

P

eter Swift is a macho detective. He has shot and slugged his way to glory, defeating the bad guys and winning the beau-

tiful women. But, Peter Swift is only the fictional hero of three best-selling mystery novels. His creator, Phillip Blackwood is a little more reserved, a little more vulnerable and a lot more naive. Blackwood is played by Tom Selleck in the romantic thriller *Her Alibi*.

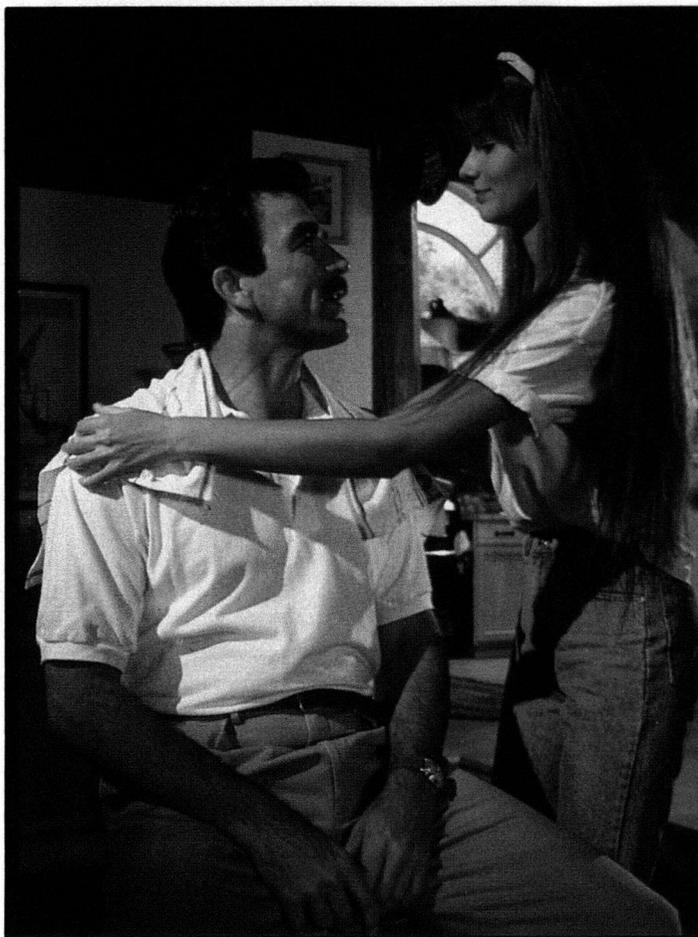
Since Blackwood's wife abandoned him for a literary reviewer, Phillip has been in a slump — both in terms of his writing and his personal life. He can't get past the title of his fourth book — *Death Of A Critic*. Hounded by his editor, Sam Dusen (William Daniels), Blackwood decides to do some research in a courtroom. After all, out of New York's eight million inhabitants, there's bound to be someone who's committed a juicy homicide that he can "borrow".

Enter the enigmatic and gorgeous Nina Ionescu (Paulina Porizkova), arraigned in court on a murder charge. One look at her and Blackwood begins to feel what his character Swift would call "smoldering passion." Believing in her innocence, he supplies Nina with her alibi, telling the police they had been lovers for some time. To authenticate this story, he convinces her to move in with him. A new chapter has begun in Phillip's life!

Because of his research for his detective-hero, Blackwood has developed friends in high places. Fortunately, police lieutenant Frank Polito (James Farentino) decides to stakeout Blackwood's house — not only to watch Nina's movements but to protect his friend. Polito issues Blackwood with a warning: if Nina is guilty, then all that stands between her and jail is her alibi and Phillip's life and career.

If this were a Peter Swift mystery, the solutions would be easy — the leading man and woman would fall in love and solve the murder. But, this is not Peter's life. Blackwood can't write it as he wants it. When a series of bizarre and nearly-fatal accidents befall him, always in Nina's presence, he must question her real motives. Is she capable of cold-blooded murder? Have his writer's instincts failed him in judging her character and, therefore, her innocence?

Her Alibi marks the return of Tom Selleck to the big screen following his triumph in one of the most popular film comedies of the decade, *Three Men and a Baby*. Selleck's career began by playing bit parts in films and on TV. But, perhaps, he is best known for his two-time Emmy winning role as *Magnum, P.I.*, the hit show which ran for eight years. He also starred in the espionage film *Lassiter* and



the science-fiction thriller *Runaway*.

Selleck was attracted to *Her Alibi* for many reasons. "The storyline is a combination of fear and lust, with sexual tensions in between" he says. "I am completely infatuated with a woman who seems to want to kill me. It's a completely different role from any I've played before."

Selleck tries to choose roles with characters different from any he's previously played. "Phillip Blackwood is a guy unlike Magnum or Peter Mitchell in *Three Men and a Baby*. He's a man who has created all the action in his life through his writing. For example, he hasn't been in a fistfight since he was six years old" says Selleck. "Now, he must face reality with the new woman in his life."

Selleck himself has a new face in his life. Born to the actor and his wife Jillie Mack just before Christmas last year was Hanna Margaret Mack Selleck. She is the first child for the 43 year old actor.

Paulina Porizkova, as the mysteriously alluring Nina, made her film debut in *Anna*, the 1987 film that critics loved. However, her face has been seen by millions on the covers of more than 300 international magazines in the last six years.

Paulina is not only a famous supermodel, she now represents Estée Lauder's entire line of products.

Porizkova's life is the stuff films are made of. Born in Czechoslovakia in 1965, she was left in her grandmother's care when her parent's escaped the 1968 Russian invasion. Her parents immediately began efforts to free her and in 1974 her mother was arrested and jailed trying to smuggle Paulina out to Sweden. Eventually they were released and it was in Sweden that Paulina was discovered by a modelling agency and sent to Paris.

Both Tom Selleck and Paulina Porizkova bring natural comedic flair to their roles in *Her Alibi*. This is exactly what director Bruce Beresford wanted — conflict, candor and comedy. Beresford had these ingredients in his last successful film, *Crimes of the Heart*. He has also directed the classic *Breaker Morant* and the poignant *Tender Mercies*. Selleck has great praise for Beresford, saying "Although he knows what he wants, he is open to his actors' suggestions. This gives an actor a lot of confidence."

Her Alibi has many remarkable supporting performances by many remarkable performers. Tess Harper is Sally Blackwood and this is her third film with Bruce Beresford. She was nominated for an Academy award for her portrayal as the disparaging cousin Chick in *Crimes of the Heart*.

Patrick Wayne (Gary Blackwood) made his film debut at age 11 with his father John Wayne in *Rio Grande*. Since then, he has appeared in over 30 films and numerous TV shows, including last year's *Young Guns* and *The Chill Factor*.

Another TV star appearing in *Her Alibi* is William Daniels as Blackwood's editor Sam Dusen. Like Selleck, Daniels has also won two

TOM SELLECK STARS IN HER ALIBI



Emmy awards, for his role as Dr. Mark Craig in the series *St. Elsewhere*.

Her Alibi was filmed in and around Baltimore and the suburban Maryland countryside. Though the locations were cooperative, the weather was not. The summer of 1988 broke heat records everywhere, including Baltimore which suffered 50 straight days of 100 degree F or higher temperatures.

— Nicole-marie Squires

