

# SECTION EIGHT

## BECOMING GEOGRAPHICALLY DESIRABLE

### THE RIGHT TIME TO MOVE TO LOS ANGELES AND THE SCOUTING TRIP

• **This section of the book was inspired** by an interview I had with Tony Shepherd. At the time he was Vice President of Talent for Aaron Spelling Productions, overseeing the casting of all of their television series such as *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Melrose Place*, *The Heights*, *The Love Boat*, *Colbys*, *Dynasty*, *Hotel*, *Family*.

**Q: When do you think it's time for an actor to consider moving to Los Angeles?**

- **If an actor** wants to earn a living in motion pictures or television other than doing commercials, they have to be in Los Angeles. It may be time to think of moving when you've outgrown the market you're in. That means if you're in Chicago and you're pulling 60-70% callbacks, booking 35-40% of the jobs, you're ready.
- **If you've never been to Los Angeles**, make a trial visit. It's a tough city to live in; it's expensive. When someone is moving to L.A., it's not the actor, it's the person. It's a question of whether you want to pick up stakes. To move to L.A., you need talent, marketability, desire, time, money and patience.
- **I agree with Tony. Make a trip to Los Angeles** and check out the town; see if you could live here before you move.

## SECTION NINE

### CHILD ACTORS

- **If your child really wants to act—really wants to work—it can happen with your help.** This is the consensus of all the experts I have interviewed. Children, as well as adults, need dedication, talent and luck to make it.

- **In the writing of this Eleventh Edition, Austin Tovar**, my 18-year-old grandson, is in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade and has retired from acting for the time being. He worked on several long running Jack-In-The-Box commercials playing Jack Jr.—yes, he was wearing the big head. He loved working and being on the set but then he didn't like being pulled away from his activities for the hour drive to an audition. His parents opened a bank account for him as well as the mandatory trust fund. He pays for special things he wants to participate in from his own earnings. He gets to spend \$5 to \$20 from each paycheck he receives, depending on the amount of the check. He still receives residual checks and holding fees. (*See Austin's pictures in the Photo section.*)

- **Austin's younger brother, Jackson Tovar**, from age seven to nine also took acting classes and had an agent. He auditioned for a couple of years getting a few small jobs, but as he got more active in sports he also got tired of the long drives to audition. (*See Jackson's pictures in the Photo section.*)

- **Scams abound in the children's field.** We all think our children are fabulous. We can get swept away by the praise for our children and the promise of stardom. I have heard horror stories of families losing thousands of dollars after paying money up-front to illegitimate talent companies or acting schools for services that were promised but never provided. Throughout this section, I have quoted respected professionals in the business. Please read it carefully. Do not get ripped off.

• **Tracy Martin, acting coach, warns:**

- **Stay away from studios that offer pictures and lifetime classes** and more for an outrageous amount of money. Call around. Compare class fees and photographer fees. Again, see if these people are “in the know” with current agents and casting directors. Ask questions. Find out if they have students who are working. Often a snapshot and good cover letter is enough to submit to an agent. If the agent is interested, they will recommend several photographers.

• **There are expenses involved in getting any business started.** Your child will need classes, pictures and a working wardrobe, but you only pay for these at the time of service, not before. Agents and managers get paid commissions only after the child gets paid for working. At the end of this section I list teachers, photographers, agents and managers that I know personally or who were recommended by friends in the business. Check these resources out, do your own research, find out what you are paying for and follow your intuition.

• **Carlyne Grager of Dramatic Artists Agency Inc.** in Seattle is a mother of child actors and for the past 15 years has been an agent and co-owner of an agency that represents many children in the Northwest. I asked for her views of child actors as a parent and agent.

