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THE FEMALE AGEN(T)CY: GENDER AND NATIONALISM IN AMERICAN PRIME-TIME ESPIONAGE SERIES (1950-2006)

By

Tricia Anne Jenkins

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ABSTRACT

THE FEMALE AGEN(T)CY: GENDER AND NATIONALISM IN AMERICAN PRIME-TIME ESPIONAGE SERIES (1950-2006)

By

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This dissertation examines nine prime-time American spy series that aired on television between 1950 and 2006. Through an examination of these programs' narratives, characters, parent and spin-off shows, product tie-ins, and production histories, the project seeks to uncover how notions of American nationalism, ideal citizenship, and even the CIA have shifted during the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. By predominantly selecting programs that feature female operatives in either a protagonist or prominent villainess role, this dissertation also traces the evolution of the female secret agent on American television and illustrates the ways that gender has been and continues to be connected to notions of American nationalism, feminism and ideal citizenship. The shows selected for discussion in this project include *I Led 3 Lives, Biff Baker U.S.A., Get Smart, The Girl From U.N.C.L.E., The Bionic Woman, The Six Million Dollar Man, Scarecrow and Mrs. King, La Femme Nikita* and *Alias.*

For Celeste, who tried her damndest to thwart this mission, and for Nat, whose operational support ensured its success.

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Introduction

Nora Slatkin, former Executive Director of the CIA, has argued that one of the most inaccurate stereotypes permeating the American media is that the CIA is full of "white, male, old boys from Ivy League schools" and "that they do all of the real work" in the intelligence community. In a speech given at the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in 1995, Slatkin specifically criticized the *San Diego Union Tribune* for calling the CIA one of the government's last "all-white male bastions" because the statement overlooks the very presence of women in the agency.

Slatkin is accurate in pointing out this discrepancy between perceptions of the CIA and the actual agency, since women comprised 40% of all CIA trainees as early as 1992 (Kessler 165-166) and, by 1996, occupied one-third of the top 64 command positions (MacIntosh 255). Despite her protests, however, the conception of the CIA as an all-male "bastion" continues to be perpetuated by American media —a point demonstrated by the coverage of CIA operative Johnny "Mike" Spann's death in 2001. As Michael Kackman points out, both the agency and the media emphasized Spann's heroism, patriotism, and "selfless courage" after he was killed during a prison uprising in Afghanistan, while the media and the White House quickly molded his wife into a national symbol of sacrifice. For example, Shannon Spann appeared at the 2002 State of the Union address as President Bush's guest and was described by the White House as "the wife of Johnny Michael "Mike" Spann," now "raising their three children" (qtd. in Kackman 184). While the portrayal of Shannon as a widow struggling to recover from a profound loss was certainly accurate, Kackman points out that most of the media coverage overlooked the fact that Shannon was herself a CIA operative and that the

couple had met during their training at the agency. Kackman also argues that this information was purposefully ignored in order to place the Spanns into "the prescriptive mold of the martyred hero and his supportive family" and notes that such highly-gendered discourse is what helps to perpetuate the idea of the CIA as male-centered and "makes it remarkably difficult to imagine a feminine agent of the nation" (184-85).

More so than the coverage of Mike Spann's death and other news stories like it, however, popular narratives in film and television have contributed to the notion that men are the real backbone of the American (and British) intelligence communities. Recent films such as *Spy Game* (2001), *The Recruit* (2003), *The Bourne Identity* (2002), *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004) and those in the *Mission: Impossible* and *James Bond* franchises have all positioned men in the spy-protagonist role, while most of the leading women in these narratives function as love interests even if they also work as spies. Additionally, out of 162 espionage television programs airing in the U.S. and Britain between 1951 and 2006, roughly 50% feature a lone, male protagonist, while twenty-seven shows, or roughly 17%, center on an all-male spy team or partnership. In comparison, the shows that revolve around a lone, female protagonist total nine, or roughly 6% of all shows, while only four series, or less than 2.5%, center on an all-woman spy team or partnership (See appendix).

While the remaining 25% of programs feature a co-sexed partnership or a larger co-sexed team of agents, in shows featuring a team of operatives[1], women fare poorly in terms of representation since they often comprise just one of the multiple team members, as is the case in *Mission: Impossible* (1966-73, 1988-90), *The Champions* (1968-69), *Department S* (1969-70), *Codename* (1970), *The Omega Factor* (1979), *Secret Agent*

Man (1999-2000), *Silent Force* (1970-71), *Three* (1998), *Whiz Kids* (1983-84) and *MI-5* (2002-present). Likewise, in shows featuring a male-female partnership, women often take a subordinate role to their male counterparts in either professional status or in their ability as action/adventure characters. Shows such as *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* (1983-87), *Intrigue* (1966), *Biff Baker U.S.A.* (1952-53), and *Top Secret U.S.A.* (1955), for example, feature partnerships where the women have a lower professional status than do the men, if they have a professional status at all. This is also true in *The Avengers* (1961-69), as neither Emma Peel nor Cathy Gale works as a professional operative, but instead assists "the ministry's" secret agent, John Steed, without pay. It is not until the introduction of Tara King in the show's final season that Steed is even matched with a partner who works as a professional spy, but Tara's debut in "The Forgot-Me-Knot" makes it clear that she is a young, inexperienced recruit while Steed is a tested and revered operative.

What is unusual about *The Avengers* is that both Emma Peel and Cathy Gale are experts in martial arts and often employ their skills against villains, while John Steed represents a more "effete-looking hero" who prefers to fight with a bowler hat and umbrella (Miller, *The Avengers* 83). Before the appearance of *La Femme Nikita* (1997-2001) and *Alias* (2001-2006), most shows featuring a female spy held the show's male lead responsible for the fighting and action sequences, while the woman possessed a limited physical agency and primarily functioned as either a subordinate assistant or as a spy whose main skill involved disguising herself through dress to garner information.

Also contributing to the popular notion that the CIA is an all-male, if not all-white male bastion, is the fact that in spy television series, women of color are the least visible

in terms of sex and race. Indeed, all but four of the leading female protagonists appearing in the genre between 1951 and 2006 can be read as being of white, European descent[2]. Interestingly, those characters that can be read as women of color are all played by black actresses: Sheryl Lee Ralph in *Codename: Foxfire* (1985), Natashia Williams in *She Spies* (2002-04), Gloria Ruben in *The Agency* (2001-03), and Penny Johnson in *24* (2001-present). None of these women, however, works as a lone protagonist or in a male-female partnership, suggesting that when women of color do appear within the genre, they do not function as *the* leading female character. Additionally, while spy series such as *I Spy* (1965-68) and *Mission: Impossible* featured prominent black spies as early as the 1960s, the first of the four shows to feature a black actress did not air until 1985 (*Codename: Foxfire),* and Asian, Middle Eastern, and Hispanic women continue to be nearly invisible outside of their roles as villainesses and supporting characters[3].

Women's lack of visibility in spy television over the last sixty years has contributed to the idea that women fail to play a prominent role in national intelligence and security, although shows such as *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias* have begun to disrupt this narrative. The under-representation of women in the medium also has ramifications for popular constructs of ideal citizenship because unlike certain threads of spy fiction which have depicted the secret agent as foolish, inept, shady, or ruthless, most American television series have portrayed the spy as one of the nation's most elite members even if they have temporary lapses in judgment or the integrity of their agency is questionable. For instance, Cynthia Walker points out that the average television spy is more cerebral and of a higher class than his or her closest cousin, the television detective, and unlike crime show heroes, the television secret agent is usually spurred into action by moral or

political ideals rather than the baser motivation of money ("Spy Programs"). Author J. Fred MacDonald also demonstrates that American spy television has its roots firmly planted in the idea that operatives should embody notions of U.S. political rectitude, as seen in those shows that aired during the first two decades of commercial television. More specifically, MacDonald illustrates that the spy heroes of the fifties and sixties, along with military and western heroes, promoted stereotypes about American might and presented viewers with a picture of an "honest and selfless" agent and nation "forced to defend the Free World against the barbarous onslaught" of godless Communist automatons (12).

The link between spies and notions of ideal citizenship is also heightened by the very nature of the espionage program since its narratives are consistently grounded in political, economic and social threats to one or more nation-states. As a result, spy narratives construct heroes who defeat these threats using their acute mind, physical agility and resourcefulness to assert and maintain national ideologies, and thus come to symbolize the strength, intelligence, and values of the nation-state. This does not mean that the genre fails to ask serious questions regarding the use of power by the agent and his or her agency, which must use questionable means to defeat threats. (After all, if their means were wholly ethical they wouldn't need to be clandestine.) However, many of the series in the television genre can be read as ultimately celebrating the agent's ability to maintain a moral compass in the quagmires of international unrest and intelligence bureaucracies. This does not occur as frequently in spy fiction or film, of course, which feature numerous shady, heartless and incompetent spies; however, because television is supported by advertisements and relies on weekly audiences, the genre's operatives must

be ones that viewers can champion and with which advertisers are comfortable being associated. As executive consultant Joel Surnow explains, when *La Femme Nikita* was adapted from film to television, one of the first changes that he had to make was to construct Nikita as an innocent with a strong moral compass because while the film version depicts Nikita as a drug-addicted-murderer-turned-government-assassin, neither Surnow nor the USA Network believed that viewers would welcome an actual criminal into their homes and root for her on a weekly basis ("Section One Declassified").

Given the strong nationalist content of the spy genre as a whole, popular culture scholars have begun to explore the ways spy narratives link race, gender, and class to ideas of American and British nationalism. For instance, a plethora of scholars have examined the links between these constructs and British nationalism within the James Bond novels and films, including Kingsley Amis (1965), Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott (1987), Bruce Rosenberg and Ann Harleman Stewart (1989), James Chapman (2000), Jeremy Black (2001), and Christine Bold (2003). In general, these authors concur that 007 has a long tradition of viewing non-British cultures as far inferior to his own, and that these views are depicted through the vilification of and ethnic slurs against racial "others." Many of these authors also acknowledge that the Bond franchise employs "inappropriate" gender performance and "deviant" sexuality to demarcate a character's personal and national degeneracy, while Bond's masculinity and irresistibility to women mark both the agent's and Britain's superiority and desirability.

While fewer scholars have examined the link between nationalism and the spy genre outside of the James Bond context, a few have addressed the relationship within television studies. In *Saints & Avengers*, James Chapman has examined *Danger Man*

(1960-61, 1964-67), *The Avengers, The Champions* and *Department S* to demonstrate how these 1960s programs featured archetypes rooted in British culture and thus the ways that British television exported its national values and ideologies through its entertainment commodities. In *Windows on the Sixties,* Chapman specifically explains how *The Avengers* consciously excluded certain social and ethnic groups from its series—namely working class and black characters—to paint an idealized, as well as distorted and partial, version of British national identity (49). As show writer Brian Clemens explains in Chapman's essay, *The Avengers* purposely "admitted to only one class—and that was the upper. As a fantasy we would not show a uniformed policeman or a coloured man. Had we introduced a coloured man or a policeman, we would have a yardstick of social reality and that would have made the whole thing quite ridiculous. Alongside a bus queue of ordinary men-in-the-street, Steed would have become a caricature" (49).

Additionally, MacDonald's *Television and the Red Menace* analyzes American espionage narratives, newscasts, and military and western programs airing prior to the Vietnam War. The work ultimately concludes that because these series often employed "ethnic others," especially Asians, in villains' roles, and failed to question stereotypes about American might, these programs encouraged viewers to believe that they could quickly and easily defeat communism in Asia and helped lead the nation into a war Americans neither fully understood nor wanted. Michael Kackman's *Citizen Spy* also considers the ways in which 1950s and 1960s spy programs represented and defined an ideal national identity through an "ongoing discourse of cultural, racial and gender difference" (xxxv). In his chapter on *I Spy*, for instance, Kackman argues that this

American drama, the first to star an African-American lead (Bill Cosby), made space for a new black agency within the genre and dominant conceptions of the nation-state. However, because the show also "leapfrogs forward past bus boycotts and firehoses," the show depicted a "utopian American myth custom-tailored for the tumultuous civil-rights years" (126) through its narratives and casting choices. In other words, by casting Cosby, in part because he avoided racial issues in his early comedy, and constructing his character as a "post-civil rights, all-American guy," *I Spy* perpetuated the idea that within the American nation-state "lay the solution to any and all social, political or cultural ills" and essentially erased its history of racial injustice (126).

Despite these contributions of the study of the spy genre, no scholarly book, to my knowledge, examines the way women have been constructed over the course of spy television history, although some book chapters and articles have examined the ways women (and particularly the Bond women) have functioned within film, a specific television show, and historical accounts of spying[4]. At the core of this dissertation, then, is a desire to help fill in this gap in scholarship and to explore the ways American spy shows have constructed the relationship between sex, women, citizenship and American nationalism within the contexts of the nation's major political, military and social movements since the 1950s. In order to accomplish these primary goals, this project is structured around two fundamental questions: 1) How have espionage television series encoded messages regarding national values as they relate to gender and citizenship in shows featuring prominent female spies? and 2) How have the events of the Cold War, the America women's movement, the civil rights movement, and the war on terror influenced those messages? Two additional but subordinate concerns include: 1) How

have television network practices shaped the construction of women in the genre? and 2) How might audiences decode the messages embedded in these spy narratives in ways that differ from the reading(s) encouraged by the narrative?

As one might be able to deduce from this set of questions, the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation primarily rest in cultural studies scholarship about television, ideological narratives, and encoding and decoding practices. For instance, it adopts the idea that because television is dependent on the revenue generated by advertisements, television creators and network executives consciously avoid topics in their series that could evoke strong controversy and lead to sponsors retracting their advertising dollars. As a result, television show creators adopt positions in-line with perceived mainstream ideologies, and thus television entertainment is often marked by narrative lines that seem to present several arguments to viewers "but wind up foregrounding and, through the actions of protagonists already identified as 'us,' endorsing just one of them" (Green 29). In order to identify the mainstream ideologies promoted in select spy narratives, especially as they relate to issues of nationalism and gender, a close textual analysis is conducted to examine the ways these shows encode messages through narrative, music, wardrobe, casting, etc.

However, this dissertation also rests on the ideas first outlined by Stuart Hall, which posit that while television narratives may direct viewers to a preferred reading that fits within the dominant cultural order, viewers decode messages from at least three positions: the dominant-hegemonic position (where viewers read a text as the producers intended), the negotiated position (where viewers negotiate, by accepting *and* rejecting elements of the producers' messages), and the oppositional position (where viewers

"detotalize a message within an alternative framework" that is oppositional to the original message) (Hall 102-103). Or, put another way, this dissertation rests on the idea that people act on and interpret mass produced items in so many ways that, as John Fiske notes, "popular culture items have no single defined meaning and present a bank of rich semiotics" (5).

By embracing this philosophy, this dissertation not only seeks to uncover select spy programs' narrative ideologies, but also the possible alternative and even subversive readings allowed for in these series when they originally aired. In some cases, this is accomplished through analyzing fan postings on internet sites, interviewing fans of the shows, drawing from critical responses and cast interviews, and/or conducting my own analysis of subversive readings. Fan-based analyses of early programs, including *I Led 3 Lives* and *Biff Baker USA*, were nearly impossible to conduct, however, since these shows aired over fifty years ago, and I could not uncover any published fan sites or fan material for the series.

Of course, before beginning a discussion of any spy television show, it is important to outline this dissertation's treatment of the genre, especially since these series often share characteristics with crime, mystery, fantasy and science fiction shows. In fact, the commonality of genre crossover within spy narratives is what helps to explain why many of its stories are denoted simply as "thrillers" or "action/adventures" (Britton, *Beyond Bond* xiii) and why a single show may be read as a detective story or science fiction story by one fan and a spy show by another. As Toby Miller points out in *Spyscreen,* for instance, most espionage series follow a narrative structure where, at the start of each episode, the law is violated and the state finds out about it. The show's

heroes then attempt to discover who is responsible through the use of informants and struggle with the enemy before defeating him or her and restoring order. This formula, though, is similar to that employed by television's investigative dramas, and thus explains how *Honey West* (1965-66) and *The Saint* (1962-69) can be read as both detective and espionage programs (44-45). The same concept applies to shows such as *The X-Files* (1993-2002), which most fans consider to be a science-fiction program due to its themes of paranormal activity and the possibility of alien life. However, the two main characters are agents for the FBI, and the show often explores issues of government conspiracy-- a trope popular within both the spy and science-fiction communities.

But regardless of its penchant for genre crossovers, the spy genre does possess its own unique set of formulas and conventions. As aforementioned, the average spy is often more cerebral and of a higher class than the television detective and is usually motivated by moral or political ideals rather than money. Additionally, the genre's villains are usually foreign and eccentric, and their crimes have larger political consequences than do those featured in crime shows (Walker, "Spy Programs"). Spy series also favor exotic locales and countries (Britton, *Spy Television* 14), and starting with the James Bond novels and films, the genre has often incorporated dry humor and displayed a preoccupation with expensive consumer goods and technological gadgetry. As John Cawelti and Bruce Rosenberg explain in *The Spy Story*, espionage narratives as a whole also rest heavily on archetypes, which include the use of disguise; the secret exercise of power, often without traditional ethical constraints; and a profound sense of belonging to an organization. Likewise, the genre's plots often revolve around torture, capture,

invisibility, secret communications, elaborate disguises, complicated alibis, a narrow escape, and dead drops (13-14).

While many of the shows discussed in this project adhere to the above-mentioned conventions, this project's treatment of the spy genre rests on a more basic definition. Namely, works are considered part of the espionage genre if they feature a protagonist who works as a professional or semi-professional operative for either a real or imagined agency set up to protect the interests of the nation and/or its global allies. Undoubtedly, this is a modern definition of the genre, as early spy stories, including *Riddle of the Sands* (1903) and *The 39 Steps* (1915), often featured protagonists who did not work for any particular organization, even if they gave information to one later on. According to Frederic Hitz, it is not until W. Sommerset Maugham's *Ashden* (1927) that the spy bureaucracy is featured in the genre at all, and not until the later part of WWII does it begin to figure regularly and prominently in espionage narratives (38-39). Since this work is only concerned with spy television programs airing during and after the Cold War, such a modern definition works well, especially since it is broad enough to include genre crossovers like *Alias* and *The Bionic Woman* (1976-78), but is not so broad that it fails to eliminate television programs that do not feature a secret agent employed by the state, such as Simon Templar of *The Saint* or the private-eye series, *Honey West*. This distinction is important since this dissertation is concerned with the ways American nationalism is embedded in spy narratives and those featuring characters who are officially employed and selected by the state more explicitly address this topic than those who are not.

Working within these parameters, then, the following five chapters explore eight spy programs featuring a prominent female character that aired between 1950 and 2005. The first chapter, "Reaffirming Gender Norms in the Early Cold War Crisis: *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led Three Lives,*" examines the genre within the context of McCarthyism and the Red Scare, while "Pleasure, Consumption and the Slender Spies" explores the effects of the anti-war movement, the popularity of the James Bond films, the youth revolution and the burgeoning gender revolution on *Get Smart* and *The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.* The popular 1970s program, *The Bionic Woman,* is discussed in the third chapter within the context of the space race, television's "fantasy era" and the American Women's Movement, but it also explores the narrative of its parent program, *The Six Million Dollar Man* (1974-1978), to better understand how gender works within the franchise. Chapter Four, "The Suburban Spy and the New Right," discusses *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* within the framework of New Right politics, Republican motherhood, post-feminism and the Cold War of the Reagan-era, while the fifth chapter investigates two recent shows, *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias*, within the framework of global terrorism and the growing popularity of the female warrior on television. The work then concludes with a chapter highlighting the project's main ideas and the spy genre's relationship to American hero-making, CIA recruitment levels, and public support for intelligence agencies in general.

The shows selected for discussion in this dissertation were the product of an involved deductive process. Each show, for instance, appeared on the list of spy narratives printed in the appendix and featured a female lead, an all-female spy team, a male-female partnership, or a co-sexed spy team of three or more agents (except *The Six*

Million Dollar Man.) Since this dissertation is interested in the link between gender and American nationalism, programs whose main character(s) were depicted as fighting for the U.S. and its allies were heavily favored. (Fans of *La Femme Nikita* will know that the spy agency featured in the program, Section One, is an international organization and the show's protagonist spoke with a slight Australian accent. However, it was included in this project because the show was originally created for an American television network, depicted Section One as a pro-Western, North American alliance, and worked to explore specific types of globalization occurring in the mid-1990s.)

Out of the thirty-six programs left to consider (See appendix, Table 8), six criteria were then employed to narrow the shows selected for a detailed discussion. The first criteria was the longevity of a series since it is reasonable to assume that more people viewed longer-running programs than shorter ones and thus these shows had a greater affect upon the culture and are therefore more deserving of critical attention. As a result, any show running for less than twenty episodes was eliminated. For the same reasons, any show that aired on a paid-subscription channel not included in most basic cable or satellite packages was eliminated, but this only affected the program *Jane Doe* (2005-present), which currently airs on Hallmark.

Two of the remaining criteria were more subjective in nature and included the prominence of the female character(s) on the show and the proximity of the show to a traditional spy program. More specifically, programs that featured a female lead, an all female spy team, and a prominent male-female partnership were favored over shows that featured a single female character operating on a team of men. This decision was derived from the simple conclusion that a work investigating female spies should focus on those

shows which contain the most images of female operatives to analyze. Issues of genre led to the elimination of shows such as *Honey West*, *The Net* (1998-99), and *Dark Skies* (1996-97) because these programs do not feature women as professional operatives employed by a state-sponsored intelligence agency and *Dark Skies* and *The X-Files* were also eliminated since fans consider these programs to fall more into the science-fiction realm than the spy one.

Altogether, these choices left fifteen programs and two final criteria to consider: 1) the availability of the show in my personal archive, on DVD, VHS, or in university and museum archives and 2) the decade the program ran. Obviously those shows unavailable for review could not be considered and since this project is interested in tracing the evolution of gender and nationalism on spy television, it was important to select programs that aired in multiple decades. Thus, one to two programs from each decade between the 1950s and the present were selected for exploration and, again, the final shows selected are: *Biff Baker U.S.A.*, *I Led 3 Lives*, *Get Smart*, *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Bionic Woman (*and *The Six Million Dollar Man*), *Scarecrow and Mrs. King*, *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias*. Readers familiar with *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives* may be surprised by these shows inclusion since they are primarily centered on a male lead; however, American spy shows airing during the 1950s did not feature professional female spies in a protagonist role. *I Led 3 Lives* was thus selected because it features powerful communist women in roughly half of its episodes, while *Biff Baker U.S.A.* is unusual in that it centers on an amateur husband-and-wife-"spy"-team that works to thwart criminal and political threats abroad.

Ultimately, it is my hope that a close examination of each of these shows will demonstrate how notions of ideal citizenship, American nationalism and gender performance have changed over time and how the events of the Cold War, the space race, the women's movements, the civil rights movement, the New Right, and the war on terror have influenced spy television content and perceptions of covert intelligence agencies. I also hope, more simply, that fans of these shows will gain new insights into their favorite spy programs through this project's discussion of show production, product tie-ins, fan responses and narrative analysis.

The 1950s

Reaffirming Gender in the Early Cold War Crisis: The Spies of *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led Three Lives*

"Since when do the commies make any distinction between men and women? As long as their rotten, filthy work gets done, they don't care who does it or even what happens to those who do it."
–Herbert Philbrick in "Comrade Eva."
"Look, beautiful. One thing we don't have in common is a favorite color. I'm not very partial to pink." – Biff Baker to a Viet Minh leader in "Saigon Incident."

Early Television and the 1950s Spy Program

The introduction of television at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City generated excitement about the medium, but its development was hindered by the outbreak of World War II, which required both human and financial resources to be directed elsewhere. The conflict's end, however, signaled a period of intense growth for the technology, as the years between 1945 and 1948 saw the number of commercial television stations rise from nine to forty-eight and the sale of television sets increase by 500% ("Golden Age"). By the end of the 1950s, close to 85% of all U.S. households contained at least one TV set, which exceeded the number of homes with washing machines, vacuum cleaners or electronic toasters, and by 1961, families were averaging five hours and twenty-two minutes of television viewing each day (MacDonald 147).

Television's increasing popularity led many Americans to become concerned about its ramifications for children, families, and adults. Moral critics of the medium complained that mystery and crime dramas, which constituted roughly half of all prime-time programming in 1950, encouraged violence and juvenile delinquency (Boddy 102). Critics were also concerned about offensive comedy routines and the sexualized clothing appearing on variety shows, while others complained that programs favored large urban

settings and lifestyles and ignored rural and suburban ones. Author Carroll O'Meara specifically complained in 1955 that

> What is acceptable to broad-minded night club audiences in Manhattan, Hollywood or Las Vegas is rarely apt to be fare for admission in homes in any city or town...Our nation consists of 160 million citizens, most of whom live in small towns, go to church on Sunday, attempt to bring their children up decently, and do not regard burlesque shows as the ultimate in theatre (qtd. in Boddy 101-102).

Fears about television content and its effects on viewers were also augmented by the burgeoning Cold War. As Russia and China obtained the nuclear bomb and the Soviet Union more aggressively sought territories, Americans grew fearful about communists' ability to disrupt the nation's own economic, social and political systems, especially since Senator Joseph McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover publicly insisted that large numbers of communist spies had infiltrated the country. This "Red Scare" specifically affected the entertainment industry as anti-communist privateers worked to expose the party's Hollywood sympathizers, fearing their access to millions of Americans via film and television and, thus, their potential to change the political leanings of the nation. In order to expose these "commies" in Hollywood, identify the party's front organizations, and call for the blacklisting of "traitorous" actors, producers, directors, announcers and writers, three former FBI agents published a four-page tabloid called *Counterattack: The Newsletter of Facts to Combat Communism* in 1947. Three years later, a much thicker publication, *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television,*

cited 151 celebrities as being involved in pro-communist activities, and many whose names appeared in the publication were fired or simply not re-hired for work.

The well-publicized hunt for subversives and the concerns about television's power to negatively influence viewers affected program content. For instance, several espionage programs aired on television during the 1950s, and even though many adopted an overtly patriotic tone, writers, directors, actors and producers still worried about being suspected of political subversion. As a result, many went out of their way to associate their series with government agencies and/or popular anti-communist officials. Several programs' characters were based on the actual lives of former spy masters who documented their careers in memoirs in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and directors often employed a quasi-documentary style to enhance their programs' links with factual people, places and events. To cite just two examples, *The Man Called X* was based on Ladislas Farago's memoir, *War of Wits: The Anatomy of Espionage and Intelligence*, while *Behind Closed Doors* was based on the files of former head of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral Ellis Zacharias, who served as a technical consultant on the series. Additionally, espionage show creators sought to avert suspicion by using their programs to encourage viewers to become active in their local governments and maintain a lookout for communist subversives. As Michael Kackman notes in *Citizen Spy*, both network and independent producers of 1950s spy series sought to "burnish their public service credentials" in a tumultuous time for the medium by showing that television viewing could be "a responsible civic activity" (3).

In order to communicate their political messages, most of the nearly thirty spy series created by Americans during the decade[5] featured white, male protagonists that

individually thwarted evil. A few of these shows featured amateur spies who accidentally got caught up in foreign intrigue, but most others, including *Doorway to Danger, The OSS, Secret File U.S.A.,* and *Dangerous Assignment* centered around professional operatives with direct links to the American government. This chapter, however, explores two shows that varied slightly from the era's common espionage formula -- *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives* -- in order to better investigate notions of masculinity *and* femininity within the contexts of American nationalism and the 1950s spy program. *Biff Baker U.S.A.* is unusual in that it centers on a husband-and-wife-"spy"-team that works to thwart criminal and political threats abroad, while the latter is unique in that it partially positions its male protagonist in the domestic sphere and focuses on communism's threat to families as much as it does the nation at large. *I Led 3 Lives* also represents an unusual narrative by featuring powerful communist women in roughly half of its episodes and uses subversive gender roles to mark these women as political threats. Before exploring the issues of gender and nationalism embodied by these shows' male protagonists, female leads, and villainesses, however, a brief background of each show follows.

A Brief History of *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives*

Biff Baker U.S.A. debuted during the McCarthy era in the fall of 1952, seven years after the end of World War II and several months after a cease-fire had unofficially ended the Korean War. As a result of the historical transition taking place in the United States at the time, plot lines of *Biff Baker U.S.A.* revolve around both the aftermath of the Second World War and the developing communist threat abroad. The episode "Mona Lisa," for example, focuses on a scheme by former Nazis to sell paintings stolen from the

Louvre during the war, while "Alpine Assignment" features Biff defeating a group of communists blocking the broadcasts of the Voice of America in Vienna.

The series, which ran as a thirty-minute espionage/adventure program, starred Alan Hale, Jr. (better known as the Skipper on *Gilligan's Island*) in the title role. Hale's character works as an American entrepreneur who travels to exotic locales with his wife Louise (Randy Stuart) in order to buy goods for his import/export company. According to text-based summaries of the pilot episode "Koblen," the couple uses Biff's occupation to serve as undercover agents for U.S. Army Intelligence while on a buying trip behind the Iron Curtain; however, most other episodes depict the two as mere business or leisure travellers who accidentally get caught up in espionage or crime solving, but nonetheless bring the wrong-doers to justice.

Like many spy programs of the time, *Biff Baker U.S.A.* worked to associate its protagonists with American ideals, as the title of the program suggests. The Bakers' travels to exotic locales, for instance, helped to promote the wealth, mobility, and leisure democratic-capitalism could afford its citizens. The narratives also worked to mark the Bakers as representatives of American political rectitude, as they lauded the couple for thwarting communist influence abroad, bringing Nazi war criminals to justice, and fighting government and financial corruption, primarily in European, Asian and African nations. In fact, the effort to promote American politics and ideals through *Biff Baker U.S.A.* was so deliberate that when the series' story supervisor, Fenton Earnshaw, learned that some businesses were publicly criticizing the show for suggesting entrepreneurs really worked as government spies when overseas, he immediately retaliated in *TV Writer.* Earnshaw reminded viewers in this trade journal that the series' scripts were

approved by the State Department, the FBI and the Commerce Department and therefore could not be considered un-American. He also touted the show as "attempting to create a positive, constructive kind of propaganda to encourage the American people along the road to worldwide democracy" and claimed that any attack upon the show was "an attack upon democracy" itself (qtd. in MacDonald 108).

Despite its attempts at "constructive propaganda," however, *Biff Baker U.S.A.*, like many other programs, enjoyed only a single season's run. Airing on Thursday nights at nine on CBS, the show was sponsored by the American Tobacco Company, which bought twenty-six episodes from the Music Corp. of America, aired twenty-one of them during the 1952-53 television season, and used the remaining five as a summer replacement in 1954 after the series was cancelled and replaced by *Lux Video Theatre* ("Biff Exits" 22). While it is unclear what ultimately led to the show's cancellation, *Biff Baker U.S.A.* helped many television writers and directors gain valuable experience in the medium and genre. The series was one of the first directed by Herschel Daughtery, who later directed on the sets of *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E., The Man From U.N.C.L.E., Mission: Impossible, Star Trek* and *The Six Million Dollar Man,* and Fenton Earnshaw used his experience on the show to secure work on the series *Mike Hammer* and *Behind Closed Doors*.

Unlike *Biff Baker U.S.A.*, which set its episodes in exotic locales, *I Led 3 Lives* focused solely on the communist threat at home. Starring Richard Carlson as "Comrade Herb," the series was based on the 1952 best-selling[6] memoir of Herbert Philbrick, who worked as a FBI counterspy from 1940-1949. According to the memoir, Philbrick's espionage career began when he joined the Cambridge Youth Council in Massachusetts

but came to suspect it as a communist front group and contacted the FBI. The Bureau then encouraged Philbrick to become more actively involved in the party in order to

Figure 1: A double-page advertisement for *I Led 3 Lives* appearing in the August 24, 1953 issue of *Sponsor* magazine:

Ziv's new show is TV Dynamite! From the Secret Files of a counterspy for the F.B.I.! TREASON on our door step....this man slammed the door! Starring Hollywood's Brilliant Actor RICHARD CARLSON in the true life story of a patriotic young American who led 3 lives in the service of our country! 1. Citizen! 2. Communist! 3. Counterspy for the FBI! 'I LED 3 LIVES.' Tense because it's Factual! Gripping because it's Real! Frightening because it's True! Each half hour a true-life adventure! Your opportunity to have the most timely and important TV program in your city! Not just a script writer's fantasy—but the authentic story of the Commie's attempt to overthrow our government! You'll thrill to the actual on-the-scene photography...factual from-the-records dialogue. Taken from the secret files of a counterspy for the F.B.I. Authentic sets and scripts personally supervised by Herbert Philbrick the man who, for 9 agonizing years lived in constant danger as a supposed Communist who reported daily to the F.B.I! Never before has such a dramatic document appeared on TV!

garner information about it, and he obliged for almost an entire decade before being called as a surprise witness in the Smith Act prosecutions of 1949, where he testified about the training he received in the party, suggested that communists were intent on overthrowing the U.S. government, and ultimately helped secure the imprisonment of almost a dozen communist leaders.

When Ziv Television decided to create a syndicated series based on Philbrick's experiences, it hired the author to edit the show's scripts and fill in the details of plots writers developed from the book in order to ensure some level of historical accuracy. Additionally, the show's association with Philbrick allowed the production company to pitch the show as "true" and "real" in press releases (see fig. 1), and the show's title sequence likewise emphasized the series' relationship to actual people and events. More

specifically, each episode opens with an image of Philbrick's memoir (also titled *I Led 3 Lives*) while a voiceover informs viewers that:

> This is the story, the fantastically true story, of Herbert A. Philbrick, who for nine frightening years did lead three lives—average citizen, high level member of the Communist Party, and counterspy of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. For obvious reasons, the names, dates and places have been changed, but the story is based on fact.[7]

The show also employed a minimalist, documentary production style and an interior monologue common to B-grade film noirs, in order to give the program a sense of "historical truthfulness." Part of the show's visual style was achieved through its film locations, as almost all episodes feature Philbrick on the move, meeting with the FBI in laundries, service stations, lumberyards and pet stores, and by the fact that almost no makeup was used on the series. However, Morleen Getz Rouse notes that the show's minimalist approach was partially due to Ziv Television's budget, which could not afford a weekly "makeup man" and shot "on Hollywood and Vine" because it "was cheaper than trying to build a set of something" (168-69).

Of course, the show's emphasis on historical accuracy does not mean the program was unbiased in its portrayals of communists. Many opening sequences feature the show's narrator heavy-handedly introducing the upcoming episode. Such is the case in "Comrade Eva," when the narrator informs viewers that they are about to witness the "communists' complete disregard for human rights as they affect [a] plan of sabotage," and in general, communists on the series are depicted as omni-present fanatics bent on

Fig. 2. Herbert Philbrick appearing before the Un-American Activities Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. Photo from his autobiography *I Led 3 Lives*.

Fig. 3. Richard Carlson playing Herbert Philbrick in "Dynamite."

creating familial, political, and religious unrest in America. In fact, the possibilities for communist penetration on the show seem endless, as no regular communist characters appear—a move that perhaps stemmed from a desire to prevent viewers from forming a "perverse identification with the villains" (Doherty 143), and storylines ranged anywhere from a young girl being brainwashed by a local artist, causing her to suddenly embrace anti-war ideals, to a group of communists plotting to pose as new church members in order to spread enough gossip about the real members to create tension and discourage attendance.

Regardless of the type of threat featured during any given week, *I Led 3 Lives* episodes end with Philbrick and the FBI temporarily defeating the communists and overtly reaffirming American values. Indeed, watching the show today, *I Led 3 Lives*

seems like an overly-patriotic and paranoid series, but during its time, the series enjoyed immense popularity. In August 1953, one week before *I Led 3 Lives* was sent to air, the syndicated program had been scheduled in more markets than carried any of television's top-ten rated shows, and just one month later, the series had been sold to ninety-four markets—fifteen more than carried either *I Love Lucy* or *Groucho Marx* (Rouse 170). Sales of *I Led 3 Lives* continued to increase over the following year, reaching 178 markets by late August 1954, with 97% of all markets carrying the series in 1953 renewing for 1954 (170). Interestingly, *I Led 3 Lives* is also reported to have been Lee Harvey Oswald's favorite program of all time ("Interview"), and oil and brewery companies continued sponsoring re-runs of the program into the 1960s due to audience demand (Britton 24).

Masculinity in Crisis: The Reassuring Figures of Biff Baker and Herbert Philbrick

In order to understand how gender is connected to issues of nationalism in both *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives*, it is important to remember that during the 1950s many felt that middle-class women had been emancipated by their return to domesticity and the availability of "time-saving" appliances, such as dishwashers and washing machines. Middle class men, however, were thought to be oppressed because of employment shifts in post-war America as small, self-owned enterprises disappeared and large corporations emerged. This shift meant that the mobility and autonomy afforded by self-employment faded, while bureaucratic, "other-directed," white-collar jobs exponentially increased. When white-collar workers began reporting a sense of alienation in their post-war employment, sociologists worried about a feminization

occurring in the work place as men became service-orientated subordinates to supervisors, colleagues and customers[8].

