

Kjerstin Johnson: Welcome back to another episode of Bitch Radio. the Action episode. I'm Kjerstin Johnson, the web content manager at Bitch Media. For this episode, we'll see what Lady Gaga has to do with labor rights, hear Annie Leonard talk trash, and speak with one feminist about why she loves Action movies. This podcast also features music from Buke and Gass, a duo from Brooklyn who make, and make up their own instruments.

ANNIE LEONARD INTERVIEW

Kjerstin: Ever since the Story of Stuff, a twenty minute Youtube video explaining the harmful effects of consumption, Annie Leonard has become a consumption crusader, creating accessible videos detailing harmful environmental policies and calls for action. Brian Frank, the operations director at Bitch Media, interviewed Annie for the Action issue of Bitch about consumption, cap and trade, and the status of celebrity. Here's an excerpt.

Brian Frank: How did you initially get into activism? You've talked a little bit about being focused on the issues of garbage and consumerism for a long time, but how did you initially get into it, I guess, back 20 years ago?

Annie Leonard: I grew up in Seattle which is a pretty environmentally aware city. It was in the '70s when schools had recycling drives and environmental consciousness was just beginning to really take root and especially in the Pacific Northwest. So caring about the environment was such a part of our air at that point growing up in Seattle. So I had that early sense of environmental responsibility but I think a couple things really made a difference. One, is that my mother, you know, we were not rich, I had a single mother who had 3 kids, and she raised us to have a sense of appreciation and respect for the stuff that we had so there wasn't a lot of superfluous consumption going on in our house. We didn't chuck stuff because it was out of style. We brought our bikes in from the rain. I was just raised with a real sense of respect for the stuff that we had and appreciation for it. You know, we weren't poor, she was really poor growing up, and so she just made us realize how fortunate we were. You know, by today's standards we still had so little stuff compared to the average household today.

Growing up with that sort of sense of awareness and appreciation for stuff, I then ended up going to college in New York and I lived on the Upper West side and I would walk up Broadway. My dorm was on 110th St. and my classes were on 116th St. and I would walk up those blocks every morning and it was stunning to me to see literally shoulder-high piles of garbage the entire way of 6 blocks. You know, in Seattle, we don't have shoulder-high piles of garbage, we really try to reduce our waste there. So I got so curious about what was in this stuff. I started digging around in it and saw how much it was paper, easily preventable and recyclable waste. I said 'What's going on here? Where is that stuff going afterwards?'

So I took a field trip to the landfill which is something I really recommend that everybody goes and visits their landfill - it is such a fascinating thing and such an important thing of our overall society which really we keep hidden out of sight. So I went to a landfill in New York, which at that point was Fresh Kills landfill on Staten Island. It's one of the biggest dumps in the world. A lot of people say that along with the Great Wall of China it's one of 2 man-made structures you can see from space. It's just gigantic! And I stood there, as a sophomore in college, and looked at in every direction, if you imagine, literally as far as you can see in every direction, there were appliances, furniture, clothes, shoes, and books. Coming from this place where you have a reverence and appreciation for your stuff, to see this massive scale, absolute gigantic scale of destruction and waste just really struck me in terms of it being wrong. I thought 'Oh my god, our economy is based on this one way flow of resources, from resources to trash, and not only is that unsustainable, I mean, how you can you do that forever, but also it's being hidden from view.'

BF: Do you have a favorite or most interesting item of garbage that you found on these explorations?

AL: Oh my gosh, I have so much stuff. I do have a jar of this incinerator ash on my desk.

The city of Philadelphia for years was burning its garbage in a municipal waste incinerator which is the dumbest thing you can do if you have a bunch of garbage. One of the reasons it's so dumb is that it creates this ash that's full of toxic chemicals and you have to figure out what to do with it. It's so stupid because you're turning normal garbage into hazardous waste. But anyways, Philadelphia did it for years and they had this huge pile of this ash piled up on a lot next to the incinerator so they hired this shmucko company and the company put it on a ship and sailed around the world to dump it on a third world country. I ended up tracking them and we would alert, we hired Lloyds of London who would track ships, every country that it was nearing we would send an emergency warning to the government and say 'Warning: this ship is coming with toxic waste!' And at one point, during this, they ended up sailing 27 months and they went to every continent except Antarctica and twice during the journey they got a paint job and changed the ship's name but we still tracked them.