- **I think every parent’s level of investment** grows beyond what they originally intended and they all get caught up in the industry more than expected, but some parents nearly imprison their children within the Hollywood cycle of networking, classes, showcases, auditions, etc.
- **It is far better for a parent** to think that a career should be developed in much the same manner that they would develop their child athletically or scholastically. In those areas they start small and invest as their child’s interest grows, skills develop and passion increases. Sports and academics can affect children’s lives in many of the same ways that acting for film and television can. Good or bad, it all depends on the attitudes and character of parents, coaches and professional guides such as agents/managers. How will the child’s self-esteem and cultural enrichment be developed?
- **In my opinion, acting has been a saving grace** with my children when school wasn’t going well or athletics were too political and competitive. It gave them another “arena” in which to shine or excel. Their acting friends always remained a separate entity outside of the social politics at school and in sports, giving them a “port” in the storm.

- **Don't even think of living "close" to L.A.** If you move to Orange, Ventura or San Bernardino Counties you have not moved to Los Angeles. Yes, the rent may be cheaper but there is a reason. You can't drive into Los Angeles for an audition, interview, class or networking in less than two hours most times of the day. You must be close enough to be a part of the show biz community. If you are making the move here, give yourself as many advantages as possible by living where the action is. Be sure you have a Los Angeles cell phone number too, it is smart to get one before you move: 213, 323, 310 or 818. No excuses; do it.
- **When you do move to Los Angeles**, it is in your best interest to be debt free, computer/on-line savvy with your own up-to-date computer and a paid-for reliable car. You'll need money to set up a place to live, which is usually first and last month, a security deposit and for sanity, a two month cushion; this could total \$5,000 or more. Money for pictures and picture reproductions—figure \$1,000 and it will take about a month to have them ready to go. It would be wonderful to know you have enough money to take two classes a week plus a networking group for at least six months. Conservatively, that would be \$450 a month, so \$2700. Keep in mind you are moving here to be an actor; it is most important to be acting. Next will be your spending money for three months. What is your life style? How much money do you need each week? This could be another \$3,000. While you are preparing to move, keep track of your daily expenses. Most things in Los Angeles cost more than where you live, unless you're moving from NYC, and there are so many more things you will want to take advantage of here. Don't plan on being a different person when you move; it just doesn't happen.
- **When you arrive here with this kind of financial backing** it will still be a jolt—moving is one of the most stress-causing events a human can experience. With your above basic needs taken care of, you will be more likely to have a successful move. You will be more at ease while you are finding that survival job to eventually pay for these expenses after your hometown savings have been exhausted. You will be living your dream of being an actor in Los Angeles.
- **Many move here without financial backing** and make a go of it as well. You can work and earn money here, so if you want to move, move. Will it be harder? Yes. But you will be here and at least learning what it is like to be here. Some people have more courage than others and some are more willing to live on the edge than others. You decide for

yourself. You don't want to end up at 50 years old and say, "Gee, I never took the chance."

- **Do not count on a public transportation system** to get around; you will be sorry. In your home town, buy a Sunday *Los Angeles Times* newspaper or get it online. Also check online: *Craig's List* (Los Angeles.) You will find lots of information, possible survival jobs available and the costs of rents. When you get here, pick up the *L.A. Weekly* newspaper and the *Recycler*. They're free and can be found at most 7-11s, liquor stores, music stores, newsstands, theaters, restaurants and other locations.
- **Carry this book with you** and purchase *The Thomas Guide* (street map book). Many rentals will expect a six month or one year lease. There are bulletin boards and rental services where you can look for a roommate. Be careful, don't trust too easily.
- **Jay Bernstein, manager, writer, producer**, taught a course called *Stardom, the Management of, the Public Relations for, and the Survival and Maintenance In*.

**Q: What is your advice for actors who are moving here from out of town?**

- **They should be studying the town.** It's very tricky with a lot of roads and some of them look like freeways. You have to be very careful where you're going. I tell people to spend a year like you were in college. If your parents paid for your college, they may pay for a year here. If you worked your way through college, then work a year here. Get a feeling of what's going on. Weigh every decision. There's plenty of time. Get that career team together.
- **If you are new, visit or call the local Police**, crime prevention section, and ask if where you are planning to stay is a safe area.
- **Always be on the lookout** for film and television personalities. You will see them.
- **Actor/writer Jim Martyka moved here from Minnesota** and has become a resident tour guide for his family and friends who come to visit. He has added some great cool spots to this section.

