

Chapter 25

SCIENTOLOGY BLACKLIST

(KIRSTIE ALLEY)

USA Today had assigned me to write a cover story on Kirstie Alley, the great comedic actress and fervent Scientologist whose death in December 2022 at age 71 came as a shock to us all. Besides her strong body of work on *Cheers* and *Veronica's Closet*, the Emmy and Golden Globe winner had gained infamy in an unforgettable 1991 Emmy acceptance speech. I was lucky enough to be seated in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium that evening to hear Kirstie thank then-husband Parker Stevenson as “the man who has given me the big one for the last eight years.” (When I spoke with Parker in 2023 about that infamous zinger, he described it to me as “an appropriate summation of Kirstie’s bawdiness and my discomfort with that.” And on their limo ride home, he remembered telling her, “You don’t have to mention me ever again in a speech.” The couple ended up divorcing in 1997.)

More than a decade after that speech, I was super excited for my opportunity to sit down with Kirstie to discuss how she was embracing her curves as the star of the new Showtime mock reality series *Fat Actress*. But just before we finalized a meeting place, I received an upsetting call from her manager Jason Weinberg.

“Sorry, Will,” he said. “The interview’s not going to happen.”

I was so confused. “*Why??!!!*” I asked.

I was told I’d done something involving Alley during my years writing for *Entertainment Weekly* that had alienated Scientology’s Supreme Being, Xenu. There was just one problem with that: I’d never interviewed Kirstie Alley for *EW* or any other outlet. I’d never even met her. There had to have been a mistake. Somehow the Scientologists had confused me with some other William Keck.

But then a few days later it hit me. In fact, I *had* done something.