

**Bonus Section: Great Winter Getaways**

# Los Angeles

OCTOBER 1993

TWO-FIFTY

## Tom Cruise

**No More Mr. Nice Guy**

by Rod Lurie

## Instant Karma

McMartin, 10 years after

## Hey, Daddy-O

Like, the beatniks are back

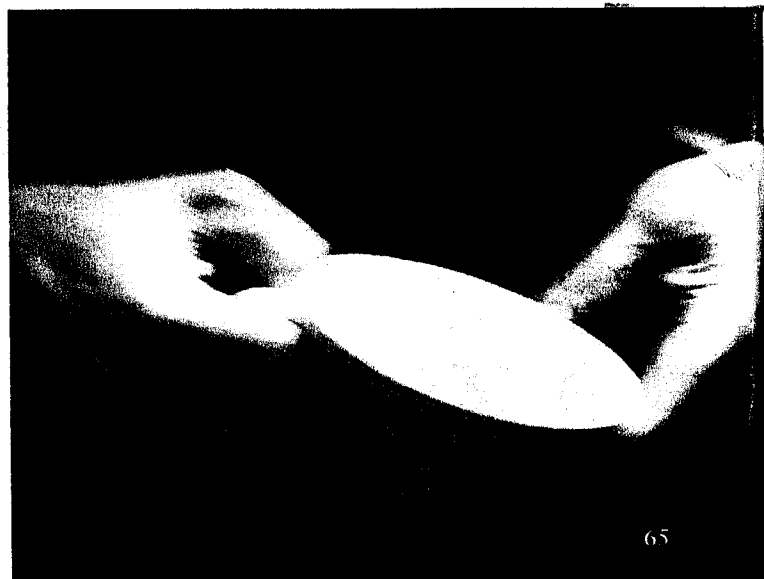
## No Carjack!

How to really shock a thief



# CONTENTS

O c t o b e r



## FEATURES

- 48 Instant Karma McMartin 10 years after  
by *Mary A. Fischer*

---

- 58 No More Mr. Nice Guy What you don't want  
to know about Tom Cruise by *Rod Lurie*

---

- 65 Cool, Daddy-O! Holy Ferlinghetti—the beats  
are back by *Kent Black*

---

- 72 There Goes the Calder! The little sculpture  
that could by *Laura & John Stegman*

---

- 74 Outside In Jay Griffith's daring (and weird)  
landscapes by *Joanne Jaffe*

## COLUMNS

- 12 Openers Including *The Insider*, *Finds*,  
*Nights Out with Mr. Los Angeles*

---

- 30 Close-Up On ice with Barry Melrose,  
the king King by *Matthew Heller*

---

- 36 Music The inside story behind the very  
first Phil by *Dick Adler*

---

- 38 Survival L.A.'s carjack wars go high-tech  
James Bond by *Stanley Young*

---

- 150 Dining Out Drai's has got the boffo  
bouffe by *Bruce David Colen*

---

- 168 Films Robert Altman's *Short Cuts*—call  
it a long player by *Rod Lurie*

---

- 172 Performance Unleashing a treasure trove from  
Sondheim's trash can by *Dick Lochte*

---

- 176 Main Events From Dylan and Santana to  
Esa-Pekka ... what's doing this month

## SPECIAL SECTION

### Great Winter Weekends

Palm Springs' bohemian secret, 10 tough links, Vegas goes theme park, the taming of Taos—plus our guide to the West's best lifts, resorts and hideaways. *Page 81.*



Cover: *Illustration by Robert Grossman*

There is a story that Steve Tisch, producer of the 1983 coming-of-age classic *Risky Business*, the film that would eventually vault Tom Cruise into the warm aerie of megastardom, likes to tell.

After a tough day of shooting, Cruise approached Tisch, his partner Jon Avnet and the film's director, Paul Brickman. It seemed Cruise was concerned: He felt that his costar, Rebecca DeMornay, a newcomer who had snatched the part of sexy hooker Lana from Michelle Pfeiffer, was miscast. Things just weren't "working" between them.

# NO

give it his best shot. Two days later, he informed Tisch he would no longer be needing his location hotel room—he and DeMornay were now sharing a suite.

It's a cute story. And though some might see in it, even way back then, the first signs of a penchant for "tinkering," it's a charming tale of perhaps an overeager and naive young actor—certainly nothing anyone would construe as character assassination.