**Losangelesalmanac.com.** All the L.A. neighborhoods.

*To download and print an updated version of this and all resource lists, go to [actingiseverything.com](http://actingiseverything.com).*

## SECTION 10

### CITIES OUTSIDE OF LOS ANGELES

- **Many of you reading this book** are outside of Los Angeles and wondering how you will make the leap into the Industry.
- **Al Burton gives an excellent interview** in The *Child Actor section* about the work you can do in your hometown. Throughout the book the information can be found to gain training and experience to help you achieve a satisfactory artistic life where you live. If you can become a big fish in a little pond, you can achieve a great sense of accomplishment.
- **My daughter, Cynthia Kerr's**, husband was transferred to Dallas, Texas. She had been an accomplished actress as a teenager. After marriage, motherhood and a successful real estate career, she wanted to return to her first love, acting. This move was her opportunity. The first week, I visited and we checked out the town. I had asked actors from Dallas who studied with me, where to look. KD Studio was mentioned by several. We met with the director and knew we had found a home. Cynthia enrolled in KD Studio Actors Conservatory of the Southwest. She thrived on going to classes every day, the voice and body work, the rehearsals, the camera, acting classes and the friendships. She had her pictures taken and interviewed with four agents; one offered to take her on the spot. Because of the excellent schooling and networking at KD Studio she was in two plays, three industrials and a McDonalds' national commercial during her first year. At the time of her graduation, she had paid for her education and expenses from her acting work, and the residual payments continued. She had another baby and then, at last, they were transferred home to Los Angeles.
- **Order books** on acting in your city through Samuel French Bookstore, [samuel french.com](http://samuel french.com) and contact your state's Film Advisory Board for agents, films and extra casting agencies that will be casting in your area. Also, look for film and acting schools in your area; they are usually full of useful information and industry people.

## MID-AMERICA (AUSTIN & DALLAS, TEXAS)

- **Actors in this part of the country flock to Texas**, more specifically Austin, which has not just a vibrant film, television and theatre scene, but also a great music community. While industry people say Houston has fallen off the map, Dallas still provides a number of opportunities for actors.
- **Though limited, Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado** also have some theatre. In Denver, check out the **Denver Center Theatre Company** at 303/893-4000, [dcpa.org](http://dcpa.org). They hold open calls.
- **Thanks to:** Actress and coach **Juli Erickson** for providing information on Dallas and **Peter Blackwell** from Austin Soundmine for contributions to the Austin section.

### • AUSTIN

#### WEBSITES, PUBLICATIONS

**Austin Actors net**, [austinactors.net](http://austinactors.net).

**Groups.yahoo.com/group/AustinFilm Casting**, While in the groups section, also check out casting notices for Houston, Lubbock and South Texas as well. This is the newsletter for all of Austin's news for actors, they post daily notices for everything going on in Austin.

#### CASTING OFFICES

**Beth Sepko**, 512/472-5385. [bethsepkocasting.com](http://bethsepkocasting.com).

**Donise L. Hardy, CSA/Casting Works LA**, 512/485-3113. [castingworksla.com](http://castingworksla.com).

#### TALENT AGENCIES

**CIAO! Talents**, 512/930-9301. [ciaotalents.com](http://ciaotalents.com).

**Collier Talent**, 512/236-0500. [colliertalent.com](http://colliertalent.com).

**Acclaim Talent**, 512/416-9222. [acclaimtalent.com](http://acclaimtalent.com).

**Actors Clearinghouse**, 512/476-3412. [actorsclearinghouse.com](http://actorsclearinghouse.com).

**Lee Peterson and Associates**, 512/912-9918. [LeePeterson.com](http://LeePeterson.com). Talent manager.

#### UNION OFFICES, ASSOCIATIONS

**Texas Film Commission**, [governor.state.tx.us/divisions/film/hot;ine](http://governor.state.tx.us/divisions/film/hot;ine).

