

Reality Bites: She's Just Not That Into You

When It Comes to Love, Hollywood's Hottest Are Just as Messed Up as the Rest of Us

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Workplace romances can be inelegant, at best. But what happens when you still have to work with the person after your split?



Just ask actor Justin Long (you might remember him as your friendly, neighborhood Mac guy), who hooked up with co-star Drew Barrymore on the set of their new movie, "He's Just Not That Into You."

"We all rationalize and analyze to a certain extent," said Long, who plays cynical advice-monger Alex in the film. "But when you're with somebody, you've just got to make the choice to go all in. Sometimes you do and you get your ass kicked. But you can't regret it. That's the nature of love."

Things got even more tricky when the pair split in July, just months after announcing their romance to the world on "Oprah."

"Not only that, but she was his boss, wasn't she?" mused relationship expert Matt Titus about Barrymore, who also produced the film, which is based on the best-selling dating guide by "Sex and the City" writers Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo. "Can you say awkward?"

It seems love, even for Hollywood's biggest stars, is just as complicated and messy as it is for the rest of us.

"Celebrities are people just like you and me," said relationship expert Michelle Callahan, whose book "Ms. Typed" is due for release in May. "Especially women, we can really drive ourselves crazy analyzing every little thing, checking his profile on Facebook or MySpace. Why hasn't he called? Why hasn't he texted? Why hasn't he changed his status? For celebrities, that all plays out to an extreme degree because they're also watching their relationships playing out in the tabloids and on PerezHilton.com. It's probably extremely stressful."

But "He's Just Not That Into You" star Long, for one, believes you can't generalize when it comes to love.

"Relationships are such a strange, subjective thing," he said. "Any sort of general advice or guidebook is kind of obsolete. You have to examine a relationship on a very human, case-by-case basis. In real life, I don't think you can really follow a book's rules on relationships. But maybe I'm wrong."

Titus, whose book, "Why Hasn't He Proposed?," due out next week, distills it this way: "Women inherently just want to be loved. And men, inherently, just want to be laid. That is where all the miscommunication is happening. That's it in a nutshell."

Herewith, relationship experts Titus, Callahan and Cosmopolitan magazine executive editor Nicole Beland offer their take on celebrity hookups, and discover they're just as confused as the rest of us.

Drew Barrymore and Justin Long



"Drew Barrymore is a drama queen when it comes to love," Titus said. "Drew Barrymore is in love with love. She gets elated, supercharged by those euphoric early stages. And when she gets intoxicated by that feeling, she wants to share it with the world. She doesn't dangle her toes in the pool of love, she jumps in head-first. But then she starts to look at reality and, when it doesn't work out, she looks foolish and fickle."

Said Cosmo's Beland: "When you think about the career Drew chose, the energy runs really high all the time. There must be euphoria there. Add love to that mix and it's definitely combustible. And I'm sure that high is addictive. So, while men enjoy the thrill of the chase ... these

days, women also enjoy the thrill of the chase. So now you have both people in the relationship wanting that high, that excitement. When both people are playing that role, it gets really hard. But Drew and Justin both seem like such nice people. I can't imagine it getting nasty at all. It just wasn't the right fit, in the long run. "

But, Callahan said, "The more you talk about your relationship in public, the more you're going to regret it later. It seems great on the way up but it definitely comes back to bite you on the way back down. And that's not just for celebrities. I don't think there's a whole lot to be gained from airing your dirty laundry. Especially if you plan to stay with the person, because what you say about your relationship definitely colors others views of it. It's like, how many questions does Courteney Cox get about Jennifer Aniston? And then she has to be like, 'Hey Jen, what's going on? People are asking me about this.' It'll be on TV or a blog before she has time to call her best friend."

Scarlett Johansson and Ryan Reynolds



"Scarlett has a lot of challenges in that her fantasy persona isn't who she can really be in real life," Titus said. "And that makes her look hypocritical; when she's saying on the one hand that she doesn't think men and women are meant to be monogamous and then, on the other hand, getting engaged. She desires to be monogamous but there are a lot of opportunities out there. And she is drawn to them. That's where she might get into trouble."

