

Transcript of *What'sHerName* Episode 86: [THE PIRATE Ching Shih](#)

00:00 - 05:40

Olivia Meikle: Hi Katie!

Katie Nelson: Hi Olivia!

OM: There is a category of women who we have not covered at all on this podcast yet.

KN: Oh! Well, I'm sure there's like 100...

OM: There's many, yes. But this particular category - anyone who knows our family, I think, would have expected us to talk about within, like... the first 3 episodes. [laughter] So, having said that - *who's missing?*

KN: Who's missing? Hmmm...

OM: Who is our family uniquely obsessed with?

KN: Ohhhh! We're doing a pirate?!

OM: We're doing a pirate!

KN: Yesss! Pirate queen?!

OM: She is a pirate queen. She's *not* the pirate queen that I think *you* probably have 'called' for your own... [laughter]

KN: Right, I mean she's my favorite person in history - [Grace O'Malley](#). She's coming.

OM: Yeah. So I'm not stealing Grace O'Malley

KN: Okay, good.

OM: because I didn't want you to beat me up.

KN: [laughs] Okay. Good.

OM: Instead, we're doing *my* favorite pirate queen.

KN: Ohhhh. Oh, oh, oh, can I guess?

OM: Yes

KN: Ching Shih?!

OM: Yes!

KN: [gasps] Yay! I am so excited for this. I've been meaning to learn more about her. I only know the basics, and every time I think about her, I'm like, "*This lady! Incredible.*"

OM: She is incredible.

KN: Although - I mean I'm delighted, *delighted*, that we're doing a pirate... I mean, is she *too* famous for our podcast?

OM: I thought you might say that.

KN: Okay.

OM: So I checked!

KN: You checked?

OM: I checked. You know, we sort of have this unofficial rule: if more than, like, 2 out of 10 people have heard of a woman, then she's too famous to do an episode on, right?

KN: Yeah.

OM: And also, we are notoriously bad at knowing who is and isn't 'known,' being enormous women's history nerds who think that *everyone* is known. [laughter] So I tested it out and got some people on the street to see if they knew Ching Shih.

KN: Fun!

[ambient street noise]

OM (to strangers on the street): Hey, could you name some pirates for me?

Stranger 1: Uhh, Blackbeard, Captain Kidd...

Stranger 2: ...Blackbeard?

Stranger 3: Blackbeard... uh, I can't remember...

Stranger 4: Blackbeard, Captain Jack Sparrow, Elizabeth Swan...

OM (to S4): *Real* pirates

S4: Oh. [laughs] Captain Kidd?

OM (to S4 and S5): Have you ever heard of Ching Shih?

S4 and S5: No.

Stranger 6: I knew women pirates - cuz we had a book on women pirates...

OM (to S6): Ooh! Can you name some of them?

S6: No, because I don't recall them! [laughing]

Stranger 7: I definitely read articles on them at school... [continues unintelligibly]

Stranger 8: Blackbeard... I can name fictional pirates...? [laughter]

OM: (to S8) Can you think of any women pirates?

S8: Definitely not. If there are any, I would assume there's very little.

S9: [young child's voice] ...I don't know a lot about pirates.

05:40 - 10:13

KN: Whoa!

OM: So that answers that. We can officially talk about her. But even if she *was* more well known, I think I would still do an episode, because even though her name is getting more well known -

KN: Right, yeah, she is having a real rebirth right now, especially once you learn to recognize her by all her different names. Then you're like, *Oh, this is all the same woman that everybody's talking about.* [laughs]

OM: Yep. She's also known as Zheng Yi Sao, Shi Yang, Shi Xianggu, Ching Shih ["shuh"], or Ching Shih ["shee"]. She has *a lot* of names.

KN: Hm!

OM: And you know, we've noticed that in our Chinese episodes - [Wu Zhao](#), who is known by many different names, none of which were *actually* her name...

KN: Yeah.

OM: You know, she's named after the gate where she got married, or [laughter] the place where her father came from. I'm gonna say Ching Shih [shuh] because that's the way that it 'goes' in my head with my Mandarin-speaking. But she is mostly called Ching Shih [shee] in the western world.

KN: Okay, I'll say Ching Shih [shee].

