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NEWSLETTER

FILMED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PANAVISION SUPER 70MM

A RON HOWARD FILM

# FAR AND AWAY

IMAGINE FILMS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS A BRIAN GRAZER PRODUCTION "FAR AND AWAY"  
 MUSIC BY JOHN WILLIAMS COSTUMES BY JOANNA JOHNSTON CO-PRODUCERS LARRY DEWAY BOB DOLMAN EDITOR MICHAEL HILL  
 DANIEL HANLEY PRODUCTION DESIGNER JACK I. COLLIS ALLAN CAMERON DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIKAEL SALOMON, A.S.C.  
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCER TODD HALLOWELL STORY BY BOB DOLMAN & RON HOWARD SCREENPLAY BY BOB DOLMAN PRODUCED BY BRIAN GRAZER AND RON HOWARD  
 PRODUCED BY BOB DOLMAN DIRECTED BY RON HOWARD A UNIVERSAL RELEASE  
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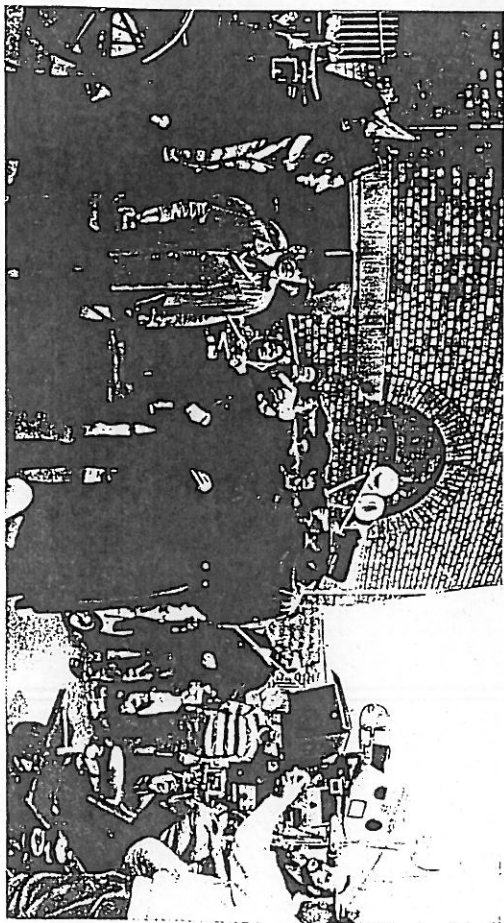
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## THE FILM

a dream. Both wanted to make a film about Ireland. One night Howard heard a folk group sing traditional Irish songs. He was touched by a tragic lyric about a couple in love. They were torn apart when one of them immigrated to America. Later that evening, he decided to make a movie about



involved 800 extras, 400 horses and 200 wagons on an exterior set which stretched over a quarter of a mile. Dublin provided the period settings for scenes occurring in both Ireland and Boston. § The film features Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman in the pivotal roles of Joseph and Shan-

Ron Howard can tell you exactly when the first seeds of inspiration for *Far and Away* were planted in his fertile imagination. He was four years old. Howard was on an airplane flying from New York to Vienna to play a role in his first movie, *The Journey*. § It was his first transatlantic flight. He fell asleep. When Howard woke up, he looked out the window, and saw a beautiful emerald green island. The plane was landing in Shannon to refuel. Minutes later, Howard was walking around, stretching his legs on the tarmac. An airport worker tousled his hair, and said, "You look like you belong here. Maybe you should stay." It made a lasting impression. § Howard is a product of the American melting pot. There are bits of Dutch, German, English, Irish and Cherokee Indian in his genes. But there has always been something special about the romance of his Irish roots. Three of his great grandparents participated in the 1893 Cherokee Strip Land Race in Oklahoma. When Howard was six, his great grandmother showed him a scrapbook of newspaper clippings about the great land race. It was the beginning of a vision that became a breathtaking scene in *Far and Away*. § In 1983, Howard directed a TV pilot written by Bob Dolman. They shared



