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ENGLISH SPEECHES

WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES



HUGH JACKMAN

BE THANKFUL

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I'm starting with a quote. It'll make sense in a second. I've never, ever watched Mr. Rogers neighbourhood. I grew up in Australia, didn't even know what Mr. Rogers was all about. I wept like a baby watching that documentary, 'Won't You Be My Neighbour?' And I wrote this down as I got to this point and I was crying, I was stopping the recording so I could write it down.

Mr. Rogers said and this was at a commencement speech or a graduation speech, I'm not sure which. 'From the time you were little, people have smiled you into smiling. People have talked you into talking, sung you into singing, loved you into loving. People have helped you all along the way. Some of them may be right here, some of them may be far away. Some of them may even be in heaven. But deep down, you have always known they wanted what was better. They wanted what was best for you. They've cared about you beyond measure and have encouraged you to be true to the best within you.'

I heard this quote. I wrote it down and the speech that I was writing for this, I ripped up because I didn't come into this business. My first job was 26. I did not come in fully formed. I always feel that I'm a work in progress and there is no, absolutely, I promise you no way I would be standing on this stage with this extraordinary honor if it wasn't for the many, many people. So, Mr. Rogers, I'm not going to thank everybody. Don't worry everyone, I'm not going to thank everybody. But I am going to thank the people that are here tonight.

And I'm just going to be upfront with you, this is going to be long. It's going to be long. It's going to be longer than it should. I've hosted the Oscars, the Tony awards four times. I know what makes a great speech. And this is going to be too long. I'm going to do all the things you're not meant to do. I'm going to list names. Yes, my lawyer is included in that because he's the greatest. Yeah Salone, and he's my friend. I'm going to do a lot of the things you're not meant to do, but there's no orchestra gonna play me off. So, sorry, you have to deal with it.

But I'm down to three very important people. I'm going to mention Kirk Douglas, who Deb and I were, yeah, we were lucky to have morning tea with Kirk and his wife and this morning. I met Kirk when I was doing a play and I have a rule when I do theater, I never go out afterwards. It's a blanket rule because I don't really know how to say no to some people. So, I decide, I don't go out with anyone.

So, word got back to me from my assistant, I told Kirk Douglas that you're not going to go out with him after the show. I said, you what, you told who? He said, oh yeah, Kirk's coming to the show this weekend.

And he wanted to go out to dinner with you and I told no. I said, right. I'd really like you to call Kirk, who was 95 years of age and tell him, I just might be able to muster up enough energy to go out and have dinner with him that night.

As a young actor, I used to listen to a tape, a cassette tape as I drove to my acting school each day, back and forth. And I listened to his story that was being narrated. He for me was the north star of actors, him and Paul Newman, a movie star. When he turned a hundred, Steven Spielberg said at his birthday celebration, he said, I've worked with the best people in the business, honestly the best, but I've only met one movie star in my entire life. And that is Kirk Douglas because when Kirk Douglas is on the screen, I cannot look away.

Kirk also is an unbelievable philanthropist. Many of you know what he does for the Motion Picture Television fund, what he and his wife does for homelessness, for women. But to me, what always gets me is that at the height of his powers, during the McCarthy era, he risked everything and broke the strike, that was on the blacklist. He broke the blacklist himself because it was wrong and he would stake everything he'd built to rewrite that.

So, receiving this award means the absolutely world to me. Oh, by the way, I have to tell you, it's funny, Roger, that you said about me, the best is yet to come, because I immediately thought of Kirk who says that every time I've met him and even today at the age of 102, the best is yet to come. There's a secret in that for living, right?

Patrick Weitzel, Patrick Weitzel has been my agent for 20 years. He's here tonight. And I'm going to tell you a story. I said, Deb, I don't know how to sum up my 20-year friendship and working relationship with Patrick. He said, yeah you do, tell him the story of when you first met and when you got X-Men. I said, okay, I've never told this story before. So, you heard a little bit from Jason that someone else got the part. It was about a six-month process for me actually getting the part. You know, the ending of the story, I get the part, right? But what you don't know is that in those final two or three auditions, it was about a two-week period or a week, something like that.

We were in LA, Deb and I to actually start proceedings on adopting our child, Oscar. And we were doing that in Los Angeles. So, we'd flown in from Australia. I was due to start a film 10 days from then. The director of the film cast me in my first ever movie. And he was doing another small movie and he asked me to be in it. It wasn't a lead role; it was a small role. Of course, I said, yes, there was no contract. There wasn't a handshake. You know, my mate says, we are making a movie, I said, yeah, great, I'll be in.

So, as all this was happening with X-Men and it was going further and further down the line, it was getting more and more serious. We were doing deals in case I got the part, my new agent at the time, Patrick was only about six months. And this was the first audition I'd had. So, we'd never really been in the cold or another deal before. I get the part and I ring and Patrick said, hey man, you got it. And I was about to say, without knowing his response, I can't do the part because I've said to my mate, I'd be in his film. And he starts in 10 days. I didn't have to say that in the end, because Patrick said, I know you said you are going to be in the film. And I want you to know, we're going to honor that agreement.

And I'll never forget this. He said to me, he goes, no amount of success is ever worth that moment where 5, 10, 15 years from now, you walk into a room and across the room, the other side of the room is the guy who gave you your first job and you can't look him in the eye. And I said, I really want to do X-men, on

every level. It's about the role, it's about everything. And he said, yeah, but you gave your word. And I said, yeah. And he said something else. He said, where you want to get to in life is never as important as the way you want to live your life.

And Patrick Patty, you'll remember this night as well as I do. He rang up the director, we were up till three o'clock in the morning. Deb and I were waiting by the phone at three o'clock in the morning, Patty rang me and said, guess what you're doing X-Men, he's recasted already. And he had, he would happily moved on. But in that moment and those eight hours, I think of negotiations probably, that's when I knew not only is Patrick Weitzel a great agent, he's a great man. It's the luckiest thing of my career. And I would not be standing here and half the things I've done in my career, would I have done if it wasn't for you Patty, I love you man. I would never be able to get away with that long story at any televised event. I could see them in the control room. Really, he's talking about his agent. No, cut, play the music.

Finally, Deb. You know, you have taught me that life is actually never defined by highlight reels, even though, by the way, I love the reels. Thank you so much. Whoever put those together, I was like, wow. Except for the boat Derek scene, we could've missed that one too. But you really have told me that life is not defined by those, life actually happens in between that. Life happens when the camera is not rolling.

You believed in me when I couldn't, you've loved me with a passion and a depth that I didn't even know existed. And I don't think I even felt that I deserved. You have pushed and encouraged me when I was scared to venture out. You have smiled me into smiling. You have sung me into singing. You have loved me into loving. And like everything I do in my life, I share this with you. I love you. Thank you all.

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