

I chose to examine the 2005 movie “Mr. and Mrs. Smith.” The actors are Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, and I chose to look at this movie in particular because not only is there a lot of sex and violence combined, but the actors are a large part of popular culture today. They are featured in every tabloid magazine, and this movie was supposedly the start of their very public relationship. The characters are John and Jane Smith and they play married assassins who do not know that each other are contracted killers. They are in an unhappy marriage until they are hired to kill each other. They try to kill each other in violent, action filled scenes and in the end they fall in love again, which results in more sex and violence.

The scenes in the movie where Jane is killing people show her wearing very scandalous clothing and other’s, where she is acting like a suburban housewife, show her wearing conservative sweaters and pearls. Most of the movie shows her dressed in close to nothing. Mayer (2005) says “that pornography has become part of mainstream media. Referring to the increasingly prominent displays of sexuality and the body in the U.S. popular culture, news stories have proclaimed a new trend that they call ‘new nudity,’ ‘soft core,’ and ‘post feminist’” (p. 305). Mayer went on to say that *Girls Gone Wild* could be the cause of this.

This movie is not considered pornographic and it falls under Mayer’s definition of “sex sells.” Mayer writes, “if sex does sell, leaving aside for now the question of audiences that are effaced by this ‘sex sells’ equation, then critical media scholars must start asking now not only what kind of sex sells, but also who sells, how, within which structures, and under which conditions.” In this text two very popular and beautiful actors are doing the selling. They are doing it through the sex scenes and scandalous clothing in a violent, B rated movie.

They use violence against each other as well as against the people that they are contracted to kill. The first person that Jane Smith kills is a man that is selling guns to bad people. That is the only information we are given about him in the movie. I am also under the impression that she might work for the government, because she is informed about the person or people she is hired to kill when she gets a call from a male voice on the phone who is referred to as father. John and Jane work for two different agencies and we are never told who John works for.

By the end of the movie the companies who they work for have hired a SWAT team to kill them both. Jane and John have made up and decide to fight the SWAT team together and that gun fight results in many dead bodies. Grindstaff and DeLuca (2004) wrote, "In this perversion of justice and law...we have dueling bodies, stripped of their human agency (309)." This quote applies to the movie because John and Jane go from married and unhappy to trying to kill each other. They lose their human side for part of the movie and they take direction from the law or their bosses.

Grindstaff and De Luca (2004) wrote, "Pearl's decapitated body testifies to the power of the NMRPS" (p. 310). The fact that Jane and John could not kill each other demonstrates that they are evenly matched and both powerful. All of the dead bodies or all of the people that they kill represent their power as assassins as well. Even though Jane and John cannot fit the description of the terrorists in the Grindstaff and De Luca publication, they are similar because they are following the orders of a higher power. The terrorists in Iraq have been told, by someone more powerful than themselves, to fight against American occupation. Their goal was to free the prisoners that are being held in the Guantanamo Bay prison. Jane and John's goal is to stay alive and fight against the people who are trying to kill them. Daniel Pearl is described as

“heroic” by a fellow journalist in the article and Jane and John Smith can also be described as heroic for saving each other’s life in the end.

The violence shown in this movie is typical for many modern action movies. There is not a lot of blood and gore, but there are a lot of bodies and it is implied that many people have died because of these two assassins. *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* is rated PG 13 meaning it is suitable for children who are thirteen and over. The rating demonstrates that our society has evolved and changed its standards when it decides what is considered violent and what is not.