Americans who began their lives in Ireland before the turn of the 20th century. § Soon afterwards, Dolman discovered a batch of letters written by a woman on the way to Oklahoma to meet her husband. They were romantic and funny, and filled with excitement about the adventures ahead of them. That was the missing link he needed to bring his script to life. § The Story: Joseph Donnelly travels across Ireland determined to avenge his father, a tenant farmer, who

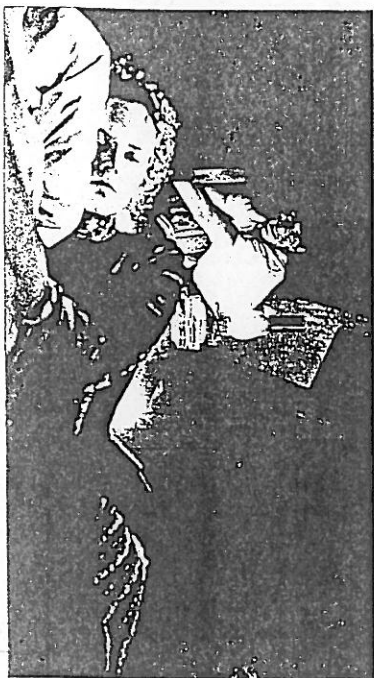
died protesting injustice. Donnelly's mission is futile, but he meets Shannon, a rich landlord's daughter, who dreams of America. They become uneasy travelling companions, who cross the sea together, seeking wealth and opportunity. The lure of land sends them across the continent with a stream of other immigrants to Oklahoma. *Far and Away* is about people who left a country behind, and gained a new land on the raw edge of the frontier. § Production began on May 28, 1991, in Billings, Montana. It was an ideal setting for recreating the look and feel of Oklahoma in 1893. The extraordinary land race scene

non. Supporting cast includes Thomas Gibson, Robert Prosky, Barbara Babcock and Colm Meaney. Other main credits belong to Brian Grazer, producer, Ron Howard, producer/director, Todd Hall-owell, executive producer, Bob Dolman, screenwriter/co-producer, Larry DeWary, co-producer, Mikael Salomon, ASC, cinematographer, Michael Hill and Daniel Hanley, editors, Jack T. Collis, production designer/Montana, Allan Cameron, production designer/Ireland, Joanna Johnston, costume designer, and Ivan Sharrock, sound mixer. §

"F A R A N D A W A Y . . ."

— A new beginning —

## THE CINEMATOGRAPHER



“Ron (Howard) and Brian (Grazer) told me about a low-budget movie they wanted to make in Europe with a small crew. It sounded like fun,” Salomon says. “When plans for the movie got bigger, I suggested that we shoot it in 65mm format. Their first reaction was, ‘Sure, why not?’ Then they asked about the drawbacks.” § It wasn’t an easy question to answer. No one had shot a 65mm film for more than 20 years. The new 65mm cameras were untested on a venture this big. Working in a larger format, depth of field was more critical. It would affect the way he set up some shots. But Salomon didn’t expect that to be a prob-



Ron Howard and Mikael Salomon

lem with today’s advanced films and lenses. § “The biggest drawback was dealing with the unknown,” he says. “No one knew what to expect.” § The old epic 65mm films were typically filmed with stylized “hard” light. Salomon worked in contemporary style. His lighting was natural-looking. In the 1890’s kerosine and gas lamps provided most of the night-time illumination. That dictated the color, angle and

intensity of light that Salomon created. § In the days of epic films, directors of Lean’s stature sometimes waited for the perfect moment to shoot a key exterior scene. Sometimes they waited for days. Modern film crews shoot everyday. If the weather isn’t right, they improvise. In Dublin, there was bright sunlight, and then dark skies a moment later. Salomon used artificial smoke to mask the sun. That way, film shot on a sunny day, could be matched with footage shot when the sky was overcast. § Salomon