Said Beland: "When people have the overwhelming urge to sleep around, they say things like, 'I don't think humans are meant to be monogamous. Everybody cheats. We're not meant to be with one person.' And then the

moment they find someone that they truly connect with and feel satisfied with, they change their minds about that. So, I think Scarlett said that in a moment where she was exploring and felt that to be really true, but now she thinks differently. Or, at least, I hope so."

Jennifer Aniston and John Mayer



"Jennifer is pulling a classic girl move; she's playing the chameleon," Titus said. "She's playing detective, trying to discover who he is and what he wants and playing whatever role she must to keep his attention. It's the everyday equivalent of the high-maintenance city girl agreeing to go camping with a guy just to keep him interested. She's trying on all these different personalities in order to give him what he wants, and he really has no idea what he wants. Here's the thing though, guys like a challenge. So you think you're giving him exactly what he wants and when you finally do that, you're punished for it. The bottom line is, they're not right for each other."

Cosmo's Beland believes "there's a lot to be said for dating your opposite, because it brings out a different side of you. So, there's a positive angle and a negative angle to a woman who changes when she's with a certain guy. A lot of women will date certain men because they want to experiment with that guy's lifestyle and play with a different side of themselves. When Jennifer Aniston was with John Mayer, it may have been because she actually wanted to be with a rock star. She wanted to be exposed to the parties and the concerts. It can be really fun, if you're trying to figure out what you want to do next and, to a degree, who you are. But, of course, the negative side is that when you're changing to please a guy, at some point in the relationship, you're going to come back to who you really are. Then he's going to be disappointed and confused, and you're going to be frustrated by that reaction. And that creates a real hot mess."

In the end, Titus said, "Jennifer Aniston is subconsciously still trying to replace Brad Pitt. To her, what they had was perfect. He completely fit Jennifer Aniston's desires in every way, sexually, socially. Brad Pitt was the perfect fit for her. And she's been trying to re-create that scenario with anybody. She's willing to sacrifice whatever she has to, even if that means playing groupie to John Mayer."

Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner



"I'm proud of him," Titus said. "He went right into that relationship after Jennifer Lopez. It was like five months later and look how well it worked out. He went from one extreme with J.Lo, that horrible movie, the Barbara Walters debacle, everything in the public eye, to a really low-key, down-to-earth romance. And it just goes to show you, love has no timetable. Forget the rebound thing, forget the media glare. They just fit, they have babies, they go to the park, they put each other first. To a certain degree, it was probably Matt Damon's influence. He definitely settled down, and Ben saw that and wanted it too. And

when Jennifer Garner stepped into the picture, the timing was right."

Beware Dating Depression

"When dating, both men and women have a habit of going after who they think they want, and maybe J.Lo was who Ben thought he wanted, that really extroverted, out there force of nature," Beland said. "So we date that person, and then we realize, 'Oh, this isn't actually working for me.' And that can really throw you into a tailspin, because there's nothing worse than getting who you think you want and realizing you were wrong. It trips you up. It can cause dating depression, like 'If that person didn't work, nobody will work.' Or if you're lucky, like Ben Affleck was lucky, the next person you go out with, bam. She turns out to be the one. And he might not have realized it without have dating J.Lo."

Said Callahan: "Jen and Ben are a low-key couple that really know where to draw the line. Matt certainly set the example, but really, they made a concerted effort to keep their private lives private."

Jessica Simpson and Tony Romo or . . . ?



"She's got Jennifer Aniston syndrome," relationship expert Titus. "Since Nick, has she ever been truly been happy? I mean, Johnny Knoxville, John Mayer? Come on. What is she looking for? She had it, she lost it, she's been searching for it ever since. Tony Romo is an adorable, wholesome guy, but he's sort of like a Nick Lachey without the edge. And poor Tony doesn't know what he's getting into. He's just a nice, affable kid that got sucked in by a pretty face."