In his work *Men in the Middle*, James Gilbert argues that sociologists also feared the decline of American masculinity in the 1950s due to the rise of suburban culture and mass consumption. Gilbert posits that these aspects of American life specifically challenged the rugged individualism connected with notions of white masculinity, since both suburban life and mass consumption encouraged conformity, leisure, and comfort (4-5). In terms of the Cold War, this perceived weakening of American masculinity was of significant concern since many reasoned that the country's prowess depended upon the ability of "strong, manly men" to stand up against communist tactics. As Elaine Tyler May points out in *Homeward Bound*, many contemporaries "believed that the Russians could destroy the United States not only by atomic energy but through internal subversion" (94), and thus some believed that "soft men" would be soft on national defense, while others concluded that weak men would be unable to resist communist seductresses or party blackmailers eager to exploit those engaging in homosexual acts or extra-marital affairs. In response to these concerns, national policy demanded that known homosexuals be fired from their government jobs, and the country's dominant culture came to represent monogamous, heterosexual behavior culminating in marriage as mature and responsible while "deviants" were considered irresponsible, weak and a threat to security (94).

This climate helps to explain why both Biff Baker and Herbert Philbrick emerged in the early to mid 1950s as married protagonists, even though spies in literature, television and film are typically portrayed as single men whose jobs do not afford the

Fig. 4. DVD Cover of *Biff Baker, U.S.A.* Vol. 1. Released by Alpha Home Entertainment.

luxury of long-term, personal relationships. In other words, by positioning these men in committed heterosexual relationships, *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives* were able to present viewers with heroes "responsible and mature" enough to ward off communist tactics, and indeed episodes from both series feature the protagonists resisting the charms of female enemies out of love for their wives (and country). Perhaps what is surprising, then, is that these protagonists are also constructed as white-collar, organization men. Biff Baker, for example, is employed as a buyer for an import-export company while Herbert Philbrick works for an advertising agency. Both professions were ones that Americans feared were feminizing middle-class men; however, both shows worked to challenge dominant notions of the white-collar worker by featuring characters who employed their individual agency, both on and off the job, in order to ensure the continuation of American prowess.

As Erica Arthur demonstrates in "The Organisation Strikes Back," the effort to reconstruct ideas about white-collar masculinity was not just undertaken by television during the era; American companies also used their training manuals and prescriptive literature to stridently oppose "cultural representations that envisaged the white-collar male as a weak-willed, insignificant creature" and to instead cast him as "a heroic, robust," and "self-reliant figure" (37). *Biff Baker U.S.A.* can be read as attempting to

accomplish this precise goal, as its protagonist is a physically robust man, who accomplishes heroic feats while independently conducting business deals internationally. For instance, many episodes depict Biff having the autonomy to conduct transactions without contacting his home office for permission or advice, and Biff's company plays such an insignificant role in the series that none of the episodes currently available for review feature his boss or co-workers at all. Rather, the protagonist is only shown making and receiving telephone calls and telegrams in order to communicate with his colleagues back home, and thus the show can be read as a counterpoint to the many domestic comedies of the decade that presented fatherhood as the new center of the middle-class man's identity since the home, these shows assumed, was the only place he was still able to exercise authority[9].

Additionally, Alan Hale Jr. appears to be a hulking man on camera. The actor, who stood at 6'2" and weighed well over 200 lbs., is often the tallest and broadest person in an episode and therefore encourages viewers to read his character as strong and masculine before they even get to know him. The actor's frame also allows Biff to convincingly overtake villains in physical confrontations, and he is responsible for all of the show's action sequences. Biff's physical feats on the show work to emphasize the traditional links between masculinity, physical agency, and subjectivity, as it is his interactions with the series' criminals that also lead to Biff unravelling illegal plots and discovering guilty parties. Biff's physical and often violent engagement with overseas villains, however, also works to promote American and Western imperialism on the show. In "Saigon Incident," for instance, a group of Viet Minh rebels tries to (re)claim a rubber plantation from French colonials with whom Biff is friends and business partners.

When the rebels rush the colonials' home with weapons, they are slaughtered by Biff and his friends' gunfire—an act that is justified in the program by the Viet Minh's association with communism and the rebels' ethnic "otherness." More specifically, the episode constructs the rebels as primitive, yelping, shirtless commandos led by an exotic, sexualized female who encourages the killing of women and children in order to advance the group's political agendas.

Episodes such as this may have helped garner support for the nation's foreign policy in Korea and Vietnam by depicting America's enemies as barbarous savages, but the show also fails to explain the group's motivations for trying to reclaim the land or the injustices they've suffered under French colonialism, and, thus, the rebels' embrace of the communist political and economic system is left unexplored in the narrative. As J. Fred McDonald argues, such shallow depictions of communists-- which were common to almost all genres during the era-- were dangerous because they led Americans to believe that they could easily defeat communism in Asia and presented viewers with a one-dimensional picture of an "honest and selfless United States" forced to defend the Free World against a "barbarous onslaught" (12).

Almost equally one-dimensional in its portrayal of communists is *I Led 3 Lives.* This series, like *Biff Baker U.S.A.*, revolves around a middle-class protagonist, but unlike the travelling Bakers, Philbrick and his family reside in a suburban home complete with many of the decade's latest consumer goods. The emphasis on the domestic realm in this show helped the Philbricks represent the "ideal" 1950s family that symbolized the promise of American capitalism during the era. Between 1945 and 1950, for example, the country's gross national product jumped 250 percent, and by end of the 1950s, 60%

of all Americans owned homes; 75% owned a car; 87% owned a TV, and 75% owned a washing machine (Breines 3). Likewise, per capita income had risen 35% between 1945 and 1960 (Breines 3), and thus, the 1950s signalled the emergence of a new middle-class that, in turn, served as a symbol of the prosperity and upward mobility afforded by American economics and government.

Importantly, however, Philbrick resists the risk of feminization presented by suburban conformity and creature comforts since he leads a unique and dangerous life defeating communists in America. Additionally, the series depicts communism—not the suburbs or the rise in white-collar jobs-- as the real threat to American masculinity. One of the ways the party is depicted as emasculating on the show is that men in the communist party must often answer to women who are able to serve in leadership positions. As Kackman notes in *Citizen Spy*, at least half of *I Led 3 Lives'* 117 episodes feature powerful communist women, and many times these females are depicted as emotionless authoritarians who wear severely cut suits and possess both rigid postures and brusque voices (32). Because no women serve as agents in the FBI, Kackman also argues that *I Led 3 Lives* "pits two dramatically different bureaucracies against each other...On the side of American virtue is the men's club of the FBI, an efficient organization of terse agents who work quietly but thoroughly," and on the other side is "the organization's evil twin, the Communist party" which represents a "perversion of state power, staffed by ineffectual men and aggressive women" (32).

However, communism is also depicted as threatening to American masculinity in the series because the party demands unquestioning loyalty from its members and strictly forbids them from acting without instruction or oversight. In other words, it expects its

"company men" to be so dependent on "management" that they cease to employ their own critical thinking and agency. A good illustration of this occurs in "Legation," where Philbrick is forced to carry out a series of tasks aimed at discrediting the local police chief. In this episode, Philbrick is not allowed to know the party's end game, to complete any of his tasks without heavy surveillance, and the party refuses to answer Philbrick's questions regarding the mission or even tell him about the next task until the present one is complete. Given that Philbrick is believed to be a loyal party member with mid-level rank, these precautions seem unnecessary and emasculating, and indeed, if the show merely depicted Philbrick's activities in the Communist Party, he would represent an emasculated figure. However, the show is not really about Philbrick's work in the party; it is about his work as a counterspy. Therefore each episode depicts Philbrick taking serious risks, such as stealing party files, making emergency contacts with the Bureau, and using his quick thinking to come up with satisfying lies to evade suspicion. In his efforts to betray the party and ensure the continuance of American ideals, then, Philbrick is able to embody the "masculine" traits of risk-taking heroics and self-reliance, much like Biff Baker.

But before claiming too much for Philbrick, it must be remembered that the protagonist also follows the orders of the FBI unquestioningly, which, like the communists, sends him on assignments without always telling him why. In fact, while the spy shows of the 1960s would go on to spoof the efficiency of government agencies, *I Led 3 Lives* encourages Americans to have unquestioning faith in the FBI and its agents rarely make mistakes in the series. However, Philbrick's unquestioning loyalty to the FBI does not undercut the protagonist's patriotism or suggest emasculation in the narrative,

rather it works to bolster Philbrick's link to American nationalism and ideals. As Paul Cantor notes in "Not Your Father's FBI," overwhelmingly positive portrayals of the FBI were common to both film and television programs of the 1930s, 40s and 50s, and perhaps served as an attempt to counter the concerns of Americans regarding the formation of a federal police force, which many thought was an unjustified extension of the government's power. Regardless of the motive behind these depictions of the bureau, however, Cantor posits that "probably no branch of the federal government has gotten more of a free ride from the mass media than the FBI" (5), and he argues that the popular culture of the era worked to persuade Americans to view the bureau as "a symbol of the integrity of their government" (7) and the FBI agent as the "very image of the all-American hero" (8). *I Led 3 Lives* certainly operates in the vein, and so even though Philbrick acts blindly for the FBI, his actions link him to integrity and national loyalty.

Because both *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives* feature middle-class protagonists who serve structured organizations through their individual agency, the programs suggest that "company men" can still be masculine and serve a valuable part in national defense. However, the programs really only address issues of white masculinity and national service since neither series features people of color in regular roles and both virtually ignore the racial unrest prominent in the United States during the era. While it is unclear why these programs ignored the topic, Mary Dudziak's ideas outlined in *Cold War Civil Rights* suggest that the move may have stemmed from communists' attacks on the United States in regards to race relations. More specifically, Dudziak points out that America's victory in WWII allowed the nation to proclaim its defeat of fascist racism and to claim moral and political superiority. However, because America could not end racial

strife on its own soil, communist propaganda, both inside and outside of the United States, charged the country with hypocrisy and political inferiority. While such attacks eventually forced federal policymakers to pass meaningful civil rights reform, it also forced the American government to control the ways in which the civil rights movement unfolded in the media in order to wage its own war of ideas in the global media. In terms of 1950s spy programs, such control would not have been difficult for the government to manage since scripts were often approved by various government agencies or anti-communist officials, but at least in regards to *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives*, the creators basically chose to ignore domestic, racial unrest altogether, suggesting that to even admit that race relations were a problem in the United States would weaken these shows' ability to project American democracy and capitalism as the superior form of government.

The Communist Temptress and the Contained American Wife: The Women of *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives*

As aforementioned, most 1950s spy programs featured single male protagonists, and thus women rarely served as regularly-appearing characters in heroine roles. *Biff Baker U.S.A.* represents one of the notable exceptions, but as the title of the series suggests, it primarily focuses on Biff's heroics rather than on Louise's contributions to crime solving, and while a few episodes of *I Led 3 Lives* feature Eva Philbrick helping her husband defeat the latest communist threat, the show is unquestionably about Herbert's adventures, and Eva fails to appear at all in many of the series' episodes. Nevertheless, both *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives* provide interesting commentaries

on women and gender during the early Cold War, especially as they relate to issues of American nationalism and political subversiveness.

Take, for example, *I Led 3 Lives'* portrayal of communist women. When they are not depicted as masculine women leading a staff of ineffectual men, they are constructed as sexually manipulative women who use their sensuality to advance their own political and personal agendas. An example of one such woman is found in "The Fiancé," which features Comrade Susan manipulating an American weapons designer and accepting his marriage proposal so that she can ultimately steal his blueprints and pass them along to the communist party. Episodes such as this linked feminine manipulation with issues of national security, but others, such as "Dynamite," went one step further to suggest that sexually uncontained women not only posed a threat to American defense but to patriarchal order in general. More specifically, "Dynamite" features Comrade Rose using her feminine charms to convince another party member, Comrade Barrigan, to frame their local leader for embezzlement, thus allowing the pair to move up in the party. The episode begins with a meeting during which cell members confront Barrigan about his attempts to frame the leader, and during this meeting,

Figure 5: Comrade Rose in "Dynamite."

viewers are led to think Rose is an innocent and loyal party member because she presents herself as a self-effacing woman interested in the communist cause, rather than the power it affords. But starting in the middle of the episode, when Rose's true involvement is revealed, the character is depicted much differently. She vacillates between speaking in sensual, manipulative tones and shrill, belittling ones when convincing Barrigan to carry out the crimes she designs, and by the end of the episode, viewers learn that Rose not only wants to use Barrigan to frame their leader but that she also wishes to kill all of the local party members, including Barrigan, to obtain even more power for herself. Upon this revelation, the camera begins to film Rose from low-level positions that emphasize the swell of her breasts, suggesting that her overly sexualized nature is inextricably linked to her treachery of both America and patriarchal order.

As Julie Wheelwright's "Poisoned Honey: The Myth of Women in Espionage" explains, such portrayals of women in the spy genre are not unique to 1950s television. Popular accounts of spying circulated by male officials, journalists and historians have often depicted female spies as seductresses who value sexual and material power over patriotism and prize the overthrow of men above the call of duty. In fact, Wheelwright suggests that this is probably the most popular depiction of women in the spy genre, as is partly evidenced by the Mata Hari myth. As aforementioned, however, the early Cold War in America also encouraged a rhetoric that linked unrestrained sexuality with communist subversiveness since "morally weak" men were thought to be easy targets for the communist party, which was thought to employ sexual seductresses in order to blackmail men into joining or providing information for the organization.

As David Lewis' *Sexpionage* details, the link between uncontained female sexuality and communism was not purely imagined since the KGB had used sexual temptation against the West since at least the 1940s. These "sexpionage" plots typically involved a "raven" (male operative) or "swallow" (female operative) seducing a Westerner visiting the Eastern bloc who had access to valuable information. The couple's sexual encounter would be recorded by the KGB using a hidden video camera, still camera, or microphone and the evidence would then be used to blackmail the target into providing information for the outfit since the target often feared imprisonment, or losing a job, spouse, family, or public reputation. While educated guesses in 1976 placed the number of sexpionage targets actively spying for the East near 10,000 (17), Lewis notes that these traps were really only carried out in the Eastern bloc and were rarely, if ever, employed by the KGB on American soil. Nonetheless, American entertainment and political rhetoric during the 1950s worked to depict politically subversive women *in general* as sexualized threats to both the nation and patriarchal order.

What is disappointing about these depictions of highly-sexualized villainesses is not just the fact that these shows linked political subversiveness with women's failure to ascribe to traditional gender norms, thereby limiting the range of acceptable gender performances available to women. It is also disappointing that series like *I Led 3 Lives* and *Biff Baker U.S.A.* (which likewise employed hyper-sexualized females in its few storylines that feature female villains) offer viewers few depictions of women using a position of power justly or for the betterment of others, and the series also masked several of the reasons why many American women joined the Communist Party USA in the preceding decades. Both Ethel Rosenberg and Elizabeth Bentley, for instance, were

primarily drawn to the organization in the 1930s and 40s because it was the only political party taking an official stand against fascism, sexism, racism, and poverty, and reports had still not reached the U.S. of Stalin's purges or his murderous efforts to create communal land[10]. The desire to end these injustices, especially during the depression and WWII, is what motivated many men and women to join the CPUSA, but because shows like *I Led 3 Lives* and *Biff* fail to explore these aspects of the party, it suggests that communists were little more than heartless, rude atheists who failed to value honesty, free-thought, and human life to the extent that even Richard Carlson was afraid that the show would be accused of red-baiting given the temper of the times. Such one-dimensional portraits of communists did not serve the American public well as they encouraged uncritical, fear-based reactions to the communist movement both at home and abroad and may have even helped lead the nation into Vietnam, a war which the general public failed to totally comprehend.

Of course, if *I Led 3 Lives* and *Biff Baker U.S.A.* depicted sexually unrestrained women as political subversives intent on gaining power in the public and political spheres, it is only logical that the same narratives would construct "desirable" American women as sexually and economically contained through marriage. As Susan Douglas explains in *Where the Girls Are*, this rhetoric, which encouraged American women to embrace their roles as wives and mother during the Red Scare, rested on the idea that if the United States was going to fight off communist contamination, "then *our* women had to be very different from *their* women." "Their women," she writes, "worked in masculine jobs and had their kids raised outside the home in state-run child-care centers that brainwashed kids to become good little comrades. Therefore our kids had to be

raised at home by their moms if we were going to remain democratic and free," and she notes that there actually were "politicians and newspapers that proclaimed daycare a communist plot" (47). Also embedded in this rhetoric was the issue of Western economic superiority, as it suggested that Soviet women *had* to work to keep the communist economy running, but American capitalism had emancipated its women by allowing them to leave paid-labor in order to tend to their families and use a host of affordable home appliances that signalled the technological superiority of the West.

Such notions regarding "the ideal American woman" are best displayed in *I Led 3 Lives*, as the series primarily features Eva Philbrick in the home tending to her husband and children's needs—work that proves invaluable to Philbrick and, thus by extension, the FBI. In fact, while many television programs suggested the 1950's male identity rested in the home since it was the one place he could still exercise his authority, this spy program suggests that if Philbrick had to live the "fourth and fifth lives" of father and husband, his already complicated life would be completely overloaded. As a result, the narrative suggests that by Eva tending to her "womanly" roles as wife and mother, she also serves her country by freeing up her husband's time in order to directly defeat communist threats. Put another way, the show suggests that if Herb had to father his children, buy his clothes, and make his own dinners, it would be impossible for him to also serve as the family breadwinner and the FBI's counterspy. By Eva doing these tasks for him, she gives Philbrick the time, nourishment and emotional support he needs to serve their family by defending the nation from communist subversives, and she also provides the valuable guidance her daughters need when they, too, are subjected to communist ideas.

Indeed, traditional gender roles are so important to the series that some *I Led 3 Lives* episodes warn viewers about the dangers of Americans transgressing these norms. One such episode, "Comrade Eva," features the communist party's district headquarters recruiting Philbrick's wife for a basic assignment just as she is about to attend the "thrilling" once-a-year-sale at a local department store. While Herb is afraid that this assignment is the start of the party trying to get its "sticky little fingers" on his wife, neither Eva nor Herb can protest, lest they be suspected of disloyalty. The party's recruitment of Eva into affairs that take her outside the confines of the home turns Herb into an emotional wreck. For instance, one of the first things he does is contact Jerry Dressler of the FBI and ask that they raid the district headquarters to free his wife, who is only being asked to pass out propaganda fliers. When Dressler reminds Herb that only a few people know about the party's location and that the move would blow his cover as a counterspy, Philbrick insists that he doesn't care; he just wants Eva out of the building. As Dressler goes on to insist that the act would be of no use to Eva, Herb or the nation and urges Herb to think more rationally, the protagonist merely storms off to visit the headquarters himself, but when his visit fails to help him make contact with his wife, the worried Herb has no choice but to head home where he literally sits by the phone, wondering if it is out of order as he waits for his wife to call.

By placing Eva in the political and public sphere and Herb in the private one, this episode warns viewers that gender transgressions can weaken both national security and the family unit. Because Herb becomes an emotional wreck operating out of fear for his wife's safety, he becomes a threat to himself, Eva, the FBI, and thus the nation as he is willing to blow his cover to rescue his wife. Likewise, Eva is furious about the role

reversals because she has missed the once-a-year sale and the opportunity it affords to care for her family on a budget and, as a result, the stability and comfort of her family is likewise threatened. Of course, the division of women as caretakers and men as providers and protectors becomes disrupted by the Communist Party, which is depicted as failing to "make any distinction between men and women." "As long as their rotten, filthy work gets done," Philbrick reflects in this episode, "they don't care who does it or even what happens to those who do it." And this disregard for "human rights," as the narrator at the start of the episode informs viewers, threatens to pervert the nation by weakening the family unit, turning caring wives into absent ones and competent husbands and workers into ineffectual, emotional wrecks.

Like Eva, Louise Baker also adheres to many traditional gender norms, but because Louise is not positioned as either a mother or housewife in *Biff Baker U.S.A.*, the character serves a different function within the series than does Philbrick's wife. Essentially, Louise, like Biff, works to emphasize the wealth, mobility and consumption democratic-capitalism can afford its citizens. Louise, after all, does not need to work since her husband's job as an entrepreneur supports them both, and her economic emancipation allows her to travel with Biff, taking in the world's sites and retail goods. She and Biff often stay in posh hotels, dress in stylish evening attire, and enjoy cocktails and meals with new friends.

Interestingly, however, Louise is also depicted as playfully sassy and independently- minded, and she seems to prefer international travel to the comforts of suburban living and the role of motherhood. As a result, her role on television marks a departure from the happily contained housewife popularized by many other 1950s

television series such as *I Led 3 Lives, The Donna Reed Show, Leave It To Beaver,* and *Father Knows Best* and provides audiences with an alternative and even celebrated vision of white, middle-class femininity. Because of Louise's "fierceness," though, *Biff Baker U.S.A.* might also be read as a show that expressed America's anxieties over who would wear the pants in post-war America, and the series ultimately worked to resolve these anxieties by punishing Louise for employing her individual agency.

To be more specific, Louise is petite, blonde, and, when compared to Biff, almost child-like in stature. But while she may have embodied a feminine ideal that stood in stark contrast to images of masculine Soviet women or full-breasted communist temptresses, Louise' build does not prevent her from employing her own agency in dangerous arenas, often against Biff's wishes or instructions. For instance, in "Counterfeit Plates," Louise realizes that she has left her new camera at an old Nazi hideout the couple had visited earlier that day as tourists. When Louise tells her husband of her mistake, Biff, who is already in bed and half asleep, tells her to wait until tomorrow morning when the two of them can retrieve the apparatus together. However, Louise is set on recovering the camera immediately and heads out on foot in the dark countryside. Soon thereafter, the narrative punishes her for her agency, as when she arrives at the location, she accidentally discovers an ex-Nazi attempting to recover hidden German money plates, and he attempts to strangle her to death. A similar occurrence happens in "Blue Mosque," when a group of terrorists steals one of Biff's company's trucks to transport munitions, and Biff, upon discovering its location, leaves during the night in order to reclaim it. Before his departure, Biff clearly tells Louise to stay at the hotel and wait for his return. However, Louise cannot stand merely waiting and worrying,

so she calls an Egyptian official and the two decide to meet up with Biff in order to ensure his safety and the trucks' recovery. Of course, the government official Louise telephones turns out to be involved in the terrorist cell, so she inadvertently reveals Biff's activities, which leads to both of their captures and near deaths. These episodes, which usually resolve by Biff rescuing Louise, position men as the only ones suited to employ their own agency and, like *I Led 3 Lives*, suggest that women best serve men and, by extension, their country by adhering to traditional gender roles that firmly place the male as the head of the family unit.

Conclusion

1950s' spy programs were quite conservative in their approach to both politics and gender. However, as Ella Taylor argues in *Prime Time Families,* this conservatism was common to all genres since "the defining tone of prime-time television during [the 1950s] was consensual and ... mediated by the internal dynamics of an industry addressing itself to a massive, largely unknown audience" and was "therefore committed to holding the middle ground and avoiding controversy in its construction of the social world" (39). But if the introduction of television into people's home caused shows to be cautious in regards to content, so did the political climate of the time. Due to McCarthyism and the Red Scare, numerous employees of the television industry feared that they would be suspected of political subversion if they failed to produce narratives that overtly embraced American ideals, and as a result, many 1950s spy programs associated themselves with government agencies or former spy masters to reassure officials and viewers of their loyalty.

In a time when subversive gender performances also led to one's political loyalty being questioned, spy programs, including *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and *I Led 3 Lives*, depicted "good Americans" as subscribing to traditional gender norms, which were prescribed as necessary to defeat the communist threat. More specifically, Biff Baker and Hebert Philbrick represent middle-class heroes who eschew suburban and white-collar feminization and instead employ their individual agency to protect the nation from subversives both at home and abroad. Because the political rhetoric at the time also suggested that uncontained sexuality was linked to subversiveness, both *I Led 3 Lives* and *Biff Baker U.S.A.* feature married protagonists and depict female subversives as hyper-sexualized vixens who dupe men in order to gain political and personal power. In contrast, the female leads of these programs, Eva Philbrick and Louise Baker, represent desirable, sexually contained women, whose "emancipation" from paid-labor helped mark the superiority of American capitalism. Additionally, Eva Philbrick's role as wife and mother helped represent American social and political ideals as her service to her husband and family helped defeat communist threats both in and outside of their home.

Just one decade later, however, the strict adherence to gender norms by spy heroes would dissipate, as the 1960s ushered in an era of male and female protagonists who played with camp and androgyny. These spy narratives would also begin to question the motives and effectiveness of government agencies, whereas *Biff Baker U.S.A.* and, especially, *I Led 3 Lives* displayed an absolute faith in government to protect its citizens and the world from harmful threats. In order to better understand the historical and social factors that led to this transition in television's spy narratives, the next chapter examines

two popular 1960s shows featuring heroic female male-female partnerships: *Get Smart* and *The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.*

The 1960s

Pleasure, Consumption and the Slender Spies: *Get Smart* and *The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.*

"How would it look? A princess saving a princess? It would destroy all the kiddies' faith in fairytales."
–Mark Slate to April Dancer, "The Prisoner of Zalamar Affair."

Agent 99: "I'd like to know exactly where you were when the professor was abducted."
Max: "If you don't mind 99, I'd like to handle this myself."
Agent 99: "Right."
Max: "I'd like to know exactly where you were when Professor Dante was abducted."
--"Mr. Big" (Pilot)

Viewers were introduced to both *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* during what media critics have dubbed "The Year of the Spy." This time period, which ran from 1965-66, earned its name because of the numerous espionage series that debuted on American television, including *I Spy; The Wild, Wild West; Secret Agent*; *The F.B.I., The Avengers; The Man Who Never Was*; *Mission: Impossible*; *Amos Burke—Secret Agent; Blue Light;* and *The Double Life of Henry Phyfe.* Flanking either side of "The Year of the Spy" were NBC's *The Man from U.N.C.L.E,* which debuted in 1964, and BBC's *The Prisoner,* which aired in Britain in 1967 and in 1968 in the U.S.

The unusual number of spy shows emerging during this period is a result of networks' attempts to capitalize on the massive success of the James Bond films, which hit cinemas in 1962 and broke box office records throughout the decade[11]. However, the spy craze also reflected a retread trend occurring in American television during the early and mid-1960s, as networks consistently created "new" shows that flagrantly copied previous successes-- a trend that irritated, if not infuriated, industry critics. In fact, the prestigious Peabody Awards Committee declared in 1965 that it was unable to find a single entertainment offering in the 1964-65 season worthy of a citation, and as a result,

the committee only gave awards to public affair shows (McCrohan 43). Roughly four years earlier, Newton Minow, John F. Kennedy's newly appointed chairperson of the Federal Communications Commission, also commented on the retread trend by labeling television "a vast wasteland" that offered little more than violence and mind-numbing formula shows.

Peabody and Minow aside, the espionage series of the 1960s did hold important entertainment and cultural value for audiences in the midst of tumultuous times. If shows such as *I Led 3 Lives* and *Biff Baker U.S.A.* played on fears of wide-spread Communist penetration and encouraged Americans to have unquestioning faith in their government, the sixties were marked by a growing cynicism in regards to the government's trustworthiness and effectiveness. Many Americans, for instance, had come to view Joseph McCarthy's hunt for communist subversives as an infringement on citizens' civil liberties, as evidenced by both the Supreme Court's late 1950s rulings that weakened the senator's momentum and the entertainment industry's decision to ignore many of the blacklists McCarthyism had produced. Additionally, Americans' trust in its intelligence agencies eroded with the CIA's cover-up of the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, the *New York Times'* 1966 uncovering of the agency's efforts to start a Burmese war against China, and the surfacing of further reports regarding the organization's attempts at upheaval in Cuba, Laos, the Congo, and Taiwan. As memoirs of former spies began to surface in the 1960s, which portrayed the United States unfavorably, the luster of covert operations continued to fade. Soon critics of the CIA were charging that the agency could no longer be considered a symbol of American valor but was rather an intolerable

bureaucracy led by a series of inept directors who failed to provide the agency with a clear moral compass (Kackman 106-107).

Given this national climate, many of the era's spy shows sought to criticize or parody the government and its intelligence agencies. Both *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* and later seasons of *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* used camp and dry wit to undermine the reverence afforded to intelligence organizations in the past, while *Get Smart* parodied the CIA through over-the-top humor in order to capitalize on Americans' growing distrust of the government and its handling of overseas affairs. Mel Brooks, one of the *Get Smart* creators, even believes that the main message of his series is to "never trust a government agency that uses the word covert," adding that the "CIA always—because of the word covert—allowed themselves to do things without Congress or the administration," making them "very dangerous people" (qtd. in Green 9). Likewise, William Schallert, who played the Admiral on the show, notes that *Get Smart* often works as "a nifty satire on government cover-ups that seems remarkably prescient in light of what we know today" (141), and the actor has a special affinity for "A Man Called Smart, Part Two," which features the Admiral going on television to tell the country everything is okay when, in reality, it is headed for disaster.

However, the spy shows of the 1960s were not only campy or comedic outlets for Americans' frustrations with their government; many of the espionage series that aired during the decade worked to actively reconstruct ideas about American citizenship within the culture's changing climate. Much attention has been paid to *I Spy* and *Mission: Impossible*, for instance, since both shows featured African-American operatives who carved out a place for a new black subject within dominant conceptions of American

citizenship and reflected the gains made by the civil rights movement. Likewise, women, such as Agent 99 (*Get Smart*), April Dancer (*The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.*) and Cinnamon Carter (*Mission: Impossible*) emerged as professional spies, encouraging a greater continuity between women and the public sphere while simultaneously disrupting the dichotomy between masculine action and feminine passivity.

Because Agent 99 and April Dancer are more prominently positioned as lead characters than is Cinnamon Carter, this chapter explores how *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* construct the female operative within their narratives. These series are particularly important to the genre because they are among the first to feature professional female spies and thus explore new facets of the relationship between gender and nationalism in espionage series, especially as it relates to the loosening of rigid gender roles during the Cold War in the 1960s and the rise in consumer culture. Before delving into a discussion of the ways these shows' characters and narratives work to depict the relationship between nationalism and gender, however, a brief description of each show follows:

A Brief History of *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.*

Indeed a satire about government operations, *Get Smart* constantly poked fun at intelligence agencies by depicting a half-wit operative working for an under-funded agency called CONTROL. The show debuted in the United States on September 18, 1965, and for its first four seasons ran in either the 8:30 or 8:00 time slot on Saturday evenings on NBC. When the network cancelled the show due to a drop in ratings, *Get Smart* found one more year of life with CBS, where it aired on Fridays at 7:30 p.m. before ending for good on May 15, 1970.

Figure 6: Don Adams as Maxwell Smart and Barbara Feldon as Agent 99. Image available at the Museum of Broadcast Communications' website.

During its five year run, *Get Smart* satirized government spying, as well as the spy-craze itself. In fact, the series was partially dreamed up by Dan Melnick, who decided it was time to create a television show spoofing James Bond and the 1960s' spy-mania. To realize his dream, Melnick asked Leonard Stern to join the series as executive producer, and Mel Brooks and Buck Henry served the creative team as writers. Their work was picked up by NBC's Grant Tinker, who commissioned the *Get Smart* pilot after ABC rejected the script-- a move ABC would later regret. Over the course of the show, *Get Smart* was nominated for fourteen Emmy Awards and won seven: Outstanding Comedy Series (1967-68 and 1968-69), Outstanding Actor in a Comedy Series (1966-67, 67-68, and 68-69), Outstanding Writing in Comedy (1966-67), and Outstanding Directing in Comedy (1967-68). Barbara Feldon was also nominated twice for Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series for her work as Agent 99 (1967-68 and 1968-69) but lost to Lucille Ball and Hope Lange respectively.

Essentially, *Get Smart* revolves around three characters: Maxwell Smart (Don Adams), the Chief (Edward Platt) and Agent 99 (Barbara Feldon), all of whom work for the covert branch of the U.S. government known as CONTROL. Most episodes feature these three foiling the plots of KAOS, an international organization of evil, but Smart is undoubtedly the star of the series and usually defeats KAOS through a series of mishaps.

Indeed, Smart is clearly depicted as a bumbling, but loveable idiot, who believes he is James Bond because he fails to recognize his own limitations. As Don Adams relays, "Maxwell Smart is what every ordinary guy—your taxi driver, your bellboy, the guy behind the counter, a soda jerk or whatever he is—would be if he were James Bond" (qtd. in Green 28), and, undoubtedly, the divide between 007 and Smart is great. While Bond is tall, suave, and both physically and mentally acute, Max is short, speaks with a grinding, nasally voice, and is easily distracted and accident-prone. When Bond employs inventive, top-of-the-line gadgets, they help him accomplish his missions and make the British government appear technologically superior to others; Smart, however, uses devices that often fail to work or make him look ridiculous, such as the Cone of Silence or his shoe phone which often goes off in a quiet restaurant or theater, thereby blowing his cover. But despite all of his flaws, Smart always manages to get the job done, and like 007, he is considered one of his agency's top operatives.

If Maxwell Smart is a spoof of James Bond, his partner, Agent 99, represents a mix of the sexy Bond villainess and the "steadier comforts of the only lady who could ever really be good for Bond, his eternal co-worker Miss Moneypenny" (McCrohan 64). A former fashion model turned spy, 99 is a demure woman who speaks English, German, French and Chinese; plays the violin and harp; and is trained in marital arts. While she comes up with many of the ideas that save her and Max in dangerous situations, she is sensitive to 86's ego and often allows him to take credit for her thoughts. Like Miss Moneypenny, 99 is also hopelessly in love with the star agent, even though Max is oblivious to the fact before the start of season four, when the writers, in an effort to boost

ratings, married the two characters and, later, during season five's sweeps week, gave them twins.

The Girl from U.N.C.L.E. never received the critical acclaim bestowed upon *Get Smart*, and due to an unsatisfactory audience share, it was cancelled after just one season. Regardless of its brief run, however, the show marked a departure from traditional television narratives by featuring the first female lead in an hour-long drama—an especially notable feat since the entire decade favored male-centered westerns, military and crime shows and featured few female protagonists even in domestic comedies and dramas. In fact, the 1960s averaged just 8.5 shows with a female lead per year, and many of these centered on young protagonists positioned inside the home, including *The Patty Duke Show* (1963-66), *Peck's Bad Girl* (1959-60), *Margie* (1961-62), *Fair Exchange* (1962-63), *Karen* (1964-65), and *Gidget* (1965-66) (Luckett 278).

Precisely because *Girl* was taking a risk by featuring a female lead in an action series, network executives were never certain that the spin-off would be a success despite the popularity of its parent show, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* In fact, the show's creator, Norman Felton, was so worried about whether a woman could carry a lead role in an action-adventure drama that he wrote to NBC President Grant Tinker suggesting that the network either do two hours each week under the U.N.C.L.E. title, featuring episodes with both *Man* and *Girl* characters "in any combination that seemed best" (R. Anderson 99), or restrict the *Girl* series to thirty minute episodes.

NBC ultimately rejected both of Felton's pleas, and the series ran independently every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. during the 1966-67 season. However, the uncertainty regarding the show's direction did not disappear by the time *Girl* went into production, as

evidenced by early casting choices and character constructions. For instance, *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E* originally starred Mary Ann Mobley, the 1959 Miss America winner, as April Dancer and actor Norman Fell as her partner, Mark Slate. In the pilot episode, "The Moonglow Affair," Mobley plays an inexperienced, twenty-four-year-old agent teamed with the elder Slate who leaves retirement to mentor her on missions. But while the pilot, which was introduced to viewers under *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* title, earned NBC a satisfying forty-five share (Walker, "The Gun" 209), the network nonetheless demanded that the actors be recast by the time the series independently debuted in the fall of 1966. Ronald Smith suggests that NBC may have wanted to recast the actors in order to construct hipper and "more British" characters that would appeal to a younger audience (157-158) and help the network compete with ABC, which held a virtual monopoly on the female, teen demographic. (In the previous year, ABC had aired *Gidget, The Patty Duke Show, Tammy,* and *Honey West,* and it had just picked up the British spy series, *The Avengers,* for its 1966-67 season). Regardless of the reason, however, the Southern and conservative Mobley was replaced with the edgier Stefanie Powers, who spoke with a slight European accent[12] and played a stronger, more experienced Dancer with a penchant for go-go boots and miniskirts. Likewise, Noel Harrison, the young, British actor-singer,

Figure 7: Stefanie Powers as April Dancer and Noel Harrison as Mark Slate. Image available at The Museum of Broadcast Communications' website.

replaced Norman Fell as Mark Slate, who was re-written to function as April's partner and equal, rather than as her mentor and elder.

While "The Dog-gone Affair" suggests that these revised versions of April and Mark were once romantically involved, the series primarily depicts the two as platonic partners who use complimentary sets of skills to defeat the villains of THRUSH. April, for instance, speaks a dozen languages fluently ("The UFO Affair") and is particularly skilled at conducting surveillance and garnering information while in disguise, while Slate is primarily responsible for physically fighting off the pair's enemies. Perhaps out of concern for its younger viewers and contemporary criticisms that television had become too violent, *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* narratives also border on the absurd and make the dangerous seem silly, although the series stays away from the over-the-top humor employed by *Get Smart*. Examples of such plots include "The Carpathian Caper Affair," which features April and a civilian, Herbie Fummer, about to cook to death in a giant toaster before being rescued by a stray, bouncing ball which puts pressure on the toaster's lever, popping the two into the air. "The Garden of Evil Affair" features Mark trying to out-cycle his adversaries who are riding tandems and unicycles, and "The Little John Doe Affair" depicts April trying to dismantle a bomb embedded in a chicken with a carver's fork and knife. Such silly and even surreal narratives have often been cited as one of the main reasons that *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* failed to emerge as a powerful action-adventure drama, and even Stefanie Powers admits that she and Noel Harrison were forced to play characters as "hopefully real" as they could be given the ludicrous situations in which they found themselves (qtd. in Britton 48).