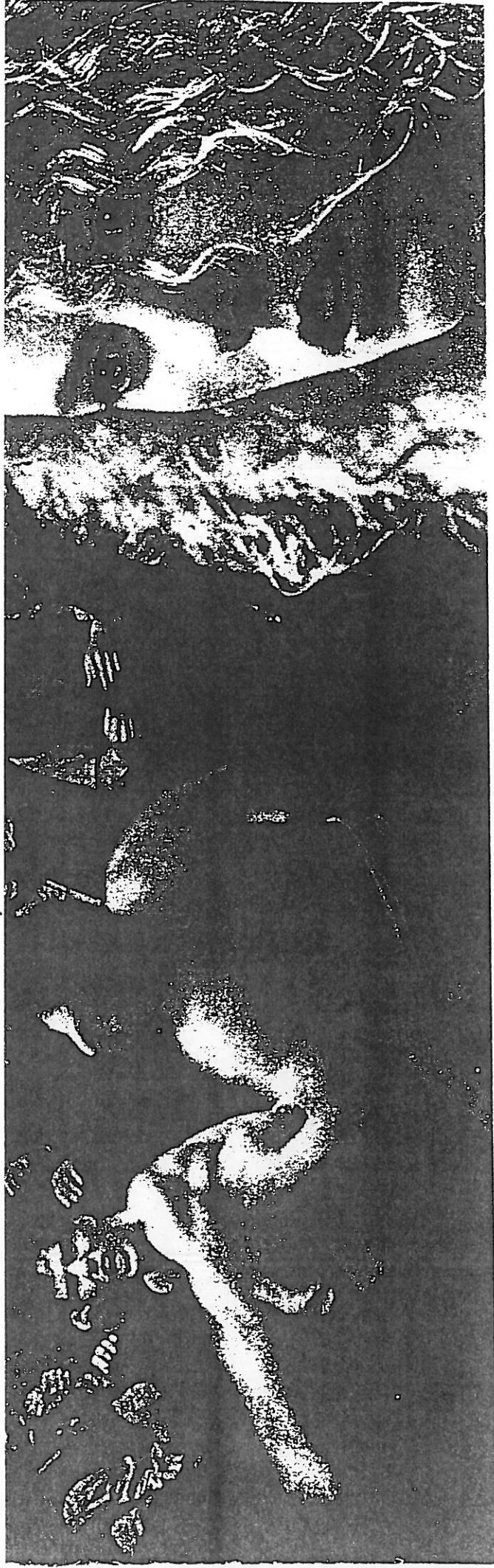
used nine cameras to film the land race. One was on a tower 80 feet tall. There was another camera on a helicopter. Several others were on Steadicam image stabilizers. These allowed the operators to physically move with the action, while keeping the cameras as steady as a rock. This puts the audience right in the middle of that incredible scene. There also were a few cameras “buried” in the ground so wagons and horses could ride over them for another point-of-view. It all adds up to an incredible series of unforgettable images guaranteed to leave the audience gasping. § “We were in every conceivable situation,” he says. “There was nothing we couldn’t do.” There were day and night interior scenes in a manor in Dublin. These

were lit through windows, and from source lights in the manor. Salomon created the illusion of night, while shooting during daylight hours with the use of filters and light. Lush, verdant exteriors were photographed in the woods near Dublin with heavily saturated blues and greens. A small, dimly-lit boarding house room in Boston was shot practically drained of color. Boston was dark and overcast. It was a black part of the story, a low point. It suited the hazy environment of the city which depended on coal for heat. In contrast, Oklahoma was sunny and bright, with lush blue skies, and lush, deep landscapes. § Salomon made sparse use of extreme close-ups of the hero and heroine. “This is a romantic film, so you don’t want someone who is supposed to be attractive to have pores the size of baseballs on the big screen,” he says. “You have to watch every detail, because the audience sees everything.” § “The steadiness, and clarity of the images is incredible,” he says. “You really feel like you can get out of your seat and walk into the screen. It’s my job to offer the director as many options as possible. I make recommendations, but I’m there to help the director tell a story. All I have to offer is my inspiration and the sum of my experience.” §