At one point, they went to Haiti and lied and said the stuff was fertilizer and they got an import permit for fertilizer and they dumped 4,000 tons of this heavy metal and dioxin-contaminated ash on the beach in Haiti and Haiti's constitution even prohibits waste imports but they did it anyways. So we notified the Haitian government and when the Haitian government learned that it wasn't fertilizer they said 'Stop unloading it, load this stuff back up and leave!' And the ship just left in the middle of the night. So that ash sat there. To me it was an incredibly powerfully symbol of how the US has treated Haiti as a garbage pit for years, centuries, and so it became sort of a mission of mine to get that ash out. Because I just thought it is so wrong for the richest country in the world to dump its waste on the poorest country in the hemisphere.

So I went to Haiti a bunch of times over the years to get this ash home, and I do have a little jar of that ash on my desk.

BF: Great. Good story! I'm curious how did you end up deciding to focus on cap and trade as your first priority as the follow up story to *The Story of Stuff*? I think a lot of people maybe were surprised by that.

AL: Yeah, well it actually wasn't even our next in line. It's amazing I get about five requests a week to make a 'story of' something, and I can't make 'em all. Because I was so busy for a year writing this book. My colleagues here, we really brainstormed, and Free Range Studios, we continue to partner with them, we brainstormed on what the criteria were for moving on with the film. A couple of the criteria we had were that we feel that this technique that was developed was very good at breaking down complicated issues and make them accessible. So we wanted to take issues that were complicated and explain them in an accessible way. One of the things we strive for is being accessible without dumb-ing it down. We're not cutting corners on any of the issues but we just want to make it accessible.

Another criteria we had is that issues that are not adequately in the public discourse. There's a lot of issues, problems out there that are intimidating to talk about. Sometimes I realize that environmentalists when we talk about these issues in order to prove our credibility like I did at that Rockwood training, we use the biggest technical words we can find and show off how smart we are. And while it might show that we know this stuff, it ends up excluding other people from the conversation.

And a lot of the activists I've worked with in the global south have said to me they feel like the climate discussions are a train that is speeding along so fast that they want to jump on but they don't know where to start because it's so complicated and technical. So we were not planning on doing one on cap and trade but activists around the world who I knew from doing broader environmental work came to me and said it's an emergency. They said a bunch of companies and corporate-oriented environmental groups are pushing for this legislation that does not meet the science, that benefits big corporate polluters more than people, that completely ignores the issue of international equity in terms of climate impact, and they said that the demand for climate justice and the really rigorous critiques of cap and trade were being excluded from the conversation. So they asked for our help to use *The Story of Stuff* platform to simplify and raise this issue into the public discourse. It was such a compelling case and so critically important, the timing was so important, the issue was so important. And that the really more conservative mainstream NGOs were dominating the discourse so much that these millions of people, especially in third world countries, were feeling like their voices weren't being heard.

BF: How have you taken some of the flack that you've gotten? *The Story of Stuff* was really widely praised in the environmental movement, has it been hard to not have... I mean, obviously some people have been very happy with this, but some people have not. Has that been hard at all?

AL: For every complaint that we got, we got a hundred 'Thank you for raising these issues' from all over.