Queering Patriotism?: Reading the Body in *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.*

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the 1950s' dominant culture feared American men's ability to stand up against communists' attempts at internal subversion. More specifically, it feared that suburban conformity, along with the rise in material comforts and white-collar service jobs were "softening" American men and that these men would thus grow soft on national defense and lack the strength to resist aggressive communist seducers eager to blackmail those engaging in homosexual or inappropriate heterosexual affairs. In response to these concerns, the country encouraged men to embrace the traits of rugged individualism and enter into early marriage, which provided a safe and contained outlet for sexual desires (May 94).

Traditional gender roles were also prescribed for American women, as the culture reasoned that women's fulfillment of their roles as wives and mothers would protect the nation's families from internal subversion and help mark the U.S. as the superior "other" to the Soviet Union. The American media, for example, commonly depicted Eastern-bloc women as working in de-feminizing jobs and allowing state-run, childcare centers to raise and indoctrinate their children with communist propaganda. Subsequently, the media suggested that in order to remain democratic and free, American children would need to be raised at home by their mothers, whose "emancipation" from paid labor also signaled the economic superiority of the West (Douglas 47).

Several 1950s espionage programs reflected these ideas as they often featured heterosexual patriarchs battling political threats in the public sphere; lauded American women for embracing traditional femininity and their roles as wives and mothers; and

depicted women who employed an uncontained sexual agency as threatening subversives. By the 1960s, however, many young women had come to understand the 1950s' domestic ideology, which championed restrained sexuality and the "cult of motherhood," as restrictive and repressive. This shift can be partially explained by the FDA's approval of the birth control pill in 1960, which offered women a new sexual freedom, as well as the 1963 publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique,* which encouraged millions of women to question the assumption that they could "find fulfillment only in sexual passivity, male domination, and nurturing maternal love" (Friedan 43)[13]. However, the events of the Cold War and the civil rights movement also encouraged women to rethink the idea that their primary service to the nation rested in their roles as wives and mothers. For example, the Soviets' launch of Sputnik in 1957 led the dominant culture to encourage greater access to higher education for both sexes in order to ensure Western technological prowess, while JFK's 1961 inaugural address passed the torch of fighting communist influence on "to a new generation of Americans" and inspired flocks of both men and women to join the Peace Corps when it was founded just two months later (Douglas 22-23). As Schulamith Firestone argues, the civil rights movement also helped encourage the gender revolution not just because many women got their activist starts in the pursuit of black causes, but because "Just as the issue of slavery spurred on the radical feminist of the nineteenth century, so the issue of racism stimulated the new feminism: the analogy with racism and sexism had to be made eventually" (33).

In order to reflect the nation's shift towards greater inclusivity, many popular 1960s' spy series featured multi-racial and/or co-sexed teams of spies. These programs, which include *Mission: Impossible, I Spy, The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.,* and *Get Smart,*

worked to account for racial and gender difference previously ignored in the genre and even played with camp and androgyny to "consciously foreground the arbitrarily constructed nature of social norms that were in the early Cold War invested with such a cultural weight" (Kackman 96). As Agent 99 and April Dancer rank amongst television's very first professional, female spies, it is important to examine how these women are constructed if one is to understand the development of the female operative in the genre, as well as the new ways gender often functioned in the 1960s spy program, especially in regards to American nationalism.

A logical place to begin such an examination rests in issues of the body since Yvonne Tasker argues that the bodies of action-adventure characters are vital to the narrative because these protagonists "are cinematically constructed almost exclusively through their physicality" (35). Of course, Tasker is specifically referring to film stars in this statement, but her argument is nonetheless relevant to television, and scholars such as Sherrie Inness have built upon her work to suggest that, like cinema, contemporary television has primarily depicted its heroines' "toughness" through well-defined or unusually heavy musculature, as well as stylized clothing since a "pair of khakis has a higher tough quotient than a pink tutu" (25).

While latter day spies such as Nikita and Sydney Bristow possess defined muscles and supreme physical agility, it is important to acknowledge that neither Agent 99 nor April Dancer possesses a "ripped" body or wears "tough" clothing. Rather, 99 is a tall, lanky spy with little body fat or muscle, and Dancer represents a slender, if slightly shorter, operative. More specifically, Barbara Feldon, who played Agent 99 on *Get Smart*, stood at 5'9 and weighed roughly 110 pounds while shooting the series, and the

model-actress was so slim that she was forced to wear long sleeves throughout the show's run because she looked "unhealthy" on camera if her "thin, long arms were showing" (Feldon qtd. in McCrohan 64). MGM's original promotional booklet for *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* describes April Dancer as "five-feet, five inches and 108 pounds of raven-haired danger" (reprinted in R. Anderson 104), and while this description undoubtedly refers to Mary Ann Mobley's embodiment of Dancer, Stefanie Powers was similar in build. In 1983, the actress revealed her height as 5'6 and marked her weight at 117 lbs (Wallace). Given most humans' tendency to put on weight as they get older, it is likely that Powers was nearer to Mobley's 108 pounds in 1965, but either way, Powers, like Feldon, possessed a very slender, almost boyish body.

The casting of these feminine, if boyish, looking actresses worked to distance 99 and Dancer from the images of the overly sexualized and curvaceous communist seductress, as well as from the "masculine" Soviet woman who enjoyed emasculating men in her position of power. But while these actresses may have embodied a new type of American ideal and played two of the first professional, female spies on television, precisely because of their slenderness, their characters possessed a limited physical agency that failed to effectively challenge notions of the female body as passive and weak and limited their service to national defense. For instance, even though the pilot episode features 99 fighting a female combatant, throughout the rest of *Get Smart*, 99 is rarely shown using her marital arts skills, although viewers are told she possesses them, and rarely is she shown shooting a gun at someone, let alone hitting her target. These roles are primarily delegated to Smart, who engages in fistfights and shootouts, while 99 aids the mission by feeding Max ideas, employing an occasional karate chop or

technological device, or merely pointing a gun menacingly. Part of the fault for 99's lack of physical agency was admittedly Feldon's, who laments that the scenes in which she was to karate-chop an enemy were eventually taken away from her because while the move started out fierce, she would soften the blow upon contact, which looked ridiculous on camera. "I have no strength whatsoever," she said, "and it was practically ostentatious of me to think I was a danger to anyone. But I couldn't do it. The only time I did it at all well was when I had to hit a dummy" (McCrohan 139). But even when not fighting adversaries, 99 is still depicted as physically weaker than Max on the show as evidenced in "Island of the Darned." Here, the operative cannot keep up with 86 when trekking through the jungle, and her limited physical stamina forces the two of them to rest, which leads to their capture.

While it is tempting to criticize *Get Smart* for constructing 99 as a "liability" physically, the show was somewhat in tune with the roles real women played within American intelligence at the time. Jeanne Vertefeuille, tasked with discovering CIA mole Aldrich Ames in the 1990s, has remarked that in 1954, women were automatically assigned to the secretarial pool if they joined the CIA regardless of their talents and that it was not until the 1960s that women were allowed to attend "The Farm" for career training. Vertefeuille, who was one of the first women admitted to The Farm during the decade, also recalls that out of the 66 trainees that attended during her year, only seven were women, and they were not allowed to take all of the same courses as men, were not taught to use weapons, and were subjected to the CIA's belief that women were not capable of enduring the physical training The Farm required (P. Early 224-225).

Additionally, the success of *Get Smart* as an entertainment offering did not suffer much for 99's restricted physical agency since she was able to relinquish the role of fighting and killing adversaries to Max. However, given that April Dancer was the star of her show, she should have been primarily responsible for defeating her enemies, but like 99, she does not represent a physical threat, and many critics claim that this was an additional factor that led to the downfall of the show. According to Cynthia Walker, the problem primarily lay with the NBC Broadcast Standards Department, which was especially vigilant about action scenes involving female characters. The board often sent explicit directives to *Girl's* parent show about women guest stars, restricting what they physically could do and have done to them on screen, and *Girl* had to cope with these same restrictions. In fact, the series ran into trouble as soon as the pilot episode aired because it featured April being dangled over a pool of flesh-eating fish by her enemies. According to Norman Felton, scenes such as this caused several New York reviewers to comment adversely in terms of the show's violence and "sadism," and as a result, Felton requested that the show's producer, Douglas Benton, review all episodes to "make sure we don't have any offensive actions" (N. Felton qtd. in Walker, "The Gun" 209).

Given these network constraints and reviewers' criticisms, the majority of action sequences, including the wrestling, fighting and shooting of adversaries, befall Mark Slate, leaving April to merely watch or assist in some minor way. In "The Prisoner of Zalamar Affair," for example, a large fight scene ensues in which everyone participates except Dancer, who simply crouches underneath a wheel hub and sprays an "atomatizer" into her enemies' eyes after they have been knocked to the ground in front of her. Likewise, in "The Little John Doe Affair," April hides underneath a food service cart

while the man she is sent to protect is forced to defend himself against another character trying to kill him. Perhaps in an attempt by the show's writers to mock the fact that Dancer cannot physically participate in the fight scene, this episode also features Mark Slate telling April via radio to let the men "take care of the rough stuff" and bidding her to play "the lady."

While restricting Dancer's physical agency may have helped the show gain more favorable press reviews, inevitably, the move weakened Dancer's believability as an action-adventure heroine. After all, it is hard to admire or even champion a lead character who rarely saves herself or others when trouble arises, and instead, screams or simply waits until help arrives. However, while Dancer and Agent 99 possessed a restricted physical agency, their bodies may have nonetheless held subversive power for female viewers, especially since they can be read as challenging the dominant culture's emphasis on marriage and the family. As Susan Bordo argues in *Unbearable Weight*, the ultra-slim body can hold disruptive powers since it often symbolizes liberation from domestic destiny (206). More specifically, she writes that if full, voluptuous breasts, hips and waists signify maternal femininity, then "disidentification with the maternal body, far from symbolizing reduced power, may symbolize freedom from a reproductive destiny and a construction of femininity seen as constraining and suffocating" (209). Susan Douglas remarks that such a reading of the ultra-slim body fits well within the 1960s popular culture landscape, as most of the female archetypes offered up by the decade represented a compromise between obeying gender norms and challenging them. Often these women, but most famously *Breakfast at Tiffany's* Holly Golightly, were wide-eyed and small-breasted yet were still depicted as girlish and sexually attractive, helping young

women "imagine and emulate a new kind of agency that blurred the lines of what it meant to be a boy and what it meant to be a girl" (105). Douglas also writes that after "the mammary mania of the 1950s," flat-chestedness became fashionable and soon came to "signify ipso facto the special exception to all those negative stereotypes about female irrationality, incompetence and stupidity" (105).

This "new kind of agency" which blurred the lines between men and women is indeed present in *Get Smart*, as evidenced by its pilot episode which introduces viewers to 99 disguised as a male chauffer. In this episode, CONTROL sends Max on an assignment and gives him a code phrase to help him locate Agent 99 for the first time. When she makes contact, viewers and Max hear her sultry, feminine voice before the camera pans her body from bottom to top, coding her as the sexual object described by Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema." Despite the fact that she is dressed in pants, a suit jacket and tie, and despite the fact that her hair is tucked into her hat, it is clear to viewers that she is a woman. The very fact that the camera pans her body to seductive music tips viewers off, as does the fact that she possesses thick, long eyelashes and speaks in a whispery,

Figure 8: Agent 99 in a chauffeur's outfit in the pilot, "Mr. Big."

sensuous voice. Max, however, doesn't realize until two-thirds of the way through the episode that 99 is "a girl," after she takes off her hat to reveal a chin length bob. The humor in this scene, then, is based on Max's failure to pick up on the signifiers of 99's femininity before she lets down her hair (the only signifier he recognizes) even though audiences know 99 is a woman as soon as they hear her speak. But the scene also works to suggest that 99 represents a new kind of woman that indeed blurs gender lines through her boyish body, dress, and even her role as a professional spy, which, as the scene also suggests, is expected to be male. Similar types of gender-bending occur throughout the series, as well, as 99 often goes undercover as a man during assignments (including a Charlie Chaplin impersonator).

While April Dancer does not blur gender lines through her dress as much as 99, who disguises herself as a man in many *Get Smart* episodes, both she and 99 challenge femininity's association with irrationality and stupidity. For instance, while Dancer and 99 are undoubtedly given a less active role when compared to Slate and Smart, they nonetheless act in dangerous situations and are depicted as skilled, rational, and quick-thinking operatives. In fact, Dancer's handler, Waverly, notes that April has "an uncanny knack for survival" and in "The Mother Muffin Affair," the narrative even suggests that Dancer is a more competent agent than Napoleon Solo in some realms of tradecraft. At the start of this episode, viewers learn that Solo is followed from the airport by Mother's cronies, which leads to the two agents being trapped, while Dancer, who arrived separately, was able to move undetected. Agent 99, throughout the entire *Get Smart* series, is also depicted as the most rational and quick-thinking operative on the series, although she does allow Max to believe that he has come up with many of her ideas.

Additionally, both characters represent the "freedom from reproductive destiny and a construction of femininity seen as constraining and suffocating" to which Bordo refers (209). After all, Dancer represents a jet-setting woman who enjoys engaging in romantic flings with numerous men and does not express a desire to settle down, marry, or have children, while 99 continues to work as a spy even after delivering twins in season five. Interestingly, "The U.F.O. Affair" even comments on the ways April's slim body suggests a new type of sexual liberation. This episode features a captured Dancer being prepared to join a Moroccan villain's harem. When the villain comes to check on her progress, the harem's mother-figure, who clearly resembles an older version of Marilyn Monroe, complains that Dancer has the body of a "scraggly" tiger and lacks a "fullness" to which a man can "grab solidly." However, the villain challenges the woman's reading of April, calling her body appropriate for a "stream-lined age" and notes that her body is more suitable for his purposes, which entail Dancer providing him with physical pleasure rather than reproduction.

It should also be noted that as spies, April and 99's traditionally feminine traits often belie their true agendas and thus upset femininity's association with passivity, objectification, and weakness. In "Kisses for KAOS," for instance, 99 vamps a KAOS saboteur in order to get his fingerprints at dinner and employs various other ID devices from the CONTROL lab to aid her mission. Likewise, both 99 and Dancer's wardrobes serve to mark them as desirable and feminine but also mask the contraptions they employ on assignment. One of Dancer's dress hems works in conjunction with her bracelet to form a powerful explosive, one of her necklaces conceals a tape recorder, and one of her shoe heels hides both a communication device that allows her to alert Slate of danger and

a pill that, when combined with liquid, emits a noxious gas. 99 also possesses dual functioning jewelry, including a ring that conceals a stainless-steel blade and a charm bracelet that can play both a woman's scream and a woman's laughter. All of these devices help to suggest that even under the most feminine of trappings lies a dangerous power.

Of course, it is not just females' bodies that helped subvert dominant notions of gender in both *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.*; these shows also blurred the

Fig 9. A weedy Mark Slate in "The U.N.C.L.E. Samural Affair."

lines between masculine and feminine through the casting choices for Maxwell Smart and Mark Slate. Noel Harrison, the actor chosen to play Slate, for instance, possessed a very lanky and slight build that showed no signs of the hyper-masculinity common to most action-adventure heroes. In fact, Associate Producer George Lehr remarks that Harrison was so small in stature that he was uncomfortable handling the parent show's famous gun

–the U.N.C.L.E. Special-- because his hands, which were smaller than Stefanie's, could not agilely wield the large and bulky weapon (Lehr qtd. in Walker, "The Gun" 209). Additionally, Slate often looks "weedier" than his female partner, and while he is often responsible for the show's action sequences, he also engages in non-traditional activities for action heroes such as quieting a brawling bar by playing music ("The Dog-gone Affair") and (wisely) trying to evade a fight with a much bigger man before getting tossed around like a rag doll in "The Paradise Lost Affair."

Part of the decision to cast Harrison may have stemmed from the choices made on *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, which also worked to re-conceptualize the action-adventure hero. According to Walker, Norman Felton once met a woman at the BBC who complained that leads in American series were all big, tall, muscular and American, so he decided to vary the formula by featuring the less than physically impressive American-Soviet duo played by Robert Vaughn and David McCallum ("The Man From"). These actors stood at 5'9 and 5'8 respectively and also possessed slender builds with little defined musculature. On the set of *Get Smart*, Don Adams was also less than physically formidable, and the actor actually stood two inches shorter than Barbara Feldon, who performed many of her scenes in slippers or socks in order to reduce her height. When necessary, Adams even stood on an apple box in order to gain extra inches during scenes, while Barbara would slouch, cock her head, or roll her ankles to appear shorter (McCrohan 64). As aforementioned, Max also speaks in a whinny, nasalized voice Adams exaggerated for the character, and this, along with his short and thin build, helped the actor successfully depict Max as a spy with both mental and physical limitations.

Additionally, several episodes in both *Girl* and *Get Smart* privileged a queer reading that suggested gender play was not only in vogue but acceptable for television's national heroes, a move which poked fun at the staunch adherence to gender roles common in 1950s spy programs. For instance, in *Get Smart's* "The Day They Raided the Knights," both the Chief and Larabee go undercover as women in order to discover a KAOS plot. While the Chief must borrow clothes from wardrobe, Larabee reveals that he has used his own dress —a souvenir he kept from playing "Charlie's aunt" in a college play. Besides suggesting that Larabee has a propensity for cross-dressing, this episode suggests that the Chief views cross-gendered performances as legitimate, even patriotic tactics, to employ in order to thwart KAOS.

One of the more famous supporting characters on *Get Smart* is Charlie Watkins, a CONTROL agent who has perfected the art of disguising himself as a woman in order to

Figures 10 and 11: (Left) Angelique Pettyjohn as Charlie Watkins. (Right) The Chief and Larabee dressed as women in "The Day They Raided the Knights."

garner valuable information while on assignment. Watkins, of course, was played by an actress, Angelique Pettyjohn, but the producers used voiceovers to give her a deep voice to denote when Watkins was being "himself" as opposed to when he was acting as a woman. In the episode "Pussycats Galore," much of the humor stems from the fact that Watkins is dressed like the feline version of the Playboy Bunny and passes so effectively as a woman that Max cannot help but sexually objectify the agent even though he knows Watkins is just in disguise. In fact, at the end of "Pussycats Galore," 86 asks 99 out after work but whispers to Watkins that he/she can come too if he likes.

Like "Pussycats Galore" and other *Get Smart* episodes, *Girl* narratives could also privilege a queer reading. To cite just one example, in "The Mother Muffin Affair," a *Man-Girl* crossover episode, the horror actor Boris Karloff plays an elderly, female assassin who has a clear sexual attraction to Napoleon Solo and explicitly objectifies him throughout the episode. While Mother is read as a woman by the other characters in the show, it is clear to audiences from the starting credits and from Mother's physical appearance that she is really a man dressed in drag, encouraging audiences to read a homosexual subtext behind each of Mother's flirtatious comments targeted at Solo.

The types of gender play mentioned above are profound given that just a few years earlier, the television spy was "unerringly, even militantly, a heterosexual patriarch," and "any hint of gender instability" in these shows marked one as a subversive communist (Kackman 96). Within such a context, then, both *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* can be read as actively challenging the idea that one cannot be a good citizen-subject if one does not rigidly conform to gender norms. After all, the Chief, Max and Agent 99 work for the most covert branch in the United States on whom the

government relies in the most secretive and dangerous of situations, and all three dress in drag numerous times without their authority being compromised or loyalty being questioned. In fact, these episodes suggest that going undercover as the opposite sex is actually *required* for effective national service. Likewise, both *Girl* and *Get Smart* challenged previous spy series' linkages between essentialist gender norms and patriotism by suggesting those on the "right side of the Cold War" could be marked by more androgynous bodies and queer gender performance, and both series disrupted the idea that women could best serve the nation as wives and mothers since both shows feature single, professional, female spies dedicating their lives to national defense.

Both shows also reflected a new attitude towards the Cold War in that they suggested citizens possessed a lack of faith in and reverence for their government, and suggested that the Cold War was, on many levels, absurd. After all, characters such as Charlie Watkins or narratives like those featuring April trapped in a toaster make the situations in which intelligence operatives find themselves seem surreal and illogical, especially when viewed against the backdrop of something as serious as national defense. The idea that a "cold war" was absurd was also present in the shows' dialogue. In one *Get Smart* episode, for example, Max suggests that China, Russia and France should outlaw all nuclear weapons, and when 99 asks what the U.S. should do if they don't comply, the spy simply replies that it would "have to blast them" because "It's the only way to keep peace in the world." As a result, *Get Smart* can be read as helping to set the stage for the anti-war movement which, as Robert Daniels points out, was aided by other mid-1960s popular culture works which emphasized the war's absurdity, including Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) and *Seven Days in May* (1964) (98).

Pleasure, Consumption, Feminism, and Ideal Citizenship

While reading the bodies of select spy protagonists can help uncover the ways many 1960s espionage narratives rejected the strict adherence to gender roles that the early Cold War promoted, it is also important to acknowledge that *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* emphasized material consumption and personal pleasure as a way to redefine notions of ideal citizenship during the decade. As Hilary Radner points out, much of the 1960s social fabric was fueled by consumer industries' need for new markets, and thus popular culture encouraged the "emergence of discourses that formulated an individual whose major preoccupation was the fulfillment of his or her needs and desires" (2). Such individual fulfillment, which was primarily defined in sexual as well as material terms, soon came to signify one of the most important aspects of American and even Western citizenship during the sixties, as it served as the "final expression of the citizen's inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness" (2).

One of the largest proponents of this new rhetoric was undoubtedly the spy genre, which featured prosperous protagonists enjoying high-end consumer goods and engaging in romantic affairs with numerous characters. The most famous of these spies is James Bond, but television shows such as *The Man From U.N.C.L.E., The Wild, Wild West, I Spy, Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* also featured protagonists as purveyors of fine goods and/or sexually successful with members of the opposite sex. Part of the genre's celebration of individual pleasure and fulfillment served to mark the array of consumer goods Western capitalism produced as key to personal happiness and thus suggested that the limited consumer consumption that communism afforded was indicative of the "misery" experienced by its citizens. As a result, 1960s spy narratives

often conflated consumer consumption with national supremacy. In the Bond series, for instance, Jeremy Black points out that the focus on 007's consumption of high-end goods came at time of rising disposable income in both Britain and the United States and set new standards as to what was stylish and desirable (211)—both materially and politically. Bond also showed how affluence and consumerism could be stylish and noble rather than vulgarly materialistic, and because he exuded a class unconnected with money or birth (211), he offered up a version of British supremacy that was neither stuffy nor alienating to the average viewer or reader.

The emphasis on personal fulfillment, especially through sex, as a way to embrace one's right to the pursuit of happiness was also influenced by the burgeoning sexual revolution that produced two of the decade's most popular cultural icons: The Playboy and The Single Girl. Both of these archetypes, but especially The Single Girl, underlined the younger generation's dissatisfaction with the previous decade's emphasis on early marriage and family and marked a new consumer ideology of singleness that was not synonymous with either gay culture or spinsterhood (Radner 3). While images of The Single Girl varied in popular culture, Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) is probably one of the most representative. As Julie D'Acci argues, this best-selling book "laid out a step-by-step plan for the single woman to forestall marriage, enjoy many sexual partners, have a job, and spend money on an apartment, furnishings, attractive clothes, and other goods to enhance her appeal" (76). Additionally, while Gurley Brown's single girl is not anti-marriage, she does recognize that the institution fails to offer her security, and thus, she is encouraged to be economically self-sufficient

and to find personal fulfillment in a career, sex, and material consumption in addition to, or instead of, marriage.

Given this popular culture landscape, it is important to note that Agent 99 and April Dancer debuted on television just three and four years after the publication of Gurley Brown's influential book and that they clearly reflect many of the basic tenets articulated in it. Both women, for instance, derive pleasure from cultivating their personal appearance through makeup and high-end clothes and the sexual attention such efforts earn them. In terms of wardrobe alone, 99 often dressed in classy, feminine fashions, as the original costumer for *Get Smart* favored velvets and chiffons for the spy and preferred loose skirts or pants from Capriotti, a high-end boutique in Beverly Hills (McCrohan 64). While 99's outfits undoubtedly earned her a low mark on the "toughness" scale, they marked the operative as an extremely glamorous woman who fit the age's modish ideas of beauty as embodied by both Audrey Hepburn and Twiggy. *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* likewise constructed April Dancer as modish through her wardrobe, as the series spent nearly $1,000 an episode to dress Powers in the latest youthful, fashions (Smith 158), including several clear plastic and midriff bearing ensembles. April's wardrobe was also more sexualized than 99's. Throughout the series, for instance, April performs a mission in a black leotard and high heels, delivers a civilian to safety in a soaking wet dress, conducts surveillance in a bikini, and treks through the jungle in nothing but shoes and a man's safari shirt. More so than Agent 99, then, Dancer's wardrobe codes her as a desirable sex-object, a position that is reinforced by many of the series' guest stars who comment on Dancer's beauty and try to engage her in sexual activity within the show's narratives.

Both Agent 99 and Dancer also derive significant personal fulfillment from their careers. April does not express a desire to marry, have children, or even establish an exclusive, long-term relationship with anyone during her show's twenty-nine episodes. Rather, the spy-protagonist thrives on the life of a jet-setting, single woman and embraces the mobility, sexual and financial independence, and the consumer goods her job affords. Dancer is also not jealous of other women who show affection to her partner, nor is she afraid to take credit for her own ideas and actions. April, in total, then, represents the links between "'femininity, speed, public life, youth, and mobility' that came to define the new modern single girl of the mid to late 1960s" (Luckett 281).

While a need to boost ratings forced *Get Smart* to marry Max and 99, it is important to remember that 99 refuses to give up her career after marriage and having twins, and 99's real name is never revealed throughout the entire run of *Get Smart,* suggesting that her professional identity defines her more than does her role as a wife and mother. Of course, the show does not address, even comically, the problems working mothers face while having newborns at home, and Feldon has remarked that because the show is both a fantasy and a comedy, "we're not going to see 99 neglecting the kids because she's out on a case or anything like that" (qtd. in Green 40). However, by playing the roles of career woman, wife and mother simultaneously, Feldon asserts that 99 can be read as pre-feminist icon:

> A lot of women have said 99 was a role model for them. Because she was smart and she always got the right answer. And that was one of the first roles on television that showed women that way. As sweetly self-effacing as 99 could be, she knew she was smart and she was not afraid to show it, although she didn't

> want to defeat Max with it. I think that Buck Henry and Mel Brooks wrote a real early feminist role. And it's a role I am not embarrassed to have played. She fulfilled herself both in her career ... and then she married Max and had children. I suppose she was one of the first women to have it all, and did it with a kind of élan, a kind of ease that I think women have not found so comfortable to do. (Green 40)

And indeed, by constructing both Dancer and 99 as fulfilled career women, *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* did create a type of pre-feminist icon before second-wave feminism gained its full momentum. After all, the debut of Agent 99 preceded the establishment of The National Organization of Women (NOW) by one year; April Dancer preceded the 1967 formation of The Chicago Women's Liberation Group and the New York Radical Women by the same time span; and both characters appeared five whole years before the debut of the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, which many media scholars consider to be the first feminist text on television[14].

The Femme Fatale and Unmarried Shrew: Villainesses of *Get Smart* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.*

However, while 99 and Dancer's positive associations with material consumption, career, and even sexual liberation helped them embody 1960s principles regarding ideal citizenship and early feminist agendas, both series also revealed a cultural uneasiness regarding women's economic fortitude and sexual freedom, as evidenced by the types of women cast as villains in both narratives. In *Get Smart*, women rarely appear as villains, but the very few female villains who do appear in the series fall under the category of femme fatale. To cite just two examples, in "Kiss of Death," Tracy Dunhill attempts to

avenge her father's death by kissing and thus killing Maxwell Smart while wearing a poisonous lipstick. Dunhill informs her KAOS colleagues that it will be easy to lure Max to her apartment by preying upon his weakness for women, and indeed, Max finds Tracy "fascinating" and "beautiful" and almost falls for her trap. In "The Laser Blazer," 99 hires a voluptuous maid named Ingrid to clean the couple's apartment, not knowing that Ingrid is really a KAOS plant sent to search the flat for a secret weapon. Throughout the episode, Ingrid uses her sexuality to evade Max's suspicion and even to search Max's upper body for information. In fact, she is so successful at using her sexuality to evade suspicion that when he's told Ingrid is an enemy agent, Max still struggles to believe it, asking whether those are "the legs of a KAOS agent?"

By depicting women who aggressively use their sexuality to advance their own political agenda, *Get Smart* suggests that the fear of communist seductresses had not yet subsided and that both the sexual emancipation of women and men's cultural license to act as playboys may unravel the fabric of the West. In the case of "The Laser Blazer" affair, KAOS is searching for a high-powered laser hidden within Max's suit jacket and can destroy human and inorganic life with ease. In the case of Tracy Dunhill, Max's susceptibility to feminine wiles threatens his life and CONTROL, which stands to lose one of its top agents. Of course, the femme fatale archetype was not new to visual narratives and had been frequently featured in WWII and post-war cinema, where it is most often connected to a "deep-seated unease in the shifting gender roles in that society" (Pidduck 65). Elaine Tyler May argues that, during the Cold War, figures like the femme fatale continued to be powerful because many Americans feared women's increasing sexual emancipation, which was furthered by the pill, since it threatened to disrupt the

family system so important to warding off communist influence. "So pervasive and lasting was the connection between taming fears of the atomic age and taming women," she states, "that as late as 1972, a civil defense pamphlet personified dangerous radioactive rays as sexy women" that can cause "silent damage" and even "kill you" (109).

Because Maxwell Smart is the show's lead character, the femme fatale approach was easy to employ when constructing KAOS villains. However, because April Dancer carried *Girl,* the show's creators had to find some other relationship to use in regards to the female villains' interactions with the heroine. As a result, female THRUSH agents are not usually depicted as young and irresistible to men; rather, they are constructed as unmarried shrews who range between forty and seventy-years old and possess independent wealth but are extremely power hungry nonetheless. Additionally, while these villainesses mastermind their own evil plots, they often get men to carry out their dirty work either through emotional manipulation or figurative emasculation. "The Drublegratz Affair," for example, features Princess Rapunzel, a middle-aged THRUSH agent, who is plotting to kill her two nephews, so that she may take the throne after her brother's death. As one of the nephews is a rock musician about to host a music festival at the palace, Rapunzel makes use of Dr. Igor Gork's talents, which entail him writing a song for the festival and subjecting it to an "intensified vibration" in order to cause an avalanche that will kill everyone present. In this episode, Rapunzel is depicted as a demanding "barracuda," who constantly nags, criticizes and bosses Gork around. When she realizes that Gork can help her successfully take the throne of Drublegatz, she remains unsatisfied and envisions the two of them marrying so that they can take over

"Moscow" and then "the moon." "The Lethal Eagle Affair" follows a similar pattern by featuring Gita Volander, a sixty to seventy-year-old woman who once reigned as the head of THRUSH Baltic but was retired for "no reason,"except "jealousy, backbiting and envy of [her] accomplishments." In order to regain her powerful position, Gita employs Franz-Joseph to develop a weapon capable of "transporting anything to anywhere," but she puts too many demands on his work in terms of capability and time frame. Franz cannot stand up to Gita, for fear of her wrath and in an attempt to please the critical woman, he pretends that the device works, when in actuality its success is a hoax.

Unlike the femme fatale, then, THRUSH women are not usually threatening because they employ their sexuality to advance their own aims. Rather, they represent The Single Girl gone awry since their lack of spousal companionship turns them into bitter shrews, who invest too much of their personal identity in their work and political power. In other words, these villainesses serve as a warning to young women about what could happen to them if they remain single career women for too long. Additionally, these episodes also warn viewers about the potential ramifications of women's economic emancipation on a national scale by suggesting that powerful women mostly spell disaster for men and even democratic societies. The "The Fountain of Youth Affair" specifically gets at this latter point as it features the Baroness Ingrid Blangsted creating a highly successful product that reverses the aging process. Described as a woman only loyal to "her lust for power," the Baroness sells these injections to the wives of world leaders in exchange for state secrets and political power, including Madame Dow who forces her husband, the premier of "Syranesia," to cancel his nation's upcoming free elections in exchange for her youth.

Conclusion

Get Smart and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* reflect a stark departure from the conventions and rhetoric employed by many spy programs airing in the 1950s. Not only do they suggest that Americans had lost faith in the government's effectiveness and trustworthiness, they also reflect the growing inclusivity of the American republic encouraged by the burgeoning gender revolution, as they feature two of television's first professional, female spies. While these characters, Agent 99 and April Dancer, possessed a limited physical agency and failed to effectively challenge the idea that women are passive and weak, they nonetheless spoke to many baby boomers that had come to view the 1950s' domestic ideology as repressive and restrictive. More specifically, the casting of the slender and almost boyishly-built Barbara Feldon and Stefanie Powers in these show's title roles marked the appearance of a new heroine who represented a disidentification with the maternal body that "far from symbolizing reduced power," symbolized freedom from a reproductive destiny (Bordo 209). These shows, which cast short and slender men in lead roles and often privileged a queer reading, also challenged previous spy series' linkages between essentialist gender norms and patriotism by suggesting those on the "right side of the Cold War" could be marked by more androgynous bodies and queer gender performance.

Additionally, both series marked a shift in appropriate expressions of citizenship as they championed individual fulfillment, namely through material consumption, careers, and sex, as the ultimate embodiment of a citizen's inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness. Agent 99 and April Dancer clearly embody these new principles of ideal citizenship and underline the younger generation's dissatisfaction with the previous

decade's emphasis on early marriage and family, as they represent independent career women who enjoy the challenges, disposable income and romantic interludes their spy work affords. However, as represented in each show's employment of women in villainous roles, the culture was still uneasy regarding women's sexual liberation and economic fortitude and warned young viewers about the negative ramifications of women remaining single and career-driven for too long. This negotiation of feminism and anti-feminism would continue into the 1970s spy series, *The Bionic Woman*, which featured the first professional, female spy to work alone on assignments. But this show did not just address issues of second-wave feminism. As the spin-off from *The Six Million Dollar Man*, this series also addressed issues of technological proliferation during the Cold War space race and, as a result, is one of the first popular "spy-fi" (spy/science fiction) series to air on American network television.

The 1970s

Atomic-powered Cyborgs and the Quest for Technological Supremacy: *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman*

"Steve Austin: Astronaut. A man barely alive. Gentlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We have the capability to build the world's first bionic man. Steve Austin will be that man. Better than he was before. Better, stronger, faster." –Opening narration of *The Six Million Dollar Man*

"I need some time to have a life of my own ... That may mean marriage, children. I don't know. But it does mean some work that I feel good about. My teaching, helping kids. But something positive. Because you see I experience the OSI as negative activity. It's fending off disaster; it's survival time, and I must have some things in my life that give me perspective so my work for you will mean something.

–Jaime Sommers in "On the Run," *The Bionic Woman.*

Based on Martin Caidin's novel C*yborg* (1972) and originally introduced to television viewers as a made-for-TV-movie, *The Six Million Dollar Man* (1974-78) starred Lee Majors as Col. Steve Austin, a government spy and former astronaut who had walked on the moon. During the show's pilot episode, Austin tests an experimental "lift body" that sends him and his jet crashing into the desert floor, damaging his legs, arms and eye almost beyond repair. Believing that they have the technology to rebuild him, the U.S. government spends six million dollars to have a team of aero-medical surgeons outfit the colonel with atomic-powered limbs and an eye, which afford Steve superhuman strength, speed and sight. All of his bionics are comprised of elaborate wire circuitry and rubber skin, but they appear human, and thus very few people know Austin possesses superhuman powers. This aspect of Steve's identity serves him especially well in his role as a covert operative for the Office of Strategic Intelligence, which he adopts in order to repay the U.S. government for the cost of rebuilding him.

Though extremely popular with 12-14 years olds (Phillips and Garcia 343), *The Six Million Dollar Man* (SMDM) proved only moderately successful with ABC viewers

overall during its first season, and during its second, the series faced falling ratings and a shortage of scripts (Stowe). As a result, show writer Kenny Johnson suggested giving Austin a love interest and female bionic counterpart to boost interest in the show, especially amongst adult viewers. Stephanie Powers was considered for the part, but Lindsay Wagner was ultimately cast to play Jaime Sommers, a top-ranking professional tennis player and Steve's childhood love. During the two-part episode entitled "The Bionic Woman," Jaime and Steve rekindle their romantic relationship and become engaged, but before the two actually wed, Jaime is involved in a sky diving accident that threatens her life. In order to save his fiancé, Steve convinces the OSI to provide her with the same cybernetics he possesses, and the covert organization reluctantly agrees, outfitting Jaime with a bionic arm, ear and pair of legs, which allow her to crush steel, run 60 mph, and crack safes using her supersonic hearing. Like Austin, Jaime agrees to work for the OSI as a government spy in order to repay the outfit for saving her life.