# “FAR AND AWAY”

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A RON HOWARD FILM

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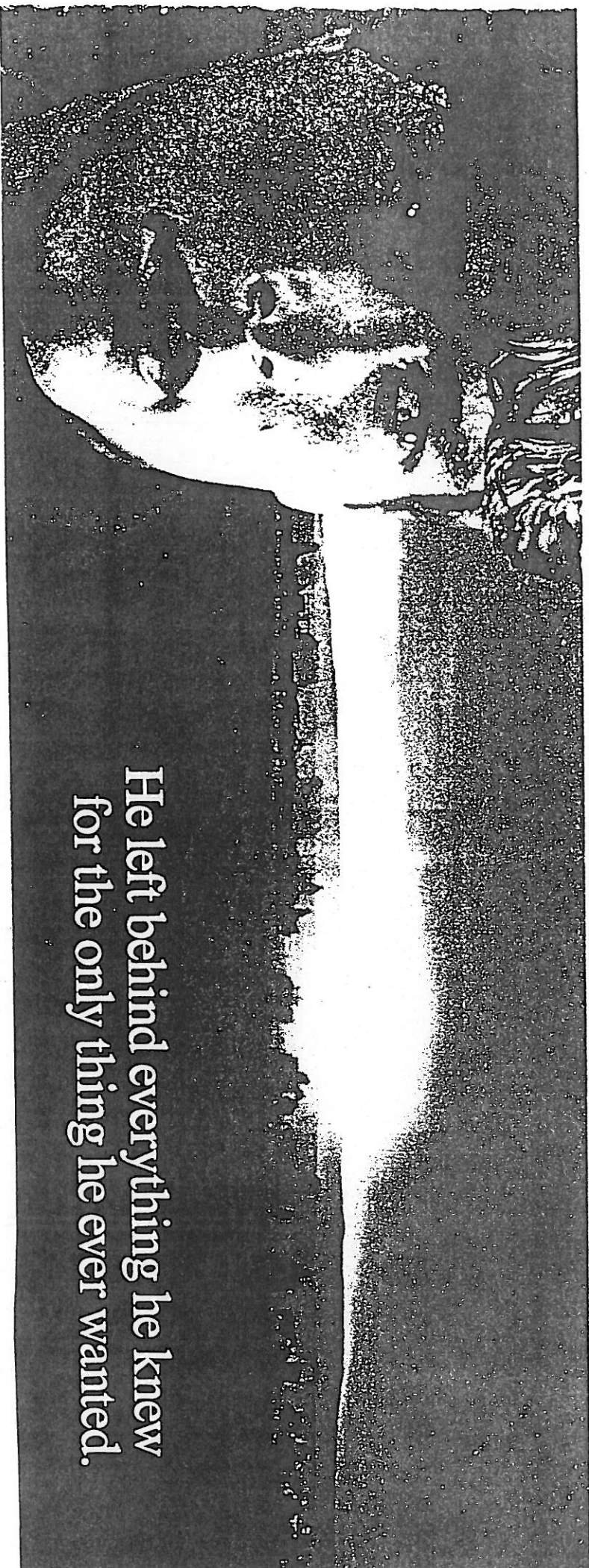
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# TOM CRUISE



He left behind everything he knew  
for the only thing he ever wanted.

# NICOLE KIDDMAN



Ron Howard showed Mikael Salomon the script for *Far and Away* while he was photographing *Backdraft*. Salomon suggested shooting the story on 65mm film. To one had done that since 1970, when David Lean directed *Ryan's Daughter*. There were questions about costs, and concerns about imposing creative restrictions. The old 65mm cameras were heavy and cumbersome. They hindered mobility. The lenses and films used in 1970 were "slow" by today's standards. They required vast amounts of light to properly expose the film. & But that was 20 years ago. Forward discovered that Panavision and Arriflex had recently developed state-of-the-art 65mm film cameras and lenses. There was also a new generation of Eastman 35mm films. Those tools gave Salomon more flexibility. There were few creative restrictions. And none that couldn't be overcome with enthusiasm and ingenuity. & For the first time on a theatrical feature, the scope and image quality of the 65mm frame could be combined with a contemporary visual style of cinematography. Everyone expected the 65mm frame to add depth and dimensionality to the land race and other large exterior scenes. They weren't disappointed. The surprise came when Howard directed