There was one set of responses that did make me sad. Before I made the film, I called up a lot of people I knew that worked on climate issues and I asked them, "What do you think about cap and trade?" Almost across the board, people said "Cap and trade will not work, it doesn't match the science, it disproportionately benefits corporations." Absolutely people know this but what they said is that it's the best we can get. As a matter of fact, after this film came out, there was an email listserv of environmental law professors and someone sent me this string of conversations on it, and somebody had posted *The Story of Cap & Trade* and this one environmental law professor wrote back and said "it was irresponsible of Annie to release this." and he said, "it's true that the cap and trade legislation..." I forget the exact words but he said something like, 'the cap and trade legislation is barely better than terrible but it's the best we're going to get so we have to rally around it.' What I felt like is 'I'm done rallying around little bit better than terrible. I want us to aim much higher.' So to get back to the one set of responses that made me sad were the many Washington, D.C. environmentalists who called me and emailed me and said 'I'm so glad you said it, it's the truth but I can't say it.' One environmentalist called me up, a really well-known environmentalist, called me up while I was making this film and said 'I heard you're making a film about cap and trade' and I said 'yeah.' And he asked me 'Is it critical or is it supportive?' And I said 'It's critical.' And he said 'God bless you.' I said, 'Oh I'm so glad you appreciate it. Great, we're getting ready for the launch; there are 200 organizations around the world who are going to put it on their webpage on the day of the launch, could I add your group?' He said 'No you can't do that; I can't risk alienating the Sierra Club.' I was like 'Arggh!' The thing that made me sad is that the people who knew that a critique was correct who knew that cap and trade is not going to bring us anywhere near the level of pollution we need but who are afraid to speak up. I feel like we've lost our sense of political imagination in this country. I thought of all the heroes that I have throughout history, none of them would have rallied around something that was a "little bit better than terrible." So that was the part that made me sad.

BF: How do you think we overcome that - the lack of imagination on solutions to the issues What do you think is our broader social change strategy?

AL: I feel like a lot of environmentalists are still suck in trying to choose between different items on a menu that someone else has set. The real power is not choosing an item on the menu but deciding what's *on* that menu. We're too quick to give away our power. We're willing to grovel for every little crumb we get from the current political process or we're willing to choose between the lesser of two evils. We've got to get a critical mass of people that say 'No, I reject that whole paradigm, I reject the whole menu.'

BF: Through the success of "The Story of Stuff" you've become in a way, a bit of a celebrity. What do you see as the role of celebrity in activism?

AL: I really believe that celebrity or being in the spotlight or attention or any validation in the abstract are useless, it's what we do with those things that makes a difference. I cannot say how many people have written to me and I appreciate them, saying "Congratulations!" But getting 8 million people to watch a movie doesn't deserve congratulations, it's like wow now I can leverage this platform that I now have, that will determine whether or not I deserve congratulations. And it would be so much easier if I was just like Julia Roberts and just wanted to be famous or Miley Cyrus or something, but I don't, I want to encourage people to take action and redesign our economy so that we can live in a way that's sustainable and fair and that's just a lot harder than just trying to be famous.

It's an interesting situation to be in cause I'm in a place right now where a lot of people like *The Story of Stuff* and so I feel like I could stay in this sort of safe arena and just keep talking about these issues that everybody agrees on. I was telling my board that I would be guaranteed to be invited to cocktail parties and everything would be fine... Or, we could use this platform and the connection we have with these 8 million people to push the discussion further, to begin to broaden this space of political discourse like we did with *The Story of Cap and Trade*. We said we will lose some of our supporters, we will take risks and maybe people will stop liking *The Story of Stuff* project and maybe we will stop getting funding and maybe this wave will lose its momentum. I was so happy, our entire board and staff agreed, let's take that risk, rather than trying to hold on to the spotlight we've gotten and stay here and be comfortable in its glow, let's push the envelope and see how far we can take the discourse. I think that's a really important role because there's a lot of really good work and critical analysis that's happening that is not reaching the mainstream, because maybe the language is off-putting or you know, for all different reasons it's not reaching them. If there's a way that we can use this spotlight to bridge that, that'd be really exciting - to get more people than are already doing so to think critically about our economy that'd be great.

BF: Do you think there is a role for pop culture, for movies, for TV shows to have a positive impact in changing these things, changing the way our economy is structured, changing our relationship to the environment?