Figure 12: Lee Majors as Steve Austin and Lindsay Wagner as Jaime Sommers in "The Bionic Woman Part One."

While Jaime's character was meant to attract a larger adult audience, neither ABC nor the show's creators wanted Austin to be tied down with a marriage (presumably because it would limit the types of action-adventure plots available

to Austin), so they decided to kill Sommers at the end of the two-part episode by having Jaime's body reject her bionics. The move, however, proved to be a significant mistake for the network, as "The Bionic Woman" not only delivered a sharp hike in ratings, but over 200,000 letters from viewers flooded into the network, protesting Jaime's death and begging ABC to somehow bring the character back to life. "When she died, Universal was inundated with a tidal wave of telegrams and phone calls," recalls Caidin. "People were bitching, 'You can't kill her off.' Picketers outside the studio were raising all kinds of hell" (qtd. in Philips and Garcia 43). Eventually, viewer pressure became too strong to ignore, so Fred Silverman, the head of ABC Programming, decided to resurrect the character, and, thus, through the use of "revolutionary new cryogenic technology," Wagner returned to the airwaves on September 14, 1975 in "The Return of the Bionic Woman." Also a two-part story on *The Six Million Dollar Man*, this third season opener featured Jaime's cybernetics intact, but the character suffered from a partial memory loss that prevented her from remembering her feelings for Steve, thereby creating a new dramatic situation. The episode helped launch the *SMDM* into the television top ten for the first time since its debut, and ABC, recognizing the bionic woman's mass appeal, ordered Wagner's own spin-off series, which independently aired on January 11, 1976, during the 8 p.m. time slot on Wednesdays.

As spy series, both *The Bionic Woman* (1976-1978) and the *SMDM* addressed Americans' concerns regarding their national supremacy during a low-point in American Cold War history, especially as it related to Vietnam, Watergate, and the U.S. space program. More specifically, the tide of the Vietnam War had forced the United States in 1975 to unofficially declare defeat and to admit that its technological supremacy and

military might had failed to deter communism in a region the size of New Mexico. Due to the huge budget deficit the U.S. incurred from its efforts in Vietnam, Richard Nixon had also scaled back federal support of the U.S. space program in the early 1970s, abandoning its plans for a manned mission to Mars, canceling the last three Apollo launches, suspending Saturn V production and testing, and reducing the Apollo Applications Program to a single Skylab -- all before resigning as President due to the Watergate scandal that left the international community questioning the integrity and even desirability of American democracy. Much to the U.S.'s chagrin, during the same time period, the Soviet space program was accomplishing a number of firsts, including the development and launch of the first robotic space rover, the first space station, the first probe to orbit Mars, the first probe to reach the surface of Mars, and the first probe to orbit and photograph Venus. The U.S.S.R. was also making a concerted effort to close the military distance between itself and the U.S. through the development of strategic weapons and an anti-satellite program, not to mention celebrating a communist win in Southeast Asia.

By the time the *SMDM* finished its third season and *The Bionic Woman* debuted in 1976, American political and military leaders had already begun to call for a comprehensive rearmament to be expressed most clearly though the expansion and modernization of American military resources via the space program (Carter 242-243). The government's new emphasis on military and defense applications (rather than on civilian space interests) would eventually culminate in Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" program in the 1980s, but as early as 1977, Gerald Ford had authorized the development of a new anti-satellite program to counter the Russian's program, and thus the late 1970s

marked a transitional period in the U.S. space program in its attempts to reclaim national supremacy on the world stage after a series of embarrassing defeats and scandals.

In this historical climate, it is fitting that Jaime Sommers and Steve Austin emerged as popular heroes who represented "products" of the U.S. military and space program, which had designed and outfitted them with bionic limbs. It is also unsurprising that both spy series adopted a science-fiction approach in order to explore the contemporary culture's fantasies about space and techno-bodies, in addition to its attempts at reclaiming the supremacy and even integrity of American agency in the international political arena. However, the *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman* were not just invested in contemporary concerns regarding the United States' role in the Cold War, as both programs debuted during the height of second-wave feminism, and *The Bionic Woman* especially worked to negotiate feminist and anti-feminist concerns in its narratives. As a result, this chapter examines the specific ways that the *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman* imagined America's supremacy on the world stage by featuring reluctant spies who embodied U.S. technological, ethical and political superiority, in addition to the ways *The Bionic Woman* imagined the cybernetic-spy in specifically gendered terms at a time when second-wave feminism had reached its zenith.

Analyzing Issues of Nationalism and Technological Supremacy in the *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman*

As the show's basic premise reveals, *The Six Million Dollar Man* and Steve Austin were carefully constructed as a hybrid of other genres and their heroes. As one of the show's producers commented, "We needed a superhuman to take over where Superman left off. We needed the violent action and derring-do of Batman. We needed

the science fiction of *Star Trek*, [and] we needed the intrigue that goes with James Bond" (qtd. in Cohen 26). However, the series' producers were opposed to creating an espionage-based series that would remind people of Watergate-- the 1972 political-spy scandal which had ended in Nixon's resignation two years later-- so they worked to create a spy different from "the adventure-loving and ruthless James Bond" while simultaneously retaining the intrigue of the spy series. "In this era of public scandal and cynicism," said executive producer Harve Bennett, "I felt the time was right for the old-fashioned idealistic hero—like the Lone Ranger or Gary Cooper—who comes along to fight evil" (qtd in Cohen 26). Elaborating further, Lee Majors described the difference between Austin and Bond this way: James Bond wants to spy; Steve Austin hates it. He hates "the very nature of espionage. He finds it repugnant, degrading. If he's a James Bond, he's the most reluctant one we've had" (qtd. in Cohen 27).

Austin's emergence as a reluctant spy helped distance the *SMDM*'s hero from the Watergate scandal and reposition the secret agent within the realm of integrity and respect during the 1970s. However, the producers' decision to retain Austin's career as an astronaut also helped the show address some of the specific insecurities about the United States' supremacy prevalent since the Kennedy administration. As Dale Carter illustrates in *The Final Frontier: The Rise and Fall of the American Rocket State,* during the early 1960s Americans grew increasingly concerned about their primacy on the world stage as the Soviets seemed to outpace the U.S. in both missile and space technology. During his campaign, Kennedy suggested that the emerging space gap and missile gap could be attributed to the lack of national initiative and vitality under the Eisenhower administration, and argued that Soviet primacy in space sent the world the message that

the US had passed "its high noon" and that "the long, slow afternoon" of decline had already begun (qtd. in Carter 154). To dispel this impression, the presidential-hopeful insisted that the nation must prove itself on the "great new frontier." Since space was the "symbol of the 20th century," he argued, the US could not afford to "run second in this vital race" (qtd. in Carter 154).

Kennedy's vision proved difficult to obtain in the early part of his administration, as just a few months after his election, the Soviets launched the first human into space, Yuri Gagarin. The Soviets used Gagarin's flight, in addition to the previous Sputnik launches, as worldwide advertisements promoting communism as the wave of the future and the vanguard for universal progress. As Carter explains, the propaganda surrounding the Soviets' space achievements was designed to "vindicate not only Soviet society and technology but also Soviet history, particularly in the third world which both Kennedy and Khrushchev viewed as the main battlefield in the latest part of the Cold War" (155). More specifically, leaders of the U.S.S.R. argued that in 1917, Russia had been underdeveloped during its subjection to international capitalism, and only after the Bolshevik Revolution and the abolishment of private enterprise, had the state been allowed to develop a planned economy that now provided its citizens with a just industrial society, presently capable of leading the way both on earth and in space. (This sentiment was succinctly expressed in Khrushchev's remark to Gagarin after the cosmonaut's return from space: "Let the capitalist countries catch up with our country!")

Fueled by a desire to reinstate the U.S. and its free enterprise system as the recognized instrument of liberation, Kennedy threw his support behind the Apollo space program, designed to "beat" the Russians in a long-term space race aimed at putting men

on the moon. Kennedy also worked hard to promote the astronauts as national, and even international, celebrities, breaking with the military's tradition of treating its greatest pilots as an unpublicized elite. (When Chuck Yeager first broke the sound barrier in October of 1947, the US Air Force kept it secret for eight months). As Carter writes, these astronauts, who were depicted as "cool under pressure and skillful at the edge of disaster" ... acted as bearers and protectors of those all-absorbing, ostensibly supra-political American values of discipline and family, deity and flag ... By electing to become astronauts, these men, like their Soviet counterparts, also became the bearers of societal and historical values" (160).

Although Kennedy did not live to see it, the Apollo project, and indeed, the space program as a whole, reached its crowing achievement in 1969, when Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon, while Michael Collins orbited above. The event attracted nearly 600 million viewers worldwide, or roughly one-fifth of the planet's population at the time (Grinter 2), but more importantly, it sent the international community the message that the capitalistic and democratic United States was not a waning nation. In this climate, it is fitting that the creators of the *SMDM* chose to endow their hero with all of the cultural connotations of American strength, ingenuity, and bravado of the Apollo program by making Col. Steve Austin an astronaut who had walked on the moon and by consulting Edwards Air Force Base, NASA and Caidin, who lived near Cape Canaveral and its space-medicine scientists, on the technical aspects of the series.

By featuring a spy bureaucracy that specialized in high-tech research and development, the show was also able to play with notions of U.S. technological and

political supremacy since OSI scientists had "created" a protagonist whose ability to defeat national threats largely stemmed from his bionic powers—themselves an OSI achievement. In many ways, the show's emphasis on American technology and its relationship to covert intelligence operations reflected the primary strength of the CIA when compared with other international outfits. For instance, the KGB, the STASI, the Mossad, and even MI-6, were renowned for their HUMINT (intelligence gathered from humans) during the Cold War, but the CIA primarily invested its budget into technology that would allow it to compile and analyze information gathered from sophisticated bugging devices, computer databases and satellite imagery with which poorer and smaller intelligence outfits could not compete.

Likewise, Steve's position as a bionic astronaut allowed the covert agency to send Steve on missions where he played out fantasies of overpowering Russian space-aged technology and used his bionics and astronaut training to "save the world." In "The Rescue of Athena One," for instance, Steve rescues a female astronaut stranded in space, while in "Dark Side of the Moon," he returns to the moon to stop mining operations which have shifted the moon's orbit and created havoc on Earth. A two-part episode airing in season four, "Death Probe" features a Russian Venus probe that crashes in Wyoming and threatens to destroy a small town. When weapons and Steve's bionics have no effect on the probe's destructive rampage, Steve simply outsmarts the probe, and thus the episode features the triumph of American ingenuity over Russian space technology, already constructed as inferior by the probe's unintentional descent from space.

Both the *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman* helped to champion American technological prowess through the protagonists' bionic bodies more generally, as well.

"Bionics" refers to the replacement or enhancement of organs or other body parts by mechanical versions and differ from prostheses in that they mimic the original body part's function very closely, or even surpass it. In the case of Jaime and Steve, bionics not only afford them superhuman strength, speed, hearing, and vision, but more importantly, bionics are able to save their lives when ordinary medicine has failed. In this respect, then, the techno-science embedded in both series offered viewers the fantasy of replacement body parts *and* the dream of control over life and death—all made possible by the American government and its scientists' ingenuity.

It is important to point out, however, that while both series depicted the techno-body as healthy, enhanced, and fully functional and portrayed the government's use of bionics as benevolent and lifesaving, the shows were not one-dimensional about the role of technology in American society. As Anne Balsamo notes, within popular culture, the popularization of new body technologies "disseminates new hopes and dreams of corporeal reconstruction and physical immortality," but it also signals a repressed "awareness of strain on and threats to the material body" (2). This is certainly true of the *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman,* for both Jaime and Steve's bodies are threatened by freak accidents. More importantly, though, their bodies are powered by atomic-energy, suggesting that the series might best be read as articulating the promise of American science to tame the power of the atom in order to improve human life, while simultaneously expressing cultural fears about atomic weapons and nuclear energy. This reading seems particularly plausible given that the arms race was starting to gain renewed momentum in the late 1970s, and many feared that it would culminate in a nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States. Likewise, episodes on both the *SMDM*

and *The Bionic Woman* revolved around nuclear concerns, including "Doomsday and Counting," in which Steve burrows into an underground Russian installment in order to save the fiancée of a Russian colonel from a nuclear blast; "Nuclear Alert!," which focuses on Steve's attempts to stop terrorists from dropping an atomic bomb while aboard an enemy plane; and "The Last Kamikaze," which explores the possibility of an atomic bomb falling into the hands of a Japanese WWII pilot who is still fighting the war on a Pacific island. Some *Bionic Woman* episodes also address the fears of atomic energy, including "Assault on the Princess," which revolves around unstable energy cells hidden aboard a casino ship that will explode unless Jaime can locate the double agent who stole them, and "Fembots in Las Vegas," which features Jaime trying to save a scientist whose "energy weapon" has been stolen and launched into space.

Additionally, many of the show's plots explored the potential for government technology to be used for ill-motivated, militaristic purposes rather than for the benefit of humankind, and both series often ask whether humans are in danger of losing their humanity, especially when corporeal technology threatens people's shared, physical vulnerability. In fact, this last question seems to have played heavily into the development of both shows' concepts. As Bennett says of the development of the *SMDM*, "Our guy couldn't be invincible like Superman. With all his powers, he had to be questioning, vulnerable, and in jeopardy every so often—so that the audience would root for him and empathize with the human part of him" (Cohen 26). Additionally, when the creators of *The Bionic Woman* were looking to cast the role of Jaime Sommers, Bennett championed Wagner because she had the one quality that he was looking for: "vulnerability" (Cohen 78).

Despite this similarity in construction, the *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman* treated the threat of technological proliferation in different ways, as the *SMDM* was more apt to revolve around plots that focused on space-aged technology's relationship to American domination, while *The Bionic Woman* preferred to explore the ways in which technological developments affected people's personal lives. This difference in approach was partially the result of the shows' audience make-up and of the different acting abilities of Majors and Wagner. The *SMDM* was most watched by pre-teen and teen-aged males, which, according to Sims Bainbridge, were the population segment most apt to show support of the space program throughout the seventies and eighties (11-12). *The Bionic Woman*, whose protagonist was originally created to attract a larger adult audience, appealed more to the teen-aged, young adult, and female demographic when it aired on ABC (which has always attracted younger viewers) and on NBC (which has traditionally catered to a slightly older one.) As unit production manager Ralph Sariego also notes, "*The Bionic Woman* had greater [emotional] depth because of Lindsay. She was a fine actress ... and wanted more of a dramatic show than action-adventure. On *Six Million Dollar Man*, Lee Majors didn't care. He just grunted, moved his eyebrow and took the money. Lindsay fought hard for better stories and character relationships" (qtd in Phillips and Garcia 45). James Parriot seconds Sariego by noting that the actors' abilities and investment in their craft influenced show content. Specifically, he remarks that Lindsay was "best when she had a good character conflict." "I liked putting her in more emotional situations ... and in the best shows, it was Jaime who had the emotional and moral dilemmas" [rather than the guest stars] (46).

The shows' different foci also meant that Steve and Jaime represented American nationalism in different ways. The *SMDM*'s emphasis on Steve's brawn allowed him to literally embody notions of American strength while *The Bionic Woman's* exploration of technology's influence on personal identities often meant that she, as a government agent, demonstrated and enforced the highest level of ethical standards and humanity (which was especially important in light of Watergate). Sometimes this operated on a simplistic level, such as when Jaime saves Max, the bionic dog, from being put down just because his body appears to be rejecting his bionics (when in reality, his bizarre behavior stems from a fear of fire.) Other times, Jaime's "nationalism" operates on a more political level. In "On the Run," for instance, U.S. senators capture Jaime to try to force her to live in a resort for ex-spies when she attempts to retire from the OSI. Only later do the senators realize that while Jaime has often feared she is becoming more robot than human, actions such as the senators' attempts to lock Jaime in a type of zoo suggest that politicians and intelligence workers operating out of their own "fears" run the real risk of losing their compassion and humanity for others, and they thank Jaime for reminding them of this and redirecting their moral compass.

This does not mean that *The Bionic Woman* failed to address the relationship between technology and national domination, however. Throughout the series, Jaime plays two roles primary roles as a bionic spy. One involves her using her bionic strength to protect or extract important government figures, including ambassadors, OSI scientists and missing OSI agents. The second involves her ensuring that technological devices and plans do not fall into the wrong hands and weaken American prowess. In the first two seasons alone, for instance, Jaime helps protect a secret formula designed by Dr. Welles,

stops a Doomsday Device activated by a supercomputer, stops a secret decoder from being sold on the black market, prevents an American industrialist from selling government weapons plan to the highest bidder, recovers two energy cells that can be used as bombs, and investigates an unarmed missile launch while the U.S. missile warning system is jammed. In this sense, Jaime is both representative and the protector of American technological supremacy, although the show undoubtedly emphasized "the human element" of technological proliferation.

Additionally, because they originally aired on the same network, Lee Majors and Lindsay Wagner often made appearances on one another's shows, and in these cross-overs, episodes often explored issues of technological proliferation on both the national and personal level. A good case in point is a three-part *SMDM-Bionic Woman* storyline entitled "Kill Oscar." This fan favorite opens with Dr. Franklin (a barely-disguised allusion to Dr. Frankenstein), working on his latest invention—female robots, or "fembots," as he calls them. Franklin's plan is to send his fembots, who are made to look like the secretaries of prominent OSI scientists and spy handlers, into the organization in order to capture a weather machine on which Steve Austin and engineers are working. As the OSI describes it, the machine is meant to create weather patterns programmed by a computer in order to bring rain to areas of drought and sun to areas of bitter cold, ultimately helping societies all over the globe sustain life through agriculture. However, viewers learn that Dr. Franklin worked on the OSI project ten years ago, and he pushed for the machine to be used for militaristic purposes—sending hurricanes to enemy territories or causing drought to weaken enemy food supplies. Almost immediately, then, the episode pits "evil" on the side of those who would abuse technology for power and

"good" on the side of those who would use technology benevolently. Importantly, the episode also suggests that the OSI – a semi-secret branch of the US government – can be trusted to use technology for beneficent purposes and to purge itself of any megalomaniacs eager to use its developments to enhance the nation's prowess under the cover of clandestineness since Franklin, viewers learn, was fired for his "grandiose ideas" by the OSI chief, Oscar Goldman.

Goldman, played by Richard Anderson, was the primary character responsible throughout both series' run for guiding the OSI through its ethical quandaries, and Anderson often promoted his character as a government-patriot in the media, as well. In a 1974 interview, Anderson describes Oscar Goldman as "an ethical man who genuinely believes we [presumably, intelligence agencies] are the last great hope of America today" (qtd. in Cohen 40-41) and remarks that he viewed his role as important to preserving the government's image of integrity. "I play a public servant," the actor remarked, "and I'm trying to depict all government servants in key positions around the world....the ones you never read about or hear about, the ones who speak six languages and are professionals. The ones who often exercise diplomacy, who have to follow orders, orders they don't always like, but who uphold the government and are heroes themselves in that sense" (40).

Given Anderson's role on both series, it is no wonder that Franklin's attempts to gain personal control of world power through the weather machine require him to "kill Oscar." However, the episode did not just explore technology's relationship to the government and global domination; the story also explored technology's relationship to human identity through Jaime's interactions with Franklin's fembots. As David Greven

notes, "Kill Oscar" asks Jaime to explore her "intermittent fears of becoming more robot than human" (144) since she, like the fembots, appears completely human on the outside but is composed of machinery on the inside. What is fascinating about this three-part episode is that Franklin's robots are repeatedly exposed as "un-human" when they engage in fights with Jaime, who accidentally rips off their faces and exposes a circuit board and microphone where flesh and blood should be. This exposure of the fembots' mechanical nature horrifies Jaime in a way that does not horrify other OSI workers, presumably because they do not share Jaime's concerns over how much the human body can be comprised of machinery before that person becomes more robotic than human.

Figure 13: Dr. Franklin and one of his fembots in "Kill Oscar Part One."

Predictably, the narrative assuages Jaime's fears by focusing on the element of thought and "free will," for the fembots derive their strength from their machinery and cannot act without instruction from Franklin. (In fact, Franklin describes his fembots as the perfect woman: "fully programmable, obedient, and as beautiful or as deadly as I choose to make them," thus completely subjecting them to patriarchal power and control.) Even though the fembots possess greater strength than Jaime, she is able to

defeat them by outsmarting them and is saved several times when the control system Franklin uses to direct his fembots malfunctions. Even more telling, however, is the conclusion of the story which features Steve and Jaime capturing Franklin, who wishes to die a "hero's death" by allowing himself to drown in his compound. Despite the fact that Franklin has used his fembots to try to destroy Jaime numerous times, the bionic woman refuses to let Franklin die and threatens to carry him out of the compound if he will not go willingly. While Franklin snips that Jaime is clearly "a determined woman with a mind of [her] own—something I've always found flawed about women," he is eventually grateful and reflects on Jaime's humanity, concluding that contrary to his original belief, "humans are superior to machines." He also reassures viewers that "some of the most wonderful things in life are the ones that cannot be controlled," a sentiment which works to reassure viewers of Jaime's humanness but also serves as a symbol of Jaime's triumph over patriarchy and the men who consciously aim to perpetuate it.

Gender, Feminism and Nationalism

While the *SMDM* approached issues of technology from the angle of national-interest and *The Bionic Woman* primarily approached issues of technology on a personal and emotional level, the series also differed in their depictions of espionage and technology based on the gender of the protagonists. Both Steve and Jaime work for Oscar Goldman at the OSI, but Goldman is more than just a boss to his bionic employees. He is a friend to Austin and a father-figure to the orphaned Jaime (her parents died in a car crash when she was a child). This means that Goldman's relationship to Steve is one of an equal, while his relationship to Jaime is one of protector and mentor. This relationship

helps to explain why Steve gets away with constantly disobeying Oscar's orders on his spy missions and caused media writer Glen Larson to note that Austin values individual human rights over the group goals of the OSI. "When that conflict exists," he writes, "the department will have to go along with Austin and allow him to have things his way because he is the *only* six million dollar man" (Cohen 36). Jaime, as the only bionic woman, however, is more apt to happily defer to Oscar and Steve's directions when engaging in her own spy work and is thus coded in traditionally gendered ways.

Also important is the fact that Jaime operates as a woman in the OSI's male economy of science and political power, which helped shape her destiny as a spy in the first place. It is Steve's pleading in "The Bionic Woman" that persuades the OSI to make Jaime bionic, as he argues that Jaime would be granted access to places Austin would have no chance of entering as a male spy. While Oscar recognizes this as an emotional plea, he still allows himself to be swayed, and he and Austin proceed to talk about putting Jaime back together, making explicit the extent to which Jaime and her body are subjected to patriarchal power, especially since Jaime's actions and body are soon controlled, literally and metaphorically, by Goldman and OSI scientist, Rudy Welles.

Jaime's inability to free herself from the masculine economy of politics and science factors heavily into the show's final episode. As aforementioned, "On the Run" revolves around Jaime's attempts to retire from the OSI. As she explains to Oscar, she is grateful for the agency saving her life through bionics, but she now feels that her life is consumed by "that one-hundredth of one percent of the world that deals with espionage, security, paranoia and secrets."

> This minor piece of life has become my whole life. Almost everything I do everyday relates to it. … I didn't ask for this arm…this *army* called the OSI. I didn't even really enlist. I was drafted. .. I am tired of answering the bugle. … I am tired of looking in the mirror and seeing an OSI agent instead of a woman.

While Goldman respects Jaime's decision to retire, Goldman's superiors in the U.S. Senate will not let Jaime leave the agency, even though, as Oscar points out, she has no contractual obligations to the OSI and poses no security threat upon her retirement. Goldman's superiors offer the counterargument that her body is in many ways government property. As one senator says, "Sommers is a walking library of our state secrets. Not just the ones in her head; the ones in her bionics. Sommers is a prize that an enemy could snatch up and examine at their leisure. How can you possibly justify putting her out on the street?" And later, he argues, "Suppose she were kidnapped by an enemy. Do you think their exploration of her bionics would be very pleasant for her, to say nothing of the effect that would have on our national security?" Much like Jaime's entrance in the spy business

Figure 14: Screen shot from *The Bionic Woman's* opening sequence.

was controlled by Oscar and Steve deciding her bionic future for her, then, her attempt to exit spying is controlled by Oscar's male superiors.

The ways in which gender is inscribed on the bionic woman and the six million dollar man is also significant given the plethora of scholarship addressing the image of the cyborg. As Anne Balsamo argues in *Technologies of the Gendered Body,* the human body has traditionally been thought to belong to the realm of nature and that nature has traditionally been conceptualized as inferior to culture and technology. With the development of cosmetic surgery, cavity fillings, pacemakers, in vitro fertilization, and as of 2006, bionic arms, the human body has since been re-conceptualized as a "techno-body" or a boundary figure "belonging to at least two previously incompatible systems of meaning—the organic/natural and the technological/cultural" (5). Because gender construction has heavily relied on the cultural reading of the "natural" body, some feminist scholars have adopted the image of the cyborg, which blurs the boundaries of nature and culture, in order to demonstrate its potential to usurp essentialist gender identities rooted in the material body.

For instance, Balsamo notes that the dominant culture has consistently coded the female body and thus women as "natural" and "reproductive," so that "the womb continues to signify female gender in a way that reinforces an essentialist identity for the female body as the maternal body" (9) With the advent of technological developments that may decouple the uterus from reproduction and even allow men, with the help of machines, to carry babies to term, the cyborg, as the representative of such developments, blurs not only the boundaries between nature and culture but also what it means to be male and female. For this reason, scholars such as Donna Haraway have championed the

cyborg as a figure that would allow women to effectively initiate political action without falling into the trap of identity politics, which rests on hierarchical dualisms of naturalized identities. For Haraway, in other words, the cyborg has the potential to allow women to bridge the divisions that exists between them, and she even goes as far as to claim the cyborg as a post-gendered figure (150). However, as Gill Kirkup points out, while Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* has proven useful for the cultural deconstruction of gender, its usefulness as a tool for material change has yet to be proven (5). Scholars such as Sue Short have also challenged Haraway's conception of the cyborg as a post-gender figure by demonstrating the ways in which gender identity is firmly inscribed upon it in the popular arts. "These representations," Short argues, "play upon familiar stereotypes of either approved or reproved female behavior and may consequently be evaluated as feminist cyborg stories" that "foreground a dichotomous and inherently patriarchal view of femininity" (83). She goes on to demonstrate that science fiction cinema has specifically punished (usually by death) the "synthetic female" for any demonstration of assertiveness deemed a threat to the dominant order. In order to survive as an artificial woman in SF cinema, Short posits, it is necessary that the cyborg conforms to approved standards of behavior and generally defers to male authority (83).

Short's assertion that SF cinema has firmly inscribed gender identity on the figure of the cyborg is relevant to both the *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman* since both Jaime Sommers and Steve Austin were created in traditionally feminine and masculine molds despite their bionics. Harve Bennett has said that Steve Austin was envisioned as a traditionally masculine hero that preferred "brawn" over "brains" and notes that he found Steve's bionics particularly useful since they enhanced the brawn element tremendously

(Cohen 344). Bennett has also described Steve as a "mono-syllabic, shy-with-the-ladies, aw- shucks kind of hero," and "a modest kind of western man amidst all of this technology, which he used well" (344). Jaime Sommers, however, was not envisioned in the same "mono-syllabic," brawn-over-brains fashion even though she possessed the same bionic powers as Steve. As Bennett notes, "We picked up tremendous things with Lindsay that we didn't have with Lee Majors...Lee's character was quiet and reserved. But here we had a bionic person—*a woman*—who could cry and tell us how she feels. So we were able to develop much more *feeling* in the show" (emphasis mine) (qtd. in Phillips and Garcia 46)

Show creators also worked to gender Jaime by diffusing her super-human strength. Philip De Guere, a writer on the series, notes that the production team "decided that the non-super hero approach was the way to go [on the show]." We wanted Jaime to be "ladylike and operate her bionics discreetly," he says, because "the conventional wisdom at the time was that an audience wouldn't buy a real strong, aggressive female character" (qtd. in Phillips and Garcia 45). Kenny Johnson, the character's creator and show's director, writer and executive producer, also remarks that Sommers physical prowess was purposely tempered so as not to alienate certain sections of the viewing public:

> We wanted to create a woman who was obviously physically powerful and yet not threatening to some guy who might want to sit down and have a cup of tea with her ... So we carefully crafted it so that she never actually hit anybody. She would pull a rug out from under them or cause

something to fall on them but [she] never actually slugged anyone. (Stowe)

As these comments reveal, Jaime's bionics complicated her existence as a woman precisely because a woman is rarely conceived of as feminine, appealing *and* physically powerful. This is also revealed in the episode that introduced Jaime, for when Steve informs her after her surgery that her limbs and ear are now bionic, she protests: "What did you let them do to me? ... I don't want to be a freak! Why didn't you just let me die?" Such comments are indicative of the fear and loathing such a cyborg identity entails when set against conventional notions of gender, as Sommers is clearly disturbed by her bionic identity and the "manner in which its undercuts her femininity and desirability" (White 181). In fact, in one segment of "The Bionic Woman," Jaime tells Steve that she understands if he no longer finds her sexually attractive since he knows her legs are not "really her legs" at all. Of course, Steve turns the table on Jaime saying that his legs are not really his legs either, but while his response succeeds in abating Jaime's worries, his remark fails to understand the ways in which Jaime's bionics complicate her gendered identity precisely because she is a woman.

Interestingly, the contradiction between Jaime's bionics and her femininity are also present in the series' product tie-ins, many of which emphasized the importance of the bionic woman's conventional beauty rather than her strength, which was a central element of the Steve Austin action-figure. As Rod Rehn illustrates, the Kenner toy company produced a Steve Austin doll that was thirteen inches tall and wore a red NASA-style jumpsuit and red sneakers. Owners could peer through a hole in the back of his head to see out of Steve's bionic eye—a wide-angle telescopic lens—and his right

arm featured roll-back rubber "skin" that revealed removable bionic parts. By hitting a button in the back (after twisting his head to the right), Steve's bionic arm could lift objects weighing up to two pounds, and the doll had several accessories, including three bionic arms that owners could interchange with the original. The Laser Arm shot a red light beam; the Neutralizer Arm did karate chops and had a sonic stun gun; while the Oxygen Supply Arm had a retractable oxygen mask that fit in a hidden compartment.

Kenner's Jaime Sommers action-figure also featured the character's bionic elements: if one turned the head from side to side, a ping sound could be heard to represent Jaime's bionic hearing, and panels in the doll's thighs could be removed to reveal bionic parts, while her jeans had lift-off patches that allowed users access to her circuits. However, the accessories that came with the doll focused on Jaime's role as a conventionally attractive woman and girlfriend rather than her role as a woman with superhuman strength. The figure had comb-able blonde hair, came with a vinyl Mission Purse that contained a wallet, money, credit cards, a mission assignment, a snapshot of Steve, a comb, a brush, and cosmetic case with make-up (Rehn). Consumers could also purchase the Bionic Woman Styling Boutique, which came with an eleven-inch tall bust of Jaime and a make-up tray with cosmetics, comb, brush, curlers and ribbons, or they could select from a range of fashion clothes for the figure, including several evening gowns. An alternative version of the bionic hair salon was also manufactured and featured a reclining salon chair, photo of Steve, hair dryer, comb, brush, and sun lamp, along with a cable to connect Jaime's arm to a bionic station that would check her vitals and create an EKG readout (SWFigures.com)[15].

As the product tie-ins suggest, then, *The Bionic Woman* creators and marketers found themselves struggling to balance Jaime's bionic powers with her femininity which they believed made Sommers a desirable figure for young, female consumers. However, this tension was also exacerbated by the domestic politics circulating during the late 1970s, which forced the series to negotiate second-wave feminism and anti-feminism in its narratives. In many ways, the show embraced much of the rhetoric of feminism, as evidenced by the many *Bionic Woman* episodes that feature Jaime embracing many of the movement's tenets. During "Bionic Beauty," for example, Jaime must go undercover as Miss California in order to infiltrate the Miss U.S.A. contest, whose directors attempt to transport a secret device to Paris in the pageant winner's rhinestone staff. During the swimsuit portion of the competition, Jaime remarks that she feels like a side of beef, foreshadowing the real-life protesters of the 1978 pageant who likened the competition to animals being judged at the county fair. Other episodes feature Jaime championing the OSI secretaries who feel underappreciated by their bosses, poking fun at the Virginia Slims motto, "You've Come a Long Way, Baby" and in the *SMDM* episode that first introduced viewers to Jaime, the character demands to decide for herself whether to accept the consequences and dangers of working for the OSI, rather than letting Steve and the government decide for her.

Likewise, depending upon their knowledge of Wagner, fans may have read the actress and hence Sommers, as a powerful, feminist figure because of Wagner's success in negotiating her *Bionic Woman* contract with Universal Studios. As was well-publicized at the time, Universal had decided not to renew Wagner's $50,000-a-year contract in 1975 because although she was considered "promising," her credits included only a few

mixed-review films and the studio considered her to be "too tall, too skinny, too flat-chested, too unglamorous" (qtd. in Cohen 77). When Wagner landed the guest appearance role on *The Six Million Dollar Man* and caused an avalanche of mail to pour into ABC, the actress and her agent found themselves in an advantageous position to negotiate a new contract and together landed Wagner $500,000 a year for five years, a guarantee of one film role annually, and 12.5% of the take from sales of Bionic dolls, t-shirts and other spinoffs, which at the time were speculated to produce as much as $2 million ("The $500,000 Timex"). Given that Lee Majors' own contract paid him a "mere $300,000" for an already popular series and included no royalties for spinoffs, Wagner's contract was touted as a significant feat, and Lindsay became the highest paid actor in dramatic television, causing Lee Majors to grouse that "the $500,000 woman was "a bionic rip-off" ("The $500,000 Timex").

Jaime Sommers was also one of the first (if not the first) professional female spies on television to work alone on missions rather than under the protective wing of a male partner, and while Jaime, like Steve, is not enthralled with the idea of espionage, she agrees to work for the OSI in order to express her gratitude for saving her life through bionics. As aforementioned, this plot device served to distance both the *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman* from the Watergate scandal, but it also suggested that women were just as capable as men of sacrificing their personal lives and physical safety in order to serve the American government. Thus, Jaime's decision to spy for the OSI helped position her within the realm of patriot traditionally reserved for men who engage in physically dangerous service to their country.

However, those few scholars addressing the series argue that Jaime Sommers is best read as a figure that negotiated the tension between feminism and anti-feminism rather than as one that supported second-wave feminism entirely. Susan Douglas discusses *The Bionic Woman* in the context of *Charlie's Angels, The Flying Nun* and *Wonder Woman*, noting that all four television series represented "new exemplars of the liberated woman" but featured them only "in comic book settings that could never be mistaken for reality" (218). Their power, Douglas writes, "had to be kept secret, as the women who possessed it masqueraded as regular women—as women with absolutely no power at all" (218). And precisely because they possessed great strength, it was critical that these women be hyperfeminized and achieve their power, not through their own devices, but "through the wizardry of special effects" or through technology "designed and controlled by men" (217-218).

While Douglas goes on to remark that Lindsay Wagner represented a conventionally beautiful woman, she admits that *The Bionic Woman* was the least kitschy of the four shows because she "didn't have a costume, was not constantly seen in bikinis or wet t-shirts, and didn't giggle all the time" (218). Likewise, Sherrie Inness remarks that *The Bionic Woman* offered women viewers a potentially powerful role model as she possessed superior physical strength and was one of the first action-adventure heroines to work alone, but Inness sees Jaime Sommers as primarily negotiating anti-feminism and feminism since the show "helped to reaffirm that women, while more capable than generally given credit for, were still less competent than men" (32). As she specifically points out, Jaime is depicted as an inferior (and less expensive) version of the six million dollar man, and the series, like *Charlie's Angels*, placed a strong emphasis on the

importance of femininity and sex appeal to diffuse the threat posed by second wave feminism (32). This can be seen in the show's publicity material as well, including a 1976 *TV Guide* issue that featured Wagner on the cover and claimed that she was possibly the most beautiful woman on television.

It is important to recognize, too, that many different kinds of feminism were circulating during the 1970s, including difference feminism, which, as is more thoroughly explained in the next chapter, focused on the "natural" feminine attributes of women and encouraged society to recognize the ways they complimented the "natural" masculine attributes of men. Put very simplistically, cultural or radical feminists argued that women ought to reject men and patriarchy altogether, with some encouraging women to form unique, lesbian, women's cultures. Unlike radical feminists, liberal feminists sought to work within the parameters of patriarchal society and focused on increasing women's access to education, high-paying jobs, and other opportunities in order to ensure equality with men, while Marxist-socialist feminists called for the abolishment of capitalism in order to rob patriarchy of its economic power.

Given the variety of feminist perspectives during the 1970s, it is plausible to read *The Bionic Woman* as a testing ground for at least a few different types of feminism. For instance, the show emphasizes the emotional sensitivity Jaime displays at work and in her personal life, suggesting, much like difference feminists, that women have something unique, yet equally valuable, to contribute to the world. However, the show seems to primarily focus on the angst of liberal feminism in that Jaime continually strives and struggles to succeed in the male economy of politics and science even though she possess the strength (both literally and figuratively) to "smash the whole thing." In this

sense, then, *The Bionic Woman* rejects notions of 1970s radical feminism, as Sommers chooses to work within a patriarchal system in order to allow women greater opportunity within it and is involved in romantic relationships with Steve, and later, with another man, throughout the series' run. In terms of the show's audience, which appears to have been mostly white, middle-class, young, and female, this approach to second-wave feminism may have been the most-appealing for the show's creators to adopt, as it allowed them to cater to that demographic's realistic hopes of entering the system, especially in terms of jobs formerly reserved for men, and who were probably not ready to eschew all accoutrements of femininity or their desire for sexual relationships with men.