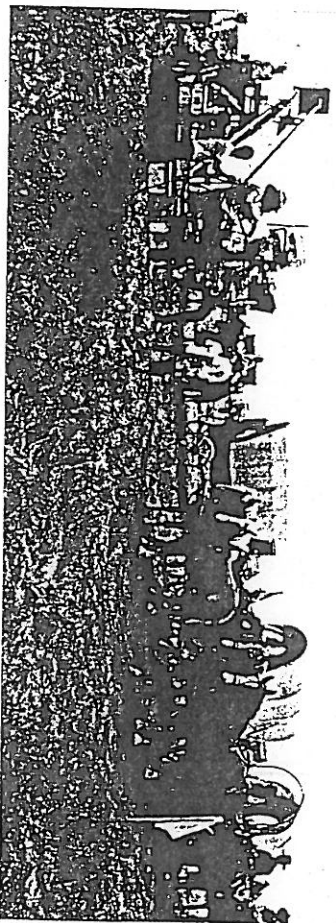


Ron Howard and Brian Grazer

dramatic scenes shot in close quarters. & "The clarity and definition are so much better that it draws the audience right into the story," he says. "It's like adding another dimension. It's more intimate. The audience becomes more engrossed. There's an improvement in the tonal quality of the film, especially in the shadows. They can see every subtle detail. It's like being there. It adds something special to the movie-going experience. It's the way a film like *Far and Away* is meant to be seen." &

## THE DIRECTOR

"A lot of new technology has filtered into the movie-making process during the past five to ten years," says Brian Grazer. "Some of it has come from television. The MTV



look has influenced what audiences expect from movies. As a filmmaker, you have to ask yourself, will something new heighten the audio and visual experience for the audience?" & Once his questions were answered, he never had a doubt about filming *Far and Away* in the 65mm format. "It's a big, sweeping adventure story that lends itself to the scope of the format," he says. "The audience will be moved by the story, and captivated by the performances. They'll

## THE PRODUCER

leave the theatre talking about the land race, because of the incredible action, and its relationship to the plot. But, they will also tell their friends and neighbors, this

film looks fantastic. It's as true as real life." & People have been asking Grazer if it cost more to shoot *Far and Away* in 65mm format. "Ron and I talked about that. It cost more. But it wasn't a significant percentage of the budget. It was a creative decision. But we are also financially responsible people. We believe, if you enhance the entertainment value of the movie-going experience, you will increase the net revenue earned by the film." & It cuts to the heart of the future of movies. "We are being tested," says Grazer. "Audiences are challenging us to make better films. All of us have to dig a little deeper inside of ourselves, and do better. That's why we are so proud of *Far and Away*." &

## FAR AND AWAY

A Universal release of an Imagine Films Entertainment presentation of a Brian Grazer production. Produced by Grazer, Ron Howard. Executive producer, Todd Halliwell. Co-producers, Bob Dolman, Larry DeWaxy. Directed by Howard. Screenplay, Dolman, story by Dolman, Howard. Camera (Dolby color, Panavision Super 70m), Mikael Salomon; editors, Michael Hill, Daniel Bantley; music, John Williams; production design, Jack T. Collis (Montana), Allan Cameron (Ireland); art direction, Jack Senter; art direction (Ireland), Steve Spence, Tony Reading; set design, Joseph Hubbard, Robert M. Beall; set decoration, Richard Goddard; costume design, Joanna Johnston; sound (Dolby), Ivan Shafrack; associate producer, Louisa Vels; assistant director, Altric Laullier; Karen Ilea, Ros Hubbard, John Hubbard. Reviewed at Coronet Theater, N.Y. (1st Cannes Festival — closing night), May 1, 1992. MPAA rating: PG-13. Running time: 140 MIN.

