



Halfway to Hollywood: Diaries 1980--1988 (Michael Palin Diaries)

Michael Palin

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A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Nonfiction of 2011 title

The second volume of Michael Palin's diaries covers the bulk of the 1980s, a decade in which the ties binding the Pythons loosened—they made their last film *Monty Python's Meaning of Life* in 1983. For Michael, writing and acting took over much of his life, culminating in his appearances in *A Fish Called Wanda*, in which he played the hapless, stuttering Ken, and won a BAFTA for Best Supporting Actor. *Halfway to Hollywood* follows Palin's torturous trail through seven movies and ends with his final preparations for the documentary that was to change his life—*Around the World in 80 Days*.

During these years he co-wrote and acted in Terry Gilliam's *Time Bandits* as well as spearheading Gilliam's follow-up success *Brazil*. Palin co-produced, wrote and played the lead in *The Missionary* opposite Maggie Smith, who also appeared with him in *A Private Function*, written by Alan Bennett. In television the decade was memorable for *East of Ipswich*, inspired his links with Suffolk. Such was his fame in the US, he was enticed into once again hosting the enormously popular show *Saturday Night Live*. He filmed one of the BBC's *Great Railway Journeys* as well as becoming chairman of the pressure group Transport 2000. His life with Helen and the family remains a constant, as the children enter their teens.

Palin's joy of writing is evident once more in *Halfway to Hollywood* as he demonstrates his continuing sense of wonder at the world in which he finds himself. A world of screens large and small.

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