This assertion is supported by at least some viewers comments posted on *The Bionic Woman* forum of JumptheShark.com, a website that allows viewers to express their opinions about the quality of particular shows. In one post, a viewer praises the combination of Jaime's beauty and strength and the way the mix influenced her as a young girl. "Jaime Summers [sic] was my IDOL when I was young!," the fan writes. "I had long, blonde hair like her and ... I wanted to look exactly like her ... We had a wooded area behind our house with a good share of fallen, rotted trees, and me, my brother, and our friends would go out there and play Super Heroes... I was always Jaime, my friend had to be Wonder Woman (spare me... what a gay costume! Jaime would NEVER wear ridiculous trash like that!)." And later, the fan writes, "Remember the part in the intro where Jaime is squeezing the tennis ball and it pops in her hand and she looks surprised? I used to love to do that bit with the rotten branches, except when they crumbled, instead of looking shocked, I would always look down knowingly at my hand

and smile slyly and nod my head up and down... ('yeah that's right.... I'm bionic.....')" ("The Bionic Woman Forum").

Other viewers have praised the series for featuring a strong character who was not afraid to be vulnerable, hurt, or feminine. One fan on JumptheShark.com writes that she enjoyed Jaime because she would be happier in "macramé class than saving the world from evil and calamity." The fan also notes that he/she appreciated the fact Jaime sometimes took advantage of her bionic powers for "practical things, like when she didn't have enough time before a date"" and when she would use her "special speed and strength to do otherwise monotonous household chores like scrubbing the floor, ironing, or cooking" ("The Bionic Woman Forum"). This comment suggests that the show was enjoyable because it challenged the idea that women had to eschew men or take on daunting careers that left no time for a personal life and suggested that women needn't be "superwomen" to be fulfilled in life.

Yet another fan enjoyed the show because it suggested that women could be equal to men in the professional realm. More specifically, the fan claims that *The Bionic Woman* was "ground-breaking as a role model for young girls. The older I get, the more I appreciate why it held such fascination for me at such an impressionable age, in a decade when women's roles were changing so dramatically. Forget *Charlie's Angels* and *Wonder Woman,* who followed in *The Bionic Woman's* footsteps; this show offered a real character young girls could dream of being like who was just as powerful as her male counterpart." While another expresses that what made the show great was that it featured a science-fiction, superhuman spy, in vulnerable positions where she "gets injured and

cries." "How often do you see that happen today?" the fan asks. ("The Bionic Woman Forum")

Conclusion

Perhaps because of its ability to blend science fiction with espionage, *The Bionic Woman* and the *SMDM* proved popular with viewers at a time when space captivated the public imagination. The *SMDM* ran for five seasons on ABC while *The Bionic Woman* ran for two before being picked up by NBC in September of 1977 for a final season. According to Brooks and Marsh, *SMDM* ranked ninth in the ratings for the 1975-1976 season and pulled a 24.2 rating in 1976-77 to rank seventh overall (1251-1252). During its first season, *The Bionic Woman* achieved a 24.9 rating to rank fifth in the overall ratings, four places ahead of *The Six Million Dollar Man,* and higher than *Happy Days; M*A*S*H*; Welcome Back, Kotter; The Mary Tyler Moore Show; Kojack*; and *The Jeffersons* (Brook and Marsh 1251). While the series fell to fourteenth in the ratings in its second season, ranking seven places below its parent show, *The Bionic Woman* nonetheless pulled a 22.4 rating (Brooks and Marsh 1252).

Precisely because of its strong first and second season finishes, the show creators were stunned when ABC announced that they were canceling *The Bionic Woman.* "We were pulling a 30 share when ABC cancelled us," says James Parriott. "ABC felt that *The Bionic Woman* was slipping, and their researcher told them to drop the show while it's still hot and get something else ... because [the show] is gonna fail next season" (qtd. in Phillips and Garcia 49). The show managed a reprieve by moving to NBC, but it also lost its crossover appearances of Steve Austin on *The Bionic Woman* and Jaime on the *SMDM*, which was only possible when both series aired on the same network. As a

result, the shows lost the potential that Steve and Jaime might restart their love affair, which contributed to the shows' ultimate demise.

When it looked clear *The Bionic Woman* wouldn't be picked up for a fourth season, Lindsay Wagner asked Steven de Souza to write a series finale.

> She told me over lunch, "I feel Jaime Sommers has never been comfortable as a tool of the government. She's basically a peace-loving person, and she's only doing it because she's grateful the OSI saved her life. What would happen if they called her one evening and told her she had to be airborne to Russia that night...and she doesn't want to do it anymore?" So I wrote a story that really brought that to the fore. (qtd in Phillips and Garcia 49).

De Souza found the script to perfectly mirror Wagner's real life situation: "Lindsay who was tired of doing a network show, played Jaime Sommers, who was tired of being a spy" (49).

The legacy of Steve Austin and Jaime Sommers continues, however. In 2004, the pair were jointly ranked number nineteen in *TV Guide's* list of the 25 Greatest Sci-Fi Legends, and according to NBC press releases in January 2007, the network is creating a pilot for a new version of *The Bionic Woman.* While NBC does not hold the rights to the *SMDM,* it makes more sense to resurrect *The Bionic Woman* rather than the *SMDM* because it was not nearly as grounded in the space-race culture of the late 1970s and instead focused more on the "timeless" dilemmas of humans' relationship with technology. The show also promoted women's role in espionage as one that policed the humanity and ethics of clandestine agencies rather than as one that demonstrated the

brawn of the nation. This seems particularly appropriate in the quagmire of America's war in Iraq and the negative publicity and questionable ethics surrounding its treatment of prisoners abroad. Interestingly, the role of women in espionage as ethical gate keepers also continued into the 1980s, but in one of that decade's most popular spy series, the role was not played by an independent, female, professional spy, but rather by a suburban mom operating as an amateur in *Scarecrow and Mrs. King.*

The 1980s

The Suburban Spy and the Rise of the New Right: *Scarecrow and Mrs. King*

"So if I work here, does that mean that I work with you? I mean that's what you do, isn't it? You have partners? But you know I might need some special training; I'm not sure I have the right skills. I mean I type; I don't shoot, you know. But I do love this area. Oh, I'm crazy about it. All the fresh vegetables come here and besides that, the boys' dentist is right around the block. So what I could do is, I could drop them off at the dentist, then I could go into spy headquarters, and then I could pick up a fresh melon all at the same time."--Amanda to Lee in the pilot episode, "The First Time"

"No, this is not a series about a straw man who falls in love with a lady farmer. The premise here is even less likely. Scarecrow is the code name for a square-jawed chap named Lee Stetson (Bruce Boxleitner), who is, to put it bluntly, a spy. He works for a CIA-type outfit called the Agency. Amanda King (Kate Jackson) is a pretty and recently divorced housewife, who lives with her two sons and her mother (Beverly Garland). Now, by a series of coincidences that occur only in the fevered minds of Hollywood scriptwriters, Scarecrow has to get rid of a package containing vital information. Naturally, he hands it over to Mrs. King, a woman he's never met and who could be a Russian spy, for all he knows. Well, maybe she reminds him of an actress he once saw in *Charlie's Angels*. Anyway, it looks as though the dashing operative will wind up working with the fetching housewife, who turns out to be pretty good at lurking. Maybe she watched *Charlie's Angels*, too?
--Text promoting the series premiere in *TV Guide*, Sept. 10, 1983.

President Ronald Reagan's landslide victory and the rising prominence of the New Right led television executives to reconsider their programming development during the early 1980s. Scott Siegler, Vice President of Dramatic Programming at CBS, for instance, believed that Reagan's victory indicated that America was "moving to the right," that viewers would become "more anti-foreign" and "tolerant of the U.S. protecting its interests abroad," and thus tried to capitalize on the political shift by commissioning two pilot scripts for shows revolving around the CIA and its efforts to fight Soviet might[16] (qtd. in Gitlin 221). In 1981, ABC also tried to tap into the nation's political mood by dropping the show *American Dream* in order to run *Today's FBI* and an Aaron Spelling program called *Strike Force*. Both were traditional law-and-order programs that stressed the comforts afforded by a legalized, national institute looking after its citizens. According to the network's entertainment president, Tony

Thomopoulos, both *Today's FBI* and *Strike Force* were the network's attempt to reflect the "spirit" of Americans, who, he believed, were looking to restore their faith in organizations that could "bring this country back to some basic national values" (qtd. in Gitlin 222), presumably because events such as Watergate, Vietnam and the CIA's involvement in Latin America had worn away citizens' faith in government.

In 1981, prominent New Right members, Rev. Donald Wildmon, Rev. Jerry Farwell, Sen. Jeremiah Denton and Phyllis Schafly, also attempted to influence television's direction by founding the Coalition for Better Television (CBTV). During the month of February, the coalition announced that it would hire 4000 monitors to track the prime-time schedule for signs of skin scenes, sexual innuendo, implied sexual intercourse, profanity and violence and would then tally the results to see which sponsor aired the most commercials during the offending episodes and organize a boycott against that product/company (251). The goal of the CBTV was to pressure the networks into "cleaning up" their programs by inciting panic amongst the advertisers that supplied their revenue. Their tactics succeeded in causing a small percentage of companies to withdraw their support from questionable episodes on all three networks, but because network time is a seller's market, the move ultimately failed to have a major effect, and the CBTV eventually called off the boycott. But while the New Right's attempts to use a boycott in order to influence television content ultimately failed, according to Todd Gitlin, the move helped to convince networks that "the popular pendulum was swinging away" from shows exploring issues of homosexuality and away from the "jiggle" genre, which included shows such as *Charlie's Angels* and *Three's Company* and focused on viewer titillation through images of the female body (263).

Perhaps no other actress embodies the networks' decision to move away from overt sexuality, violence and "jiggle" in order to focus on themes more acceptable to the dominant ideologies of the New Right era than Kate Jackson. During the late seventies, Jackson played Sabrina Duncan on *Charlie's Angels,* which featured her, alongside Farrah Fawcett and Jaclyn Smith, kicking and karate-chopping enemies while wearing highly-sexualized clothing. Undoubtedly, the show helped launch Jackson's career by drawing 23 million viewer households and 18,000 pieces of fan mail each week ("Kate Jackson's Triumph"), but despite the show's popularity, the actress decided to leave after three seasons to pursue other projects, citing the show's "fluff" and focus on "T and A" as contributing to her decision (Hicks). The move proved risky for Jackson's career, as the actress spent the first few years of the eighties working on lukewarm films, but by 1983, she had returned to stardom by landing the role of housewife-turned-spy, Amanda King, on the series *Scarecrow and Mrs. King.*

Like many other spy series of the era, *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* reflected the influence of New Right politics on television content, for one of the core ways in which the New Right differed from the Old Right was that it considered the patriarchal family as the sacred unit of American society and thus promoted public policies in both the legislature and the media which stressed the importance of traditional family values, marriage, childbirth, heterosexuality and the role of the husband as a household head. In order to reflect the momentum of the New Right in the United States at the time, many spy television creators modified some of the genre's conventions in an attempt to provide less objectionable content for advertisers interested in aligning themselves with the status quo. Most notably, 1980s spy shows downplayed violence and moved away from their

celebrations of materialistic consumption, high fashion and the playboy lifestyle popularized in the sixties and instead moved towards plots that celebrated more traditional values such as the importance of family and "justice for all." To cite just three examples, *Airwolf*'s premise revolved around Stringfellow Hawke refusing to accept a million dollar reward in exchange for recovering a high-tech helicopter for an agency known as The Firm. However, he does agree to perform the task in addition to subsequent missions in exchange for the government recovering his brother or his brother's remains from Vietnam. CBS' *The Equalizer* featured Robert McCall as an assassin for the CIA who comes to regret his profession and thus retires from the agency in order to work, free of charge, for the innocent and downtrodden, while *MacGyver* featured its main character employing scientific ingenuity to escape dangerous situations and often employed non-violent storylines that delivered moral lessons[17]. Most spy shows also stayed clear from the elements of spoof and camp popular in the genre one and two decades prior, with many shows taking a more traditional approach to gender instead.

Scarecrow and Mrs. King exhibited many of these same characteristics by making its protagonist a suburban mom trying to support her two boys after a recent divorce through part-time spy work for The Agency; focusing on the ways Amanda's nurturing and non-violent attributes contributed to her success as an undercover agent; and exploring her romantic desires for her partner, Lee Stetson (a.k.a. Scarecrow). However, CBS's decision to develop a program about a suburban housewife-turned-spy probably had to do with the network's target audience as much as it did the rise in New Right politics. More specifically, CBS's audience has always been disproportionately older and more rural since the network signed up more affiliates in the early days of

television and has always had more affiliates in smaller markets. As a result, their audience differs slightly from ABC in particular, which was the third network to emerge and thus had a harder time signing up affiliates in the small markets, which often carried just one to two stations before the introduction of cable. ABC's late entry meant that the network had to target its shows at a younger demographic since it reasoned it would be difficult to woo older viewers accustomed to watching CBS and NBC but relatively easy to attract and retain younger ones.

Naturally, CBS's market has directly impacted its programming choices over the decades. In the early 1980s, CBS programmer Herman Keld remarked that his network has never done well airing "ABC-type programs" like *Three's Company* or *Charlie's Angels*, which he described as "sophisticated, slick and big-city" (qtd. in Gitlin 57), thereby suggesting that CBS shows are more likely to succeed when they are aimed at its slightly older, rural and suburban audience. During the 1980s, the older element of CBS's market suited the network particularly well, however, because while the most lucrative viewers for advertisers during the 1970s' were 18-49 year-olds, by 1980, one-third of television's average prime-time audience was over fifty and had more disposable income than they did one decade prior. Therefore, networks began targeting 25-54, and even 25-64 year-olds, of which CBS had the largest share. (Gitlin 56-62) This industry trend helps explain why *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* may have chosen an actress in her mid-thirties as the series' protagonist; focused on the "older" themes of motherhood, marriage and divorce; included the character of Amanda's widowed mother played by Beverly Garland; and set many of its plots in the suburbs of Washington D.C. rather than the city itself.

The promotional materials for *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* also indicate that while the show may have been aimed at an older, more suburban or rural demographic, it was also targeted at women. Many of the advertisements for the show which appeared in

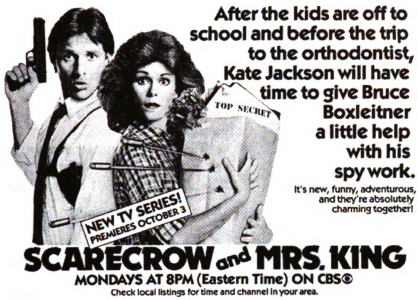


Fig 15: *SMK* advertisement featured in *TV Guide* (1983). Available on-line at http://www.kate-jackson.com/smktvads.htm

TV Guide, for instance, picture both Lee and Amanda, but the copy primarily focuses on Amanda through taglines such as "Amanda Mistaken for Princess Marked for Murder," "Amanda Exposed in Memoirs," "Amanda the Bait to Trap a Traitor," "Amanda's Mom an Unsuspecting Target" and "Housewife Betrays Her Country?" Ads that attempted to introduce the show to viewers also played heavily on the bored-housewife-seeking-adventure theme (see Figs. 15, 16, and 17), while later ads centred on the romantic elements of the show, including one that features a photo of Lee and Amanda in a heart-shaped frame entitled "Do You Take This Spy?" and an ad that features an image of the pair dancing that reads "Amanda and Lee Have to Work *Very* Closely to Save a Kidnapped Courier" (Fig. 18).

While the series underwent several changes within its first season due to "delays, script hassles and a general deterioration of working conditions" that led executive producers Brad Buckner and Eugenia Ross-Lemming to leave the show and Juanita Bartlett, producer of *The Rockford Files*, to join the Scarecrow team in their stead (Hicks), the marketing and development of *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* was ultimately successful. The series ran from 1983-1987, making it one of the longest running spy programs of the decade. During its first three seasons, the show ranked 20th, 22nd, and 28th in the Nielsen's respectively (Brooks and Marsh 1254-55) and was nominated for an Emmy in cinematography, two Emmys in costuming, and won the 1986 Emmy for Outstanding Achievement in Music Composition for a Series. Kate Jackson was also nominated for the 1985 Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a TV-Series – Drama, although Angela Lansbury took home the award for her work on *Murder, She Wrote,* another program featuring an older protagonist solving crimes. When the show was finally cancelled in its fourth season due

Fig 16. *SMK* advertisement featured in *TV Guide* (Sept. 10, 1983). Available on-line at http://www.kate-jackson.com/smktvads.htm

to a sharp drop in ratings and Kate Jackson's battle with breast cancer, *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* found an extended life when reruns of the series were broadcast on both Lifetime and PAX, and even now, twenty years later, the series enjoys a strong fan following. Sizeable bodies of fan fiction and numerous fan websites abound in cyberspace,[18] and organized fan events, such as a 20th anniversary celebration of the series in North Hollywood and annual viewing parties aimed at regional fans, continue to take place.

Fig. 17 ***SMK*** **advertisement featured in** ***TV Guide.*** **Available on-line at http://www.kate-jackson.com/smktvads.htm**

Analyzing Nationalism and Gender in *SMK*

Given *Scarecrow and Mrs. King's* appeal to slightly older, suburban women, the rest of this chapter explores the way the series encoded messages regarding gender during a time when the American nation-state was dominated by the rise of the New Right and feminist backlash politics, while simultaneously witnessing an increase in divorce rates and the number of women engaging in paid labor. The last section of this chapter also investigates the ways that viewers may have adopted negotiated or even oppositional

viewing stances in regards to the messages encoded by the narrative itself. As discussed in the introduction of this book, such an analysis rests on the idea that television creators consciously work to create shows that adopt positions in-line with perceived mainstream ideologies and avoid topics that could evoke strong controversy and lead to sponsors retracting their advertising dollars. However, regardless of how a show may encode mainstream ideologies, viewers can decode messages in negotiated and oppositional ways and produce their own meanings from a text, and thus, as John Fiske notes, "popular culture items have no single defined meaning and present a bank of rich semiotics" (5).

Fig. 18: *SMK* advertisement featured in *TV Guide*. Available on-line at http://www.kate-jackson.com/smktvads.htm

Encoding New Right Politics

While no unified voice existed for the New Right during the 1980s, the term generally refers to a network of people and organizations committed to social and fiscal conservatism, including Jessie Helms, Orin Hatch, Phyllis Schafly, Jack Kemp, The

Heritage Foundation, The Conservative Caucus, and groups working against abortion, gay rights and pornography. Many of the New Right's policies had been gaining momentum since the early 1970s and were concerned with the family unit, which it viewed as the basic and most sacred unit of the republic. Because many social conservatives of the New Right envisioned gender as a hierarchical ordering decreed by scripture, with God and Christ at the top, followed by men and then women, they more specifically believed that the nation's health depended upon the existence of strong families, which consisted of women who served their families through nurturance, altruism and self-sacrifice within the home, while men served as breadwinners and decision makers (Klatch 676-77). These gender assignments were seen as necessary and complimentary, and thus the New Right was in many ways at odds with the second-wave feminist movement. For instance, both feminists and social conservatives understood women as "one man away from welfare," but feminists sought to ensure women's economic security through paid labor, while women such as Phyllis Schafly believed it was men's responsibility to financially provide for women and tried to ensure women's rights and entitlements within the confines of marriage. (In fact, this logic guided Schafly's opposition to the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment, as she believed the ERA would, in part, free men from their responsibility of providing alimony for women in the event of a divorce.)

The image of the social and fiscal politics of The New Right have been most closely identified with white, middle-class Americans, so given that suburban, middle-class women were the very audience at which CBS was directing *Scarecrow and Mrs. King*, it is unsurprising that many of the New Right's politics of difference feminism are

comfortably encoded in the series' narrative, images, and characters, especially as the show features a mother-turned-spy as its protagonist, suggests that women who exhibit the feminine traits of domesticity, self-sacrifice and nurturance can contribute to the nation's prowess, while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of traditional masculinity to the nation-state through the character of Lee Stetson, Amanda's partner, on the show.

In fact, the emphasis on difference feminism comes as early as the show's opening sequence, which emphasizes King's place in the domestic sphere and Lee's place in the public one. In season one, this title sequence opens with shots of the Capitol, the Jefferson Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial to alert viewers to the show's location. A picture of Amanda's home, complete with a white fence and well-groomed lawn, is then flashed across the screen, serving to emphasize the juxtaposition of Amanda's suburban, domestic existence with the urban, political sphere of Washington D.C. and to mark her as an outsider of it. Several shots of Amanda then follow which depict her kissing her son goodbye in the morning, vacuuming her boys' messy room, drying her sons' wet shoes in the oven, assembling a children's toy, dressing and kissing her sons in the family room, and blow-drying a crystal glass. The music to which these images are set is comprised of peppy, high notes emphasized by strings and xylophones. However, this music quickly changes when the images of Lee Stetson are shown in the next visual sequence, as it shifts to a slower and more dramatic tune that employs cymbals and deep horns that signal the great power and dangerous activity of the male lead. Unlike those of Amanda, the images of Stetson all feature him in public, urban areas. He is shown running down a fire escape, running across the lawn near the

Washington monument, kicking an enemy while inside a helicopter, running with a package at a train station, and snooping around dark buildings with a flashlight and revolver. The title sequence then shifts back to the higher, faster music and matches it with an image of Amanda's mother in her kitchen wearing an apron, Lee's boss, Billy Melrose, standing outside a storage room at The Agency, and then returns to the deeper music to show an image of Lee and Amanda's colleague, Francine Desmond, reading a newspaper in The Agency's hallway and a shot of King's two children. The remaining title sequence shots are of both Lee and Amanda that feature Lee dragging Amanda by the hand, driving and flying her away from danger, and laughing at her when she slips and falls with a bag of groceries on a rainy street. Through the use of image and music, then, the show constructs Amanda as a mother and housewife operating in a safe, suburban home, and depicts Lee as a serious, government agent often on the run from dangerous criminals in Washington D.C. Thus, within the first minute of the series, the show works to emphasize the importance of traditional gender roles to the text itself.

Of course, these featured dichotomies of urban and suburban, masculine and feminine, active and passive, non-domestic and domestic are further upheld in the show's narrative. Lee as a selfish bachelor living in a high-rise flat, who never grocery shops, cleans his apartment, or thinks about home décor, while Amanda is constructed as a housewife who takes pride in both her home and sons. Class differences also arise on the show as Amanda is marked as a white, middle-class woman through her home, wood-panelled station wagon, and wardrobe, which primarily consists of jeans, sneakers, and over-sized sweaters—all of which suggest that she spends her resources on her family instead of herself. Lee, on the other hand, drives a high-end sports car and is often shown

wearing suits and tuxedos, suggesting that he ranks higher than Amanda in both income and social status.

These binaries, though sometimes rigid, are essential to the show because many of its comedic elements are derived from the fact that Lee and Amanda come from very different worlds but are nonetheless forced to work together on espionage-related assignments. Take, for instance, "To Catch a Mongoose," which features Lee and Amanda interrogating one of Amanda's old high-school friends, whom The Agency believes is now an international assassin. In order to extract a confession, Lee decides to use both physical force and a good cop-bad cop routine to get Conrad to confess his crimes, but in Amanda's role as the good cop, she essentially over-mothers Conrad, soothing his every worry and frustrating Lee to the point that he leaves the room and reluctantly allows Amanda to "interrogate" the suspect. Using kindness, compassion, and the tactic of "just talking to him," Amanda does what trained operatives cannot: she gets Conrad to open up, admit that he is not the Mongoose, and help The Agency track and then capture the real international assassin. This scene is satisfying for many female viewers since Amanda's skills as a nurturer and caretaker are more effective in this espionage-related case than the skills Lee has gained over the years in professional interrogation training.

As episodes like "To Catch a Mongoose" illustrate, rather than reinforcing the cultural status quo which celebrates the masculine over the feminine, in many ways, *SMK* aligned itself with New Right politics by working to esteem traditionally feminine roles and, ironically, emphasizing their importance to government intelligence. Consider, for instance, the plot lines of several episodes from seasons one and two. In "The First

Time," the fact that Amanda's mother watches the Colonial Cookery show and writes down its recipes allows Amanda to realize that the Russians are sending codes transmitted via those recipes, and thus, helps to uncover a KGB spy ring operating in D.C. In "The ACM Kid," Amanda takes a teenage computer genius into her home after his parents have been kidnapped, and it is her motherly love for the teen that eventually helps him admit that his parents are being held captive until he agrees to break into a secure government server. In "Charity Begins at Home," Amanda's service as the refreshment coordinator at a high-security charity event allows The Agency to monitor suspected criminals, while her work for an environmental group in "Vigilante Mothers" allows The Agency access to a chemical weapons plant. "There Goes the Neighborhood" features the government needing to send a pair of operatives to pose as husband and wife in a suburban neighborhood in order to investigate Connie Beth Cosmetics, a company thought to be linked to a Central American arms smuggling ring. Because most of the Agency's operatives are unmarried urbanites, Amanda is chosen for the assignment and helps Lee avoid mistakes that would blow their cover. For example, Amanda is put in charge of decorating their home to look middle-class and suburban, something at which Lee would undoubtedly fail. Likewise, when Lee announces his plan to go door-to-door to introduce himself to the neighbors and secretly begin his investigation, Amanda quickly explains that his behavior would raise suspicion. In the suburbs, she informs him, the neighbors come to your house to welcome you to the area, and she suggests that they make daiquiris and hors d'oeuvres to ingratiate themselves. Of course, Amanda is right, and her food along with her friendly charm work so well that two neighborhood women eventually get a job for Amanda selling Connie Beth products, which helps Lee and

Amanda discover that the company is hiding weapons parts inside the hair dryers, curling irons and larger appliances the women unwittingly send to their clients overseas.

These plot lines focused on the threat of communist penetration of the US government during a time when the Cold War was turning warm again[19], but they also explored the fear that a more subtle threat was penetrating American domestic life. As Rosalind Pollack Petchesky helps illustrate, this theme may reflect the rising popularity of the New Right movement, which she characterizes as a reaction against sexual liberation and its threat to the patriarchal family form. More specifically, the author argues that extreme right-wing movements are typically the expression of "preservist" impulses of social groups who feel their way of life is being threatened. Quoting from Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, she goes on to explain that "desperately preservist movements require an aggressively moralistic stance...There needs to be invoked some system of good and evil that transcends the political or social process and freezes it" (211), yet that "system of good and evil is not arbitrary; it is the product of a particular historical moment and a conjunction of the social and material forces that bring specific social conflicts to the fore" (Petchesky 211).

In the early to mid-1980s, the New Right's pro-family movement worked to preserve, if not make legally mandatory, a patriarchal family system and can be understood as stemming from the fact that such families had almost ceased to exist in the United States. For instance, by 1975, husband-wife families with two or more children in which only the man worked outside the home comprised just 13.5 % of all husband and wife families. By 1977, three-fourths of married women were working outside of the home, with 50% being the mothers of young children, while the number of female-

headed households in the U.S. had risen to one in seven families, one in three marriages ended in divorce, and over one million households consisted of unmarried couples (Petchesky 235). Just as the embodiment of absolute evil was the threat of international communism and labor movements in the 1950s, Petchesky argues feminism and the gay right's movement, which encouraged women's economic emancipation and alternative family structures, were ear-marked as the most pressing evil that threatened the "American way of life" in the 1980s (211).

However, it is too simplistic to argue that the narrative of *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* merely served as a vehicle for the New Right movement, especially since Amanda King is a divorced mother supporting her two sons by taking on work outside of the home. Instead, the narrative must be read as an attempt by the show's creators to negotiate perceived dominant ideologies with the recognition that many of its female viewers were divorced or married women struggling to balance work and family life. As one of the ads for the show points out, Amanda is a housewife looking to add "a little spies to her life," suggesting that while she may love her role as a mother, she also longs to contribute to society outside of it, and this was not lost on viewers. Emily Ross, who was a pre-teen when the show originally aired, notes that as a child of divorce living with her mother: "Amanda represented possibility to me. Someone who was willing to take a risk. She was a person who truly cared about those around her. Yes, she was a housewife, but what her character showed me was that you can do both [work and be a mother] and while you may have to admit that you can't be everything to everyone all the time, you can be a mom and still have a full and exciting life of your very own." Pat

Kaiser, a viewer in her mid-twenties when the show originally aired, describes Amanda as a feminist:

> She chose her life and what she wanted to do. When her first husband took a job in Africa and said come with me—she said No, I need to raise my children here. When she realized a long distance marriage was not working, she divorced and did not accept alimony just child support ...When super-spy Lee Stetson told her to get out of the spy business, she became his partner instead. When her hubby came back and wanted to pick up where they left off, she politely declined saying she liked the woman she had become and wanted to move forward not backwards ... she was a single mother making her way in the world with a little help from her mother. Wow! What a role model.

These two comments suggest that while *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* promoted the New Right's emphasis on traditionally feminine roles and their importance to the nation, viewers of the show often came away feeling empowered by Amanda, who to them represented a type of post-feminist, even feminist, hero who encouraged women to contribute to society both in and outside of the home. In fact, *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* is probably best considered a post-feminist text, rather than one that promoted New Right, feminist backlash politics. As Bonnie Dow argues in *Prime Time Feminism,* "backlash" has become a convenient catch-phrase to describe the media's general retreat from feminist issues during the 1980s, noting that many television shows that aired during the decade actually adopted a post-feminist stance to represent the political shifts occurring at the time. For Dow, post-feminists differ from backlashers because they

celebrate women's advances in employment and higher education, but lament the fact that many "second-wave feminists failed to recognize that 90 percent of women wish to work *and* become mothers" (Hewitt qtd. in Dow 90). Thus, post-feminists were largely concerned with helping women find ways to balance their careers with their families and cope with child-care responsibilities, but simultaneously reinforced the idea that these issues are primarily women's issues by overlooking the sexual politics that helped to naturalize these views (91). Backlashers, on the other hand, believe that nothing good came from the second-wave feminist movement and advocate for women's retreat from the workforce. Backlashers also feel that women's natural place is in the home and that those who choose careers will only find themselves mired in a host of unfavorable social and personal consequences (93).

When viewed in this light, *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* can certainly be read as operating in a post-feminist vein, as the series often diverted attention away from many feminist issues while simultaneously focusing on the challenge of balancing work and family. For instance, Amanda must occasionally look for work outside The Agency in order to make her financial ends meet. In these episodes, she often experiences some form of sexual harassment, which the narrative fails to explicitly address. Such is the case in "There Goes the Neighborhood," where Amanda's interview for a job at Honeycut Typewriters consists of the employer reviewing her file and declaring her "perfect" for the job once he sees that she is divorced. "From where I sit, Mrs. King," the man says seductively, "everything looks tip top," and later, when Amanda asks if he has any further questions about her application, he simply asks if blue is her favorite color, noting that it should be since she looks "delicious in it." In this episode, Amanda is

clearly uncomfortable with her interviewer's advances, but she merely smiles and tries to redirect the conservation back to work until Lee barges in, pretending to be her husband, and rehires her for an agency mission. Neither Amanda nor the episode, more generally, ever directly addresses the harassment in the episode and Mrs. King actually expresses regret that she lost the job due to Lee's brash behavior.

The show is also post-feminist in that it is largely concerned with the ways in which Amanda balances her life as a spy with that of a divorced suburban mom and never questions the sexual politics that assign mothering, child care, and housework to women—duties Amanda also performs for The Agency and even for Lee. Of course, much of the show's comedy is based on these two extreme aspects of Amanda's life. As a divorced mother of two, Amanda is responsible for all of the parenting and housework (although her mother helps out), but as a spy, she must be able to leave at the drop of the hat and hide her activities from her family. She also must try to balance her romantic life with her colleague Lee Stetson on top of her parenting and spy work, and this juggling act is one of the facets of the show that fans most admired. As Susan Dickerson remarks, "I loved the show *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* so much that I still watch it (dvds) and participate in forums and get togethers for it. The show's "spy" theme was exciting and wonderful when combined with the romantic interludes of the main characters. I was a mother of two boys in my 20's during the first run of *SMK* and Amanda was an empowering figure for me even as a happily married woman. She demonstrated that the "housewife" and "mother" is a lot smarter and resourceful than we think. It was fun to fantasize being Amanda with my own spy guy." Likewise, Dawn Yzaguirre remarks that as a teen in the 1980s, she thought "Amanda was a very admirable character. She had to

take over caring for her family after the divorce from Joe. Being someone whose mother worked from the time I was very young, I could totally relate to this type of situation. I feel that her situation made Amanda an even stronger character."

Comments such as these suggest that fans appreciated the way that *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* celebrated the importance of Amanda's domestic and mothering skills by showing how they contributed to her success as a spy/laborer outside of the home, disrupted the stereotype of the boring housewife, and, in the case of Dawn, may have even helped them develop a new appreciation for the women in their own lives who struggled to balance work and family.

However, it should be noted that while *SMK* constructed Amanda as a post-feminist heroine whose caring and compassionate nature proves key to the success of an agency operation, the show did not suggest that national defense should refrain from *only* taking a feminine approach. Amanda and Lee operate as a team, and Lee is very much a masculine character that employs physical force and weapons in order to accomplish agency goals. In fact, Lee often saves Amanda when she is captured, drugged, or otherwise over her head in international intrigue, and he is the one to deliver the fatal blow to their adversaries. Lee's status as an experienced, trained operative also means that Lee serves as the main decision maker when he and Amanda are in the field, although Amanda does come up with many of the ideas that help get them out of trouble.

Interestingly, the emphasis on the importance of traditional masculinity to both the series and the nation was also explored in the early publicity material for *SMK*, which worked hard to define Bruce Boxleitner, the actor who played Scarecrow, as representative of a new, ideal American male. Part of the need to define an image for

Boxleitner stemmed from the fact that when *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* originally aired, the actor was not that well-known. While he had starred in Disney's space-age *Tron* (1982) and Kenny Rogers' *The Gambler* (1980), Boxleitner had yet to become a truly popular celebrity or play the part of Captain John Sheridan in *Babylon 5,* for which he is probably most well-known. As a result, publicity articles for *SMK* that focused on Boxleitner promoted the series as much as the actor himself, and these depictions often chose to focus on the actor's "all-American masculinity." To cite just two examples, *Modern Screen* described Boxleitner as a present-day John Wayne: "strong, rugged, and apple-pie American" with "down-to-earth charm, traditional values and a lack of pretension" (Miller), while *TV Guide* described the actor as the "logical heir to Robert Redford's mantle of wholesome masculinity," and then went on to quote the actor's personal manager, who described his client as a "super-patriot" and would-be war hero (Estrin 38).

These well-crafted descriptions suggest that Boxleitner (or at least his manager) wished to be distanced from images of "unwholesome" and "un-heroic" masculinity, which given the time period, most likely referred to those evoked by the Vietnam draft dodger and even from the Vietnam veteran, who, by the 1980s, had come to symbolize loss, moral failure and national decline. As Susan Jeffords argues in *The Remasculinzation of America,* such a reading of Vietnam veterans partially stemmed from the fact that because these men had come to represent a group unjustly victimized by the government and discriminated against by society, they had become "on par with women, blacks and other disenfranchised groups" (xiv). As a result, Jeffords argues that the popular culture emerging during the 1980s largely set out to reclaim American

masculinity and to reaffirm the relations of dominance and patriarchy it embodies. This was accomplished on television by featuring masculine action heroes with non-descript Vietnam backgrounds, such as those in *Magnum P.I., T.J. Hooker, Miami Vice,* and *Rip Tide* (2), but was most famously accomplished by film series such as *Rambo*, which depicted the government as feminized, indecisive, bureaucratic and ineffectual and featured hypermasculine Vietnam veterans reclaiming American masculinity by "showing an open disregard for government legislation" and instead exhibiting "strength and firmness" (169). Yvonne Tasker concurs with many of Jeffords ideas and illustrates in *Spectacular Bodies* how even British critics of the *Rambo* series interpreted the films as an attempt to reclaim American masculinity and might. As one critic from *The Guardian* wrote: "Rambo II opened in American cinemas at the right time to profit from the Beirut high-jacking[20]. When the White House was impotent with rage, patriotic Americans could watch the muscle of Rambo destroy the Vietnamese and Russian armies as he rescued GIs from Communist prisons" ... winning "in the cinema the war the United States lost on the ground" (qtd. In Tasker 93).