Joseph Donnelly . . . . . Tom Cruise  
Shannon Christie . . . . . Nicole Kidman  
Stephen . . . . . Thomas Gibson  
Daniel Christie . . . . . Robert Prosky  
Nora Christie . . . . . Barbara Babcock  
Kelly . . . . . Colm Meaney  
Molly Kay . . . . . Eileen Pollock  
Grace . . . . . Michelle Johnson  
Also with: Douglas Gillison, Wayne Grace, Barry McGovern, Niall Toibin, Rance Howard, Clint Howard.

oriented Hollywood feature in more than two decades to have been shot on 65m stock (with Panavision's new Super 70 equipment), and released in 70m. As created by Mikael Salomon, images have a wonderful crispness and luminosity that make the effort worthwhile.

Buffs will note that the new process, at least as used here, boasts a normal Panavision aspect ratio, one not as wide as the similarly named Super Panavision 70 process of the 1960s.

Long-in-gestation story by screenwriter Bob Dolman and Howard is a standard-issue tale of a lower-class lad who gets involved with the feisty daughter of a wealthy landowner. Dozens of fights, confrontations and misunderstandings, thousands of miles and nearly 2½ hours later, the two headstrong youngsters give in to the inevitable physical impulses obvious to everyone else from the beginning.

This script would have perfectly suited Tyrone Power or Errol Flynn in the 1930s. With just a few mildly salacious adjustments to suit modern sensibilities, Cruise ably picks up the reins as a tenant farmer in Western Ireland, circa 1892, who wants to kill his absentee landlord for torching the family home and, in effect, murdering his father.

Exemplifying script's notions of both manifest and spiritual destiny, Pa gives son Joseph (Cruise) an inspirational deathbed speech about the connection of one's soul to one's land, and how Joseph ought to go to America. First, however, son means to do in the landlord (Robert Prosky), who, when met, turns out to be a nice chap who feels as victimized, in his way, as Joseph.

In fact, just about every character here insists they are oppressed. Prosky's pampered, spoiled daughter Shannon (Nicole Kidman) is kept on the tightest of leashes by her mother (Barbara Babcock), and is constantly badgered by her darkly handsome suitor (Thomas Gibson). Later challenges the uppity Joseph to a duel, but, saved by the fog at dawn, Joseph makes off with Shannon for the States, disagreeably consenting to work as her servant shipboard.

Arriving in Boston (actually streets of Dublin nicely re-dressed) at the 45-minute point, the couple is instantly thrown in with the hordes of immigrant riffraff when Shannon's silver is stolen. Sharing a room at a brothel, the two must fend for themselves while Shannon toils plucking chickens, Joseph, in pic's most engaging scenes, makes a name for himself as a scrappy bare-knuckles boxer.

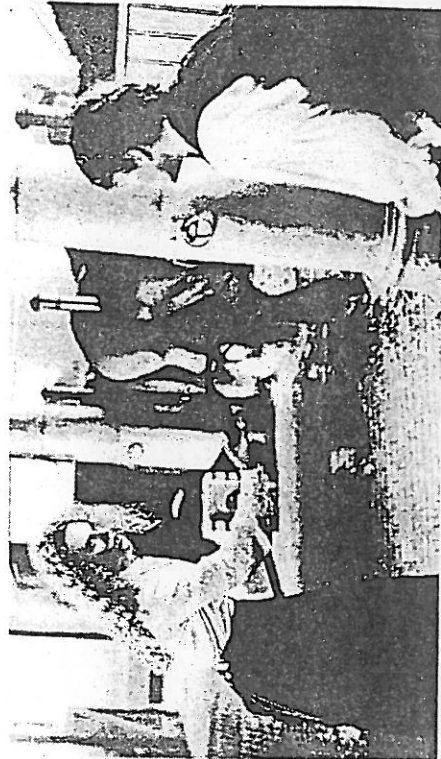
However, the land still beckons, and by the next year all the characters (the Christies, as well

as Joseph, have also come to America) find themselves in the epochal Oklahoma land rush.

All chords struck by Howard and Dolman are the familiar home-spun variety. While fine and dandy for mainstream audiences seeking a comforting good time, it also makes for a picture with no edge. A little irreverence and some revisionist strokes would have lent some welcome spice to this bland meat-and-potatoes serving of U.S. history.

Some of the detail results in needless dawdling. Joseph's sentimental dreaming of Shannon and the couple's let's-pretend-we're-rich interlude in a Boston mansion are embarrassing, and the lull before the big land rush is just padding.