AL: I think this is an all hands on-deck situation. We have to do every possible thing we can do. Definitely there is a role for social media, for pop culture, for celebrities. Definitely, there's a role for all of those things to perpetuate new cultural norms that are more focused around ecological sustainability and social equity. Absolutely, we need to be changing the policies and laws, we need to be holding corporations accountable, we need to be injecting this stuff into public education. Especially since pop culture has done so much to perpetuate the over-commercialization of our society and really just soak the over-identification of ourselves as consumers that definitely pop culture should help rectify that situation.

Kjerstin: This was a very hard interview to edit down, and I highly recommend listening to the entire interview, which is available on our iTunes channel and at bitchmedia.org/audio, where you can also find links her website. Visit thestoryofstuff.com to learn and watch more about cap and trade, bottled water, and you guessed it—stuff. Also keep an eye out for the book version of the Story of Stuff, where Annie was able to squeeze in a bit more material than in her youtube video.

UNIONS AND BAD HOTEL

Woman: Honey, we can't stay here, this hotel is under boycott!

Other woman: (singing to the tune of Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance") Oh-whooooo, Don't get caught in a bad hotel! Oh-whooooo, Don't get caught in a bad hotel! Boycott, boycott! Worker's rights are hot! Boycott, Boycott! Boycott this hotel!

Kjerstin: Yes, you heard that right—don't get caught in a bad hotel. Several Bay Area queer activist groups, including Pride at Work, One Struggle One Fight, teamed up and descended on the Westin St. Francis hotel in downtown San Francisco this past spring. Using Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance" song, they reappropriated the lyrics to support a hotel union and tell people in the Westin St. Francis lobby—as well over two hundred thousand viewers on Youtube—don't support hotels who don't support their employees.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Connie Hibbard, one of the employees of the Westin St. Francis about the hotel boycott and the Bad Hotel viral video.

Connie Hibbard: My name's Connie Hibbard and I work at the Westin St. Francis in the bakery department. I've worked at the hotel for 27 years. I've been in, you know, in hotel, restaurants, food/beverage for those 27 years.

KJ: Could you talk about what issues you and other union members are facing right now?

CH: Obviously our biggest issue is health care but we've been without a contract for over a year and we just started negotiations with the Hilton and Starwoods in this last two months. They met early in the fall and then everything stopped. And they were demanding that we pay for our health care—portions of our health care which would take us—we pay nothing at this point—and that would take us up to 200 dollars a month after 3 months. Which is pretty outrageous because over the last 20-25 years we have taken lower wages and made it clear what was important to us was healthcare and that we felt the money should be put into our insurance. And after last 20-some years they want to make us pay for health care even though we've taken lower wages. We have very low pensions, we do not put a lot of money into our pensions for that reason. And health care costs have gone up considerably but all these hotels, the Starwood, the Hiltons, have made tremendous amount of profit. My hotel alone, in 2009, probably one of the worst economic years in this country in

70 years, made over 9 million in profit. So it's no question that they can afford to pay the health care, they're just choosing not to. And so, that is what the struggle is really about, huge corporations coming into a city like ours and buying up hotels and really trying to break the union is what they are trying to.

KJ: So the union organized a boycott against their own employer. How did the organizations involved in the Bad Hotel video get involved?

CH: You know they're not part of our union at all. These are just community activists who are empathizing with our cause. So we really don't know who organized it, who did it, so it was a surprise to us as well. [laughter] But it was a good one, yeah. I mean everyone I have spoken to in the hotel who saw the video was pretty amazed at it and felt it like it was done in a way that was really professional and brought it home and made people really see— you know there was a child in the video— it made people see this is really about families and about our struggle and I thought it was a really great way to put it there in the public. It caught people's attention which is what we're really trying to do. There are other choices of hotels to stay at in this city. You know, you can find a place to stay and honor our boycott and kind of what it's put out there in the public.

KJ: You said you were just phonebanking, how do you see new ways of protesting, like the video, compared to more traditional means of activism like marching or phonebanking?

CH: Well, I think especially if it gets on to the internet it helps us because it reaches so many people we can't reach. You know, people that aren't in San Francisco and don't know this is even going on. I mean they go on to the internet and see different groups reacting to this situation in different ways and it really helps us. It educates the public, it's a huge tool I think in educating the public really.

