



FEDS



STARS REBECCA DEMORNAY

Rebecca DeMornay is one of the liveliest, loveliest and funniest of stars on the screen today, an actress who has made a tremendous impact with few films over the past five years. Two of her movies, *The Slugger's Wife* and *And God Created Woman*, were hardly around long enough for her to be noticed. Yet, in spite of those disappointments, she is full of optimism over her latest film, *Feds*, a comedy which gives her every opportunity to show audiences what a clever actress she is.

She never intended to be funny. It just came naturally. "I started out on a very fast track" she recalls "a big role in a successful movie. It all happened for me before I had a chance to find myself".

DeMornay became an instant favorite in *Risky Business* opposite Tom Cruise. She played the bitchy, sexy Lana, the "prostitute with a heart of stone" the business woman who believed absolutely in fun and free enterprise. Her range has since covered the doomed suburban mother in *Testament*,

another desperate woman in *Runaway Train* and a lively role in *The Trip to Bountiful*. She prefers not to mention her 'sexy' character in the new version of *And God Created Woman* but enjoyed immensely the part of a rock and roll singer in *The Slugger's Wife* opposite Michael O'Keefe, who falls in love with the home hitter on the Atlanta Braves.

In making the transition from her first film to her major role in *Feds*, she has, in her own words, "explored her possibilities as an actress". Until *Risky Business* her sole screen experience consisted of a few lines — as a member of the "living storyboard" — in Francis Ford Coppola's experimental musical *One From the Heart*.

Her experience of life itself is another matter. DeMornay grew up in Pasadena, where her step-father, Richard DeMornay, was a scientist who had worked on the Apollo Project inventing a micro-camera. When he retired he became a breeder of Arabian horses. He died when Rebecca was three and a half years old.

"My mother liked to travel" she recalls "When I was very young we

roamed the United States and then Europe, always looking for new places to see." With this upbringing she found a self-reliance and confidence which is apparent in her work and a gift for language. She speaks fluent German and French. The price for all this, she admits "was being unable to form the usual childhood friendships."

She managed to remain long enough in Austria to graduate from Kitzbuhel *summa cum laude* and to develop an enthusiasm for winter sports, particularly skiing. Then it was back to London where she worked as a waitress on "the graveyard shift" at a round-the-clock restaurant.

"When I returned to Los Angeles I felt myself a foreigner. Part of this was that while I was in London I picked up a Cockney accent. It wasn't intentional, but wherever I go, I seem to adopt the local speech pattern as a kind of protective coloration. I had lived abroad for so long" she continued "that I felt I was 'going away' to America rather than coming home."

On her return to Los Angeles she had no idea what she wanted to be — or to do. One day she passed a whitewashed building which caught her eye: an acting school run by Lee Strasberg, the founder of the Actors' Studio.

"I thought of all the people he had taught — Brando, Monroe, Clift, Newman, and I went in and enrolled" she remembers. "They asked me why I wanted to be an actress and up to that moment I wasn't even sure that I had wanted to be one but once there, something came over me and I

said 'I didn't want to be an actress, I needed to be one.' And I was accepted."

It was not long after that when she went to work for Coppola as an apprentice and he gave her the one-line role in *One From the Heart*, which earned her a Screen Actors' Guild membership. Shortly afterwards, she auditioned for *Risky Business* going in "cold" to the studio at five in the morning. She won the role.

With a winsome smile she adds "You know the rest". The rest is that in *Feds* she plays a new recruit to the ranks of the FBI, in company with a friend (played by Mary Gross from *Saturday Night Live*), in training for 16 weeks during which they turn the FBI into something resembling a modern-day version of the Keystone Cops.

DeMornay's mother had attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and had given up her acting career for her marriage. Inevitably, she is asked if she enjoys carrying on her mother's unrealized acting career. "I never thought of this at the time" she admits "but yes, now I do. I suppose I inherited the desire and the skills from her and for this I'm grateful to her."

And her long term ambition? Nothing less than Shakespeare. "I've only done him-in workshops; I'm longing to do it on the stage, in particular Cleopatra and Juliet." Stratford take note!

— Gerald Pratley



For trivia buffs, the now famous line spoken by Rebecca DeMornay in *One From the Heart* is "Excuse me, those are my waffles."