Which made it all the more surprising when I called Cruise's publicist, famed celeb flack Pat Kingsley of PMK, to verify the story. "I

# MORE

**Is Tom Cruise losing his boyish biggest movie star—or**

# MR.

**charm now that he's the world's was it just an act all along?**

"We explained to Tom that, from our point of view, she was not going to be replaced and that she was doing a terrific job," says Tisch. "We told him that as production went on, they were going to have to play a number of scenes together and there had to be this illusion these two characters were falling in love."

In other words, Tisch and Avnet told Cruise to find a way to make it work. The then 20-year-old actor, whom Tisch describes as the "most sincere and authentic guy I know," nodded seriously and marched out to

# NICE

was on the set," Kingsley blasted me, "and I can assure you that that never happened. Tom was very, very grateful to be in this movie, which was his first lead role. He never

would have asked for the lead actress to be replaced."

I tried to explain that we didn't see this as a dump on Tom—it was simply a funny anecdote. But Kingsley and her client were having none of that. An hour later, Kingsley called me back and said I

should call Brickman and get the "truth" on the story.

"I don't really remem-

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## NO MORE MR. NICE GUY

ber," Brickman says. "It was 11 years ago. But I remember there were some problems in the beginning, and everybody was getting testy. We just had to cool it for that day."

Within the next few days, I would get calls from Tisch and others I had interviewed, asking if their stories could be altered or discluded from the piece. It had been made clear to them that Cruise would not appreciate seeing their names in this article.

And that was just the beginning. Later, as the deadline for this story approached, I was granted a fact-checking-only "interview" with Cruise. It went like this: I had to submit my questions in writing to Kingsley—21 of them—to which the star responded through written answers that were then read to me over the phone by Kingsley, who said she was "in touch with Tom."

Meantime, Kingsley herself was conducting her own "interview" with me, calling from Los Angeles, from Paris. No matter how far she went, she was never far from a phone, questioning and, in some cases, even screaming that certain areas we were looking into were none of anyone's business. (More on that later.)

It was a kind of damage control you would not come up against

dunning a poor widow for the small amount her husband owed him—have been blamed on overzealous publicists or other staff.

For many who know Cruise—and work with him—the boy-next-door image is far from accurate. Increasingly, there are indications that he is petulant and demanding, something of a control freak who shows flashes of a prodigious ego. Indeed, many journalists are coming to believe they've been bought with an engaging smile.

The first chinks in the armor began appearing during the filming of *Far and Away*, with reports that crew members were given a memorandum explaining what could be done and said in front of the actor. It was only an omen of what was to come a few months later, just before the picture's release.

Though Cruise was never in love with the press, when it came time to hawk his earlier movies, he showed at least a willingness to meet and greet. And while he was never a killer interview, he did turn on the charm. All that changed with the press junket for *Far and Away* in 1992. Typically, print, radio and TV people are flown to a hotel, usually at the film company's expense, where they meet with stars at tables of about 10 reporters, answering

**"During *Far and Away*, crew members were reportedly given a memorandum explaining what could be done and said in front of Cruise—it was only an omen of what was to come."**

60

if you were trying to talk to the President. I could only ask, what kind of damage are they so anxious to control?

He's bigger than Jack, bigger than Pacino, bigger even than—this summer, at least—Arnold or Kevin. Arguably, Tom Cruise is the biggest movie star in the world. His last two films, *A Few Good Men* (in which he played a recent Harvard grad) and *The Firm* (in which he played a recent Harvard grad), garnered an international gross of close to half a billion dollars. In fact, though some Cruise films could be termed disappointments, it would be a stretch to call any failures. The closest was Ron Howard's Irish epic dud, *Far and Away*—and it raked in more than \$100 million. You'd think the guy would be happy, loosen up a bit. That was my first mistake.

For years, the public has seen Cruise as a fresh-faced wonder boy, the all-American quarterback—"The guy all women want to date and who doesn't threaten any guy," Tisch says. Like Schwarzenegger, he has been careful to maintain a public image of the quintessential innocent, the good-looking comer who's just enjoying the ride of a lifetime. And as with Schwarzenegger, any hints of a deeper, more fearfully controlling ego—like the time last year when the press discovered "good guy" Schwarzenegger was

innocuous questions like "How was it to work with your wife?"

This time out, Cruise—and wife-costar Nicole Kidman—demanded that reporters sign contracts stipulating which publications the stories would appear in and when they would run. Further, the contract stated that anything Cruise said could only be used in conjunction with *Far and Away* and could not be mentioned in regard to any other Cruise article or project. In other words, the content of the interviews would be the sole property of Cruise.

Not that Cruise's fears were totally unfounded. In one case, despite the contracts, a writer bought a transcript from a radio reporter, then sold it to a foreign newspaper under a false name.