KJ: Are you ever worried that people might not take your struggle as seriously because there's a lady gaga song attached to it?

CH: Absolutely not, no, I don't. I don't worry. You know I have to tell you, I didn't hear a negative thing about that YouTube. I heard nothing and I called my brother in Wisconsin and said go online and look at this and he called his union rep with steel workers out on the east coast. So, people's response is extremely positive. It really spread fast so, that doesn't seem negative to me. I think that's a very positive response.

You know, those people who are anti-union won't pay any attention but people who care about unions and care about them creating a middle class will look at that and will think about it.

KJ: What do you think of the relationship between pop culture and labor rights?

CH: Well, it's interesting because I think pop culture is what Woody Guthrie did way back when. I think he's the person who, I mean Woody Guthrie took his guitar and jumped into—walked into factories and started singing labor songs. I mean, I think that's kind of similar to what they did on YouTube. They walked into the hotel and they did their music and it educated people and it organized people. Pop culture getting involved in labor is another educational tool. I mean, that's really what it does. The very first union experience that I had was learning Joe Hill on the guitar. So I really understood, I started to learn that way about labor through music and then I went on to take arts and labors at city college. It was taught by Fred Glass. So there's lots of stuff out there to learn about labor and unions and it certainly involves pop culture. Cause that's now in the present, that's what it's about. It enlightens people. It gets the creative juices going in labor and we really need creative juices in labor. I think it's extremely important.

KJ: How has your work environment changed at the hotel since the boycott and since the video?

CH: I feel that for me it just feels like more strength and more solidarity working on the boycott in my own hotel. I feel that people really back me up my brothers and sisters of the union are backing me up and I think the struggle is taken more seriously when people in the union members volunteer and get involved with the boycott. It broadens your prospective of what unions have done for this country and how they help the city maintain the kind of lifestyle they have. So the boycotts, it's just an incredible education. It's been an opportunity for me to educate myself about just how economics work and then I go back to the workplace and I talk to my coworkers and we talk about what's going on and what I'm learning and how it's affects me. It just strengthens us.

KJ: What's something about your job that you would want to share with someone who doesn't know what it's like to work in hotel and food services?

CH: Boy, that's a tough one, I have been doing this for 35 years and to share what I do, I guess, I think, first of all, the people who work in the hotel industry and in the food industry really like people we are really interested in meeting new people from all walks of life and I mean all walks of life. And it's really exciting in that way. On the other hand it's extremely physically difficult and hard. I mean, I carry trays with thirty pounds on them, and it's a very demanding physical job that, you know, ends up in your later years with injuries that's why the health care issue is so important. So, it's a great industry to be in if you love people, and on the other hand, it's also a tough industry physically. Yeah it's stressful, but I got to meet the Dali Lama, so...[laughter] that's the other thing, you know?

KJ: What's something about your job that you would want to share with someone who doesn't know what it's like to work in hotel and food services?

CH: The union local website is unitehere2.org. And you can go on that website and it can give you a list of things to do or hotels if there's going to be anything upcoming. I

think that if anyone out there is interested in labor and labor studies I definitely think they should pursue it. I think if they have time and can volunteer with unions and get to know better how unions work and what they've done for the community, I think that's really important. And of course probably right now, the most important thing is just to know which hotels are boycotted in San Francisco and which hotels to avoid and to pass the word on. And come walk on our picket lines! [laughter]

Kjerstin: For more information about the hotel boycott, as well as links to the organizations involved in the Bad Hotel video, visit bitchmedia.org/audio. You can watch the entire Bad Hotel video there, or by searching for it on Youtube.

SNARKY'S MACHINE ON ACTION MOVIES

Kjerstin: If you get your fill of feminism and pop culture on the internet, then you probably know Angelina Anderson, or at least her blogging moniker—Snarky's Machine. You can find Angelina blogging at her own site, Snarky's Machine, as well as I Fry Mine in Butter, the Bitch blog, and last but not least, an office supply review blog, aptly called, "Does this pen write." But the only thing Angelina loves more than a liquid ink rollerball, it's movies. Not only is she IMDB.com personified, her first guest post at the Bitch blog revealed she wrote a screenplay starring Dame Judi Dench called a Room With A View to Kill as well as a zine imagining Dench as an action hero. It only seemed natural to talk with Angelina about one of her favorite genres, Action.

