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auditions hit New Jersey: Part 1

by [An Nicholson](#)

Just as you'd expect, NJ's 'American Idol' auditions featured singing hopefuls, fresh-eyed teenagers, and reality TV veterans. Click on for interviews with a couple auditioners and first day recap.



This summer, [American Idol](#) kicked off auditions for its 12th season airing in January 2013. The week of June 18th it took its auditions to Northern New Jersey's Prudential Center, with actual auditions occurring Saturday, June 23.

When you cover live [American Idol](#) auditions, there are a couple things you expect: unmediated chaos, interesting characters, human interest stories, fame seekers, dew eyed talent, disappointment, and [Ryan Seacrest](#). Well, this past Saturday's auditions featured every single *American Idol* staple in spades.

Mediated Chaos



5,000 hopefuls turned out around 5:00am Saturday morning to audition for *American Idol*. However, despite the number of people on a surprisingly cool yet sunny day, it felt incredibly well-

ordered. Even when I jumped into the pen with the waiting auditioners, with a press of bodies around me and Ryan Seacrest at the center, it didn't feel chaotic in the slightest. I didn't sense diva energy, competitive hostility or overt anxiety. Everyone just seemed excited to be there, incredibly fresh and slightly hopeful the judges would recognize their star potential.

Interesting Characters

While most people dressed in their ordinary Saturday afternoon hanging out clothes (including the hipster dudes and the kid-next-door teenagers), the people who stood out rocked hot pink suede platforms, red sequined miniskirts, patriotic top hats, gypsy chick clothing, and aqua leopard platforms. One top-hatted, wig-wearing character dropped his own personal pearls of wisdom to the surrounding crowd while dressing. Oily skin is good (it looks dewy on camera). Stare into the camera (it makes your eyes twinkle). And, if you try out for the [X-Factor](#), you'll have one camera and one judge in round one, two cameras and two judges in round two, and three cameras and three judges in round three. If you make it to round four, you meet the show's judges. Last year, he reached *X-Factor's* third round during their Prudential Center auditions and, like most people, planned on auditioning for The [Voice](#) if he didn't make the *AI* cut.

One teenager, accompanied by her Nook reading mom (who looked like her sister), painted one finger the same color as her mother's nail polish while 16-year-old Alexis was a veteran, having auditioned for *American Idol's* Pittsburgh round at 15, and hoped her rendition of *Lean On Me* would get her through this time.

Surprisingly, 19-year-old Olivia, a Miss American Spirit winner, was not an *American Idol* old hat, having decided to wait until she hit age 18 and started college before auditioning this year. Her performance background included shows at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center with her high school choir.



Human Interest Stories

Although *American Idol's* human interest stories are typically heavy-handed and eyeroll-worthy complete with sepia overlay and violin concerto, it's a different story when you talk to the people face to face. Suddenly, you know why *AI* wanted to get their stories across.

27-year-old [Leandra Ramm](#), pictured with her fellow musician and audition songwriter Freddy Coscia, initially couldn't audition for *American Idol* until the police arrested her stalker. Her father is a noble peace prize winner who she never met but whose sperm donation brought her talent to the world (and her to the attention of her stalker when she discussed it on CNN).

Army specialist Romeire Brown planned on singing either Stevie Wonder's *Signed, Sealed and Delivered* or the patriotic *Star Spangled Banner*. He considered his audition a tribute to his brother, who he formerly performed with as a singing-rap duo, before the latter was murdered. To make the story even sadder, his brother's birthday fell on the second day of auditions.



For audition results see page 2, for photos see page 3.

Photo Credit: *A. Nicholson, Fox*

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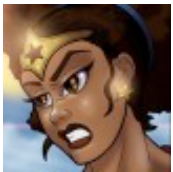
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Clacked by [An Nicholson](#) 
on Jun 28, 2012 @ 12:26 EST5EDT

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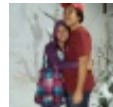
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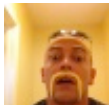
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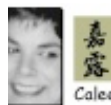
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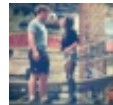
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