Of course, Boxleitner does not possess the hypermasculinity of Rambo, but the writers of *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* did draw from the same vein as many of the decade's male-muscle films by depicting the actor's character as disdainful of The Agency's bureaucracy, and by showing Scarecrow constantly getting in trouble, even suspended, for failing to follow the outfit's rules and procedures which he finds limiting and ineffective. Lee would much rather spring into action to defeat threats than sit around thinking of possible strategies or considering Agency protocol. In the episode "The Man Who Died Twice," the writers also imply that Lee served in Vietnam when he

mentions that one of his recruits was extremely helpful there during the war. He says that Kai hid him during a MIA hunt into Cambodia, implying that, like many of his TV counterparts, Scarecrow possessed a non-descript Vietnam background. Given these insights, Scarecrow, as well as the publicity material surrounding Boxleitner, can be read as participating in the nation's attempts to reclaim American masculinity through the media and aligning itself with what Tasker has called Reagan's "muscular lack of diplomacy" (92). By depicting Scarecrow as working within a state institution but opposed to its bureaucratic methods, this element in *SMK* may also help explain part of the show's success since, as Tasker argues, a certain populist appeal is generally associated with the figure of the hero who is outside or apart from state institutions, and who, in a sense, is untainted by their inevitable corruption (105).

Negotiated and Oppositional Readings

The fan culture surrounding *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* suggests that viewers responded favorably to a myriad of elements embedded in the original broadcast material--at least some of which centered on the importance of traditional gender roles to American society. On one fan's web page, for instance, the author lists the top ten reasons why she loves *SMK* and reason number nine celebrates Lee's heroism, noting that while Amanda gets into an amazing amount of trouble, "the even more amazing thing, that I just love, is that Lee is ALWAYS there to save the day!!" ("Lori's Scarecrow"). Another fan site sponsored a contest celebrating the domestic food elements of the show. More specifically, the site for the SMK Cooks Fan Fiction Collection notes that "food has been an important, often crucial, element in this endearing and enduring housewife-meets-spy series. Amanda cooks for her boys, Lee cooks for Amanda, Dotty cooks for

Captain Curt, Amanda cooks for Lee, Amanda cooks for the office, Amanda cooks for the princess—well, actually, Amanda cooks for everyone!" The sponsor of the collection, a professional cook and pastry chef, then writes that once she realized the abundance of food in the series, she decided to "start cooking [her] way through it" and what follows on the site are the recipes she and others fans of the show created for the fictional and real dishes mentioned on the series.

But while *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* encoded messages in-line with many of the era's dominant political and cultural values, *SMK* is not a closed narrative that discourages viewers from adopting negotiated or oppositional viewing stances to New Right or even post-feminist politics. In fact, the openness of the narrative may help to explain the popularity of the show, as John Fiske argues that in order for a text to become truly popular, it must be "producerly," a term which refers to a work that is easy enough to understand without intense, focused analysis but open enough to allow people to produce their own meanings from the work and encourage at least one reading that challenges a cultural dominant ideology. In other words, Fiske suggests that in order for a television narrative to be popular, it must avoid the use of overt propaganda and instead be open enough to allow viewers to engage in what Umberto Eco has called "semiotic guerilla warfare" against the dominant center.

For example, comments made by *SMK* fans on the internet suggest that many viewers enjoyed the way Amanda succeeded in the work place and upset the male-dominated culture of The Agency. On the website jumptheshark.com, several fans remark that the show began to suffer when Amanda became a full-status agent on par with Lee in season three. "It wasn't the dating. It wasn't the marriage," one viewer writes. "The real

tension in the show came from Amanda being an intuitive, successful AMATEUR. In the 3rd season, she started going on her own assignments, which 'dulled the edges'," while yet another remarks that "the whole idea of the show is that Mrs. King didn't know squat about the spy business, yet she still managed to upstage the Scarecrow nine times out of ten. When she became a real agent, it wasn't cute anymore." Likewise, one woman's fan page reveals that an element of the show she found enjoyable is the fact that "Amanda is a housewife. Lee on the other hand is a trained agent of ten years. Yet Amanda always seems to come up with ideas to solve the cases that neither Lee, or the other agents even thought of. I love that!!" (Lori's Scarecrow). On the one hand, these comments reveal that viewers of the show understood housewives and mothers as unlikely successors in the male-dominated world of espionage, but on the other hand, reveal that viewers recognized these same stereotypes as untrue and/or unsatisfying and thus responded to Amanda precisely because her station allowed the character to prove society wrong.

Viewers may have also adopted more oppositional stances to the show's narrative if they consumed any of the publicity material about Kate Jackson published during the show's run and allowed that material to influence their reading of Amanda King. For instance, while the broadcast narrative of *SMK* emphasized the importance of women fulfilling their "natural" roles of nurturer and caretakers and adopted a post-feminist approach to issues of work and family, publicity material for the series often focused on the attributes of Jackson that contradicted the image of a contented woman successfully balancing work and relationships. Articles often commented on the fact that Jackson was heavily involved in the production of *Scarecrow and Mrs. King,* through her company

Shoot the Moon Productions and suggested that her investment in her work on the series (and on *Charlie's Angels*) is what led to her divorce from Steven Andrews, whom she married while playing Sabrina Duncan, and to her subsequent divorce from David Greenwald while working on *SMK*. Quotes selected for publication in feature articles about the actress also depicted Jackson as intensely career, rather than relationship, oriented. In a 1984 issue of *TV Guide*, Jack Hicks decided to use this quote from the actress:

> Look. I'm a Type-A personality. I need to get up early every day and I need to work hard. I can make a very good living doing two TV-movies a year and a feature film every three, but I don't want to live a life in which my big daily decision is where to eat lunch. That's why I came back to regular TV with Scarecrow. I give all of me to my work, and I want a chance to work at things I like.

In 1985, *Good Housekeeping* also featured a cover photo of the actress and an article entitled "No Time for Love-- A Talk with Kate Jackson" by Vernon Scott. This article, much like the one appearing in *TV Guide*, stressed the fact that Jackson is currently fulfilled by her work and comfortable with the fact that it leaves no time for personal relationships. "At this stage of the game," the actress is quoted as saying, "if it's a question of my work or a personal relationship—it's the relationship that suffers" (91-92). "Any important relationship with a man right now would put far too many demands on him because my schedule is pretty inflexible. I have to work 16 hours a day and I have to *enjoy* it" (92). The article's second to last paragraph also notes that "Kate is pleased that when there is no man in her life she can function happily alone. 'There doesn't have to be a man to validate me as a woman. I don't have to walk into a party on someone's arm. I can go alone" (93). Such depictions of Jackson aligned her more with the second-

wave feminist movement than it did with the rise of the New Right in the mid-1980s, and this, as well as her work on the quasi-feminist series[21], *Charlie's Angels,* may have influenced viewers' readings of the series, encouraging them to focus on Amanda's qualities that empowered her to thrive in the male-dominated world of spying. Fans also responded in complicated ways to the show's supporting character, Francine Desmond (Martha Smith), Amanda and Lee's colleague at The Agency.

In many ways, Francine can be read as contributing to the feminist backlash taking place during the 1980s. As Susan Faludi argues, the term backlash refers to the idea that women who put their energy into their career, favor singleness over marriage, and strive for equality with men ultimately bring unhappiness upon themselves because they are denying their true calling as a family caretaker. Evidence of the growing prominence of backlash politics could be seen during the 1980s in the legislature, as well as on television, where single women's visibility greatly diminished on prime-time shows and were relegated to secondary characters or to non-threatening, all-woman environments such as those featured in *Designing Women* or *The Golden Girls* (Faludi 158-159). Backlash politics also appeared on television when the early 1980's political climate encouraged television executives to banish feminist issues from its program content and by mid-decade to reconstruct a "traditional female hierarchy which placed suburban homemakers on top, career women on the lower rungs, and single women on the very bottom" (Faludi 148). Career and single women were likewise relegated to two stock types: the coldly calculating careerist or the deeply depressed spinster, and in many cases, single women who worked on television either had "no emotions" or were emotional wrecks because they longed for a husband and children (Faludi 159). The

single careerist, however, belonged to the lowest order of females since she "had traded in her humanity for a paycheck, and spurned not only men but children" (Faludi 59).

Such backlash politics were encoded in the narrative of *SMK* through Francine — a career-focused spy who finds children "nasty" and chose a career over marriage and a family. Francine dates Washington insiders and uses her large disposable income to buy designer clothing, and in the pilot, Francine proudly proclaims that she represents "Today's Woman," who can do anything she sets her mind to. While Amanda prefers to use kindness, honesty, and gentleness on the job and is often selected for missions due to her domestic knowledge and activities, Francine lacks domestic talents (indeed, she must take cooking lessons in the pilot episode) and prefers using semi-automatic machine guns and aggressive interrogation tactics to accomplish her tasks. In "Brunettes Are In," for example, Francine enjoys using physical roughness and harsh language when interrogating a man who tried to catch and then sell Amanda into sex slavery, and when that achieves only partial success, she leaves the suspect alone only to come back and employ an aggressive sexual seduction to get him to divulge information, explaining to Lee that "just because I'm a woman doesn't mean that I am always subtle or delicate."

While these descriptions may seem to challenge rather than contribute to backlash politics, Francine does ultimately serves as a commentary on the pitfalls of the feminist movement. This is partly achieved by the fact that Francine is often shown belittling Amanda for the roles she plays in her family and home. In the pilot, for instance, Francine jokes that Amanda will make a great partner for Lee in the spy game because she "knits" and in "Brunettes are In" she tells Lee that she is surprised Amanda didn't faint in a "suburban swoon" when the two men try to capture her. These catty comments

pit Francine against Amanda, whom the show clearly positions as the protagonist and thus the most desirable woman. After all, Scarecrow does not fall in love with Francine even though they've worked together for years nor does Billy Melrose praise Francine's work with the same fervor as he does Amanda's. As a result, Francine is encoded as an unlikeable character and her unlikeableness stems from her disparagement of Amanda's decision to both work and raise a family, instead of Amanda adopting her chosen route which solely focuses on a career and the high-end luxury goods it affords. Also, while early seasons of the show depict Francine as comfortable with her decision to "spurn" children, later episodes show Francine ultimately regretting her choice to favor a career over committed relationships, thus reinforcing the idea that her desire to strive for equality with men ultimately brought unhappiness upon herself. The show also subscribes to the female hierarchy Faludi references since Amanda, the suburban mother, is clearly placed on a higher rung within the narrative than is Francine, even though Francine ranks higher than Amanda within The Agency.

Interestingly, fans also picked up on the elements of the show which depicted Francine as part of the feminist-backlash. Pat Kaiser, a librarian from Los Angeles, California, notes that Francine's "flaw as a feminist was her lack of compassion for other women." "As the seasons went by you saw more of this compassion from her and thus she became a more multi dimensional and likeable person. Francine thought that for a woman to succeed she needs be like a man—she criticized Amanda for her vulnerabilities. Over the years Francine softened just a bit and became a better friend, agent and overall person. A feminist should empower other women not deflate them." However, Keiser also found part of Francine empowering. In the same paragraph, the fan

remarks that she enjoyed some aspects of Francine, whom she describes as a "militant feminist, trying to not only make it but excel in a "Man's World." "I loved her 'don't mess with me attitude,'" Keiser remarks. "She could face down 10 KGB agents without blinking, but put her in a room of desperate housewives with kids and she would melt. She could go toe to toe with Lee and her boss Billy, giving as well as she gets." One fan preferring to simply go by the name Rebecca, notes that growing up, Francine was also an enjoyable character. "I liked Amanda ... but she was comedy. Francine was cool. Even now, I still love competence in a character. I loved that she kicked butt, that she was good at her job, that she was an equal. Amanda was a trainee. She got bossed around. She was fun, but I didn't take her as seriously. She often succeeded through happenstance and she broke vases on people's heads, whereas Francine was more traditional in her fights and stuff." Likewise, in an online Q and A session with Martha Smith in 2006, another fan remarked that "I was and am a real big fan of the *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* show. Of all the people on it I liked your char. the best. 'Cause for the times you showed (I was only 7 at the time) that girls could do and be anything in real life, or as close to real life as TV can get" ("Ask Martha").

Conclusion

Scarecrow and Mrs. King marks a departure from previous female-centered spy series. Agent 99, April Dancer and Jamie Sommers were created as single, full-time operatives born of the pre-feminist and feminist movements and often played with gender in transgressive ways through dress, camp, comedy and even technology. Amanda King, on the other hand, was born out of the rising influence of New Right and post-feminist politics, which wished to redirect the discussion of women's issues towards an emphasis

on their roles as caretakers in addition to paid workers. Plots of the series often focused on the ways Amanda's domestic skills, self-sacrifice and nurturance aided in agency missions, but also suggested a deep-seeded fear that the American family, and thus the nation itself, was being threatened by sexual liberation movements. The show also felt compelled to emphasize the importance of traditional masculinity to the nation-state in response to the U.S.'s loss in Vietnam, as evidenced by the construction of Amanda's partner, Lee Stetson.

Regardless of the shows' New Right, post-feminist and even backlash elements, however, viewers of the show negotiated those elements in complicated ways. While viewers picked up on the backlash elements of Francine's character, for instance, they still found elements of her personality empowering in ways that specifically challenged the tenets of the New Right and post-feminist movements. Likewise, viewers were able to negotiate the character of Amanda King, embracing her ability to succeed against most odds and balance one of the most complicated lives ever assigned to a 1980s television show character.

Of course, what *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* did share with shows such as *Get Smart, The Bionic Woman,* and even *Biff Baker USA* and *I Led 3 Lives* is that it featured women who possessed a limited physical agency and its story lines were firmly rooted in the Cold War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, however, later spy series lost their well-defined enemy and had to rethink the dichotomy of "us vs. them" that was severely disrupted by the rise of international and domestic terrorism in the West. The metamorphosis that took place in the post-Cold War era can be clearly seen in two television series explored in this project's final chapter: *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias.*

The 1990s and 2000s

Female Warriors and the War on Terror: *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias*

"I was falsely accused of a hideous crime and sentenced to life in prison. One night I was taken from my cell to a place called Section One, the most covert anti-terrorist group on the planet. Their ends are just, but their means are ruthless. If I don't play by their rules, I die."
–Opening narration of *La Femme Nikita*

"My name is Sydney Bristow. Seven years ago I was recruited by a secret branch of the CIA called SD-6. I was sworn to secrecy, but I couldn't keep it from my fiancé. And when the head of SD-6 found out, he had him killed. That's when I learned the truth: SD-6 is not part of the CIA. I've been working for the very people I thought I was fighting against. So, I went to the only place that could help me take them down. Now I'm a double agent for the CIA, where my handler is a man named Michael Vaughn. Only one other person knows the truth about what I do, another double agent inside SD-6. Someone I hardly know –my father."
--Opening narration of *Alias*, season one.

As evidenced by earlier chapters, women in spy television programs have lacked a strong physical agency. The wives of Herbert Philbrick and Biff Baker allowed their husbands to wrestle enemies in dangerous situations while they supported from afar, and Agent 99, April Dancer and Amanda King all held their male partners responsible for the physical conflicts involved in espionage (although they occasionally dropped a vase on an enemy's head or employed a weak karate chop). Even the Bionic Woman, who was given super-human strength by the Office of Strategic Intelligence, rarely employed her power outside of running and jumping from buildings, while the Six Million Dollar Man wrestled, punched, and knocked out walls when enemies or objects stood in his way. This type of gendered narrative is not unique to spy television, however. As Frances Early and Kathleen Kennedy note, one of Western culture's most powerful and influential stories is that of the male just warrior whose willingness to shed blood for the common good entitles him to "mastery over self and others" (1). Because women in these stories primarily play the role of the "beautiful soul" in need of male protection and/or the maternal war-support figure, the authors posit that while a few women, such as Joan of

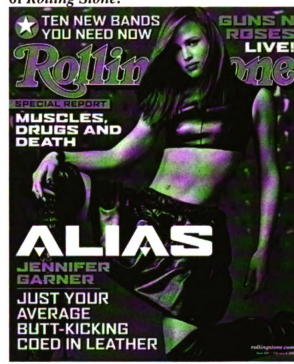
Arc, have achieved warrior status, they are mostly viewed as "temporary transgressors" with no tradition of their own (1).

In the mid-1990s, however, television began to re-imagine the warrior story, as the small screen "increasingly cast women as warriors whose capacity to fight for just causes match[ed] or exceed[ed] that of their male colleagues" (Kennedy and Early 3). These heroines, who included Buffy, the Vampire Slayer and Xena, Warrior Princess, battled evil on a daily basis, repeatedly saving the world from "untold horrors" (3). Media journalists also commented on the increased visibility of female warriors on television during the mid 1990s and early 2000s. To cite just one example, *The New York Times'* Jennifer Steinhauer wrote that many of 2000's prime time heroines were "muscular and trained in the marital arts," "restoring world order and ending bad dates with swift, punishing blows" (5). Part of the excitement generated by these "chicks-who-kick" rested in the fact that they disrupted many of gender's association with class and sexuality. In the past, tough, violent women in popular culture have been primarily depicted as either working class women with a penchant for swearing and drinking, or as lesbians who eschew all feminine accoutrements. The female warriors who began appearing on television in the mid-1990s, however, were often constructed as sophisticated, middle-to-upper-class heroines who enjoyed "kicking ass" in haute couture.

At least two of these new television warriors emerged from the spy genre. The USA network's *La Femme Nikita* (1997-2001) featured a blonde-haired, blue-eyed spy, who, according to the show's title sequence, measured in at 5'11 and weighed just 120 lbs. While such a build seems highly unlikely for an action heroine, the show nonetheless depicts Nikita as capable of defeating any foe in combat, even if she is

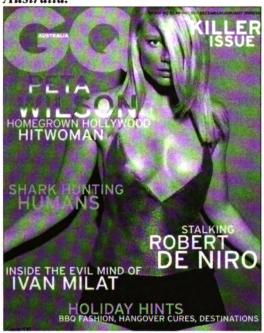
dressed in high-heeled boots and tight dresses. Sydney Bristow of ABC's *Alias* (2001-2006) likewise performed roundhouse kicks in nightclub attire and two-piece swimsuits—displaying a combination of violence and sexuality praised by media journalists. A March 2002 article in *Entertainment Weekly* specifically celebrated Jennifer Garner (the actress who played Bristow) as a "luscious-lipped" woman who "jumps off buildings, swaggers in fab, skintight dresses," and "spouts Romanian," while "wasting little time in wham-bamming herself into the pantheon of Hollywood Chicks Who Kick" (Snierson 28). Likewise, a February 2002 issue of *Rolling Stone* featured a cover photo of Garner in a two piece leather outfit under the heading: "Just your average butt-kicking co-ed in leather." Peta Wilson, the Australian actress who played Nikita, was also celebrated for her combination of sex appeal and toughness. In the Dec/Jan 1998/1999 edition of *GQ Australia*, Wilson appeared on the cover with her breasts partially exposed under a headline that lauded her as a "Homegrown Hollywood Hitwoman," while Dan Snierson described her character as "part babe, part nut-crunching machine" in a 1997 issue of *Entertainment Weekly* (34).

Fig. 19. Jennifer Garner, the star of *Alias*, on the cover of the February 2002 of *Rolling Stone*.



While the "chicks-who-kick" trend has significantly died down in recent years, media scholars were quick to explore the potential and limitations these women presented for viewers and Western culture in general. In her work *Tough Girls*, Sherrie Inness suggests that an increased visibility of female warriors in popular culture holds promise for women since it disrupts the West's association of maleness with toughness—an association that works to ensure male privilege and authority in society. Inness specifically writes that because toughness is often understood as a prerequisite for all sorts of roles in our culture--including football coach, CEO, and president of the United States—the idea that women have little to do with toughness helps keep them as second-class citizens since they are assumed to lack the strength required for many leadership roles (17). Presumably, Inness believes that physical toughness is indicative of mental toughness, but while the two do not always exist in tandem, in *Alias* and *La Femme Nikita* a strong, positive correlation does exist. As Kent Ono points out, however, many shows featuring female warriors have been stripped of an overt, feminist, political context, and he argues that female warrior shows are not about powerful women, so much as they are about powerful, white, heterosexual women, and thus fail to truly transgress gender boundaries, particularly in regards to race and heteronormativity (166).

Fig. 20. Peta Wilson, the star of *La Femme Nikita*, on the cover of the Dec./Jan 1998/1999 issue of *GQ Australia*.



Also raising questions about the female warrior's potential as a feminist icon, David Roger Coon demonstrates that the ways tough female-centered shows are marketed often undercut the potentially empowering messages of the broadcast narratives. By analyzing the trailers and print advertisements for *Alias* and the cinematic version of *Charlie's Angels,* Coon is able to show how many of these shows' promotional materials position Sydney and the Angels as the object of the male gaze and isolate their sexuality as the basis for selling the main text (11). "Whereas the text[s] themselves show how femininity and female sexuality can be used as a means to an end," he writes, "these ads simply offer the woman up as spectacle, returning them to their traditional status as passive sexualized objects and thus undermine much of what the series work so hard to accomplish" (11).

Despite these limitations, *Alias* and *La Femme Nikita* were innovative shows that helped give women their own tradition of warriors in popular culture and re-imagined the relationship between women and the state, as these narratives featured females using violence to protect individuals and the nation instead of depicting women as in need of personal and national protection. It is also important to stress that as spy series, *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias* also reflected significant shifts in American nationalism and notions of ideal citizenship in the post-Cold War era, for while these broadcast narratives re-imagined the female spy as a physically strong warrior who could engage in battle on behalf of the nation, they also depicted these women as entrapped operatives whose relationship with the spy agency reflected powerful moral dilemmas rarely seen in previous American espionage dramas. As a result, this final chapter explores the elements

of nationalism and feminism in *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias*, focusing on the texts' relationship with the post-Cold War era and feminist thought.

Analyzing Issues of Nationalism and Feminism in *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias*

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union two years later have traditionally marked the end of the Cold War. The significant demise of two of the U.S.'s most prominent enemies -- communism and the USSR-- wrought numerous changes in American culture during the early post-Cold War era, and many questioned whether the CIA would even be necessary in the new age. In November 1997, for instance, the Gerald R. Ford Library held a conference to debate the continued need of a Central Intelligence Agency. The Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet, delivered the keynote address, where he, unsurprisingly, argued that the agency was still necessary, reminding the audience that President Truman had created the CIA as an insurance policy against "the kind of surprise that caught America off guard in World War II" and to help him "sort through the confusing and conflicting nature of the reports landing on his desk from various departments." "As I look at the world today," Tenet stated, "it is clear to me that the potential for dangerous surprise is as great as ever." He then went on to list a host of present threats, including Saddam Hussein's attempts to build biological weapons, Iran's plans for building intermediate range missiles, the build up of North Korean forces near the DMZ, and the "vast and unfinished transformations underway in countries with large nuclear arsenals, such as Russia and China." What Tenet was trying to illustrate was that even though the Cold War had ended, the threat against the American nation-state had not. Or, as former CIA Director James Woolsey described the early post-Cold War era: while the great Soviet dragon has been slain, a

"bewildering variety of poisonous snakes have been let loose in a dark jungle," noting almost nostalgically, that "it may have been easier to watch the dragon" (qtd. in Melton).

Despite the intelligence community's awareness of new threats and the need for the continuation of intelligence gathering, the CIA nonetheless struggled to retain its power and influence in the post-Cold War era. The 1994 discovery of Aldrich Ames, a Soviet mole at Langley, led to congressional investigations in both the Senate and the House, where politicians seriously considered dismantling the agency after listening to testimony about how Ames had sold American secrets to Moscow for over nine years without arousing much suspicion amongst his colleagues (Lapham). The memory of the CIA's misadventures in Nicaragua and the Iran-Contra scandal were also still fresh enough in the public's mind to warrant suspicion of the agency, and without a visible, viable enemy after the Cold War, the outfit struggled to attract recruits and public support. In fact, outside intelligence analysts believe that CIA employment levels had dropped from 20,000 near the end of the Cold War to 16,000 by 1997, although recruitment levels had begun to slowly increase in 1998 due to Tenet's attempts to re-make the agency's image in print advertisements and at college fairs (Raum).

In order to strengthen its influence in American culture, the CIA also turned to prime-time television and Hollywood for help. In 1995, the CIA asked Chase Brandon, a former covert operations officer, to take on the role of film industry liaison in its Office of Public Affairs. Brandon was charged with the task of reforming the CIA's image of a "negative, Machiavellian conspiratorial organization full of trench coat wearing, suspicious people who assassinated folks" (DiBenedetto-Kenyon), and his first move was opening the CIA's doors to Tinsel Town. "I invite them to come, let them see it, and then

have them understand that the real stories about the real men and women are more gripping and compelling than the fictional things are" (qtd. in DiBenedetto-Kenyon). Brandon, however, does more than serve as a tour guide. He actively works with television creators, filmmakers and writers to develop accurate depictions of the CIA, and to-date, his film credits include *The Recruit* (2003), *Sum of All Fears* (2002), *Enemy of the State* (1998), and *Bad Company* (2002), while he has also served as a technical consultant for television programs including *The Agency* (2001-2003), *Alias* and *JAG* (1995-2005).

In fact, *The Agency*, which debuted on CBS in 2001, became the first series allowed to shoot scenes on the CIA's premises. In a CNN televised report on *The Agency*, David Ensor argued that this new interplay between Hollywood and the CIA primarily stemmed from the absence of a Cold War adversary and the ways it forced the agency to find new ways to drum up public support for its existence and create interest for new recruits (qtd. in Britton 245). Chase Brandon implicitly concurred with Ensor when he admitted that granting permission to *The Agency* to film on-site helped ensure a positive portrayal of the agency and its operatives. "You don't get to come in here and film in our hallways if you're going to typecast us as ugly, nefarious people"(qtd. in Britton 245). Likewise, Brandon remarked in *USA Today* that he views his job as particularly important because Americans get much of their information about the inner workings of the government from popular culture. In "perilous times," Brandon said, the ways that government officials are depicted "educates and informs the public, reassures the public, entertains the public" (Hall).

Not everyone was comfortable with the relationship between shows such as *The Agency* and the CIA, however. In July 2001, Lewis Lapham wrote in *Harper's Magazine* that he saw the series as unwarranted propaganda for an intelligence community prone to arrogance, deceit, and outright stupidity. His article then went on to detail the ways the agency had bungled numerous international conflicts over the last fifty years, noting that CBS could have hardly taken on a more ambitious project by attempting to legitimize an agency well-known for "chronic stupidity and criminal incompetence." For Lapham, *The Agency* was part of the CIA's attempts to promote a revival of the "atmospherics of the Cold War," where the United States was once again "threatened by rogue states, starving mobs, Arab terrorists, deadly chemicals, and treacherous Chinese."

Of course, the events of September 11, 2001 changed many things for the CIA, as Americans refocused their energy – not on the Soviets – but on Middle Eastern terrorists. Faced with a viable, visible enemy once again, the CIA almost immediately enjoyed a resurgence in applications. *New York Magazine* reported that from 2001 to 2002, the CIA experienced a 50% increase in applications ("9/11 in Numbers"), and Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, reported that as recently as December 2005, CIA recruitment levels were still high and that there continued to be a "major effort under way to increase both analysts and human intelligence collectors" in the agency (qtd. in Ensor).

But while the events of 9/11 led to an increased level of citizen and federal support for the CIA, the agency also faced criticisms regarding its effectiveness, structure, arrogance and exclusivity, and in this climate, the CIA again turned to prime time television in order to help boost its public image and recruitment levels. In March 2004, an agency press release announced that it had posted a new video on its CIA

Careers website featuring Jennifer Garner and reported that the actress would also star in CIA recruitment videos shown to graduate students at college jobs fairs. In the video appearing on the CIA Careers website, the then-31-year-old actress calls on citizens to join the intelligence service. "I play a CIA officer," Garner says in the ad. "In the real world, the CIA serves as our country's first line of defense in the ongoing war against international terrorism. The CIA's mission is clear and direct: Safeguard America and its people." And later, Garner states, "It takes smart people with wide-ranging talents and diverse backgrounds to carry out this mission ... people with integrity, common sense, patriotism and courage. The kind of people who have always worked for the agency."

According to Brandon, who served as a consultant on *Alias* during its first season, Garner was selected to appear in the ads because her character, Agent Sydney Bristow, "embodies the integrity, patriotism and intelligence the CIA looks for in its officers" (qtd. in "New Recruitment Video"). In 2003, Brandon also noted that "We feel that Miss Garner, both in character as agent Sydney Bristow and as herself, embodies the intelligence, enthusiasm and dedication that we're looking for. Our continuing efforts to enlist the best and the brightest would be admirably served by having her support...Her participation would add a human touch to the message we're trying to convey" ("'*Alias*' Star").

Brandon's recruitment of Garner made sense in many ways. Considered the brain-child of J.J. Abrams (also the creator of the hit show *Lost), Alias* was a "spy-fi" series revolving around a female operative and her complicated work and family relationships. A highly-stylized narrative, the show depicts espionage as an exciting, jet-setting lifestyle that requires operatives to go undercover in the world's most glamorous cities while

sporting haute couture and Bond-like technological gadgetry. The show's early seasons deal with Sydney's attempts to destroy the local branch of a global terrorist network, SD-6, through her work as a double agent for the CIA, a task she shares with her father. Throughout the series, Bristow and her CIA colleagues continually face new challenges as they battle terrorists intent on harming American and international citizens, and while Sydney often faces hardships both within and outside the agency, she nonetheless persists in the fight against evil. Sydney's determined and resourceful nature were obviously attractive to the CIA's public relations team, but the show also appealed to teens and young adults, which meant that using Garner could better help the CIA land current and future recruits of the same age group. According to the Nielsens, for instance, *Alias* often won its Sunday night time slot amongst the coveted 18 to 49 year-old demographic and ranked second amongst teens during its first season ("Bantam Books").

What *is* somewhat strange about the CIA's selection of Garner/Bristow to promote the agency and attract new recruits is that *Alias* narratives often presented the U.S. government and its intelligence organizations as morally dubious outfits that bordered on terrorist activity itself. For instance, "Breaking Point" depicts the CIA giving authority to a task force whose leader is funded by White House "black money" and tortures Sydney with electro-shock therapy in order to garner information she cannot remember but is suspected to be stored in her brain. "A Higher Echelon" also constructs the CIA as surveilling normal citizens' faxes, emails, and phone calls—or, more shortly, violating their constitutional rights. The leader of SD-6 and the show's main nemesis, Arvin Sloane, is also an ex-CIA operative, who despite his history of ruthlessness and terrorist activity is re-hired by the agency for his knowledge and connections in season

four. *Alias* also depicted a range of morally ambiguous situations that asked viewers to question the integrity of the CIA. As Sutherland and Swan point out, techniques like the Inferno protocol "are presented as dualities on the show: necessary tools when used by the U.S. government, horrific violations when used by terrorists" (131). (The Inferno Protocol is an interrogation procedure that causes cardiac arrest in fifty per cent of its subjects, and viewers are asked to condone its use on Sark but to abhor its use on Michael Vaughn, Sydney's handler and lover, when he is threatened with the same treatment.) Thus, as the American government employs tactics similar to those used by terrorists and works with former terrorists when their interests are aligned, the morality of the government's actions is increasingly called into question.

However, given the constant reality of terrorism, the means resorted to seem necessary on the show, and they ask viewers to accept that a war on terrorism cannot be fought on the usual terms of engagement. "Moral lines must soften and bend in order to accommodate the necessary weapons such a battle requires," write Sutherland and Swan. "While we are at times uncomfortable with the massive power of governmental agencies ... and distressed when the government threatens our heroine, we understand that the complexity of the situation demands a nuanced response" (131). In this respect, then, the series asks viewers to accept and condone the government's use of morally ambiguous tactics in order to protect citizens in a new age, marking a dramatic departure from shows such as *I Led 3 Lives, Biff Baker U.S.A., The Six Million Dollar Man, The Bionic Woman* and even *Scarecrow and Mrs. King,* which diligently worked to depict the government and its intelligence agencies as morally upright and honorable.

But while it might be tempting to attribute the moral ambiguity represented in contemporary spy shows like *Alias* to the events proceeding 9/11, it is important to remember that *La Femme Nikita* displayed the same type of ambiguity when it ran in the mid to late 1990s. *La Femme Nikita* was based on Luc Besson's 1990 French film of the same name and its American remake, *Point of No Return* (1993). Both films tell the story of Nikita, a hardened criminal and drug addict, who is imprisoned for life for murder and eventually "freed" by a covert government agency that fakes her death in order to use her as a covert assassin. Unlike her predecessors, the television version of Nikita is neither an addict nor a murderer. Rather, the character is wrongly convicted of killing a police officer, but despite her innocence, the show's secret agency, Section One, fakes Nikita's death in prison and then employs her as a covert operative, making it clear that Nikita's survival depends upon her successful and continued service to the section.

According to the show's executive consultant Joel Surnow, the story change was made because neither he nor the USA Network believed that viewers would welcome an actual criminal into their homes and root for her on a weekly basis ("Section One Declassified"). The move, however, also meant that Section One would be depicted as much more sinister than in the films since in the cinematic versions of the story, Nikita is "generously" given some semblance of a normal life after being rightfully imprisoned for murder, while the television series depicts Section One entrapping the character into a life of espionage, even though they know she is innocent and possess the power to free her from prison. And indeed, Section One is depicted as morally repugnant throughout the show, as its operatives are regularly "canceled" for failing to accomplish mission goals, challenging those in authority, or simply outliving their usefulness. The outfit also deems

itself fit to decide when innocent civilians are expendable, kills those suspected of enemy activity before it knows all of the facts, and engages in torture to garner information. As Surnow describes Section One: they are an organization that believes they must "out-ruthless the terrorists in order to be successful" ("Section One Declassified").

The morally ambiguous nature of Section One ultimately pushes viewers to consider two central questions: to what extent will a decent person go in order to survive and how many horrible acts can a person commit before she ultimately loses her decency and humanity? These questions play out most explicitly through Nikita's individual struggles as a Section One operative trying to survive *and* retain her humanity in the morally-grey world of espionage, but Nikita, as the series' protagonist, can also be read as representative of the Western nation-state, and thus the series also asks: to what extent will a decent *country* go in order to survive and how many horrible acts can a *nation* commit before it ultimately loses its decency and humanity? But even here, the use of the words "nation" and "country" are somewhat misleading as *La Femme Nikita* approaches espionage from a globalized perspective. While the script was developed for the USA Network by Joel Surnow and Robert Cochran (who later went on to develop *24*), its lead actress, Peta Wilson, was raised in Australia, and many of the other cast members were American, British and Canadian. The myriad accents that appear on the show help give *La Femme Nikita* an international feel, and although temporary alliances are sometimes forged between Section One and known security agencies (the CIA, NSA, and Interpol), viewers never discover who actually finances the operation.

As Stacy Takacs writes, rather than serving a known nation state, Section One might best be viewed as the embodiment of the "deterritorialized Empire of

communication and control" imagined by New Economists since the outfit is depicted as a flexibly specialized corporation whose purview is the planet.

> It shares with the multinational corporation an utter disregard for issues of locality, preferring to command vectors of communication and transportation instead. Section One places a premium on mobility and speed, dispatching its operatives all over the world in the blink of an eye ... Most indicative of Section's preference for space over place, however, is its refusal to reference its own location. Physically, Section bears no attachment to any place outside of itself. Composed of labyrinths and blind alleys, its architecture is self-referential. There are literally no signs pointing to the existence of an outside world except, perhaps, the orchids that Operation's right-hand woman, Madeline, keeps in her office. (161)

Given this construction of Section One, it is difficult to find evidence of American nationalism within the series, especially as the lack of recognizable monuments, such as the Statue of Liberty or the Eiffel Tower, do not allow viewers to identify the spy agency with a particular government that might be used "to redeem them and place them into the ranks of heroes" (Ng 107). However, by taking into account race and geography, it is clear that Nikita re-inscribes notions of white, Western superiority. That West-is-Best is communicated on multiple levels throughout the series: Nikita works for a western-based anti-terrorist organization, terrorists rarely emerge from within the U.S. or its allied nations, but rather from regimes in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and while Nikita may continuously question the killing Section One engages in, viewers are taught

by the text to read the organization as the only thing standing "between the West and worldwide chaos" (Tung 107).

Interestingly, while *Alias* is clearly positioned within notions of American nationalism, the show also adopts a globalized approach to espionage and citizenship, as Sydney and her colleagues often travel the planet in order to fight terror. But Sydney is not just cast as a global citizen through her work as a spy; her family also helps to present her in an international light. Her mother is a Soviet operative, her half-sister is Argentinean, her best-friend is African-American, her second fiancé is French, and she has reported biological links to an ancient Italian prophet, Milo Rimbaldi. Sydney also speaks nearly a dozen languages fluently, and thus all of these elements suggest that the purview of intelligence agencies and responsible citizens must be global in nature during the post-Cold War era. In other words, *Alias* recognizes the increasing interconnectedness of cultural, political, and financial economies and suggests that in order to protect Americans, the government and its agents must protect its allies and innocent civilians abroad, an argument that also allows the CIA to claim that no place on the planet is beyond its purview.