OM: People *maybe* know her name, but they don't know any of the details of her life. People just kind of know the bare basics.

KN: Like me!

OM: Yeah. And she is completely fascinating.

KN: Yayyyy.

[theme music]

OM: I'm Olivia Meikle.

KN: And I'm Katie Nelson.

OM: And this is *What'sHerName*

KN: Fascinating women you've never heard of.

[theme music]

OM: My guest is *also* completely fascinating and very exciting.

Jamie Goodall: My name is [Dr. Jamie Goodall](#), and I'm a staff historian at the US Army Center of Military History, and previously I taught for about four or five years at Stevenson University, which is just outside of Baltimore, Maryland. I focused particularly on pirates of the Atlantic World, but I did a [National Geographic bookazine](#), which brought me into pirates throughout the globe, which was a really interesting deep dive that I hadn't done before.

OM (to KN): The author of [Pirates of the Chesapeake Bay](#) and...

KN: Oh!

OM: that really fantastic [National Geographic on pirates](#) that came out a few months ago, if anyone saw that.

KN: Fun! Cool!

OM: It's amazing. You should absolutely go get it. She also has two more books on pirates and piracy coming out in the next two years. Her twitter feed is an amazing *treasure trove* of pirate information -

KN: Oh, wow.

OM: She's basically the go-to expert on all things Pirate right now.

KN: How fun!

OM: And I'm a huge fan of her work, so I was really excited to talk to her.

First, let's talk about that name that came up a lot in my 'woman on the street' interviews: [Blackbeard](#).

KN: Yeah.

OM: Probably the most famous pirate, at least in the western world. And he was pretty impressive.

KN: Right.

OM: Blackbeard commanded four ships, he was in charge of over 300 pirates, and absolutely ruled the seas as a pirate for two years. Impressive stuff. He was the terror of the high seas. There's a reason that he is super famous.

KN: Sure, flaming beard, and all.

OM: Ching Shih - also pretty impressive. She commanded *1,800 ships*...

KN: Uhhh

OM: and about 70,000 pirates...

KN: [laughs] Okay

OM: and was basically in charge of the entire Pirate Confederation of the South China Sea for ten years. Soooo it *totally* makes sense that she's not as famous as Blackbeard.

KN: [laughs] She didn't have a flaming beard. What can I say?

OM: She didn't have a flaming beard. [laughs] She was, quite literally, the *most powerful pirate in the history of the world*. And we should probably know her story a little better than we do. So let's meet her!

Jamie Goodall: I came across Ching Shih when I was researching women pirates in general, and I had never heard of her before. And probably part of that has to do with the fact that we're very Anglo-centric when it comes to piracy. We tend to focus on the more famous English pirates who operated in the Atlantic world, and sometimes they operated in the Indian Ocean, but we just have this very eurocentric view of piracy. I came across her again when I was working on the *National Geographic* magazine.

[8:50 - 13:34]

Jamie Goodall: She was born approximately 1775 in Guangdong, and she was active primarily in the early 1800's.

KN: And the time period when she gets started, like - it's later than the Golden Age of Piracy, right? The Golden Age of Piracy is over. And maybe that's why people don't really think about her as a pirate? because she's like 100 years after everybody else?

OM: Well, the Golden Age of Piracy in the west might be over...

KN: Aha!

OM: But in the East, it is

KN: it's just getting started!

OM: at its peak, yeah. It is the *best* time to be a pirate in Asia, when she is coming up in the ranks.

Jamie Goodall: Pirates were pretty active throughout the South China Seas from about the mid to late eighteenth century into the twentieth century. Many of the pirates who operated in this region were actually trained by the Tây Sơn dynasty of Vietnam. And Vietnam is going to be very important to Ching Shih, as we'll see.

[music]

OM (to KN): Ching Shih started from pretty humble beginnings.

KN: Don't they always. [pause] Well, no, they don't always, actually.

OM: They don't always - there are some princesses... [laughter] But we are pretty sure that she started pretty low. As far as we can tell, Ching Shih began her career as a Cantonese sex worker.

KN: Hm!

Jamie Goodall: Some say that her family sold her into sex work as a means of supplementing the family income.

