

SUN SHOWBIZ

SALTY TALK

GERARDO GARCIA/REUTERS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Angelina Jolie is a woman wanted, hunted and breathlessly pursued.

Never mind what happens in her new thriller, *Salt*, about a rogue CIA operative on the run.

As the 35-year-old Oscar winner observes, she knows a thing or two about being tracked relentlessly.

"The funny thing is, Salt and I were doing the same thing — which is just trying to keep our heads down and get out of there," Jolie



KEVIN WILLIAMSON
Movies

says, recalling the frenzied chase sequences that sent her racing through the streets of the U.S. capitol. Just out of frame? Hundreds of cordoned-off paparazzi.

In the film, which opens July 23, she stars as Evelyn Salt, an American spy

accused — perhaps wrongly, perhaps correctly — of being a Russian sleeper agent.

For Jolie, though, her attraction to the material wasn't nearly as complicated as her anti-heroine's motivations.

As she explains during interviews at the Ritz-Carlton, she always wanted to make a Bond movie; she just didn't want to be a Bond girl.

"(Sony executive Amy Pascal) had me in for lunch and asked me about doing

a Bond movie and I said, 'I want to play Bond.' "

A few years later, Pascal offered Jolie the script for *Salt*. There was just one catch. "She said, 'His name is Edwin.' "

That's because the movie had been developed as a Tom Cruise vehicle. When he dropped out, *Salt* quickly received a sex change. But, notes Jolie, that didn't mean he/she was softened. While most people would assume Salt would be "made lighter or

more loving, we kind of went in the opposite direction."

For example, while the male incarnation had a wife and kid, Jolie's version is childless.

"As a woman, you'd wonder why I wasn't taking care of the child or taking the child with me. It would become a film about me and a child."

Off-screen, of course, Jolie is one of the most famous moms on the planet. She and Brad Pitt are the parents of six

children — three adopted, three biological, ranging in age from eight to two.

"I've become more patient and more silly," she says of motherhood. "I wake up with an immediate constant reminder of exactly what's important, so having children, I'm never thrown from that. They're very grounding and they keep you on track with the pleasures of life and joys."

How do she and Pitt juggle the needs of six youngsters? "You just try

Salt arrives in
theatres July 23



Much like her new role as rogue CIA agent Salt, Angelina Jolie says she knows how it is to be hunted

to feel them. At different times, different ones need you. And if you listen to them, because there's two of us, we're able to spread the attention around."

Nor do the kids get away with playing their parents against each other, she adds. "We're a united front."

As for leaving home to go kill a lot of people in *Salt*, she confesses to one surreal moment on set. "I hadn't worked for a year and a half and I'd been home and had babies and my first day back, I thought, 'What am I doing? I'm somebody's mother.'"

Then again, she says, "I met Brad doing stunts together (on *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*) so we're kind of that family. It's almost expected of mom to go out and do something like that."

Besides, there's no better prep for an action film than chasing after toddlers, apparently. "The twins are going in different directions at the same time. We've gated off a lot of the rooms in the house."

What hasn't changed about Jolie since she started a family is her fearlessness, says *Salt* director Phillip Noyce, who collaborated with Jolie on 1999's *The Bone Collector*.

"When she was young, she didn't know any better, so she was absolutely fearless. She'd try anything ... One thing I've observed is that when people get to the top they get conservative in their choices. They are protecting themselves. Not Angelina. She still wanted to try anything, whether it was physical or psychological." Nor, he says, was the paparazzi a distraction.

"Strangely she seems to have accommodated that within her life," he says. "All the microscopic examination of her private life never intruded on to the set."

Indeed, he was more concerned with the number of stunts she wanted to do herself. "I was fearful — more than she was," he says.

The results, from hand-to-hand combat scenes to



Clockwise from left: Angelina Jolie plays Evelyn Salt (a role that was originally developed for Tom Cruise) — a CIA operative who is on the run after she's accused of being a Russian spy; Salt is led away by authorities; Salt fires off a weapon at her assailants; and Jolie on the cover of the latest issue of Parade.

white-knuckle wire-work, should further confirm Jolie's bankability as an action star.

What is it about Jolie that makes her a success in the otherwise male-dominated genre?

"Attitude," says producer Lorenzo di Bonaventura. "She's such a good actress she can convey so many emotions."

But also, he adds, Jolie herself is tough, as evidenced by her humanitarian work in impoverished countries — and as he learned collaborating with her.

"What's great about working with her is, if you didn't butt heads with her, I don't think she'd have a lot of respect for you."

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Canadian exclusive: Jolie not retiring

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In the espionage yarn *Salt*, everyone wants to retire Angelina Jolie.

Which is, in secret agent circles, a pleasant way of saying they're trying to kill her.

Off-screen, while the consequences aren't as sinister or permanent, there's buzz aplenty about her supposed pending retirement.

But fans — and the paparazzi — can relax. Jolie says while she may make fewer films at some point — she muses about living in

Africa and spending more time flying planes — she isn't mothballing her career.

Not that she's surprised, really, at the attention, generated by a *Vanity Fair* cover story that asked, "Farewell, Angelina?"

"I'm used to it," she tells QMI Agency in a Canadian newspaper exclusive. "I just wonder which thing it's going to be. I'm going into a round of press, I wonder which thing is going to be blown out of proportion. And this one happens to be some idea of retirement, which isn't true."

Also relieved at this news?

Hollywood, which in Jolie has not just the world's biggest star, but the only actress who can carry an action film.

"I've been lucky to be able to do drama and then jump into some crazy action movie. That audiences have let me do both is a big deal."

And *Salt*, opening July 23, allowed her to straddle both genres. "I liked the idea that (Salt) has a good side to her and a bad side. I wanted to play a bad guy and she was questionable."

At the same time, however, she knows her limits, she says. This is why she doesn't

make comedies.

"There are so many wonderful comedic actresses that are better at me than me at those jobs, it's better they take them. I'd love to try sometimes, but I think I'm kind of the straight man. I'm not that funny."

We might have to disagree. When it's noted she divides her time between humanitarian causes in real life and gunning down people in her films, she smiles. "I only kill bad people, though, so it's kind of the same thing."

— Kevin Williamson