

## Autumn Reeser on *Entourage*, *No Ordinary Family* and Life During Pilot Season

BY CHRISTOPHER ROSEN

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Autumn Reeser has come a long way from playing the Tracy Flick-like Taylor Townsend on *The O.C.* The versatile character actress has spent the better part of this summer giving Ari Gold a second ulcer in her recurring part as the foul-mouthed and super-smart Lizzie on *Entourage*. This fall, she'll ply her trade at family friendly dramedy in the upcoming ABC pilot *No Ordinary Family*, a sort of live-action version of *The Incredibles*. She also does a monthly stage show in Los Angeles and juggles going back to school. And you thought your life was busy.

Autumn rang up Movieline from her car — hands free! — on the way to take a class at the L.A. voiceover studio, Kalmenson & Kalmenson (“I have a

disease called “Taking Too Many Classes”). She was running late because of traffic, but that just gave her more time to discuss *Entourage, No Ordinary Family* and where she’d like her musical theater background to take her next.

**You’ve had quite a juicy breakout on *Entourage* during the past two seasons, in part thanks to your profanity laced tête-à-têtes with Jeremy Piven. Did you enjoy playing those scenes?**

It’s a true battle — and that is so much fun. Conflict is always fun to play. It’s one of those high human dramas. They’re appealing to watch and — definitely as an actor — they’re appealing to play. It’s a great opportunity to play a strong woman who doesn’t back down from a powerful man and asserts herself and feels strongly about her choices. There were a lot of things about Lizzie that I never really explored within myself. That’s one of the things I like about acting and one of the reasons I rush to it — it allows you to explore otherwise uncharted pockets within your personality.

**Were you worried at all that the *Entourage* set wouldn’t be conducive to strong women — that it would be a boys’ club?**

I wasn’t worried about that — most sets are boys’ clubs because 90 percent of the crew is men. That’s kind of how it is. I like it — it’s a good set. They run a tight ship over there. They’ve been doing the show for seven seasons. They are really good at what they do, so it makes it a pleasure to work on. And they really wrote great material for me.

**Did they write Lizzie with you in mind?**

I actually auditioned to play E’s girlfriend, the jewelry designer last season [the role went to Alexis Dziena]. They didn’t end up booking me for that but they said, “We’ve got this other role that we think you’d be really great for, would you be interested?” So they never saw me read for it, and I never auditioned for this role; HBO approved me and I booked the role.

**Do you find that playing a strong female like Lizzie has changed the way you’re viewed in Hollywood?**

After *Entourage* it completely opened up my casting within the industry.

People saw me for a lot of roles that I hadn't been seen for before. Older roles. I went out this pilot season for a lot of lawyers and doctors. And cops — which I haven't quite mastered yet; I find that quite difficult. I would have to go on a ride-along. There were a number of cop shows this season that I went out for and I just... I don't believe myself as a cop, so I can't expect anyone else to believe me. I went pretty far on a couple of lawyer pilots, but I'm so happy with the way my pilot season worked out this year. I feel incredibly lucky right now to be working at a job within Los Angeles with people I like and respect and on a show that I'm really excited for.

**And you mention that job — in addition to this season of *Entourage*, you've also got *No Ordinary Family* coming up in September, where you play a kind of female Alfred...**

Exactly! That's exactly right — that's exactly who she is!

**...to Julie Benz's superwoman. But in the pilot you're only in a few scenes. What made you agree to co-star?**

[Executive producer] Greg Berlanti told me from the beginning that I would have more to do — that this character would be expanded — because it only is three scenes in the pilot. But an actor can't worry about that. For me, I really loved the script. I would watch the show. That doesn't happen very often when you're reading pilots. You have to trust your instincts for that — if it's a story that you like, that you would watch, and then that there's a character for you, it's like the perfect storm. That's rare to find all those things in one project — that's what you hope for as an actor. It really is a great job and I'm looking forward to seeing where it goes.

**Well at least you know you'll be doing a lot with Julie Benz, right?**

When I signed onto the show, it was Michael Chiklis and Romany Malco were the only two signed on to the show. We didn't know who was going to be playing Julie's role. And then I think I read on Deadline that Julie was cast and I was just so excited. I'm a big fan of Julie's from *Dexter* and I was just really waiting on pins and needles to see who they would get for the

mom. And I just really enjoy working with her — we get along really well. We have so much fun.

**The pilot is a lot of fun — do you see the show getting more serious or keeping that lighter tone?**

I think we're still playing with the tone right now. And trying to figure out what it's going to be and where it's going to settle back with this group that we have. And I think the intention with the first few episodes is to stretch the tone a bit and see where it ends up lying. To see what's the best fit.

**You were a teen queen on *The O.C.*, you played a lawyer on *Raising the Bar*, you've done comedy on *Entourage* and *No Ordinary Family* covers the action-adventure genre — is there anything you haven't done yet that you'd like to give a try?**

I would love to do a big-budget movie musical — I feel like there is one big musical movie a year. And I'm always there at the theater to see them — I love them. I'm actually going back to school right now to get my degree in musical theater. I have three more classes to finish.

**Really? What made you decide to go back?**

Turning 30. Having my degree was a chapter in my life that I had to close, and I just decided that now that I'm settled and in town for a while, it would be a good year to try to complete it. It is a lot of work, though, reading over the whole schedule. It's going to be difficult to balance with the show and all the prep leading up to the premiere date in September.

**Do you ever get to put that musical theater background to use?**

I do a live stage show here in Los Angeles. It's called [\*The Thrilling Adventure and Supernatural Suspense Hour\*](#). It's like a vintage radio show — it's akin to *Prairie Home Companion*. It's that style but it's more — we have space cowboys and a pair of drunken ghost chasers. It involves a lot of great actors, comedians and voice over artists from all over town. It's just a fun comedy show with singing and stories. Coming from theater — I don't have the opportunity or time currently to do a full production — so it's a way to keep my on-stage chops sharp. It's just fun.

**So then we should book you for a guest spot on *Glee*?**

Absolutely, I would love to do that!

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