When a junket for *A Few Good Men* was scheduled last November, Cruise again insisted on signed contracts. Kingsley approached Columbia about having the contract put on studio letterhead. When the studio refused, Kingsley put the word out via PMK. But this time, the day the press arrived—some flying in from as far away as northeastern Canada—there was no Cruise in sight. Instead, each journalist found a letter awaiting him or her at their seats, explaining that he had to leave town early to be on the set of *The Firm*. Cruise ended: "I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you again in the future."

That "opportunity" did not come with *The Firm*, either. After promising dozens of out-of-town journalists last June that Cruise would be in attendance, Paramount had to inform them he'd opted to go to Australia to show off his baby daughter to his in-laws.

A month earlier, Cruise had met with the television press. Before he did, however, he asked *Today*, *CBS News*, E! network, *Entertainment Tonight* and CNN's *Showbiz Today* to sign an agreement stipulating, among other things, that the interview be used only during the theatrical run of *The Firm*, that Cruise be given the videotape after the interview aired and that, in the case of CNN, he would get to review tapes of the interviewer before agreeing to talk. Eventually, all signed, though there were alterations in the contracts, particularly about giving up videotapes. Says a *Today* producer: "I don't want to talk about it. Each time we interview this guy, we get dozens of calls on signing contracts with him."

Kingsley insists the contracts are justified. "Many people at a junket are freelance and not staff reporters," she says. "We feel obligated to try and prevent articles written for tabloids as though they have 'exclusive' interviews." All well and good. But

him a new \$104,000 Mercedes—a "reward" for his work on *The Firm*, for which he reportedly received \$12 million. Similar to Clinton's famous \$200 haircut at LAX, Cruise was slammed for accepting the ostentatious gift in the midst of a recession.

He also came under fire recently when it was announced he would play Lestat in the film version of *Interview with the Vampire*. The book's author, Anne Rice, blasted the choice, describing it as something akin to Edward G. Robinson playing Rhett Butler. And for several weeks, the *Los Angeles Times* "Calendar" section ran passionately argued letters from fans of both Cruise and the book supporting their side of the issue.

Then there's the case of the new high-tech sound-recording machine—something called Clearsound. Cruise has become enamored of the device, developed by a fellow named Steve Marlowe, and has been pushing—hard—to get it used on all his films.

The problem is, filmmakers who have used Clearsound claim that while they are often impressed with the results, it still has enough kinks to make its use untenable. Plus, where standard recording rigs cost about \$5,000, Clearsound runs \$120,000.

Cruise did succeed in getting director Ron Howard to use Clearsound on *Far and Away*, and a spokesman for Howard's Imagine Films concedes it was used to "appease Tom." On *A Few Good Men*, apparently trying to keep Cruise happy, Rob Reiner elected to use both Clearsound and a standard sound machine. And Lindsay Doran,

the question then becomes, Why does Kingsley not make similar demands for her other clients? Why is Cruise the only actor in Hollywood to whom these rules apply?

And it is not just the press that seems to be paying the price for Cruise's increasingly inflated ego. Take the filming of the climactic courtroom scene in *A Few Good Men*, in which Jack Nicholson's character lunges at Cruise from the witness stand and has to be restrained by two marine guards. While being made up between takes, a real marine, who had been cast as one of the guards, joked to the makeup artist to take it easy—he didn't want to be "prettier" than Cruise. Overhearing the remark, Cruise barked angrily at the young marine, "What do you mean by that?"

"I don't want to be a pretty boy like you," the marine joked.

"Yeah, then you'd have to get a real job," Cruise told the \$17,000-a-year marine.

Meanwhile, studio execs complain that Cruise is an expensive star to keep happy—even more than other stars of his stratospheric stature. He has, for example, insisted on perks like flying in his own private jet for film-related travel—as opposed to flying first-class like his peers. And then, last July, Paramount bestowed upon

the producer of *The Firm*, admits, "All I know is we sound-recorded two different ways. I was told one of the ways was a brand-new process and the wave of the future."

So why all the fuss? Certainly, Cruise isn't the first Actor with Clout to insist on perfection in every aspect of his work. Streisand's been doing it for decades. But in this case, there is another factor, and it's a big one. As it turns out, Cruise apparently became hooked on Clearsound while watching several in-house films made for the Church of Scientology, of which he is an ardent member. According to Marlowe, Cruise came to him and said, "How do you get that level of sound quality?" Also, according to Marlowe, the church built a duplicate of the machine for Cruise at cost, and he has been trying to get the device on his films ever since.

