

Sometimes Stardom Sucks

If you have serious celeb envy, calm yourself. Life in Hollywood can be a hell ride.

By Anna David

■ There are plenty of perks that come with superstardom: multimillion-dollar salaries, a never-ending flow of free designer duds, fancy red-carpet events, and hoards of adoring fans.

But as it turns out, there's such a thing as too much adoration. As a culture, we're more fascinated with stars than ever before. "Obsession with celebrities has reached an all-time high," says Elayne Rapping, PhD, professor of American studies at the University at Buffalo, who has studied celebrity culture. "We used to admire them from afar, but now we want to feel like we know celebrities *personally*, as if they're our neighbors or friends. We want to know the intimate details of their lives. And all this scrutiny can make being famous pretty miserable."

It's hard to feel *too* bad for people who chose these high-profile professions. But as actress Lara Flynn Boyle recently put it, being a celeb today is different than it was a few years ago, when she got into the business. "Look, I love being famous. I'm not one of those people who feels like, 'Why won't they leave me alone?' If

I cared only about the craft of acting, I'd be doing dinner theater in Iowa. But the attention on you gets to a point where it's beyond invasive—it's scary."

Out-of-Control Rumors

Sometimes that unwanted attention comes in the form of vicious rumors. Nick Lachey went to his buddy's bach-

film where it *wasn't* falsely printed that I had romantic feelings for a costar."

While these meant-to-entice stories often turn out to be true, sometimes mistakes are made. For example, in January, it was reported by a British tabloid that Christian Slater was attacked by a knife-wielding maniac. It was actually a security guard who was stabbed, and Slater wasn't even in the area.

The same inaccuracies apply when celebrities are quoted directly. Sometimes those "firsthand" quotes are changed. Proof: Before last year's Oscars, an Austrian magazine quoted Renée Zellweger as saying, "I've certainly earned the award. Last year, I was nominated for *Chicago*, but I left empty-handed. I think this year Hollywood will be fair." The magazine later admitted they had never even interviewed Zellweger. Angelina Jolie may be the latest victim of false attribution. Although it was widely reported in January that she said, "I've been painted as the Wicked Witch

"Obsession with celebs has reached an all-time high. We used to admire them from afar, but now we want to feel like we know them personally."

elor party, and all of a sudden, magazines reported that he cheated on Jessica with a porn star. Last October, costars Orlando Bloom and Kirsten Dunst reportedly partied together while filming *Elizabethtown*, and the tabloids immediately professed they were romantically involved. As Hugh Grant once pointed out: "I've never done a

of the West and a marriage wrecker. But all I've ever been to Brad is a shoulder to cry on," her rep denies her saying it.

The Stalkerazzi

Even when stars aren't talking to or posing for the press, they're still considered fair game. Nowadays, a picture of a celeb can fetch upward of \$300,000, and that