

Talent

Rock Solid

Liverpudlian stand-up comic **Crissy Rock** could not have chosen a more dramatic departure for her feature film debut, *Ladybird*, *Ladybird*. The Ken Loach movie—inspired by a true story—is about Maggie (Rock), a single mother who's had a number of children with a variety of often abusive dads. When she finally finds a stable partner, Maggie must battle social-services officials for the custody of her kids. Frustratingly angry and combative, she manages only to make her situation worse, losing child after child to the state. “You just want to say, ‘Oh, for goodness’ sake, be quiet,’” jokes Rock over the phone from her home in England. Though quite open about her own struggles with abusive relationships, Rock downplays any comparisons between herself and the character. “If I was to put my life and her life on the Richter scale, hers would probably explode while mine would probably only go to one or two,” she says. “I met the real woman at the end of the film for about five minutes, and I couldn’t stop crying. I didn’t know what to say. You can’t just go, ‘Oh, how are ya?’ when she’s lost six of her nine children. She put her arm around *me* and said, ‘It’s okay,’ and there’s me, cryin’ like a blubberin’ idiot.” Rock reached quite a different emotional peak when she won the Best Actress award at the 1994 Berlin Film Festival. “I was so excited when I got the Silver Bear because Tom Hanks [who won for Best Actor] is my idol,” she exclaims. “I’ve watched everything he’s done.” So you met him there? “No, he wasn’t there, but I touched his fax. When they said my name after his name I nearly fainted. I spun round, thinking, ‘Oh my God, he’s here.’ If he had been, I *would* have fainted.”

MICHAEL GILTZ