It's not clear exactly when Tom Cruise began to call himself a Scientologist. In 1989, a Church of Scientology publication included Cruise (using his real name, Thomas Mapother) and his cousin on a list of those who'd just completed a basic Scientology course. It's probable that his entrance to the church occurred while he was married to actress Mimi Rogers. The daughter of

## NO MORE MR. NICE GUY

two former hard-core Scientology members, Rogers is a lifelong follower. Recruiting family members into the church is commonplace. According to a close relative of Rogers, Cruise started his involvement with Scientology while he and Rogers were going through some marriage-counseling sessions at the church.

Whatever the case, Cruise was a big fish. The church is not shy about the usefulness of such a celebrity. Though L.A. church president Shirley Young denies Scientology pursues celebs, an internal memo dated January 26, 1992, describes them as "resources to forward the expansion of Scientology through the arts." And this is not just any celebrity. "Tom is pretty much seen as the messiah," says a former church member.

Though religious choice—as an icily indignant Kingsley informed me over the phone—is a personal matter, the influence of the star's faith is becoming more and more apparent both on location and in his business dealings.

The engine that drives Scientology is the concept of "getting clear," exorcising "the painful experiences of your life" that interfere with rational thought. It's achieved through a process called auditing, which is done with an "auditor" and a device called an "E-meter," more or less a kind of primitive polygraph. In essence, Scientology is all about gaining control of one's self and one's environment. It's the control facet that seems to appeal to Cruise.

On the set of *A Few Good Men*, for example, crew members thought it amusing when Cruise insisted his assistant, Michael Doven, be called his "communicator." A "Tom look-alike," according to one of the crew, Doven wore the star's "bat utility belt," complete with cellular phone and water bottle. According to the *Basic Dictionary of Dianetics and Scientology*, a communicator is "the person who keeps an executive's communication lines (body, dispatch, intercom and phone) moving or controlled. The communicator helps an executive free his or her time for essential income-earning actions, rest or recreation and prolongs the term of appointment of the executive by safeguarding against overload."

Other ex-Scientologists, too, claim Cruise routinely encouraged people who worked for him to take the church's courses. His secretary has been listed in *Celebrity* magazine, another church publication, as having successfully completed at least one.

When asked if any of his staff were church members, Cruise (through Kingsley) rifled back, "I don't

ask any employee or prospective employee what his or her religion is. Isn't that against the law? If not, why not?" Cruise, however, did say Kidman "learned Scientology from me and then investigated for herself."

The Scientology connection could also be part of an apparent conflict between Cruise and Don Simpson. Simpson, who produced Cruise's *Top Gun* and *Days of Thunder* with partner Jerry Bruckheimer, had a falling-out years ago with the Church of Scientology. According to Leisa Goodman, a church representative in L.A., Simpson left because "he couldn't live up to the ethical standards of the church."

In a recent *Premiere* article, Simpson referred to the church as "a con" and went on to say, "I'm chagrined to say I almost went clear—did the E-meter, the whole thing."

Certainly, Simpson was not doing the E-meter during the filming of *Days of Thunder*. When he balked at using Clearsound on that project, according to a production exec, Scientology head David Miscavige actually came on the set to lobby for use of the machine. According to one source, "Simpson told them to fuck off," and then the producer pulled Cruise aside and told him church representatives were not welcome.

According to ex-members, Simpson's comments would normally qualify him as an "SP," a "suppressive person," one who "actively seeks to suppress or damage Scientology." Many ex-members who join groups like the Cult Awareness Network or speak to the press are branded as such. But in order to be labeled a suppressive, the person must first be "declared," or officially designated, by the church. Goodman, although openly disdainful of Simpson, insists he has not been officially declared.

Even so, he's not on anybody's Top 10 list. The only question of mine Cruise refused to answer dealt with his feelings toward Simpson. "Don Simpson's relationship to Scientology is his business," he said, "just as my relationship to Scientology is my business."

What is clear is that Cruise is not going to be making *Top Gun II* with him. Simpson conceived the original *Top Gun* in 1986, after reading a piece about the elite fighter-pilot school in the now defunct *California*. It was he who elected to hire the young actor and who brought him from Star on the Brink to Icon. When Simpson left Paramount in



**"Within days,  
I got calls  
from many I'd  
interviewed,  
asking to be  
discluded from  
the piece. It  
had been made  
clear to them  
Cruise would  
not appreciate  
seeing their  
names in  
this article."**

## NO MORE MR. NICE GUY

1990 for Disney, he took certain rights to the movie—chief among them the right of first refusal to produce any sequel for Paramount.