A moral compass in the intelligence quagmire

Given the ways intelligence agencies employ morally questionable tactics in the name of national (or Western) security on both *Alias* and *La Femme Nikita*, it is important to recognize that what makes Sydney and Nikita viable protagonists is that they are constructed as viewers' and even their agencies' moral compass. And this is, ultimately, what the real CIA seems to have been drawn to in its selection of Garner/Bristow as the spokeswoman for the agency and its recruitment efforts. A strong

example of this type of heroism on *Alias* occurs in season three after Sydney has emerged from a two-year bout of amnesia only to find that her lover and spy handler, Michael Vaughn, has married another woman. Lauren, much like Sydney's mother, has wormed her way into Vaughn's affections in order to gain access to sensitive CIA information. When Michael discovers his wife's betrayal, Sydney's father, Jack, advises Vaughn to kill Lauren, offers him the key to his private arsenal, and notes that he often regrets having let Irena survive after discovering her disloyalty. Sydney, who has every reason to want Lauren dead, is appalled at her father's suggestion and tells Vaughn that he cannot murder his wife and live peacefully with the decision because it violates their humanity which values life over revenge. In the season finale, "Resurrection," it is Sydney's voice that reigns supreme, as Vaughn comes face-to-face with Lauren and decides that he will only disfigure her with hydrochloric acid because Sydney would not want him to murder her, and his love for Sydney is the most important thing to him. Of course, pouring hydrochloric acid on someone hardly seems ethical, even though it is clear Vaughn must exact some revenge in order to gain closure. This may be why Vaughn is stabbed from behind before he can complete the dark task, a maneuver that allows him to remain a viable love interest in the eyes of Sydney and viewers.

As this episode suggests, the ethical codes embedded in the series, while not always clear-cut, are nonetheless highly-gendered, for the men of the series accept that moral compromise is simply a part of espionage, while Sydney is careful to resist this logic. Consider, for instance, "Reckoning," which features Dixon, Sydney's SD-6 partner, blowing up a building that contains, unbeknownst to him, four CIA agents working to bring down the rogue organization. Although Sydney does not know of

Dixon's back-up detonator, she blames herself for the men's deaths, insisting that they died because of her double-agent status and her choice to hide it and the true nature of SD-6 from her partner. Vaughn, however, insists that these operatives' deaths were not in vain because these men died in service to their country, and he argues that the revelation of Sydney's true loyalties would have only lead to more deaths—a reasoning Sydney is uncomfortable accepting. In "Full Disclosure," a similar scene occurs when Sydney, who has been captured and supposedly brainwashed as Julia Thorne, is ordered to kill a man in order to convince the Covenant that her loyalty lies with them. Since the Covenant will kill her if she does not kill the man, Sydney is faced with a complex moral dilemma. Ultimately, she decides to make the kill in order to survive, although she intensely questions the ramifications of her choice. In this episode, it is again a man, CIA Assistant Director Kendall, who plays the role of comforter, reassuring Sydney that she had no choice in the matter – the man was dead no matter what she decided-- and arguing that her execution had no real consequence since the man (who was not a saint anyway) was as good as dead either way. But Sydney does not accept this justification, stating "That doesn't lessen what I did." (Sutherland and Swan 123-126)

The gendered divisions regarding ethical codes also hold true on *LFN*, where Nikita struggles to accept the cold logic of her (primarily) male colleagues at Section One. In season five, for instance, viewers learn that Nikita has been working for Center (the organization running numerous sections) in order to make Section One a more humane place for its employees, and throughout the series, the character primarily kills in self-defense and constantly attempts to retain her compassion for others. Her male colleagues, most notably Operations and her handler, Michael, however, understand that

their work requires significant moral compromise and inhumane behavior. In "Nikita," for instance, Operations notes that Wilson's character lacks discipline and despite Michael's recommendation that she be given more time to fulfill her potential, Operations chastises Michael for becoming emotionally attached to the "material" and tells Michael that all trainees are given two years to develop the necessary skills – no more, no less. "If we start making exceptions," he quips, "we're no better than the CIA. Cancel her." Nikita, of course, receives a reprieve, but when she fails to make her first kill later in the episode, explaining that she is not a killer, her handler angrily retorts that the minute he believes she is incapable of killing, she will be cancelled because in the "most clandestine organization on the planet," "mistakes are not an option."

Against this backdrop of stubborn inhumanity, Nikita's actions and values quickly become the standard the audience uses to measure right and wrong throughout the series. However, *LFN* is more pessimistic about its depiction of the compromises necessary in the post-Cold War era. As Michael Ventura suggests, *La Femme Nikita* might be enjoyed by viewers because it reassures us that "the representatives of Officialdom can be depended upon in a pinch." However, he also notes that *La Femme Nikita* is particularly bleak in scope. Whereas Buffy is largely uncorrupted by her struggle against the demons of Sunnydale in *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer,* Nikita ultimately falls victim to Section One, for while she resists killing and torturing at first, "she soon breaks fingers with the best of them." A prime example of Nikita's demise and corruption occurs in season five's "Deja Vu All Over Again?" when Nikita shows complete resignation to the fact that a new section recruit must be sacrificed during a mission aimed at taking down powerful terrorist leaders. Such resignation, especially about the death of one of her own

colleagues, is an emotion that would have been impossible for she and viewers to feel just a few seasons prior, and thus the entire trajectory of *La Femme Nikita* suggests that the series must really be read as a warning about moral and political compromise. As Ventura writes: "You want Officialdom to be on your side? OK, it's on your side--sort of. But it's evil. If it has to threaten you and your children to stop a terrorist, it will. Being on society's side doesn't necessarily mean being on your side." Put another way, the show calls into serious questions the principles of the American democratic majority by acknowledging that in its pursuit for the greatest good, minorities will be necessarily silenced and even sacrificed.

Patriarchy, Resistance and the Spy Bureaucracy

Regardless of the final development of these operatives, the tension between the individual female agent and the ethics of the male-governed agency she serves is at the forefront of both *Alias* and *La Femme Nikita*. The shows paint a picture of a male political system that believes the ends justify the means and that moral compromises are just part of the job, while Sydney and Nikita are not so sure, explicitly calling into question the ethics of their own and their agencies' actions. Plot construction such as this helps Sydney and Nikita retain a sense of heroism as they move through their ethically gray worlds and, perhaps more importantly, prevents the series from falling into the trap Frances Early warns about in "The Female Just Warriors Reimagined" when she remarks that the women warriors present in both popular culture and history often remain prisoners of male-centered notions about what it means to be a warrior. In other words, Early posits that too many female warriors simply become male-gendered in popular narratives; a trend that is dangerous because it echoes Michel Foucault's warning that

"marginalized people can be drawn to the power of 'reverse discourse,'" whereby they find themselves seeking legitimacy "in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which they were disqualified" (Foucault qtd. in Early 57). Because Nikita and Sydney are continually subjected to a patriarchal spy system that limits and controls their choices, however, these women are sensitive to their own abuses of power and are depicted as less likely to recreate the same system of abuse when they are in control, as evidenced by their constant ethical questioning and struggles to retain their humanity in an inhumane covert world.

In fact, more than any of their female predecessors on spy television, Nikita and Sydney are subordinated by a patriarchal system and by individual men who direct and dominate both their personal and professional lives. For example, it is Arvin Sloane that tricks Sydney into joining SD-6 by pretending that the organization he runs is the CIA. When Sydney breaks SD-6 protocol and informs her fiancé, Danny, that she is a spy because she wants her marriage to be free from secrets, Sloane kills her fiancé for breaching security protocol and then threatens to kill Sydney when she fails to return to the agency quickly enough after Danny's death. Sloane's deception and threats ultimately force Sydney into a double life aimed at destroying SD-6 and freeing herself from a life of espionage, but even in the CIA, she is subjected to a male handler, Michael Vaughn, who later becomes her lover; to her former partner Marcus Dixon, who eventually takes a leadership position at the CIA; and to her father, Jack Bristow, who holds a superior professional rank and whose affections he has largely withheld from Sydney since her childhood.

Nikita is likewise controlled and subjugated by men at Section One, which constantly monitors her in both public and private. As aforementioned, the pilot episode features Operations threatening to "cancel" Nikita if she fails to succeed as a section operative on his timetable, and it is her team leader, Michael, who evaluates Nikita's progress and usefulness as an operative. Throughout the series, Nikita also engages in a romantic relationship with Michael, who continually pushes her away and manipulates her emotions for both professional and personal gain. Perhaps most significant, however, is the fact that Nikita's own father, Mr. Jones, is revealed as the head of Center, which controls several anti-terrorist sections, including Section One. In "The Man Behind the Curtain," Nikita learns that her father was ultimately responsible for framing her for murder, recruiting her from prison, and then subjecting her to Section One's training and tribulations because he wanted her to take over as the head of Center when he dies—Nikita's desires be damned.

In both shows, then, the female protagonists are controlled by individual men that dominate both their private and professional lives, and both are forced/tricked into a life of espionage and secrecy from which they continually try to free themselves. Of course, they are not the only female spies on television to have been subjected to a patriarchal system of control and power. Agent 99, April Dancer, Jaime Sommers and Amanda King all worked for spy agencies led by male bosses, held subordinate positions to their male counterparts, and Jaime Sommers was especially subjugated to the masculine economies of science and espionage which, along with her fiancé, outfitted her with bionic limbs and "drafted" her into a life of spying, which, by the end of the series, she also wishes to escape. What is different about *Alias* and *LFN* is that the *degree* of oppression and

control to which the female agent is subjected is more extreme and total than that which is featured in other series and that these operatives possess a physical agency that allows them to violently challenge that system of oppression in addition to state enemies.

More specifically, Sydney and Nikita are both skilled in martial arts, engage in hand-to-hand combat, and handle a range of weapons while in the field. Because they were trained by their agencies, their physical feats are mostly suited for destroying state enemies, but especially in *Alias*, Sydney's violence is often coupled with her desire to overthrow those who would demean, exploit, or limit women. The best example of this dynamic occurs in "Phase One," which aired immediately after the 2003 Super Bowl. In this episode, Sydney goes undercover as a high-class prostitute where she must model black lingerie for a computer server guard and his bodyguard. When Sydney appears, the guard rejects the black outfit (apparently because he can) and sends her back to change into a red outfit of the same nature, finally giving his approval, dismissing his colleague and then leading Sydney to a nearby bed. When Sydney straddles him, the man believes he is about to engage in intercourse, but Sydney uses this opportunity to extract a choke wire from her bracelet, wraps it around his neck, and before asking him for the location of a computer server in the room (her real mission), she angrily asks him: "What was wrong with the black one. Do you think it's comfortable wearing clothes like this?" and eventually elbows him in the head to knock him unconscious. *Alias* episodes, such as this, can thus be read as centering on Sydney's attempts to defeat those who perpetuate a patriarchal system that values women for their sexuality as it much as they can be read as being about Sydney's attempts to defeat broader, national threats.

But while Sydney (and Nikita's) violence may work to challenge a patriarchal system and the association it makes with femininity and passivity, it is important to note that in the end, their violence can only push the system so far. For instance, Sydney and viewers understand that if she succeeds in eliminating Arvin Sloane or if Nikita succeeds in eliminating Operations, others are ready to take these leaders' places and that SD-6, the CIA, and Section One all possess the power, technology, and globally integrated networks to eliminate these female operatives if they should ever try to escape or usurp the system too forcefully. As a result, these series ultimately suggest that powerful systems of control cannot be destroyed, as radical feminists have sought to accomplish, because too many powerful people are invested in the system's continuation. The best that the female agent/agency can do, these narratives suggest, is challenge the system from the inside. However, as *La Femme Nikita* suggests, even this recourse poses serious problems for those remaining inside such systems for too long, for in the series final episode, "A Time for Every Purpose," Nikita promises her father than she will take over Center upon his death. While the episode implies that Nikita will try to use her new power to rebuild Section in a way that makes the outfit a more humane place with a greater separation of public and private spheres, as Takacs writes, this is at best a disappointing conclusion because it belies both Nikita and viewers' desires for the system's total abolition. "We'd be happier as an audience if Nikita blew the institution up from the inside, even if she had to perish in the process." "But this conclusion," she writes, "captures more realistically the political content of everyday struggles over social power, in which reform is often purchased at the price of cooptation" (175). And indeed this cooptation has its price, for, as aforementioned, within the first few seasons, Nikita

soon "breaks fingers with the best of them," leading viewers to question whether she will really be able to change the system of Section One and other anti-terrorism units from the inside.

Les Femmes Fatales: Sydney and Nikita as Sexualized Spies

As spies, both Nikita and Sydney disrupt the narrative of the just male warrior and carve out a new space for women in Western culture. As Jean Bethke Elshtain describes in *Women and War*, male warriors are the "avatars of a nation's sanctioned violence. They are the ones who protect and inscribe the order of the society they defend, and because they fight for the values placed at the center of society, in the eyes of society they are untouched by the negative associations of the violent acts they commit, which are seen as a distasteful necessity" (qtd. in Ng 106). While Elshtain does not explicitly say so in this passage, women and children often play the role of "that which needs protecting" in warrior narratives, so by featuring female warriors who are physically aggressive and violent, *Alias* and *LFN* disrupt that narrative by featuring female protectors rather than females in need of protection.

This does not mean, however, that the female warrior/spy has eschewed all feminine accoutrements; in fact, the female warrior, at least as she is envisioned in both *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias,* uses conventional notions of femininity to advance her individual and her nation's agenda. As discussed earlier in this chapter, both Nikita and Sydney are conventionally beautiful protagonists who are also skilled in physical combat and weaponry, and thus possess a new female agency that relies both on the body's physical strength and the ways the female body is read by others operating in a patriarchal system.

This can be seen as early as the pilot episode of *LFN* ("Nikita"), when Nikita asks why she was chosen to work for Section One out of all of those in prison. Michael's answer is a simple fragment: "A woman with your looks, who can kill in cold blood." Or as Madeline, one of Section One's leaders, tells Nikita: "You can learn to shoot. You can learn to fight, but there is no weapon as powerful as your femininity." Unsurprisingly, then, one of the first things Nikita must learn to do as an operative is turn her body into a feminized weapon. More specifically, Nikita, who previously dressed in oversized clothes, possessed ratty hair, and sported nose rings, must learn to apply makeup, walk smoothly in heels, and adjust her posture to project a softer rather than harder disposition, in addition to shooting guns and engaging in hand-to-hand combat. Nikita must also learn to use her sexuality to her advantage in the field. One of the best examples of this dynamic occurs in "Love," when she and Michael go undercover as a kinky, leather-clad, punk-rocking married couple to infiltrate an arms smuggling ring attempting to unleash a nerve gas. The master criminal in this episode, Bauer, hires the pair to release nerve gas in an office building, but then refuses to release them after the job is finished. Instead, Bauer holds Niktia and Michael at gun point and demands that the two engage in sexual intercourse for his night's viewing pleasure. In order to ensure their escape and help thwart a second release of nerve gas aimed at destroying a much larger population, Nikita must perform a strip tease for both Michael and Bauer, who is watching via a security camera mounted in their bedroom. Nikita's ability to perform the sexually uninhibited dance causes Bauer to zoom in on Nikita's body during her performance, which, in turn, allows Michael time to send an explosive through an air vent unnoticed and eventually secure their escape. Of course, the viewers watching the episode are also privy to Bauer's

zoom lens and thus Nikita is explicitly subjected to the male gaze; however, in this episode Nikita's objectification is really part of her subjectivity as she plays the role of sexualized object only to help Michael evade Bauer's gaze and secure their escape. In other words, Nikita's sexuality is both a means to an end and an outlet for viewer titillation.

While Sydney is not the street-urchin Nikita is during her pre-spy days, the *Alias* character is depicted as the girl-next-door who prefers jeans and minimal makeup while not operating in the field. When Sydney is employed on missions, however, she, like Nikita, must often adopt a hyper-feminine and sexualized persona in order to evade suspicion or garner an underestimation of her talents. Part of the constant use of sexualized disguise on *Alias* stems from the creators' attempts to temper Sydney's strength. As J.J. Abrams admits, part of the show's challenge was to construct a character who is sanctioned to commit violent acts, thereby challenging viewers' notions about traditional gender roles, yet who is also sexy and feminine enough to appeal to contemporary network viewers[22]. In order to address "the problem" of Sydney's prowess, then, Abrams and his team frequently employed the convention of disguise in scenarios that also required Sydney to engage in violence. In "So It Begins," for instance, Sydney wears a blonde wig and a short, blue rubber dress on a mission to Russia, where she also engages in a kick-boxing fight with an international foe, while in "Parity," she sports a red-wig and a low-cut, high-slit, red dress while swinging from a metal chain to enter into a fight with her nemeses, Anna.

But while the sexualization of Sydney may have tempered her strength, it also caused many viewers to read the character as particularly empowering. To illustrate this

paradox, it is important to note that Sydney often pairs her sexy disguises with a silly or incompetent persona in order to fool her would-be-captors into believing her incapable of spy work. In "Truth Be Told," for instance, Sydney is caught returning from a reconnaissance mission via a closed access stairwell. To maneuver her way out of the situation, she begins to explain to the guard in a southern American accent that she was just looking for the bathroom and that she has had too much to drink. She begins pleading with the guard not to tell her boss that she has had so much alcohol because she will be fired. She also readjusts her breasts and remarks that she likes the guard's tie, and as a result of her performance, the guard assesses that Sydney cannot be dangerous, and lets her go.

These actions reflect what Joan Riviere called "the feminine masquerade" in her 1929 article "Womanliness as a Masquerade." The piece details the case of a female patient who habitually undermined her own intellectual authority by flirting with her male colleagues after successfully delivering public speeches. As Kerry Maguire notes in "The Cloak of Definition: Fantasies of Feminine Identity," the woman often felt anxiety after delivering her most successful speeches, which "led to an uncontrollable urge to behave coquettishly with her male colleagues, thereby undercutting the image of authority and power generated by her public performance" (43). Riviere, a psychoanalyst,

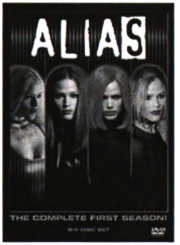


Fig. 21: DVD cover of *Alias: The Complete First Season.* Released by Buena Vista Home Entertainment in 2003.

believed that the woman performed this feminine masquerade in order to diffuse the anger she felt her male colleagues would direct at her for her possession of masculine power or the "penis" (38).

Unlike Riviere's patient, however, Sydney does not employ a feminine masquerade out of anxiety, rather she consciously adopts that persona in order to advance her own agenda, which in this case is to garner information about a weapon's facility in Taipei. By using the feminine masquerade, then, Sydney acknowledges that a general stereotype exists throughout the globe that paints women as silly, incompetent, and generally non-threatening, and the show suggests that people who subscribe to these stereotypes run a grave risk. If woman are able to consciously perform femininity in order to garner an underestimation of their talents, then they gain an advantage. In the case of *Alias*, that advantage allows women to undermine political regimes, dismantle weapons cartels, and disrupt national balances of power. And thus *Alias* creates a space where women have not yet eradicated unfavorable views about their talents and potential in the political arena, but where they also *control* the ways in which they are read by others and use unfavorable views about women to their advantage.

The spy genre, however, has always played with the art of disguise and emphasized its connections to fantasy and the excise of power. As John Cawelti and Bruce Rosenberg explain, folktales, myths and stories indicate that there is a perennial human fascination with disguise that rests in the "thrill of trying on other identities—social, racial, sexual or chronological" (13). Disguise, they argue, allows one to temporarily escape from one's own identity in a controlled manner that nonetheless allows for a "total escape from the constraints of self" and, in the genre, often allows one

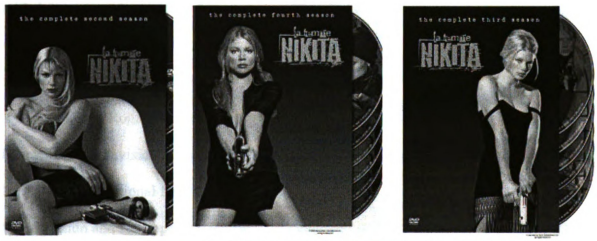
to carry out a secret excise of power. On one level, then, *Alias* and *La Femme Nikita* are merely drawing on the genre's conventions to tell an exciting story since so much of espionage tales' excitement hinges on whether or not the secret agent will be exposed as something other than what he or she appears to be. But given that the protagonists of *Alias* and *La Femme Nikita* are female, the art of (sexualized) disguise and misdirection also has feminist implications because in these series female sexuality is often a means to an end, a thing to be consciously performed in order to advance a mission. And ultimately, what these narratives suggest is that female spies who possess physical prowess make better agents because, unlike men, they can hide their power behind a number of feminine stereotypes (the drunken flirt, the shy school girl, the dumb blonde, the harmless secretary) when such power needs to be hidden, but they nonetheless possess the power they need to defeat enemies when the situation calls for such destruction. In other words, men may play characters to hide their true *identity* in the spy series, but they lack the range of stock character roles that female agents can perform to hide both their *power and identity* from the culture that circulates those stereotypes.

It is noteworthy, too, that these spy series' emphasis on disguise and the ability of the female operative to control the male gaze for her own purposes has its roots in the iconic status of the femme fatale, who likewise seeks to turn patriarchal notions of sexuality to her own advantage. (And thus it is no coincidence that the title of Peta Wilson's series is ***La Femme*** *Nikita*). Femme fatales, like female spies, are examples of women coping with the history of cultural mediation that has, for so long, positioned them as passive objects of male attention and design. They, more specifically, challenge the "logic of visuality" that "bifurcates 'subjects' and 'objects' into the incompatible

positions of intellectuality and spectacularity" and then assigns women to the latter (Chow qtd. in Tacaks 166). However, as Tacaks argues, precisely because she controls the way in which she is seen through disguise and performance, the femme fatale/female spy is also a polysemic character that multiplies the opportunities for audience identification and ups the semiotic ante for the image-commodity as a whole and may help to explain why these series were able to achieve success in different television markets both abroad and domestically (157).

But even while the broadcast narratives negotiated Sydney and Nikita's power and femininity in a way that created a polysemic character that used her conventional

Figure 22: DVD covers of *La Femme Nikita's* second, third and fourth season. Released by Warner Home Video.



beauty to carry out her own agenda, that polysemy was limited by the publicity material for these series, which often focused on these agent's sexuality in ways that were largely devoid of narrative context and thus offered up these women as spectacles for male viewing consumption and negated some of the power they held as female operatives. For example, one ad campaign for *La Femme Nikita* simply featured a sultry photo of Wilson next to the tagline "36-24-.45" (Dempsey), while another ad promoting USA's Sunday

night line-up featured a photo of Wilson seductively gazing into the camera above copy which told viewers: "On USA, it's not the criminals who are the most wanted" (USA Network). These ads, in other words, emphasized Wilson and Nikita's desirability, rather than her talents, strengths, vulnerabilities, and desires, and when the series was released on DVD, the packaging likewise focused on Nikita's lethal sexuality more than her character. For example, each of the five seasons' DVD set features Peta Wilson seductively donning a tight and/or low cut black outfit complete with a gun (with the exception of season one, where she fails to wield a weapon). The problem with these covers is that they play on the stereotype of the dangerous but highly sexualized fantasy girl and make violence look sexy, thereby erasing the moral complexity of espionage and Nikita's struggles to retain her humanity which the series works so hard to bring to the forefront.

As David Roger Coon explains about *Alias*, its television ad campaigns also relied on traditional female objectification and sex appeal to sell the product, even though the broadcast narrative embarked on cast-wide disruptions of gender norms (3). This was especially true in some of the posters that promoted the series in its first season,

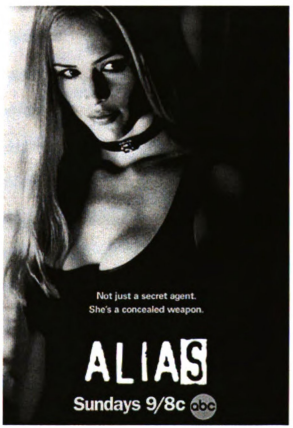


Fig. 23: Season one promotional poster for *Alias*.

which were often devoid of any existing narrative, and presented Sydney as pure spectacle. An early example of a such a poster features Garner in the rubber dress she wears in the series' second episode, "So it Begins," and the tagline "Not just a secret agent. She's a concealed weapon."

As Coon explains, the poster as a whole seems in line with the development of the series. The image presents Sydney as a beautiful woman displaying a variety of signifiers that mark her as traditionally feminine and imply the passivity and weakness usually associated with traditional femininity. The text, however, indicates that all is not what it seems, as the phrase "concealed weapon" indicates that a certain danger and power lurks beneath the surface of the dress. The idea that a strong violent woman may exist in the same body as a hyperfeminine young woman is central to the concept of the series, which the poster reinforces, but the photographic image is so dominant that it likely outweighs the idea suggested by the text, which is also positioned under Sydney's right breast, forcing viewers' eyes to that region of her body. As a black and white image, Coon also notes that the photo depends on its contrast of light and dark to create its impact, and thus the viewer's eyes are likewise drawn to the two lightest portions of the image—Garner's face and breast. Additionally, Sydney is looking away from the camera, positioning her as an object to be looked at, rather than a subject returning the viewer's gaze.

The promotional material surrounding these series, then, ultimately works to temper both Nikita and Sydney's strength by hyper-sexualizing or hyper-feminizing them. But *precisely because* these women are depicted as ultra-feminine, they challenge their gender's very association with passivity and weakness – a combination that, as hinted at earlier, proved empowering for some female viewers. As J.J. Abrams noted

about the casting of Jennifer Garner: "You don't want to look at somebody and go, 'Damn, she can kick ass!'" Garner "has this quality of the girl next door, the girl you'd want to know or date or be. And then the surprise—she's lethal."And indeed, this "surprise" of a conventionally feminine woman being violent and powerful is what fans of *Alias, Nikita* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* have ultimately responded too. As one fan of *Buffy* writes, "I adore Buffy and her ability to kick-butt, check her manicure and still throw out a rejoinder witty enough to leave us in stitches and her joe in the dust" (Anders), while a *Nikita* viewer describes the protagonist as "the peroxide-stickly figure of Peta Wilson" before going on to celebrate the fact that, to the show's terrorists, this stick figure"is La Femme Nikita, ready to kick ass and defend her right to do so!" (Brandstatter). Likewise, one fan writing on Amazon.com about *Alias* notes that, for her, Sydney's "sexuality was always very empowering rather than just titillating," presumably because her femininity was used to accomplish the operative's own agenda and contrasted nicely with the aggression and strength that Sydney soon displayed in the narrative.

There are limitations to this type of "empowered" reading, however, for while Nikita and Sydney challenge the idea that women should be passive and protected, that gendered expectation is primarily linked with white, middle-class women. As Kimberly Springer illustrates, African-Americans are "thought to be always already violent due to their savage ancestry", and "when it comes to women, race and violence, white North American women are assumed to have been provoked to violence and are not permitted violent impulses" (qtd. in Tung 110). As a result, black women's physically powerful and violent bodies in popular culture are not read identically to white women's bodies. In

other words, "a fierce, kick-ass black woman" is more likely to be read as "hyper-aggressive, wild, untamable, and vicious rather than as an admirable warrior woman breaking down age old stereotypes that white women invoke" (Tung 111). Likewise, the kick-ass Asian/Asian- American woman is not as transgressive either because she fits neatly into a pre-existing cultural stereotype that (especially in the Kung Fu genre) reinscribes notions of the natural connection between marital arts and Asian bodies (Tung 114).

But while there are limits on Sydney and Nikita's transgressive potential, their contribution to the landscape of female warriors that emerged in popular culture during the late 1990s and early 2000s has helped shape the public's perception about what can be expected from and, even, what is desired from real life female combatants. In other words, the image of the female warrior popularized by shows such as *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias* may have paved the way for the "heroization" of real women involved in war, as evidenced by the initial media reports regarding Private Jessica Lynch. In 2003, Lynch survived an ambush by Iraqis when her convoy took a wrong turn, and she was later rescued from her captors by U.S. special forces, who documented the rescue with a video camera. When the news of Lynch's capture and rescue were first reported in the U.S., media outlets depicted Lynch as a female Rambo from the hills of West Virginia, who bravely fought enemy combatants while under attack. Bloggers point to *The Washington Post's* April 3, 2003 article, "She Was Fighting to the Death," as the first news report to engage in hero-making. In this piece, Susan Schmidt and Vernon Loeb reported that Pfc. Jessica Lynch:

> fought fiercely and shot several enemy soldiers after Iraqi forces ambushed the Army's 507th Ordnance Maintenance Company, firing her weapon until she ran out of ammunition, U.S. officials said yesterday.
>
> Lynch, a 19-year-old supply clerk, continued firing at the Iraqis even after she sustained multiple gunshot wounds and watched several other soldiers in her unit die around her in fighting March 23, one official said. The ambush took place after a 507th convoy, supporting the advancing 3rd Infantry Division, took a wrong turn near the southern city of Nasiriyah.
>
> 'She was fighting to the death,' the official said. 'She did not want to be taken alive.' (Schmidt and Loeb A01)

While the *Post* noted later in the article that several other "officials" cautioned that "the precise sequence of events was still being determined," that initial intelligence about the incident was garnered from "Iraqi sources in Nasiriyah whose reliability has yet to be assessed," and that Pentagon officials had only "heard 'rumors' of Lynch's heroics but had had no confirmation" (A01), the headline of the article and the first two paragraphs suggest that the paper was keen to depict Lynch as a type of female Rambo and promote the heroics of American troops in Iraq.

In an April 27, 2007 op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, Michael DeLong, the military representative in 2003 who dealt with politicians regarding the capture and rescue of Pfc. Jessica Lynch in Iraq, also explains that based on initial reports which stated that Lynch had gone down fighting, politicians from her home state, West Virginia, wanted the military to award her the Medal of Honor. DeLong, however, argued that

initial combat reports are often wrong, and thus more time was needed to see whether her actions merited a medal—a move that he argues, angered politicians who repeatedly pressured his office to recommend her for the medal and repeatedly argued that "a medal would be good for women in the military" (A27). Presumably, politicians believed that such an honor would help dispel the image of the military as a hyper-masculine bastion where women do not belong and even attract new female recruits at a time when military recruitments levels were lower than desired.

When the military later discovered that Lynch's weapon had never been fired and that she had merely been a passenger in a vehicle that went astray, came under fire and crashed, DeLong wrote that while her actions "were understandable and justifiable," "they could not be labeled heroic" (A27). "In the case of Ms. Lynch, overzealous politicians and a frenzied press distorted facts" he writes, even though Private Lynch has always denied her heroic status. In fact, when Lynch was interviewed by Diane Sawyer in 2003, she claimed that the Pentagon used her to symbolize American courage and female strength, even though she "did not shoot, not a round" and "went down praying to my knees" (Lynch, "Interview"). On April 24, 2007, Lynch gave congressional testimony before the United States House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform that the Pentagon had erroneously portrayed her as a "Rambo from West Virginia," when she never fired a shot after her truck was ambushed. "I am still confused as to why they chose to lie and tried to make me a legend when the real heroics of my fellow soldiers that day were, in fact, legendary....The bottom line is the American people are capable of determining their own ideals of heroes and they don't need to be told elaborate tales" (Lynch, "Testimony").

The type of "elaborate tale" that the media and politicians circulated about Lynch, however, fit neatly within the images of female warriors already circulating in the nation's popular culture, which featured white, feminine women defending the nation with an automatic weapon and challenging enemies of the state. What the media seemed to be looking for was a real life Sydney Bristow or La Femme Nikita to hold up as a symbol of both national and feminine prowess. Interestingly, controversy also arose in the Lynch story regarding the varying treatment and media coverage of Lynch and Shoshanna Johnson, an African-American soldier captured in the same ambush as Lynch, who was shot through both legs and held twenty-two days as an Iraqi prisoner before being rescued. Critics, including Rev. Jesse Jackson, have posited that Johnson's race was a major reason that she received little media attention and a lower disability benefit than Lynch (Hockstader), an argument that takes on another element when viewed in light of Tung's argument, which demonstrates that black female combatants are more likely to be read as naturally "aggressive and vicious," rather than as an admirable warrior woman breaking down stereotypes that white women invoke and are therefore less suitable for the types of "hero-making" the media engaged in when the Lynch story broke.

Conclusion

Focusing primarily on the threat of post-Cold War terrorism, *Alias* and *La Femme Nikita* served as a window into a new era of international relations and exemplified a shift towards greater moral ambiguity involved in the fight against global threats. The series asked to what extent a government or outfit can go in order to curb terrorist threats before it becomes terrorist-like itself -- a dilemma that took on new meaning during post-9/11 critiques of the U.S.'s handling of the War on Terror. Both shows also broke with the

male-centeredness that had governed the spy genre to date, as both featured female protagonists who could out-smart, out-kick and out-shoot their male enemies, helping the public to believe and even expect that such heroics were possible from women, as evidenced, in part, by the media coverage of Jessica Lynch.

By blending sex, violence, complicated story lines, romance, stylized sets, and strong writing, *Nikita* and *Alias* ultimately injected new life into the spy genre and earned both series a niche in dramatic programming. *La Femme Nikita,* for example, helped launch the fledging USA Network, hoping to gain viewers through original and innovative programming in the 1990s. As Ted Edwards notes, the series was "adopted as a darling of both the critics and the audience" from its inception, and it became cable's highest-rated series, attracting a weekly audience of two million viewers (ix). The series' fans were fiercely loyal, too. When negotiations broke down between the production studio and the network during the series' fourth season, the program was cancelled. After releasing the news, however, the USA Network received over 25,000 letters and email from forty different countries protesting the series' end. Fans also purchased a full-page advertisement in the *Hollywood Reporter*, calling for another season—a request the network partially met by creating eight more episodes for a truncated fifth season (P. Anderson).

Kevin Weisman, the actor who played Marshall Flinkman on *Alias*, argues that his show also achieved a type of cult status in the television world. More specifically, he notes that while *Alias* was never a top-ten show in the ratings, it produced a loyal, discerning, and invested set of fans who often knew more about the show than the actors themselves. Weisman posits that viewers' investment in the series is what helped place

Alias in the "cultish 'lore' of television history" (3). More so than *Nikita*, *Alias* was also praised by the television industry: on top of its eleven Emmy nominations in 2002 alone, *Alias* also took home The People's Choice award for Best New Drama, and Garner won the Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Television Drama that same year. Even after its cancellation in 2005, the show continued in syndication on TNT in the afternoon time slot of 4 p.m., attracting viewers who missed the show when it aired at 9 p.m. approximately four and a half years earlier. Interest in the show has also continued to be generated by the series' media tie-in novels, whose last installment to-date appeared in December of 2006.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that while these series were innovative in many ways, *Alias* and *La Femme Nikita* were also part of a larger spy television trend, especially as they featured reluctant spies forced or tricked into espionage and continually called into question the worthiness of intelligence agencies. As Britton points out in his survey of 1990 spy series, almost every spy series of that decade (except *7 Days* and *The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne*) featured reluctant heroes forced under threat to engage in televised covert wars (241). Much more than in the 1980s, he writes, modern spies were seen to oppose both evil and the murky conditions of corrupted secret services—a trend he attributes to the fact that agencies like the CIA were struggling to retain their influence and power after the end of the Cold War, and thus featured characters like "The Official" in *The Invisible Man*, who was as much a prisoner of his agency's need to exist as he was an agent of it (241).

With the events of 9/11, however, some critics have claimed that the age of cynicism ended, as action adventure creators felt more pressure to create positive and

patriotic messages and understood that horrifying spectacles could no longer be used for mindless entertainment (Britton 253). Others, however, see these conclusions as premature, pointing out that spy shows still focus on the unethical use of power by the CIA, suggesting that even in an age where cynicism has been tempered and the CIA is working with Hollywood to ensure more positive depictions of intelligence agencies, organization, such as the CIA, have been unable to withstand the mistrust of the CIA deeply rooted in its fifty year history.

Conclusion

Only a handful of women have emerged as prominent secret agents in the spy genre's fifty-five year history on television. As mentioned in this project's introduction, roughly 50% of the 162 espionage programs that have aired in the U.S. and Britain between 1951 and 2006 feature a single male protagonist, while 17% center on an all-male spy team or partnership. Only 6% of these series, on the other hand, feature a lone female protagonist, and only 2.5% center on an all-female spy team or partnership (See appendix). In the remaining 25% of programs, which feature a co-sexed partnership or a co-sexed team of agents, women have mostly taken a subordinate role to their male partners and comprise just one part of a multi-member team.

In fact, the subordination of female spies to their male partners spans most of the spy genre's history on television and manifests itself in the lower ranks these women hold and in their weaker physical agency -- an agency that is vital for action-adventure heroes/heroines to possess. For example, Louise Baker (*Biff Baker U.S.A.*), Agent 99 (*Get Smart*), April Dancer (*The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.*), Jaime Sommers (*The Bionic Woman*) and Amanda King (*Scarecrow and Mrs. King*) are just some of the characters that have been subordinated as action-adventure characters by their lack of physical prowess in dangerous situations, while Louise, Amanda, Jaime, and even *The Avengers'* Cathy Gale, Emma Peel, and Tara King all held lower positions in their spy bureaucracy's than did their male cohorts, if they were officially employed by a spy bureaucracy at all.

The appearance of *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias*, however, marked a departure from the genre's history of subordinating women in the spy drama (and spy comedy) by

featuring lone, female protagonists who were skilled in weapons and martial arts and quickly rose through the ranks of their agency to become one of its most valued and talented operatives. Additionally, these women navigated their way through a morally-complex world dominated by men, while struggling to maintain their humanity and compassion for those entrapped by a covert system that, while well-intentioned, continually demanded repugnant moral compromise and the sacrifice of decent individuals in the name of the greater good.

