

## Interview: Sienna Miller on the Home Front in ‘American Sniper’

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CHICAGO – Sienna Miller creates illumination that a movie screen never forgets. From her early roles in “Alfie” and “Factory Girl,” to the more recent “Foxcatcher” and “American Sniper,” Miller adds an extra level of truth that generates expressive and notable characteristics to the roles that she portrays.

In “American Sniper,” Miller portrays the real-life Taya Kyle, wife of military man Chris Kyle. Chris is the subject of the film’s title, a trained Navy Seal who has the distinction of being the marksman who had the most “kills” of any sniper in American war history. In the film, Sienna Miller represents the home front for Chris Kyle, the wife that is waiting for his adjustment to civilian life. Like her previous roles, Miller finds the nuance in Taya, and produces the conflict that gives no easy answers to a warrior without a war.



Sienna Miller Rehearses a Scene for Director Clint Eastwood (right) for ‘American Sniper’

*Photo credit: Warner Bros.*

Sienna Miller was born in the United States, but was raised in London. After studying at the Lee Strasberg Institute in New York City, she made her film debut in 2001 with “South Kensington.” Three years later, she co-starred with Jude Law in “Alfie,” and established a relationship with Law that was highly scrutinized by the English tabloid paparazzi. Besides portraying Taya Kyle, Miller has also played real people in “Factory Girl” (Andy Warhol muse Edie Sedgwick), in the HBO movie “The Girl” (Tippi Hedren) and in the recent “Foxcatcher” (Nancy Schultz, wife of wrestler David Schultz).

HollywoodChicago.com interviewed Sienna Miller during a recent promotional tour for “American Sniper.”



**HollywoodChicago.com:** What do you think your character says about the military wife in our modern definition regarding the type of war that is fought in the film?

**Sienna Miller:** I don't think she is a representation of every military wife, I think she had a unique experience, and her husband is unique to a certain degree. For anyone who has had a loved one in acts of service, it's a really complicated position to be in, and I have huge empathy for those men and women – who are both keeping the home together and not knowing whether their partner will survive – that's a very difficult position to be in. Not only should we be grateful for those in service, but we should also be grateful for those left behind who are keeping it all together.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What part or personality trait felt closest to you regarding Taya, how did you best relate to the circumstance of her situation?

**Miller:** We have a similar personality, actually. She's funny, energetic and open, even though she's changed a bit as a result of her experience. Even though I was portraying her at a completely different time in her life, I understood her energy.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Since you were raised in Britain, what do you find most intriguing about the type of American woman you portrayed, and – in your observation – how do you think they are most different culturally or attitude-wise than their British counterparts?

**Miller:** I couldn't have been in a further removed culture than the one I was raised in, in portraying Taya. Her husband Chris was a Texan through and through, and was raised in a gun sensibility and atmosphere, which I cannot imagine. At the same time, I do understand that we're all human, and Britain is a strong and somewhat arrogant culture, and the way that we do things are set in stone. It's almost that way in Texas, but Taya was from Oregon, and was more liberal and open.



Sienna Miller as Edie Sedgwick in 'Factory Girl'

*Photo credit: The Weinstein Company*

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You've been on enough film sets, I think, to answer this question. What did you privately observe about Clint Eastwood and the way he works that felt different to you than any other set you've been on?

**Miller:** He's incredibly laid back, and he doesn't rehearse. There is very little conversation about back story or mood - he wants you to show up and respond to what is in front of you, and he has a very strong nose for authenticity. He's never going to let you be anything except honest.

He never says 'action,' because he did so many westerns, and the word 'action' would make the horses bolt. He'll just say 'okay,' and when he's done he just says, 'stop.' It's Clint Eastwood, so every day on that set was Christmas Day.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** In the interaction with Bradley Cooper as Chris Kyle, what did you find out about the real Chris Kyle from Taya that you think Cooper picked up on the most in his portrayal?

**Miller:** Bradley was flawless throughout. Taya saw the film last week and said she just spent two hours with her husband. I can't really select one thing because Bradley absolutely morphed into the character. In fact, he never broke character during the filming. I got to know his interpretation of Chris Kyle before I got to meet Bradley. Every single aspect of him was completely transformed, I thought he did an incredible job.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Much of this story deals with the homecoming problems that Chris Kyle had in his life. What do you believe society

owes the soldier that defends or represents a country in war?

**Miller:** It must be a really difficult thing to be in a high octane situation, like the war we've been involved in recently, and to make decisions that are morally complicated. In combination, PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] or any form of depression in adjusting afterward is really stigmatized, it seems un-masculine or some kind of failure. To come back from a situation where any moment you could be killed will change anybody, and coming back or adjusting to real life is going to be hard. We need to be more honest about that circumstance, and work to stigmatize it less.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Since you also are a actress who has done some modeling, what difficulties did you relate regarding her life when portraying Edie Sedgwick in "Factory Girl," in regards to how she used and abused herself through that 1960s scene?



Sienna Miller in Chicago, November 19th, 2014

Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

**Miller:** I haven't had too many negative experiences, fortunately. Edie's situation was a Den of Iniquity, and I think Andy Warhol gathered these broken winged people and watched them destroy themselves, which in turn was form of art for him.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Did you have a similar period in your life when it was one big party?

**Miller:** I definitely enjoyed my younger days. I had my fun, but not as much as Edie indulged in.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You also portrayed actress Tippi Hedren in "The Girl." What aspect of Ms. Hedren kept coming through to you as you did research on the part with her, and how did you fold that into your performance?

**Miller:** She's one of the most elegant women I've ever met, and I can be a bit of a klutz. So physically to represent her I had to work on my poise. That's where I began with her character.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Have you experienced any of the type of sexual harassment that was depicted between Hedren and Alfred Hitchcock in the film?

**Miller:** Yes I have, and I think it's still a very unbalanced world. Being a mother, and knowing how much I can get done in a day, if women ruled the world we could possibly get to a three day week. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You also have been a target for tabloid newspapers in the past. What do you find pathetic about their predatory nature?

**Miller:** Well, it's more fortunate now, because I did follow up with lawsuits in England, and I managed to get a law passed against them. For the past six years, it's been illegal for them to sit outside my house or follow me in cars. It's really hard to remember how it was now, because my life is so different. And the world has changed with Instagram and Twitter. People in the same situation can be more in charge of their own image - even though I don't practice social media. It was very hard when it was out of my hands at that time.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Finally, since you are such a distinct performer, what is the best piece of advice you've ever received regarding acting, and how do you blend it into your performance method?

**Miller:** I don't want to over think it, and it's hard to do when in the situation, but for me it's all about telling the truth. You can get bogged down in tics, and idiosyncrasies, and character, so for me the most effective acting is just when someone is honest. What I strive for is to be as real as possible.

*"American Sniper" opens everywhere on January 16th. Featuring Bradley Cooper, Sienna Miller, Kyle Gallner and Ben Reed. Screenplay*

adapted by Jason Hall. Directed by Clint Eastwood. Rated “R”



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