KJ: You sort of spoke about it earlier before we were recording, but it sounds like your interest in film goes way back to as a child and you were captivated since then. Do you want to talk about that a little bit? And maybe in particular how action can be fit into that?

Angelina Anderson: Well, one of the things about movies I realized very early on was that they never had any brown people.

I was also very middle class and I think a lot of times when people talk about diversity or any of those kinds of buzzwords people don't understand that there are a lot of values that are stronger and more tied to class than they are to other isms people have and that middle class people tend to be sort of culturally expected to have the same values. I was just this boring middle class person as any other person of a different race than me but I was brown so it was working through me in a different way and when I would watch *Pretty in Pink* or any movie I would always go, "wow there's never any brown people!" and so when I started to actively seek out brown people in films, it was mostly just action movies and it was usually *Lethal Weapon*. It'd be a nice family and the dad would be a cop and the mom would be a cop or a nurse or social worker and that looks like my family.

So, I started to pay attention to the people who made them, like Joel Silver and Jerry Bruckheimer and James Cameron. And every time I watched a movie there

were people like me. this was so fascinating to me as a kid and pretty much that informs my viewing because I wanted to watch Ordinary People, but they were all white, and every movie of that sort of very lofty was always that way so I had to keep going back to action films.

I also lived overseas in military communities. The movies that tended to play well in the movie theaters overseas had to be action movies because they had to reflect the demographics of the people serving overseas. The military, for all its flaws, was able to integrate very quickly. It was really weird because when I came back to the States as a teenager I was very shocked at how racially segregated almost every aspect of my life was because it had never been that way as a kid and no one talked about it, and movies were very segregated. When I came back to the states and saw that "drama" was mostly white people or there were certain narratives for brown people or Asians did not exist on TV at all unless you watched a rerun of M*A*S*H or Hawaii Five-O and I didn't know how to deal with that at all.

KJ: When did you start introducing a feminist perspective to that movie watching or start taking to account gender as well as race together?

AA: I think it was actually watching a lot science fiction movies? Where, I didn't understand why the future was just like the present. I always thought, well, if the future's going to be different, then why was Uhura basically a phone operator in outer space? This is supposed to be the future, but she's doing a job that she would be doing as a black woman in a miniskirt, she's playing a phone operator! I mean, yes, she's "communication's director" and it's all very fancy but essentially she's like the Time Life operator in outer space. And then I noticed in lots of other films, you know, Blade Runner, it's the same thing: pretty woman, very demure, very much like what we're trained to deal with in our culture and I wondered, How come, you think over the course of 500 years, there'd be some evolution.

And it wasn't until I saw Alien, the first Alien movie, that I realized, "Okay, this is a guy who I think kind of gets it, he kind of realizes that, yes, gender is going to be important but the construction of it is going to be different because they have a lot more pressing issues like the fact that they're trapped on this ship with an alien. And they can't really be caught up in all that kind of stuff and that Ripley was very powerful. But she was also very feminine and also a woman that was complicated. She wasn't all good and she wasn't all bad, but she was also portrayed as smart and beautiful. She wasn't the kind of person you saw in action movies or even in science fiction movies, there was always a "babe" in them and she was positioned so differently. Seeing that kind of thing really made me want to seek it out more because I didn't really care for Lois Lane in the Superman movies of the 1970's. I didn't care for the Batman female characters in Tim Burton's [films]. I didn't care for those kinds of people because they seemed to be retreads of what we've already seen.

KJ: Well speaking of what you did want to see in films, you wrote a zine about Judi Dench and included a screenplay where she starred in an action movie. Can you tell us about that?

AA: Okay, well I had written a zine where I basically talked about how Dame Judi Dench was the action hero of my dreams.