Indeed, one of the most striking strengths of women in the spy series is that they often represent the voice of compassion and humanity and hamper the efforts of their espionage agency to accomplish its security goals when those efforts infringe on human rights to life and liberty. Much more than *The Six Million Dollar Man*, for instance, *The Bionic Woman* continually stressed the need for the OSI to reflect on its treatment of humankind in a time of rapid technological proliferation. Likewise, Amanda King's emphasis on kindness and empathy helped her to succeed as an operative and prevented The Agency and Lee Stetson from relying too heavily on brute force to accomplish their missions, while both Nikita and Sydney Bristow constantly questioned, and encouraged viewers to question, how many moral compromises spy outfits could make before they should be considered inhumane and even terrorist-like in nature.

But while the spy genre has drawn on traditionally female traits, such as nurturance and compassion, it has also taken a dichotomous approach to female sexuality throughout its history. In earlier programs, such as *I Led 3 Lives* and *Biff Baker U.S.A.*, female sexuality was mostly depicted as dangerous to national security. In the former show, for instance, numerous episodes featured communist women who used their

sexuality to seduce U.S. government employees and citizens in order to gain access to sensitive information or to manipulate their comrades in order to advance within the communist party. As Julie Wheelwright's "Poisoned Honey: The Myth of Women in Espionage" explains, the depiction of female sexuality as dangerous is not unique to American television, as popular accounts of spying circulated by male officials, journalists and historians have often depicted female spies as seductresses who value sexual and material power over patriotism and prize the overthrow of men above the call of duty. In fact, Wheelwright suggests that this is probably the most popular depiction of women in the spy genre, as is partly evidenced by the enduring popularity of the Mata Hari myth.

However, the sexualization of female spies is not always linked with national threat or material power, although contemporary spy series continue to employ the trope by employing sexualized women in villainous roles. Instead, in some spy programs, including *La Femme Nikita* and *Alias*, the spy heroine often performs hyperfeminine and sexualized roles out of patriotism (or at least survival), as such performances encourage others to underestimate their talents, allow them access to secret information or valuable objects, and misdirect their would-be captors so they and their colleagues can accomplish an agency goal. This depiction of female sexuality as a means to a just end marks a specific departure from other spy tales, especially those appearing in film and literature, and the James Bond films, in particular, where beautiful women primarily function as a type of trophy for the male secret agent, signaling both his and his nation's desirability to viewers and readers (T. Jenkins 309-310).

The examination of the roles and representations of women in the spy genre is important because these narratives contribute to popular conceptions of national heroes, ideal citizenship, and the role of feminism in national discourses. The elevation of Jessica Lynch to heroic status would have been much less plausible to the American public if stories of female warriors, such as Nikita and Sydney Bristow, had not been circulating in the years previous to and concurrent with her rescue from Iraqi captors in 2003. Likewise, the gendered glorification of CIA operative Johnny "Mike" Spann during the early U.S. invasion of Afghanistan as a selfless patriot and the molding of his wife (who was also a CIA operative) into a national symbol of sacrifice would not have been as powerful (or convenient) if popular images had not been circulating for decades which featured the masculine spy working to protect his family from national threats.

And ultimately, the gendered and racialized narratives of the spy genre are partially affecting the recruitment efforts of intelligence organizations struggling to attract both female and ethnic minority applicants in the post-Cold war era. As former CIA operative Lindsay Moran Kegley notes, the CIA and other Western intelligence organizations, such Britain's MI-6, are facing a new type of domestic and international terrorism that demands a more diverse pool of recruits with greater cultural and linguistic diversity. "The CIA desperately needs to reevaluate and revamp its training methods in order to contend with the ever-growing terrorist threat," she states. "Traditional spy vs. spy tactics developed during the Cold War era, when it was entirely possible to sway defectors from within the ranks of our main rival, the Soviet Union" no longer work and are "totally inappropriate to combating terrorism." "Osama bin Laden and his cohorts are

not hanging out on the diplomatic cocktail circuit, the first arena in which CIA spies in training are still instructed and expected to trawl" ("Women in the CIA").

In order to fight this new threat, Moran suggests that the CIA needs to develop new, more effective means of intelligence gathering and to recruit both men and women fluent in languages such as Arabic, Pashtun, and Urdu and those who will excel at spotting, assessing, developing, and recruiting foreigners who will sell secrets ("Women in the CIA"). Moran believes that women are particularly well-suited to developing such assets, stating that in her experience "the most successful spies—that is the CIA officers who were most adept at getting recruitments—were women because their job greatly relies on intuition and a refined set of social skills," including the art of flattery, cajolement, nurturance and hiding one's true feelings (qtd. in Hersch). "In my experience," she states, "these traits seemed to appear and/or develop more naturally in female CIA officers" (qtd. in Hersch). However, Moran notes that the "CIA remains very much a good ole boys network, and to move up through its ranks as a woman is certainly challenging," suggesting that the agency needs to rethink its masculine culture and recruit more women and promote them into leadership positions (Hersch).

Popular images of sexualized females in spy television and film and the television genre's lack of ethnically diverse women seem to be hampering both the CIA's and Britain's recruitment efforts. In a May 17, 2007 issue of *USA Today*, Jeffrey Stinson reported that both Britain's domestic secret service, MI-5, and its CIA equivalent, MI-6, are attempting to recruit more women to aid in the fight against terrorism. In fact, MI-5 has recently launched a public recruiting campaign through ads on subway trains, buses and radio in order to attract five hundred new members, especially women, whom David

Bickford, a former legal advisor for MI-5, believes often make better intelligence analysts than men and tend to be good at handling informants. MI-6 is also trying to attract more female recruits, but is finding it difficult to dispel the "Bond girl image" of female spies who are used as seductresses in order to collect intelligence. In the Q and A section on its website, MI-6 has posted a response to the question: "Will I be used as a honey-trap?" with the answer: "Absolutely not. The service does not use this or similar tactics. MI-6 describes itself as a family-friendly service with flexible working hours, maternity leave and with few exceptions, partners and children can accompany officers on foreign assignments" (qtd. in Stinson 9A).

This, however, is hardly the image of female spies represented on American (and British) primetime television which are both exported to its neighbor across the Atlantic. And despite the fact that two of MI-5's last three directors were female and the organization has been fairly evenly split between genders in recent years, women only made up 38% of the latest class of new recruits (Stinson 9A). Charles Shoebridge, a London security analyst and former counterterrorism intelligence officer with Scotland Yard, also attributes that inequality to popular culture, noting that "Given the James Bond image of intelligence work in much of the media, it shouldn't be surprising if the most job applicants are men" (qtd. in Stinson 9A). While simply blaming the media seems too simplistic to explain recent drops in new female recruits, Shoebridge is right to reveal a disconnect between the male-dominated popular images of the clandestine world and the real needs and presence for and of women in actual intelligence agencies, although British shows such as *Spooks* (or *MI-5,* as it is called in the U.S.) have begun depicting important female operatives in the genre in more realistic terms.

Additionally, while the CIA has been more successful in recruiting women than Britain (Moran notes that roughly 50% of the trainees in her class were female), as recently as May 31, 2007, CIA director Michael Hayden remarked that the agency still sorely needs men and women who reflect a greater cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity (Willing), and the agency has also recognized that popular culture has a direct impact on its recruitment efforts and the level of public support it receives. For example, Chase Brandon, a former CIA operative, started the CIA's Hollywood office in the mid-1990s. Under its guise, he has, among other things, served as a technical consultant on *JAG, Alias,* and *The Agency,* and hired Jennifer Garner, the lead actress in *Alias*, to star in the agency's recruitment videos that were shown at college job fairs and on the CIA Careers Website. Ultimately, Brandon believes that his work as the CIA film liaison is important, since in "perilous times," the ways in which government officials are depicted "educates and informs the public, reassures the public, entertains the public" (qtd. in Hall, "Hollywood") and helps attract more desirable recruits.

Of course, the U.S. government and its intelligence agencies have long recognized the link between popular culture, national security goals, recruitment levels, and agency support. The FBI and The Defense Department have both run entertainment offices since the 1930s and 1940s respectively, and the newly founded Department of Homeland Security has likewise hired a Hollywood liaison to work with moviemakers and scriptwriters and offers advice and technical help to the directors, producers and actors portraying the nation's homeland defenders (Hall, "Homeland"). Phil Strub, who runs the Pentagon's entertainment office, says he hopes the movies he works on will "make the American public a little more aware of its military and possibly be of benefit to its

recruiting," while Homeland Security spokesman Brian Roehrkasse says Ferguson will help "give the public a better understanding of how the department ... protects the country."

What the CIA and MI-6 seem to really need, then, are spy programs that feature both male and female protagonists from a range of ethnic backgrounds, including those of Arab and Asian descent to encourage greater diversity in its applicants, but while hit shows such as ABC's *Lost* and NBC's *Heroes* are finding success with some of the most diverse casting ever featured on prime time television,[23] current trends in spy-related programs suggest that shows are moving more towards the conventional white and black male protagonist, such as those on *The Unit, The Threat Matrix, 24, Jericho,* and *Traveler.* Interestingly, several of these new programs are also suggesting that the most prominent enemy of American citizens is the very intelligence and defense agencies set up to protect them. To cite just two examples, CBS' *Jericho*, which ran during the 2007 season on Wednesday nights, featured one of the leaders of the Department of Homeland Security organizing domestic terrorist groups that eventually detonate nuclear bombs in over twenty American cities, while an African-American CIA operative works with a white former mercenary to uncover the identity of the nuclear mastermind. Early episodes of a new summer series, *Traveller*, also suggest that those in power at the Department of Homeland Security are behind the domestic bombing of the Drexler Museum in New York and are working to frame two white, male, Yale students for the explosion.

I am not trying to suggest, however, that television programming should work to directly support the goals of the CIA or even the U.S. government. Indeed, one of the

most important functions of the popular arts is to openly question and criticize the government and its actions in a format that is both entertaining and insightful for mass audiences. Instead, I am trying to suggest that primetime television can influence the power, applicant pool, and public support covert agencies enjoy and that contemporary spy programs seem to be heading in a direction that is more critical of the nation's defense agencies and featuring a cast that is less diverse in terms of both race and gender than what the CIA and its allies ideally want and need.

Appendix

When I began this project, I had hoped to find an exhaustive or nearly exhaustive list of spy television programs airing in English since the 1950s. Unfortunately, no such list existed, and I was forced to create my own. This list, which appears below, began by building upon a pre-formed list of 158 English-language spy series available on TVacres.com[24]. To supplement this list, I then searched several scholarly works on the topic of spy television[25] and added any show denoted as an espionage program in these books' text that did not appear on the TVacres.com list – a move that yielded an additional thirty-two titles.

This set of 190 programs was then narrowed by eliminating all of the children's spy shows and mini-series, leaving 162 regular, adult spy programs. (See Table 1 to view this list along with each program's station affiliation and season run.) Next, a combination of spy television scholarship, the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com) and TV.com was used to garner short plot summaries and cast lists for each show. This process allowed me to determine the sex of each show's protagonist(s) and to then tally the number of spy shows centering around a) a female lead b) an all-female spy team, c) a male-female partnership, d) a co-sexed spy team of three or more agents, e) a male lead and f) an all-male spy team or partnership. (See Tables 2-7)

However, because show summaries and cast lists in online media databases had to sometimes be relied upon to determine whether or not a show should be classified as having an individual male or female lead, a prominent male-female partnership, a co-sexed team of three or more agents, etc., this book's classifications are subject to any errors appearing within these databases. In most cases, however, it was possible to garner

information about a show from at least two sources, which helped ensure a higher level of accuracy. However, it should also be noted that even after viewing each episode of a particular series, classification was not always a clear-cut process. One of the most difficult to classify, for example, was *The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.,* which was ultimately placed in the category of shows featuring a prominent male-female partnership, instead of one featuring an individual female lead, as the show title would suggest. This decision is based on the fact that virtually every episode features Mark Slate working alongside April Dancer on missions, and Mark is responsible for most of the action sequences while April is responsible for most of the snooping/spying. Thus, even though the show marketed April as an individual heroine through its media tie-ins and show opener, the broadcast narrative focuses more on an espionage partnership.

Regardless of these complications, what follows is one of the most exhaustive lists of spy television programs to appear in print and offers both future scholars and the genre's fans a valuable tool to use in their own research.

Table 1: List of British and American Spy Programs Airing Between 1951 and 2006 (162 Total)

Program Title	Network Affiliation and Program Run	Description of Lead Character(s)
24	FOX/2001+	Male Lead Working with Co-Sexed Team of CIA Agents
Acapulco H.E.A.T.	SYN/1993-94, 1998	Male and Female Spies Serve as Co-leaders of H.E.A.T.
Adderly	CBS/1986-89	Male Agents for the Department of Miscellaneous Affairs
The Adventurer	ITC/1972-73	Male Secret Agent Poses as a Movie Star
The Adventures of Falcon	SYN/1954	Male Intelligence Agent
The Agency	CBS/2001-2003	CIA Operatives: Men and Women
Air America	SYN/1998-99	Two Male Undercover Agents Fly Dangerous Missions
Airwolf and Airwolf II	CBS/USA/1984-87	Male Pilot Flies Dangerous

Table 1 Cont.

		Assignments for "The Firm." (Female Co-pilot Introduced in Second Season)
Alias	ABC/2001-2006	Female SD-6 and CIA Operative
American Dad!	Fox/2005+	Adult Animated Show Featuring Male CIA Agent
Amos Burke, Secret Agent	ABC/1965-66	Male Intelligence Agent
Assignment Vienna	ABC/1972-73	Male Intelligence Agent
The Avengers	ITV/ABC/1961-69	Male British Agent Teamed with a Female Partner (although early episodes feature a male-male partnership)
The Awful Mr. Goodall	LWT/ITV/1974	Retired Male British MI5 Colonel
The Barbary Coast	ABC/1975-76	Male 19th Century Government Agent Paired with Gambling Pal
The Baron	ATV/ITC/ABC/ 1966	Male British Intelligence Agent Poses as Antique Dealer
Behind Closed Doors	NBC/1958-59	Male US Naval Intelligence Commander
Biff Baker, U.S.A	CBS/1952-53	Male Entrepreneur and Amateur Detective/Spy Assisted by His Wife
The Bionic Woman	ABC/NBC/1976-1978	Female Cyborg Works as a Secret Agent for the Office of Scientific Investigations
Blue Light	ABC/1966	Male World War II Spy
Callan	ITV/1967-72	Male, British Secret Service Agent/Assassin
The Champions	ITV/NBC/1968-69	Trio of Espionage Agents: 2 Men and 1 Woman
China Smith	SYN/1952-55	Male Adventurer/ Private Eye
Code Name: Foxfire	NBC/1985	Female Counterespionage Team
Codename	BBC/1970	British Spies Working For MI-17: 3 Men and 1 Woman
Colt .45	ABC/1957-60	Male Gun Salesman Works as US Government Agent
Cool Million	NBC/1972-73	Male Agent Turned Private Eye
Counterspy	SYN/1958	Male Double Agent
Counterstrike	USA/1990-93	Male-led Crime Fighting Team with Some Women
Counterthrust	SYN/1959-60	Male US Intelligence Agents
Cover Me: Based on the True Life of an FBI Family	USA/ 2000-2001	Husband, Wife, and Children Undertake Government Spy Work
Cover Up	CBS/1984-85	Male-Female Spy Team Pose as Model and Photographer
Cowboy G-Men	SYN/1952-53	Male Frontier Agents
Crusader	CBS/1955-56	Male Lead Trying to Free Others from Totalitarian Regimes
Danger Man (AKA Secret Agent)	ATV/1960-1; 1964-67 CBS/1961	Male NATO and MI-9 Operative

Table 1 Cont.

Dangerous Assignment	SYN/1952	Male US Intelligence Agent
Dark Skies	NBC/1996-97	Male and Female Team Battle Aliens and the Secret Government Agency Majestic-12
Department S	1969-70/ ITV	Trio of Interpol Agents: 2 Men and 1 Woman
Dead At 21	MTV/1994	Male Teenage Genius Part of Government Project with Female Sidekick
The Delphi Bureau	ABC/1972-73	Male Agent with Photographic Memory
The Door With No Name (AKA: Doorway To Danger)	NBC/ABC/1951-53	Male US Intelligence Agents
The Double Life of Henry Phyfe	ABC/1966	Male US Double Agent
Emma Brody (AKA The American Embassy)	FOX/2002	Female CIA Courier Involved with London Embassy Vice-Consul
Espionage	ITV/NBC/1963-64	Spy Stories Based on Actual Cases
The Equalizer	CBS/1985-89	Male Ex-government Agent Turned PI and Urban Vigilante
The Exile	CBS/1991-95	Male US Intelligence Agents Teamed with Male French Police Officer
The FBI	ABC/1965-1974	Cases Based on Real FBI files and Handled by Male Inspector
The Fellows (Late Of Room 17)	GRA/1967	Male Duo Track Criminals for The Home Office.
The Fifth Corner	NBC/1992	Male Spy With Amnesia
Five Fingers	NBC/1959-60	Male US Counterspy
Foreign Intrigue	SYN/1951-1955	Team of Male and Female Reporters Investigate Spies and Criminals
The Fugitive	ABC/1963-1967	Male Doctor Wrongly Convicted of Murder Runs to Clear His Identity
Fortune Hunter	FOX/1994	Former British Male Spy Employed by Intercept Corporation
Game, Set, Match	GRA/1988	British Male SIS Spy
Gavilan	NBC/1982-83	Male CIA Agent Turned Oceanographer
Gemini Man	NBC/1976	Male Agent Able To Turn Invisible
Get Smart	NBC/CBS/1965-70; FOX/1995	Male CONTROL Agent Often Paired with Female Agent on Missions
The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.	NBC/1966-67	Female Agent Paired with Male Partner
The Gray Ghost	SYN/1957	Confederate Spy
The Greatest American Hero	ABC/1981-83	Male FBI Agent Teamed with Male High School Teacher and Accompanied by One of their Girlfriends
Gunslinger	CBS/1961	Male US Cavalry, Undercover Agent

Table 1 Cont.

Hannay	ITV/1988-89	British Man Battles Espionage Agents of Imperial Germany
Hogan's Heroes	CBS/1965-1971	Male POWs Conduct Espionage Against the Germans during WWII
Honey West	ABC/1965-66	Female Detective with Spy-like Gadgets, Assisted by Male Partner
Hunter	SYN/1967-1969	Male Secret Agent Working in Australia
Hunter	CBS/1977	Male-Female Duo Works for US Government
The Hunter	CBS/NBC/1952,54	Male Intelligence Agent
I Led Three Lives	SYN/1953-56	Male FBI Counterspy
I Spy	SYN/1955-56	Male Spymaster Hosts Anthology of Spy Stories
I Spy	NBC/1965-68	Male US Intelligence Agents Pose as Tennis Pros
Intrigue	ABP/1966	Male Industrial Espionage Agent Assisted by Woman
The Invisible Man	ITV/CBS/1958-61	Male British Intelligence Agent
The Invisible Man	NBC/1975-76	Male Scientist Working as Corporate Espionage Agent
It Takes A Thief	ABC/1968-70	Male Thief Recruited as Government Agent
Jack of All Trades	USA/ 2000	Male 19th Century American Spy
Jane (AKA Jane in the Desert)	BBC/1982-84	Female WWII Undercover Agent
Jane Doe	HAL/2005+	Married Soccer Mom Secretly Returns to Work for Spy Agency
Jericho	CBS/1966-67	Male Trio of World War II Spies
The John Forsythe Show	NBC/1965-66	Male Duo of Undercover Agents
La Femme Nikita	USA/1997-2001	Reluctant Female Assassin
MacGyver	ABC/1985-92	Male Secret Agent with Scientific Skill
Major Del Conway Of The Flying Tigers	SYN/1951	Male Agent Poses as Airline Pilot
A Man Called Sloane	NBC/1979-80	Male Freelance Spy
A Man Called X	SYN/1955-56	Male US Intelligence Agent
Man From Interpol	NBC/1960	Male Espionage Agent for INTERPOL
The Man From U.N.C.L.E.	NBC/1964-68	Male Duo of U.N.C.L.E. Agents
Man In A Suitcase	ITV/ABC/1967-68	Discredited Male Spy Turns Private Eye
The Man In Room 17	GRA/1965-66	Male Espionage Agents Track Cases from Room 17
Man Trap	A-R/1956	Tales of Espionage from WWII
The Man Who Never Was	ABC/1966-67	Male US Intelligence Agent
Manhunt	ITV/1970	WWII French Resistance Fighters
The Mask of Janus (AKA Spies)	BBC/1965-66	Male Duo of British Agents

Table 1 Cont.

Masquerade	ABC/1983-84	Male Veteran Spy Recruits Civilians for Different Missions
Matt Helm	ABC/1975-76	Former US Intelligence Agent (Male) Turned Private Eye
MI-5 (Spooks)	BBC/A&E/2002+	Team of MI-5 Agents: 2 Men and 1 Woman
Mission: Impossible	CBS/1966-73	Team of IMF Agents. 4 Men and 1 Woman
Mission: Impossible	ABC/1988-90	Team of IMF Agents: 4 Men and 1 Woman
Mr. and Mrs. Smith	CBS/1996	Male and Female Spy Team Poses as Married Couple
Mr. Palfrey Of Westminster	ITV/1984-85	Male Spy Catcher
Monty Nash	SYN/1971	Male Undercover Agent for US Government
A Murder Of Quality	THA/1991	British Male Spy
The Name of the Game	NBC/1968-1971	Rotating Male Leads, Including Ex-FBI Agent
The New Adventures of Beans Baxter	FOX/1987-88	Male Teenage Spy
The New Avengers	ITV/CBS/1976-77	Experienced Male Agent Mentors New Male and Female Recruit
The Net	USA/1998-99	Female Computer Specialist Fights Computer Terrorists
Now and Again	CBS/1999-2000	Reluctant Male Agent Working for Covert Government Agency
O'hara, US Treasury	CBS/1971-1972	Male US Treasury Agent
The Omega Factor	BBC/1979	Trio of Department 7 Agents: 2 Men and 1 Woman
Orient Express	SYN/1952-1953	Espionage Anthology
O.S.S.	ITV/ABC/1957-58	Male O.S.S. Spy in WWII
Passport To Danger	SYN/1954-56	Male US Diplomatic Courier
Pentagon USA (AKA Pentagon Confidential)	1953	Based on the Files of US Army: Male Lead
The Pretender	NBC/1996-2000	Male Agent for The Centre
The Prisoner	ITV/CBS/1967-68	Male British Intelligence Agent Sequestered At Strange Village
The Professionals	ITV/1977-83	Male Duo of CI5 Agents
Quiller	BBC/1975	Male Intelligence Agent
The Rat Catchers	SYN/1965	Trio of Male British Intelligence Agents
The Return of the Saint	ITV/1978-1980	Update of The Saint, Starring Upper Class Gentleman
Sable	ABC/1987-88	Male Spy/Superhero Disguised as Children's Author
The Saint	ITV/NBC/1962-1969	Englishman Acts as Modern Day Robin Hood
The Sandbaggers	ITV/1978	Male MI6/SIS Agents
Scarecrow & Mrs. King	CBS/1983-87	Male Intelligence Agent Paired with a

Table 1 Cont.

		Civilian Mom/Housewife
Search	NBC/1972-73	Trio of Male Agents Employed by World Securities
Secret Adventures of Jules Verne	SCIFI/1999-2000	British Male Ex-Secret Service Agent Dragged into His Female Cousin's Spy Missions
Secret Agent Man	UPN 1999-2000	Trio of POISE Agents: 2 Men and 1 Woman
Secret Army	BBC/1977-79	Unit Rescues Captured Allied Bombers From Nazis. Stars Men and Women
Secret File, U.S.A.	SYN/1954-55	Male US Intelligence Agent
Secret Mission	A-R/1956	True War Tales About Women Spies
Secret Service	NBC/1992-93	Re-enactments of Secret Service Cases
The Sentimental Agent	ITC/1963	Business Man Fights Criminals
Seven Days	UPN/1998-2001	Male Ex-CIA Agent Travels In Time To Change Events
Shadow Of The Cloak	DUM/1951-52.	Male International Security Intelligence Agency
She Spies	NBC/USA 2002-2004	Three Female Convicts Work for Government Agency
Silent Force	ABC /1970-71	Trio of Undercover Agents: 2 Men and 1 Woman
The Six Million Dollar Man	ABC/1973-1978	Male Cyborg Works as US Intelligence Agent
Soldiers of Fortune	SYN/1955-56	Male Soldiers for Hire
Special Agent 7 (SA 7)	SYN/1958-59	Male Agent for the US Department Of Treasury
Spies	CBS/1987	Veteran Male Spy Works with Rookie Accountant-Agent
Spy Game	ABC/1997	Male-Female Pair of E.C.H.O Secret Agents
Spy-catcher	BBC/1959-61	Male Interrogator Sniffs Out Spies
Spyder's Web	ATV/1972	Three British Intelligence Agents: 2 Women and 1 Man
Starman	ABC/1986-87	Male Government Agent Investigates Aliens
Stingray	NBC/1986-87	Male Secret Agent
Tales Of The Gold Monkey	ABC/1982-83	American Male Pilot on Adventures
T.H.E. Cat	NBC/ 1966-67	Male Cat Burglar Becomes a Bodyguard
Three	UPN/1998	Secret Government Agency Blackmails Three Criminals to Work as Agents: 2 Men and 1 Woman
Today's FBI	ABC/1981-82	Predominantly Male FBI Agents Tackle Cases
The Top Secret Life Of Edgar Briggs	ITV/1974	Bungling Male British Secret Service Agent

Table 1 Cont.

Top Secret, U.S.A.	SYN/1955	Male Bureau of Science Information Agent Assisted by Female
Top Secret	ITV/1961	Male Lead
Under Cover	ABC/1991	Husband & Wife Spy Team Work for the National Intelligence Agency
Undermind	ABP/1965	Male Officer and His Sister-in-Law Fight Alien Subversives
Virgin Of The Secret Service	ITV/1968	Male Captain Serves the British Secret Service
VR.5	Fox 1995	Female Lineswoman Working for "The Committee"
Whiz Kids	CBS/1983-84	Teenage Whiz Kids—3 Male and 1 Female—Eventually Recruited by the Government for their Skills in Computers.
The Wild Wild West	CBS/1965-69	Two Male Secret Service Agents Work on the Frontier
Wildside	ABC/1985	Group of 5 Male Frontier Spies
Wish Me Luck	ITV/1987-90	Team of Female, British Spies In Nazi-Occupied France
The Wizard	CBS/1986-87	Male Toy Maker Paired with Male Government Agent
The World Of Tim Frazier	BBC/1960-61	Male Engineer Recruited As Spy
The X-Files	FOX/ 1993-2002	Male and Female Investigate Paranormal Activities for the FBI
The XYY Man	ITV/1976-77	Male Cat Burglar Recruited By British Intelligence

Table 2: List of British and American Spy Shows (1951-2006) with an Individual Female Lead (9 Total)

Alias	Honey West	La Femme Nikita
The Bionic Woman	Jane (AKA Jane in the Desert)	The Net
Emma Brody (AKA The American Embassy)	Jane Doe	VR.5

Table 3: List of British and American Spy Shows (1951-2006) Featuring an All-Female Team or Partnership (4 Total)

Code Name: Foxfire	She Spies
Secret Mission	Wish Me Luck

Table 4: List of British and American Spy Shows (1951-2006) with a Prominent Male-Female Partnership (18 Total)

The Avengers	Hunter	Spy Game
Biff Baker, U.S.A	Intrigue	Top Secret, U.S.A.
Cover Up	Mr. and Mrs. Smith	Under Cover
Dark Skies	The New Avengers	Undermind
Dead At 21	Scarecrow & Mrs. King	The X-Files
Get Smart	Secret Adventures of Jules	
The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.	Verne	

Table 5: List of British and American Spy Shows (1951-2006) Featuring a Co-Sexed Team of Three or More Agents (19 Total)

Acapulco H.E.A.T.	Foreign Intrigue	Silent Force
The Agency	The Greatest American Hero	Spyder's Web
The Champions	Department S	Secret Army
Codename	MI-5 (AKA Spooks)	Three
Cover Me: Based on the True	Mission: Impossible	24
Life of an FBI Family	The Omega Factor	Whiz Kids
Counterstrike	Secret Agent Man	

Table 6: List of British and American Spy Shows (1951-2006) Centering on a Male Lead (81 Total)

The Adventurer	Gemini Man	O.S.S.
The Adventures of Falcon	The Gray Ghost	Passport To Danger
Airwolf and Airwolf II	Gunslinger	Pentagon USA
American Dad!	Hannay	(AKA Pentagon Confidential)
Amos Burke, Secret Agent	Hunter	The Pretender
Assignment Vienna	The Hunter	The Prisoner
The Awful Mr. Goodall	I Led Three Lives	Quiller
The Baron	I Spy	The Return of the Saint
Behind Closed Doors	The Invisible Man	Sable
Blue Light	The Invisible Man	The Saint
Callan	It Takes A Thief	Secret File, U.S.A.
China Smith	Jack of All Trades	The Sentimental Agent
Colt .45	MacGyver	Seven Days
Cool Million	Major Del Conway Of The	Shadow Of The Cloak

Table 6 Cont.

Counterspy
Crusader
Danger Man (AKA Secret Agent)
Dangerous Assignment
The Delphi Bureau
The Double Life of Henry Phyfe
The Equalizer
The FBI
The Fifth Corner
Five Fingers
The Fugitive
Fortune Hunter
Game, Set, Match
Gavilan
Flying Tigers
A Man Called Sloane
A Man Called X
Man From Interpol
Man In A Suitcase
The Man Who Never Was
Masquerade
Matt Helm
Mr. Palfrey Of Westminster
Monty Nash
A Murder Of Quality
The New Adventures of Beans Baxter
Now and Again
O'Hara, US Treasury
The Six Million Dollar Man
Special Agent 7 (SA 7)
Spy-catcher
Starman
Stingray
Tales Of The Gold Monkey
T.H.E. Cat
The Top Secret Life Of Edgar Briggs
Top Secret
24
Virgin Of The Secret Service
The World Of Tim Frazier
The XYY Man

Table 7: List of British and American Spy Shows (1951-2006) Featuring an All-Male Partnership or Team (27 Total)

Adderly
Air America
The Barbary Coast
Counterthrust
Cowboy G-Men
The Door With No Name (AKA: Doorway To Danger)
The Exile
The Fellows (Late Of Room 17)
Hogan's Heroes
I Spy
Jericho
The John Forsythe Show
The Man From U.N.C.L.E.
The Man In Room 17
The Mask of Janus (AKA Spies)
The Name of the Game
The Professionals
The Rat Catchers
The Sandbaggers
Search
Soldiers of Fortune
Spies
Today's FBI
Top Secret
The Wild Wild West
Wildside
The Wizard

Table 8: List of Spy Shows (1951-2006) with a Prominent, American, Female Character (Listed by Decade)

1950s (3)
Biff Baker, U.S.A
Foreign Intrigue
Top Secret, U.S.A.

1960s (5)
Get Smart
The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.
Honey West
Hunter
Mission: Impossible

1970s (2)
The Bionic Woman
Silent Force (unknown episode run)

1980s (6)
Code Name: Foxfire *
Cover Up
The Greatest American Hero
Mission: Impossible
Scarecrow & Mrs. King
Whiz Kids *

1990s (13)
Acapulco H.E.A.T.
Counterstrike
Dark Skies
Dead At 21 *
La Femme Nikita
Mr. and Mrs. Smith*
The Net
Secret Agent Man *
Spy Game *
Three *
Under Cover *
VR.5 *
The X-Files

2000s (7)
24
The Agency
Alias
Cover Me: Based on the True Life of an FBI Family
Emma Brody *
Jane Doe
She Spies

*Denotes shows that ran for less than 20 episodes

NOTES

[1] In the CIA, spies are referred to as operatives whereas the term agent denotes someone from whom the operative acquires information. In popular culture, however, the term agent and operative are used interchangeably and thus are used so here.

[2] This statistic is based on the 162 spy programs listed in the appendix, Table 1.

[3] I want to be clear that I am not claiming that *Codename: Foxfire* was the first spy television show to ever feature a woman of color in a leading role. Information on both the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com) and tv.com, however, suggests that this show was one of the first, if not the first, of the 162 programs used in this study to feature a woman of color in a leading role. It should also be noted that this section only examined women who appeared in regular, leading roles. Thus actresses such as the Latina Mia Maestro, who played an Argentinean operative and Sydney Bristow's half-sister in seasons four and five of *Alias,* were not considered as women of color in major roles even though they may have significantly factored into a narrative for a short period of time.

[4] See, for example, Julie Wheelwright's article "Poisoned Honey: The Myth of Women in Espionage," Christine Bold's "Under the Very Skirts of Britannia: Re-Reading Women in the James Bond Novels," and less scholarly books such as *Film Fatales* by Tom Lisanti and Louis Paul.

[5] See appendix.

[6] Philbrick's memoir reached number seven on the *New York Times'* Best Sellers Chart in the General category.

[7] Over the course of the series, the language of this opening sequence varied slightly. The particular opening quoted here is from the 1954-55 season.

[8] For a further discussion of these ideas, see May and Gilbert.

[9] For a book length study that addresses this issue, see Leibman's *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television.*

[10] See, for instance, Kessler's *Clever Girl: Elizabeth Bentley, The Spy who Ushered in the McCarthy Era* and Philipson's *Ethel Rosenberg: Beyond the Myths.*

[11] From 1962-1967, the James Bond franchise had released *Dr. No* (1962), *From Russia with Love* (1963), *Goldfinger* (1964), *Thunderball* (1965), and *You Only Live Twice* (1967), and all grossed large box office sums for their day. *Dr. No* earned 60 million pounds worldwide (Pfeiffer and Worrall 21), *From Russia with Love* grossed $78.9 million worldwide (31), while *Goldfinger* raked in $125 million worldwide (43), *Thunderball* $141 million, and *You Only Live Twice* $111.6 million (65).

[12] Stefanie Powers was born in Hollywood to Polish parents and attributes her broad "a's" to the fact that she learned to speak Polish before she learned to speak English.

[13] Of course, not all women during the fifties subscribed to the feminine mystique, as evidenced by the fact that more women entered the paid-labor force than ever before in U.S. history, and the fact that many women, especially those of color and from the lower-working class, had long been forced to work to make ends meet. However, as Susan Douglas notes, the feminine mystique nevertheless had a lasting effect in that it divided women against themselves, "pulling them between idealized images of domestic bliss and the more gritty reality of their own lives" which often required women to not only work outside the home but to tend to almost all of the house and childcare tasks inside it (55). According to Douglas, this stress had a profound effect on these women's daughters as they came of age, and they began searching the culture for images that suggested they could aspire to be something other than a happily contained housewife.

[14] See, for example, Dow's *Prime Time Feminism.*

[15] For photos and a description of this bionic beauty salon, see <http://www.swfigures.com/swf/Vintage(NonStarWars)ActionFigures03(BionicMan-Woman).htm> Viewed February 22, 2007.

[16] These shows were called *The CIA* and *Quarell,* but neither made it to air.

[17] The synopses for these three shows were taken from Britton's *Spy Television.*

[18] Examples of *SMK*'s fan websites in 2006 included smkfans.com, smkzone.com, and smkutopia.brucefan.net.

[19] For example, increased military action in Nicaragua and Afghanistan during the early part of the decade marked the end of American-Soviet détente, and at least three "flare-ups" occurred in the fall of 1983 alone. The first took place in September when the Soviet Union shot down a Korean commercial airliner which had accidentally violated its airspace. The action killed all 269 people on board the New York to

Seoul flight, pushing American-Soviet relations to a new low. Just a few weeks later, Grenada's Marxist-Leninist leader, Maurice Bishop, was ousted and then executed by the more hard-line members of his own New Jewel Movement. In response to the takeover, the U.S. and six Caribbean nations carried out Operation Urgent Fury, which successfully captured the leaders of the Communist coup d'etat. And, finally, during early November, NATO carried out ABLE ARCHER 83, a war game which spanned the continent of Europe and simulated a coordinated nuclear release. Although it did not involve actual troop or weapons movements, the exercise did incorporate radio silences, participation by heads of state, and a simulated DEFCON 1 nuclear alert, leading some in the USSR to believe ABLE ARCHER 83 was a genuine nuclear strike.

[20] The Beirut high-jacking refers to the takeover of TWA flight 847, which was forced to land in Beirut, Lebanon, where the hijackers held the plane for 17 days, demanding the release of several Shiite Muslim prisoners held in Israeli-controlled prisons.

[21] For scholarship addressing the quasi-feminist nature of *Charlie's Angles*, see David Roger Coon and "Semi-Tough: Emma Peel, Charlie's Angels, the Bionic Woman and Other Wanna-Bes" in Inness' *Tough Girls*.

[22] This was likely a dilemma for Surnow and Cochran, as well, since *Nikita* attracted a predominantly adult audience, skewed more toward men than women (Dempsey), but the show, which aired on cable, also had more leeway that allowed its creators to push the envelope in regards to established television conventions.

[23] *Lost* alone features characters from Korea, the U.S., Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Iraq, and the former Soviet bloc, while *Heroes* features lead characters from Japan, the United States and India, among others.

[24] This list of programs may be viewed at <http://www.tvacres.com/occup_espionage.htm>

[25] These books were primarily comprised of Wesley Britton's *Spy Television*, Michael Kackman's *Citizen Spy*, Fred MacDonald's *Television and the Red Menace*, John Cawelti and Bruce Rosenberg's *Spy Story*, and Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh's *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows 1946-Present*

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