy to behind the scenes*. If I were in a position to make a podcast including people's stories and the true scope of this..it would have to be an ongoing series! I'll pop a pin in that...

Not only that, but Equity and Spotlight now have my list of agents I've been made aware of exhibiting similar behaviour..withheld pay, fake self tape auditions, and more. And there is seemingly more to come from Deadline on this.

For me, and a reason The 98% exists, this isn't just about one rogue agent. It's about how this industry is set up in a way to have allowed this to happen. How actors can be exploited and manipulated, or silenced out of fear. That the pressure of being signed to an agent, auditioning and working being so heavy that others can use it to their advantage. That actors can go to the organisations in this industry that are there to help, only to be told there is nothing that can be done. I've heard that rumours had been swirling about Archie, Bodhi, fake self tapes and more for *years*. Years! Many people left the agency because of it, and yet it was able to continue. This *has* to be the catalyst for change.

And so, this brings us to today. I am in constant talks with victims, still receiving new emails from actors and parents learning of all of this and discovering they have money owed or stolen, having meetings with Spotlight and Equity, talking to industry professionals about future help for those affected, chatting to journalists, and focussing long term on resolution and justice. My armchair investigation is with the police, and I am adding to it as I go. If you have anything you think would be helpful in terms of physical or contextual evidence for me to add, feel free to reach out to me. I am also collating stories and testimonials so if you have an experience with Archie/Jamie and/or Bodhi Talent, feel free to share it with me at the98percentpod@gmail.com, but any story for me is also a report for Spotlight and Equity, to help with their independent investigations and to hopefully inspire long term changes in regulation.

As I said before, the emotional fallout for those affected and who have been victimised by all of this is severe. There have been some lovely and well meaning offers and suggestions being made online about opportunities and follow up support for those affected by all this in regards to webinars, Q&A's, workshops etc. I have been speaking to those affected who have expressed concern about things being talked about on their behalf, without letting the dust settle and approaching them first about what is best for them. So follow up offerings and things considered "career opportunities" are on the back burner right now, but are being discussed and planned. If you're someone in the industry who wants to be involved in future plans of this nature, please do loop me in and we can chat about some future offerings in line with what/where the victims are. I am hoping Spotlight and/or Equity will help facilitate this also.

The support and lovely messages I have received personally through all this has been incredible, thank you to every single person who has reached out, shared posts, shared love and expressed concern - even if you aren't directly affected yourselves. A wonderful listener and follower reached out to me asking if there was anywhere they could donate to support the efforts. They tweeted: "How amazing that we as an industry have people like the 98% advocating for us, if you want to support them they have a ko-fi! Working on their own time, for free, to help us 98 percenters. I'm sure every little helps even if it is a share!"

I just wanted to hold space for that, to say a real heart felt thank you, to the actor who posted that, and everyone who subsequently donated. Every penny goes straight back into what I'm doing here and you all really helped ease the pressure of the shifts I lost to be able to be available and working on this when it mattered most. Hashtag actorslife freelancer, amirite? No paid leave here!! If you would like to donate to The 98%, there is a link to the ko-fi page in the episode description. Or you can join our patreon for monthly donations with access to behind the scenes content.

Lastly, and most importantly, a message to the victims...those who have been affected by the deplorable actions of a conman, financial fraudster, and the insidious grip of moral corruption. Your resilience, courage, and commitment to seek justice in the face of adversity is inspiring.

You are not alone and I urge you to hold onto hope. Hope for a time where we can say that justice has been met, where those responsible are held to account for their actions, and where restitution is made to those who have suffered unjustly. There is strength in community, and I know many have now found that. For those who have contacted me, thank you for trusting me with your stories.

You are not to blame. You shouldn't have "known better." You should be in an industry that values you, keeps you safe, and listens when concerns are raised. These sorts of people know what they are doing and are good at it. Exploitation, manipulation...sadly, in many ways, this industry is an enabler for that behaviour. Your voice matters and I truly hope we see a change in the tide after this scandal, so that every step can be taken to ensure something like this doesn't happen again.

I wish I could have gone into more detail about the context and true scope of the scam that has been going on, but I'm sure people listening will understand why that can't be happening right now. I want to thank everyone who has reached out with information, intel, experiences, thoughts, offers of help on the ground (don't forget I've been conducting all this from 4,000 miles away in North America!) Everything and everyone that has helped me piece together what has been going on, beginning to end..thank you. Extended also onto everyone who has followed, shared and supported those putting their voice to this.

Please keep talking about this and raising the voices of those who are sharing. If you are in the Manchester acting scene please spread the word about this and let people involved know where they can come for help. There is more to come. Follow @the98percentpod on social media to follow the journey of the crusade, and email the98percentpod@gmail.com if you have something to share.

Speak soon and viva le resistance!!

Alexa