I made it because I just wanted to talk about action films and I always found that my friends didn't get my interest in them and they didn't get how excited I was about action films and film in general. I tend to be more pragmatic about my pop culture consumption, I really try to make do with what is out there, while at the same time trying to get people to be more motivated to make other kinds of projects. But, in the mean time, I need to be entertained. So I started just writing down little things I would hear her say in interviews, and I just started making little mock interviews, what she would talk to me about being an action hero and playing this great action hero. I called the film "A Room With a View to a Kill", just kind of making of her very stodgy performance in A Room With a View and also an homage to my favorite Bond film which is A View to a Kill. I thought she'd be a great assassin because she has the kind of poise and calculating sort of movements and she also wouldn't arouse a lot of suspicion and most films have these really gorgeous, flashy men playing assassins which is ridiculous because people would notice them and remember them later, whereas she could come into a room, kill a bunch of people and then just leave and no one pay attention to her because women are invisible in our society and older women much more so. And I thought she'd be perfect.

KJ: And you have an excerpt for us?

AA: So, this is at the very beginning of the film and the set up of the film is that Jane, her [character's] name, and she has gotten her assignment and how it works is, she goes to a room where the assignment's going to take place, and she waits until the envelope comes. and so....

INTERIOR, HIGH RISE, DAY

JANE (VOICEOVER)

There are two things people in my business should know: how to steady their shot and when to duck. Are there more rules? Probably, I have found them to be either unhelpful, unsatisfying, or unsavory.

JANE reaches into her bag and extracts a leather-bound notebook.

JANE

I've had this notebook for 42 years and this the very first time they've ever asked me to bring it with me on an assignment.

THE END

AA: it's mostly about the moments between when she walks into the room and the end. And who she is, beyond being an assassin, not just about her being, you know a

cold-blooded assassin, it's about her whole life and sort of talking about women's roles and how they have to juggle all these things and here's this woman who's an assassin who has to juggle being a mom, a lover and wife and have, you know, an educator and all these things going on but at the same time she's got this other job.

Are you dying to know the twist ending?!

KJ: Yeah, I was going to ask about that, you said it had a trope-ilicious twist.

AA: Well, the trope-ilicious twist is that, she's sitting in the room, the whole film just goes through her life, flashbacks flash forwards and at the end part of the place that she works for, they're policy is that when they want to retire you, they just have you kill yourself. She's her own assignment!

KJ: Woah!

AA: But it's trope-ilicious in the sense that it's a twist that's been use before but not on an assassin.

KJ: So besides having Judi Dench star in more action movies, what other changes to the genre would you like to see?

AA: T here's still this idea that if a woman is going to be positioned strong in a movie and it's not going to be made for laughs, she needs to be tall. And that's pretty much something I'd like to see change because I'm barely 5 feet, and I would love to see women on TV and in films that are my height because they're not my height anymore, they're all so much taller. And of course, the body types in terms of not being curvy or fat or not having a range of body types. I think one of the things is that there needs to be sort of reimagining of what a female action hero could look like and that she doesn't always have to be conventionally attractive, or have the proportions of a model. The ones in the 1970's didn't, they were really curvy, that was the whole point, they didn't look like the girls that could be in the movies, like the girls next door. They looked like women who kick a little butt.

Kjerstin: To hear Angelina's thoughts on the James Bond franchise, Angelina Jolie, and why more women aren't character actors, I highly recommend listening to the entire interview at [Bitch Media.org/audio](http://BitchMedia.org/audio), where you'll find links to all of Snarky's, I mean, Angelina's blogging endeavors plus scans of the zine Judi Dench Action Hero.

OUTRO

Kjerstin Johnson: Thanks again for listening, listeners! If the Bitch podcast seemed a bit shorter than usual, fear not. A special Mad World podcast on gender and advertising is coming down the pipeline soon. Today heard music by Buke and Gass. Look for Riposte, their debut full-length album out on September 14th from

Brassland records. Listen to other Bitch audio segments at bitchmedia.org/audio or search for Bitch Radio on iTunes. This podcast was produced and directed by me, Kjerstin Johnson. See you next time!