Most of the film's pleasures are purely physical. Seeing Western Ireland, especially on the big screen, is always inspiring (ironically, one of the last true 70m productions was the similarly set "Ryan's Daughter"), and Montana, standing in for Oklahoma, is also pretty easy on the eyes.



IRISH EYES ARE SEETHING: Rich lass Nicole Kidman making a point with poor farmer Tom Cruise in Ron Howard's 'Far And Away.'

Irish production designer Allan Cameron has created a vivid, instantly interesting portrait of late 19th century Boston slums, and Joanna Johnston's costume designs are also notable.

Cruise's physicality is forcibly in evidence, which will not be unwelcome to his many fans. Stripped down frequently, he is genuinely impressive in the fist-tuff action of pic's midsection. His horseback riding (it's obviously him) is also thrilling in the monumentally staged land race, the likes of which hasn't been seen on screen for some time. Cruise's Irish accent is quite acceptable, to the point where one stops really noticing it.

Heavily garbed, unlike her husband and co-star, Kidman has the requisite grit and defiant spirit in her eyes. As the one-dimensional villain, Gibson dashingly reminds of Timothy Dalton, while Prosky is a kick as the resilient landowner. Michelle Johnson has a few nice moments as a busy dancer who takes a shine to Joseph at the height of his boxing fame.

In a dream job for a cinematographer, Salomon fashions a world of great color, loveliness and physical grandeur, although his favoring of soft backgrounds indicates that the full sharpness of the new 70m equipment has yet to be displayed. Also effective is John Williams' fully supportive, but not at all overwhelming score. — Todd McCarthy



# The Future of 65m production is fuzzy

By RICHARD NATALE

**HOLLYWOOD** Universal/Imagine's \$45 million romantic adventure "Far and Away" is the first film shot in 65m since Disney's "Tron" in 1982 (and before that, MGM's "Ryan's Daughter" in 1970). The big question is: Will audiences care?

Based on the first 70m previews last week, producer Brian Grazer says yes. "In exit interviews people said they could tell the difference. Even the kids."

Grazer believes the heightened pictorial quality will have an impact on boxoffice receipts, and positive sneak reactions will be included in Universal's TV spots as part of the overall marketing campaign. "Blown up 35m is grainy, whereas 65m is as sharp as looking at a postcard," attests Grazer.

But, argues Stan Kinsey of Iwerks Entertainment, few 70m theaters are designed to take full advantage of the experience. "In most cases, if you sit in the middle or at the back of a theater you can't tell much of a difference between 70m or a 35m film that has been blown up," he says.

Apart from the top 50 to 75 showcases for 70m around the country, most theaters equipped for its release May 22, Universal will scatter 163 prints of "Far and Away" in 70m as part of the 1,500-print national break.

to project in 70m are fairly small and confined, argues one studio distribution exec. "That doesn't exactly make for great presentation."

Grazer says the Ron Howard epic starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman is being viewed as a test case for 65m production, which has been dormant since the 1960s, save for nontheatrical and amusement park presentations and some visual effects.

From the mid-1950s to the mid-'60s, approximately 40 features were shot in 65m (the other 5m is for the soundtrack), including "Cleopatra," "Lawrence of Arabia," "Doctor Zhivago" and "2001: A Space Odyssey."

Already announced for 65m production are Mira Nair's "Buddha" and possibly Bernardo Bertolucci's "Little Buddha." Several cinematographers have made inquiries to Eastman Kodak and Panavision about other potential shoots. Grazer is considering using 65m in Imagine's upcoming adventure "Sea Wolf."

## Exhibitors conservative

But even optimists doubt that there will be a proliferation of 65m production. The demise of the reserved-seat engagement and the emphasis on after-marketals such as video and TV make it increasingly unlikely that studios will invest in theatrical enhancement. Exhibitors are even more conservative about spending money to build new venues or retrofit old ones.