**Austin Film Society**, [austinfilm.org](http://austinfilm.org).

#### CLASSES, COACHES, STUDIOS

**C.K. McFarland**, 512/441-3738, [ckmcfarland.com](http://ckmcfarland.com). Great acting coach, she owns and teaches at Alleywood Studios, home of Me Jane Movies. C.K. teaches on-camera acting, nuts and bolts of film work and a wonderful creativity class for actors. The studio space is very comfortable for taking risks, this is where I like to teach when I come to Austin.

**Lee Peterson**, 512/912-9918. [LeePeterson.com](http://LeePeterson.com). Acting for Film.

**Mona Lee**, 512/323-2090. [thebizonline.com/britelites](http://thebizonline.com/britelites).

**Andy Crouch**, 512/443-3688. Heroes of Comedy, improv.

**Keene Studios**, [keenestudios.com](http://keenestudios.com). Email: [KeeneStudios@gvtc.com](mailto:KeeneStudios@gvtc.com).

**Peter Blackwell**, 512/423-3680. [ciaotalents.com](http://ciaotalents.com).

**University of Texas**, 512/471-5793. [utexas.edu/cofa/theatre](http://utexas.edu/cofa/theatre).

**Austin Community College**, [austincc.edu](http://austincc.edu).

**• SOUTH FLORIDA**

• **Most of the acting opportunities are in South Florida.** However, there are the occasional jobs in the northern part of the state. Actors in Orlando should contact Brevard Talent, 407/841-7775, [brevardtalentgroup.com](http://brevardtalentgroup.com) for representation.

**WEBSITES, PUBLICATIONS**

**Actors Info Booth**, [actorsinfoooth.com](http://actorsinfoooth.com). A tremendous resource for actors with information on how the business works in Florida as well as resource lists, industry news workshops and castings.

**Film in Florida**, like Variety but for Florida, [filminflorida.com](http://filminflorida.com).

**Florida Actors**, message board of film jobs and castings, [florida-actors.com](http://florida-actors.com).

**Florida Film Directory**, [filmfla.com/index.cfm](http://filmfla.com/index.cfm).

**Green Room** (resources and discussion forums), [greenroomorlando.com](http://greenroomorlando.com).

**Florida Acting**, [floridaacting.com](http://floridaacting.com).

**Actor websites**, [actorsgetawebsitehere.com](http://actorsgetawebsitehere.com). Specializing in actor websites.

**CLASSES, COACHES, STUDIOS**

**Marc Durso**, 954/647-7569. [acttrue.com](http://acttrue.com). Classes in Hagen Process, Linklater voice and Imagery Tech throughout US and Europe. Past clients can be seen in blockbuster films, TV shows, commercials, etc. Proven technique that reveals truthful human behavior. No tricks, no gimmicks, no shortcuts, no attitudes!

**Workshops**, 954/731.4888. LA and NY industry professionals teaching in Florida, [actorsinfoooth.com/workshops](http://actorsinfoooth.com/workshops)

**Norene Bini**, 305/891-0047. Dialogue and dialect coach, specializes in Spanish, French, Italian.

**CASTING OFFICES**

**Dee Miller Casting**, 305/757-6055, 7300 NE 4th Ct., Miami, 33138.

**Lori Wyman Casting**, 305/354-3901, 16499 NE 19<sup>th</sup> Ave., Miami, 33162.

**Di Prima Casting**, 305/672-9232, (3 locations) [diprimacasting.com](http://diprimacasting.com)

**Ellen Jacoby Casting**, 305/531-5300, 300 Biscayne Blvd., No. 1150, Miami, 33131.

**Protocol Models on the Gulf—Casting**, 239/417-1200, 5017 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, 34113.

**The Extras Group**, 305/981-7580, [theextrasgroup.com](http://theextrasgroup.com).

• **More casting directors** can be found at [actorsinfoooth.com](http://actorsinfoooth.com).