According to a source close to Simpson and Bruckheimer, a few months ago, Paramount honcho Sherry Lansing called to discuss a sequel. However, the source says, it was supposedly presented to the production pair as a “cheapo knockoff,” and it was “insinuated” that the star would be Val Kilmer, not Cruise. Since the offer was \$750,000 to produce—Simpson and Bruckheimer were guaranteed \$500,000 from the sequel no matter what—they felt it was not worth the extra \$250,000 to produce a Kilmer film. Simpson wanted \$2 million and wouldn’t budge.

A few weeks after Simpson turned down the deal, a Nevada newspaper broke the story that locations were being scouted for the sequel. It would be about the first female pilot in the program—and Cruise, with CW Productions, the company Cruise heads with former agent Paula Wagner, was not only going to produce the picture, it was a near certainty he would star in it as well.

Simpson was not amused. A Paramount spokesman says, “Really, the words *Val Kilmer* were never uttered,” and he insists the negotiations with Simpson and Bruckheimer are “very well documented” and “I’m very sorry we couldn’t make a deal with them. They have made millions for the company.” Cruise, however, isn’t talking. Kingsley says, “This is between Paramount and Simpson.”

Perhaps not so coincidentally, Cruise’s aversion to the media also seems to reflect what numerous ex-Scientologists contend is the church’s basic mistrust of the press. According to former members, the church’s top managers view the media with contempt, and reporters are known as suppressive persons.

Former Scientologists insist, too, that high-level members of the church, including Cruise, have been given “reporter training regimens,” outlining ways they should handle themselves with reporters. One confidential memo instructs members on “fending a suppressive TV interviewer,” how to be “knowingly covertly hostile” and “stalling for time.” Finally, there’s a section on “bullbaiting,” or “training the student to outflow false data effectively.”

While Scientology spokespersons scoff at the notion of the church training its members to handle interviews, members do concede there is a great deal of cynicism toward the Fourth Estate. Founder L. Ron Hubbard’s Code of Honor states: “Do not give or receive communication unless you yourself desire it.”

Stephanie Mansfield, who interviewed Cruise for a profile in *GQ*, wrote: “He has turned petulant. Steely. Behavior so far

from his good-natured screen persona that I am temporarily stunned into silence. Being chewed out by Tom Cruise is not a pleasant experience.”

And what was Mansfield’s crime? In researching her piece, she spoke to a number of friends from Cruise’s childhood. “He blew up,” Mansfield said. “He kept saying, ‘Who did you talk to? Who did you talk to?’ ” Later, he referred to the article as a “covert operation,” a popular term with the Church of Scientology.

Maybe the hardest question to answer is how much Cruise’s growing involvement with the Church of Scientology is affecting his movies. His high-watermark performances—*Born on the Fourth of July*, *Rain Man* and *The Color of Money*—were all done with directors who were at least as powerful as Cruise himself, who had the prestige to keep Cruise focused. They were also done before his church involvement hit its stride. Ever since *Days of Thunder*, Cruise has had to contend with “suppressive persons,” Scientology sound machines, a divorce from a church member and a “covert” press.

“I have found—and I suspect that it is still the case 11 years later—that Tom really listens,” says Tisch. “If he respects the

### **“On the set of *A Few Good Men*, Cruise insisted his assistant be referred to as his ‘communicator.’ ”**

people he is working with, then he really solicits a lot of attention.” Still, one could make a good case that even while *A Few Good Men* and *The Firm* were blockbusters, his work in these films was rather pedestrian. Unlike, say, *Rain Man* or *Fourth of July*, it was just Cruise playing Cruise.

Which brings us to the issue of *Interview with the Vampire*, to be directed by *The Crying Game*’s Neil Jordan and over which Cruise’s casting as Lestat has caused such a mini furor. “I’m in a state of shock,” Rice said at the time. “This casting is so bizarre. The movie could be one of the biggest disasters of all time.”

“I don’t care about Anne Rice’s comments!” says the film’s producer, David Geffen. “She’s only concerned with the sycophants who write to her. Tom certainly has the capacity to play any part he wants. He is smart enough to play characters that are not right up his alley. He’s the biggest star in the world. The fact that he wants to play a dark and complicated role is a tribute to him.”

Geffen, of course, is right. Tom Cruise does have the capacity to pull it off. He has an Oscar nomination for *Born on the Fourth of July*—the one film nobody thought he could pull off.

It’s just a matter of whether he’s clear, whether there are suppressives on the set and whether Jordan will put up with it. ■