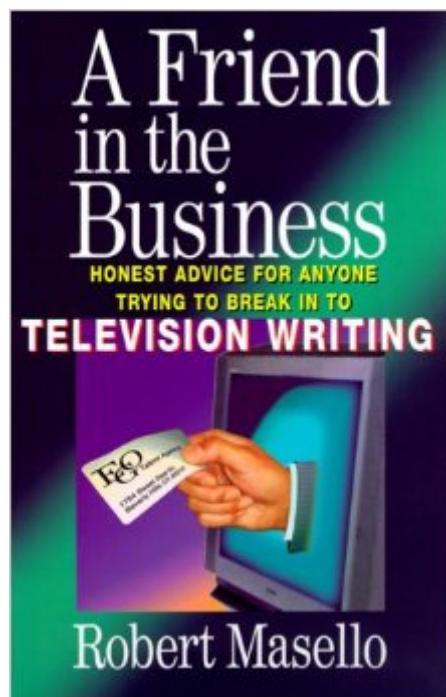


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# A Friend In The Business: Honest Advice For Anyone Trying To Break Into Television Writing



## **Synopsis**

Professional TV writer tells all: Insider secrets for getting in the door and coming out a success! Everyone who wants to write for television could use a friend in the business. Robert Masello can be that friend. He's an award-winning journalist, author, and successful TV writer. Now he's sharing the insider secrets he learned the hard way... Finding someone to read your spec script Protecting your ideas Bagging a good agent Landing a staff job--and keeping it Keeping full credit for your work--in the office and on the screen Choosing the right collaborator Collecting residuals and script fees Joining the Writers Guild of America and more. Funny, smart, empathetic, anecdotal, and most of all, helpful. This is an essential book for anyone who wants to write for the small screen.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I teach television writing and screenwriting classes at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in the Film & Television Department and Department of Dramatic Writing. I have never in 12 years made a book on TV writing required reading for my students because there was nothing good enough out there. That has all changed with *A Friend In The Business*. Masello chronicles his upstream journey in the strange, funny and sometimes dangerous waters of network television in a style that is both hilarious and sobering. He talks the talk and walks the walk. Any writer who has worked in TV will nod his or her head in painful and comical recognition. I have written for television, worked as a staff writer on two shows and had 3 pilot deals. This is important to know because besides teaching this stuff I've lived it. There is no book about breaking into television writing out there that even comes close to *A Friend In The Business*. It's truthful, entertaining and will make

anyone who wants to know what it's like to break in--and more important--stay in the business. I loved it.

I enjoyed reading this book, and found it interesting to hear the trench stories of one man's journey into Hollywood. However, there is something about the book that I didn't like, and I can't quite pinpoint it....there is a feel that the author was not as successful in Hollywood as he wanted to be, and decided to at least leverage his limited experiences by writing a book about them (versus some books out there that seem to be driven by a true desire to impart hard-earned wisdom), while settling some scores in the process. Kind of like, "I'll show them...." (more subtle, but still there). I'll give one example, and perhaps it's not the best one. He mentions that he was always hip-pocketed by the agencies, not signed, and tells us that info as if that is a good thing, like phew, he beat the system. OK, yes, being hip-pocketed is better than nothing at all, especially at the beginning, but let's face it, if an agent never wants to sign you, you did not pull one over on them. It just felt like he was trying to justify a lot of this kind of stuff. There are so many books out there that after reading, I am dying to have lunch with the author to meet him in person....whereas here, I found myself not having that experience at all. But, the book was funny and had some good intro-to-the-business info.

I work in a college career services office & bought this book for our resource center. It arrived last week and has not yet made it onto the shelf--because I can't put it down! Many career books are dry "how to" manuals which may have valuable information, but lose the readers' interest before it can be imparted. Not this book. Mr. Masello's engaging, witty writing keeps the reader riveted. And while being entertained, you also learn a good deal about succeeding in TV writing. (Which, granted, appears to be much like its cousins in radio/movies etc...somewhat dependent upon luck, timing and perseverance). At any rate, if you are contemplating a career in TV writing or looking for a good book to add to your career library, this is a must have. Note: I see he has another coming out in April on getting books published...I plan to order it as well!

Robert Masello's book about writing for television is worth buying for anyone interested in the TV business. Instead of focusing on how to write a spec TV script Masello gives the reader useful information via his own TV experience on how to survive the shark infested waters of Hollywood. He tells the reader what to expect in a pitch meeting, as a freelance writer, and as a writer on staff for a weekly TV series. His advice is honest and witty; he had me laughing out loud starting with his opening quote. His personal experiences served to make the book a page turner from beginning to

end. Like William Goldman's "Adventures in the Screen Trade" Masello's "A Friend in the Business" offers a down to earth, no punches pulled primer on what it's like to survive in the business. Even if you're not planning on becoming a TV writer, Masello's book is a fun read. I'd recommend it to all my friends (and have).

Even if you're one of the five people who have no desire to write for TV, or movies, you will love Robert Masello's hilarious tales of "the business." If you're one of the millions of aspiring writers than you absolutely have to pick up this book. Unlike the usual how-to tome, with its silly rules (only people who indent 1.5 inches on a page are permitted to write for TV) Masello takes us on a journey through the real world, and unreal characters, of writing for television. If you can stop laughing, you'll find some very practical advice on how to avoid the land mines of script writing that await writers daring to cross the California border. This is one non-fiction book that reads like a novel.

Boy, am I learning a lot from this book! Everything from the nitty gritty about preparing and pitching a script to the politics and personalities that open (or shut) the doors to a television career. I'd call it "must reading" for anyone who wants to be a television writer--or for anyone who wonders why contemporary television is the way it is.

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