**TALENT AGENCIES**

• There are a number of both union and nonunion agencies in South Florida. For a complete listing, check out Actors Info Booth Inc. at [actorsinfoooth.com](http://actorsinfoooth.com).

**UNION OFFICES, ASSOCIATIONS**

**Florida Film Commission**, [filmflorida.org](http://filmflorida.org).

**THEATRES**

**Red Barn Theatre**. 305/293-3035. Box 707, Key West, 33401. Casting: Open call for AEA actors in October. managing director, Mimi McDonald. Opportunities for interns.

**Riverside Theatre, Inc.** 772/231-5860. [riversidetheatre.com](http://riversidetheatre.com). 3250 Riverside Park Drive, Vero Beach, 32963. Casting: auditions through Florida Professional Theatre Assoc..

**Florida Stage**, 561/585-3404. [floridastage.org](http://floridastage.org). 262 South Ocean Blvd, Manalapan, 33462. Casting: open calls during the summer months, send pix to Nancy Barnett, managing director.

**HEADSHOT PHOTOGRAPHERS**

**Bob Lasky**, 305/891-0550, boblasky.com. North Miami. You can use pictures taken by him in Los Angeles.

**Paul Greco**, paulgrecophotography.com.

**Lynn Parks**, lynnparks.com.

**PHOTO DUPLICATION**

**G.N.A. Professional Photo Lab**, 305/893-3500, gnaphoto@msn.com. 12460 NE 13<sup>th</sup> Place North, Miami, 33161.

**• NASHVILLE****CASTING OFFICES**

**Jo Doster, CSA**, 615/463-9883.

**Regina Moore, Talent Connection Casting**, 615/831-0039, moorecasting.com, 417 Welshwood Dr., Ste. 109, Nashville, 37211.

**Suzzane Skinner, Image Casting**, 615/251-1400, imagecasting.com, 118 16th Ave. S., Music Row 200, Nashville, 37203.

**TALENT AGENCIES**

**Advantage Models and Talent, Carol Lahrman**, 615/790-5001, advantagemodel.com, Nashville.

**Agency for the Performing Arts, Brad Sugarman**, 615/297-0100, apa-agency.com.

**Dan Agency Models and Talent**, 615/244-3266, danagency.com, 1104 16th Ave. S., Nashville, 37212.

**DS Entertainment, Darlene Studie-McDowell**, 615/331-6264, dsentertainment.com, 4741 Trousdale Dr., Ste. 2, Nashville, 37220.

**Opry Link Modeling and Talent**, 615/320-9501, 50 Music Square West, Nashville, 37203.

**Sharon Smith Talent**, 615/742-4277, sharonsmithtalent.com.

**Talent Trek, Evelyn Foster**, 615/279-0010, talenttrek.com/main/index.cfm, 2021 21st Ave. S., Ste. 102, Nashville, 37212. Website also has a great resource list with links.

**The Cannon Group, Ms. Jimmi McCarter**, 615/297-0608.

**TML Talent Agency, Betty Clark**, 615/321-5596, PO Box 40763, Nashville, 37204.

**UNION OFFICES, ASSOCIATIONS**

**Film Nashville**, filmnashville.com.

**Tennessee Film, Entertainment, and Music Commission**, state.tn.us/film.

**THEATRE**

**Clarence Brown Theatre at the University of Tennessee**. 865/974-6011. 206 McClung Tower, Knoxville, 37996. MFA program in Acting.

**Playhouse on the Square**, 901/725-0776. 51 South Cooper, Memphis, 38104.

**WEBSITES, PUBLICATIONS**

**Nashville Rage**, audition listings, nashvillerrage.com.

**Nashville Scene**, free paper with audition listings.

**The Tennessean**, audition listings in the Sunday edition, tennessean.com.

**• NEW ORLEANS**

**1st Step Consulting**, 985/649-0561, 1stsc.com. Training, pictures and booking for models and actors.