

## FOREWORD

by Tom McSweeney

The book that you are now holding is an invaluable tool for navigating the rough seas which lie ahead of you as you begin your journey as an actor in Hollywood. It not only encapsulates into one resource a “how to” on the inner workings of the business, defines and clarifies the necessary industry terminology, but also gives the Australian actor an easy transition into the culture and mindset of the American film and television industry.

When I was a young boy growing up in Cleveland, Ohio, I often dreamed of being an actor when I grew up. I was forever putting on shows in the neighbours backyard, using the sheets on the clotheslines as curtains; I went to drama classes at the local community theatre and was part of all the plays put on at school. But more than that, I was blessed to have spent several years working with The Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival, a professional theatre company based in my high school’s Civic Auditorium. I was trained over several seasons in every aspect of the theatre by working professionals and given an insight into the business we call “Show.” The Artistic Director of the company, Vincent Dowling, an Irishman of inestimable charm and talent, offered me a place to be captivated and from which to learn. He awakened in me a dream of something bigger . . . something better . . . but told me the cost of this training was that I had to promise him that “Whatever I learned I must return.” It is the creed by which I forged my career.

My parents, however, in an effort to protect me from my irrational fantasies, insisted that I enrol in college and earn a teaching degree. “People like us, don’t work in the movie business.” Needless to say, I went off to college, but spent my entire time there working in the theatre and creating “art.” Upon graduation, I returned home, determined to at least give a life in the entertainment industry a try. The only problem that I saw with this dream was the fact that I grew up in a middle class suburb of an industrial city where movies weren’t made. I didn’t know anyone in the industry and wasn’t even sure how movies and television were made. In my naiveté, I thought the industry was like the theatre, where the sum total of my experience came from.