

= Hollywood Undercover =

Hollywood Undercover : Revealing the Sordid Secrets of Tinseltown is a non @-@ fiction book about the culture of Hollywood society , written by investigative journalist and author Ian Halperin . Halperin poses as a gay man trying to become a successful actor in Hollywood , and informs individuals he is from the non @-@ existent " Israeli royal family " . He investigates rumors that the Church of Scientology reportedly claims to have a " cure " for homosexuality through " auditing " , and speaks with a former Scientologist about his experiences . He also explores the casting couch phenomenon , the pornography industry , and the Oscars . Halperin meets with famous actors and celebrities , successfully obtains a talent agent , and a role in the film The Aviator .

The book was published in 2007 in the United Kingdom by Mainstream Publishing , and on January 15 , 2008 in the United States . Hollywood Undercover received generally positive reviews in The Herald , New York Daily News , The Saturday Star , and Contactmusic.com ; and a critical review in The Independent . Halperin later released a documentary film on the same topic , His Highness Hollywood , which premiered in New York City in April 2008 . His Highness Hollywood is a companion documentary to the book .

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Halperin pretends to be an individual trying to become a successful actor in Los Angeles , and gains access to exclusive celebrity parties . He informs individuals in the entertainment industry that he is a " member of the Israeli royal family " (which does not exist) .

The book takes a critical look at the Church of Scientology and its influence in Hollywood . Halperin posed as a gay man looking for a " cure " for homosexuality from Scientology in order to expose what he felt were inherent prejudices in the organization . He investigates rumors that Scientology claims to have a cure for homosexuality through a special " auditing " process . Halperin interviews former Scientologist Michael Pattinson , who sued the Church of Scientology claiming fraudulent activities after spending US \$ 500 @, @ 000 over 18 years in attempts to cure his homosexuality .

Halperin states that he told a Scientology official he wanted to have a successful career in Hollywood but was afraid that if his homosexuality was revealed it would stymie his career . He states that the Scientology official said the organization would " cure him of his sexuality through auditing " . According to Halperin the Scientology organization has arranged " cover " marriages as part of a " cure " for homosexuality , and notes that actor and Scientologist John Travolta married Kelly Preston two days after a male porn star told the National Enquirer of an alleged relationship he had with Travolta . According to Halperin , Anna Nicole Smith had wanted to become a Scientologist , but decided against it after she was informed by a friend of the organization 's stance on homosexuality .

Halperin concludes that the Scientology organization is more focused on money than on other issues : " I pretty much found that everything about the church is about making as much money as possible , which doesn 't really make them much different from most other religions . I have to be honest and admit I also met some nice people in the church . It 's just that I have a huge problem with their discriminatory attitude toward gays . " Halperin disputes Andrew Morton 's claim in his book Tom Cruise : An Unauthorized Biography that actor Tom Cruise is second in command of the organization , instead asserting Cruise is actually in the top position of leadership .

Halperin also explores the pornography industry , the Oscars , and the travails of the casting couch phenomenon . Links to YouTube videos by Halperin are given throughout the book , to illustrate encounters he had with various entertainment personalities . Halperin meets with famous actors and celebrities including Barbra Streisand , George Clooney and Leonardo DiCaprio , and asks them to share their advice with him about the workings of the entertainment industry . Halperin eventually lands a talent agent , and a role in the film The Aviator .

= = Reception = =

Cheryl Caira , Rosemary Goring and Anne Johnstone reviewed the book for The Herald , and describe Halperin 's experiences in the book as " certainly entertaining , and at times scandalous " . Ben Widdicombe of New York Daily News notes Halperin " received the most offensive response imaginable " when he asked a Scientology official who Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard would have voted for in the 2008 United States presidential election ; according to Halperin , he asserted he spoke with a recruiter for Scientology , " He said , ' I can tell you who shouldn 't be President - Barack Obama , Condoleezza Rice and the Rev. Al Sharpton . They should not be allowed to run for office , they should be sweeping the office . ' " A review of the book in The Independent comments that the YouTube links provided throughout the book " have the effect of making virtually everyone who tries to help him seem nice while presenting Halperin as an unscrupulous creep " .

In a review in The Saturday Star , Angelique Serrao writes that Halperin " interviews insiders who spill scandalous information that will leave you gasping at the audacity of the movie world " . Adam Adshead of Contactmusic.com writes : " Hollywood undercover is a candid and intelligent look at the fame game from an insider 's point of view . " Marc Weisblott reviewed the book for Eye Weekly , and comments : " Cynical reporting about the Hollywood system isn 't hard to come by , but Halperin has the audacity to get involved with his subjects , attracting empathy even while claiming that he 's a royal scion craving fame that his homeland cannot facilitate . "