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The Politics of Hit Girl

BY Women and Hollywood

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There aren't many times when I go to a movie and I leave speechless. But that did happen to me recently when I saw the film *Kick Ass*. For those of you that don't know, the film is about an average to slightly nerdy comic book loving kid who decides that he can be his own type of superhero. He dresses up in a wet suit and heads out into the street to save some people. The film is based on the comic book by Mark Millar, is written by Jane Goldman and

Matthew Vaughn (the pair the brought us the underappreciated *Stardust*) and directed by Vaughn.

Now you ask why did Melissa Silverstein of *Women & Hollywood* a) want to even see this film; and b) what about it could have made her speechless?

The answer is *Hit Girl*. (Alert: there will be spoilers below)

First, let's be clear. This is a movie for adults. If your kid wants to see it, say no.

Hit Girl is a character that I have never seen on screen before. She is an 11 year old girl assassin. This girl played amazingly by Chloe Grace Moretz is a walking destruction machine. She shoots, she stabs, she bayonets. She does things on screen that literally left my mouth agape.

FYI- no studio would touch this movie. They loved it but said you gotta take out *Hit Girl*. No one would finance a film with an 11 year old girl killer. Those movies are just not made in Hollywood.

The thing about *Hit Girl* is not just that she is a brutal and ruthless killer. She enjoys it. Way. Too. Much.



And the language. I really thought there were language limits but Hit Girl pushes those boundaries, and quite frankly, after this movie I don't think there are any language barriers left. They've been trampled by an 11-year-old girl. Never before have I heard the c-word (yes, that word) uttered by a girl describing men.

While I was horrified at the moment I have to admit that I smiled at the same time because she was doing something onscreen I never thought I would see. A girl kicking ass.

Literally.

So I am conflicted. The thing about Hit Girl as Jane Goldman said to me in an interview and I agree with, is that because she is 11 the violence is not sexualized. So much of violence we see in films is perpetrated on women because they are women. Hit Girl kills because that's what her daddy (Nicholas Cage) taught her to do (let's not get into the bad parenting here.) You know you're into different territory when the first scene you see of your heroine is her father teaching her take a bullet in a vest.



The question I've been asking myself since I saw the film is does Hit Girl movie us forward or backward? I don't really have a final answer. The pros are that she is actually the hero of the film. She saves everyone and kills all the bad guys. The last time I saw that was...well...never. The actress who plays Hit Girl Chloe Grace Moretz wanted to play an Angelina Jolie type action role. This is the type of part she told her agents to find according to a [story](#) in the NY Times: "You know, like an action hero, woman empowerment, awesome, take-charge leading role." It warms my heart that young actress is interested in playing these kinds of parts, that they want to for lack of a better word, kick ass is cool. Also, the fact that all these guys are destroyed by a girl never becomes an issue. There's no sexist bullshit about guys being killed by a girl. She comes and wreaks havoc and all these guys want to do is survive.

The cons are the language and the fact that she uses her "girlness" to disarm people (because, really who



would think a little girl could kick your ass?])

We would never be having this whole conversation about Hit Girl if the character would have been Hit Boy. No one would care in the same if a 11-year-old boy said the c-word. I'd probably just dismiss it as another sexist movie and character and move on.

I'm still very conflicted about this. I don't know if this is progress or if this is setting up girls in a very bad way. But one thing I do know is that with all the buzz about the film surrounding the film I am hoping that the sequel will be called Hit Girl instead of Kick Ass 2.