

PREPARING THOSE IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA

BY GARY MICHAEL SMITH



Greg Alan Williams is an Emmy award-winning actor with more than 100 primetime television episode and film credits. Still a working performer, he not only teaches the craft across the country in a 2-day workshop called the "Actor's Breakthrough Weekend" but also is host to the Film Actor Training Studio, which is held up to 17 classes a week and features a number of successful actors as coaches. Locations for the traveling course include Austin, Atlanta, Chicago, and DC, with two new weekends offered in Shreveport, Louisiana.

I asked Mr. Williams what motivated him to offer his Actor's Breakthrough Weekend workshop and Training Studio—why the select cities, to include New Orleans and Shreveport?

"While working on film projects

in Shreveport," said Williams, "I met a number of talented actors at various stages of their careers who were committed to growing their craft and their knowledge of the business. Mentoring other actors keeps me focused. It was a perfect match."

When asked about the term "breakthrough," Mr. Williams explained "Breaking through barriers and overcoming obstacles that prevent us from reaching for and achieving our artistic and professional best—usually, obstacles of our own making. And all this is based on 25 years of practical, on-going success and experience in the film industry." His goals for the workshops are to "prepare committed Louisiana actors to seek and secure principal roles in the many films being shot in Shreveport and elsewhere around the state."

What about ability and the

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practicality of surviving as working actor? "Ability; I wish I could say that ability makes the difference between a successful actor and an unsuccessful one," he confesses, "but I spent eight seasons on the beaches of *Baywatch!*" Mr. Williams continued, "Film is a visual medium—first and foremost it's about what we see. A good-looking actor with little ability has fewer work options and probably not much career

longevity. Eye-candy or not, train, train, train. Become the best actor you can be. Practicalities and realities; early in one's career, make few bills and stay as flexible as possible so you can go where the work is. Regardless of where you begin or at what age, settle in and commit to your career for the long haul, stay the course and you will get your chances to prove your worth."

In show business, genius may be awareness of one's limits and of one's unlimited potential."

Finally, I asked if Greg Alan Williams could give one single most important piece of advice to actors—no matter their level of experience. "Be nice to everyone, all the time. Like life, this business is all about relationships."

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