Naysayers also contend that contemporary audiences are not aware that when they view a film in 70m such as "Star Wars" or "Beauty and the Beast" or "Top Gun" they're actually watching a blown-up 35m print. With-

out a concerted educational marketing effort, only film critics and aficionados are apt to know the difference.

Even sound quality, which had been a 65m hallmark, is no longer the consideration it once was. Soundtrack enhancement in 35m, particularly the advent of digital sound, have virtually eliminated the differences.

"I don't buy that at all," counters Mikhail Salomon, "Far and Away's" director of photography. "People do notice the definition, the clarity, the color saturation — even if it's on a subconscious level."

## Is it worth it?

Apart from audience awareness of pictorial enhancement, there are other questions about the effectiveness and practicality of 65m, both economically and artistically.

■ Is the added cost of shooting in 65m worth it?

Grazer says the decision to make "Far and Away" in 65m upped the budget by only \$700,000, an inconsiderable sum for an already high-cost film.

The raw stock costs roughly double that of 35m. And there are some added equipment expenditures. Negative developing costs twice as much, says Eastman Kodak district manager Rick Thomas. Also, there was the added cost of dailies and trial prints which had to be transferred to 35m. The film had to be cut in 35m since there is no equipment to edit in 65m.

■ Can it be used to improve the exhibition of films?

According to Salomon, the decision to shoot in 65m on "Far and Away" was a response to the erosiveness of 35m release prints. Despite the improvements in film stock, says Salomon, "with 65m you don't get the deterioration on third-generation prints.

"Even a third-generation 35m print struck from the original 65m negative has greater definition and clarity. It's the difference between a cassette recording and a CD."

■ Will "Far and Away" have sufficient impact to jumpstart 65m production, taking advantage of the improvements in technology that have occurred in the past five years?

Many of the prior hurdles of making films in 65m have been overcome, say representatives of such companies as Eastman Kodak and Panavision.

Panavision's Phil Redden says that several years ago Steven Spielberg considered shooting "Empire of the Sun" in 65m, but the camera equipment was too bulky and impractical for the many and diverse locations on his schedule.

"It got us to thinking that we had to develop state-of-the-art equipment that would be as flexible as 35m gear," says Redden. The result was a 65m sync sound camera that is still larger and heavier than the best 36m equipment, but not prohibitively so (85 pounds versus 35 pounds).

Eastman Kodak has, meanwhile, been developing higher speed films that eliminate many of the lighting problems attendant with 65m.

In the heyday of 65m only 50 speed film was available, which meant that most shooting had to be done out of doors on locations with strong natural lighting. "Far and Away" is the first feature film to shoot extensive intimate indoor and nighttime sequences in 65m, and except for extra lighting to compensate for a narrower depth of field in some scenes, Salomon said few if any concessions were made during production.

Scenes were even shot day for night — previously impossible in 65m. The only time Salomon used 35m cameras was for the Oklahoma land rush sequence and that was to eliminate the risk of damaging the more expensive 65m cameras.

■ Will the major studios want to foot the added distribution expenditure of releasing films in 70m?

They cost about 10 times as much as 35m prints (\$15,000 vs. \$1,500 to \$2,000 each). And in many cases the distributor ships a 35m print to back up the 70m print.

This represents a \$2.5 million investment for Universal for 163 prints in 70m versus \$2 million to \$2.6 million for the approximately 1,300 additional 35m prints.

"The problem is a 70m print is good for one engagement, since there are only so many houses equipped to project in 70m," says one studio distribution executive. "Whereas a 35m print is used three or four times during the entire run of a film."

## Prints can't be shifted

The problem is exacerbated if the 70m release does not perform up to expectations since the theater owner can't transfer it to a smaller house. "The only other place they can use them is in their overseas engagements," says another studio distributor.

"I don't think our investment in 65m cameras will be a huge moneymaking venture," says Panavision's Redden. "But I believe we owe it to the industry to overcome those hurdles. Even if there are a handful of projects a year, it will be worth it."

"This is an extension of the art form," says one industry insider. "Butbig questions remain whether it will bring people to the theater or not. There are four or five movies waiting in the wings to see if it does."

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## The

## 70 MM NEWSLETTER

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