OM (to KN): She may have been one of the [Tanka people](#), who are an ethnic minority group in Southern China who lived, and still do often live, on junks - boats - all along the coasts of China and South Asia. And are mostly fishermen. And while she is working in this - what may have been a floating brothel...

Jamie Goodall: In 1801, as a sex worker, is when she met Zheng Yi, who was a notorious pirate. He fell immediately in love with her, at least according to legend, and decided that he wanted to marry her. And she accepted -

OM (to KN): On one condition - on their marriage, she would get an equal share of his pirate fleet.

KN: Ooh-hoo-hoo!

OM: And he agreed!

KN: Hah!

OM: So at their marriage, she takes over approximately 300 ships.

KN: Dang!

OM: That's a pretty big leap -

KN: 300?!

OM: for someone who has not been a pirate or a sailor or...

KN: Yeah!

Jamie Goodall: And she immediately begins maneuvering her way into a leadership position.

KN (to OM): I mean she must just have this incredible, forceful personality to be able to pull that off.

OM: Oh, absolutely! And I think one of the most remarkable things about her story is - this is going to upend a lot of our narratives about piracy, about women on the high seas, about where you gain the skill sets to be an effective pirate captain... *A whole bunch of stuff* is about to fall apart for us.

KN: Cool.

Jamie Goodall: The region was very conducive to piracy because of its complex coastal geography, which allowed pirates to kind of sneak in and out of areas and evade capture from government officials.

OM (to KN): Lots of little inlets and hidden coves everywhere make it very, very hard to patrol and it's very easy to disappear, come out of nowhere, attack, disappear again.

Jamie Goodall: There was also a lot of territorial disputes among the seaside states of the region, and there's a ton, just a massive volume of vessel traffic passing through the South China Sea.

OM (to KN): And there's plenty of room for pirates to take advantage of this chaos and reap really rich rewards, while these military navies are paying attention to each other instead of pirates.

13:34 - 18:24

OM: One really important difference that we need to understand between East and west here was really crucial to Ching Shih's rise.

Jamie Goodall: Unlike in the west, in South China there was no stigma attached to women being on board a ship, or being bad luck for a ship. That's very much a *western* cultural tradition. So this enabled Ching Shih to really rise through the ranks of pirates.

OM (to KN): You know, in the west we have this very established pattern - as anyone who's seen *Pirates of the Caribbean* knows -

KN: Yeah

OM: that having a woman on board is bad luck.

KN: Yeah.

OM: That is not a thing in the East. Nobody cares.

KN: So are there *lots* of female pirates?

OM: There are! And especially once Ching Shih takes over, there is a lot more gender equality in the piracy game.

KN: Oh!

OM: But there has never been this sort of gendered segregation on board ships that we see in the west.

KN: Interesting.

OM: And though, of course, there's obviously lots of misogyny and sexism in general in this area - it's just *regular old* sexism, not special *nautical* sexism. [laughter]

OM: That means she can rise through the ranks as *herself*, without the pattern that we see with a lot of female pirates in the west of 'first they pretended to be a man until they took power.' She's just herself, from the very beginning.

OM: So, by 1805, Ching Shih is functioning sort-of as an equal to her husband. She is commanding a large portion of the ships in their fleet, and she is the 'leader absolute' over these ships. She's not subservient to her husband - she is in charge. And she can see that the infighting that's happening within the pirate community, where they're attacking each other and taking each other out, is making them very vulnerable to the increasing attacks by western forces. The Portuguese Navy, the British Navy are starting to become more and more heavily involved in this area. She can see the writing on the wall, and knows that it is either band together or be destroyed, and so -

KN: She's like the [Boudica](#) of the South China Sea.

OM: She is! She's like an ambassador - I mean, she is incredible at getting people to talk to one another, getting them to see that they're all on the same side, and that it would be a benefit to them to band together. And so, by 1805 she organizes the pirate community and forms the Guangdong Pirate Confederation. It's a loose organization, but a strong one. And pretty much every major pirate group within the entire South China Sea have all agreed to give up a little bit of their own autonomy and answer to a higher authority in order to benefit all of them.

Now there are six 'flag color groups.' On paper, her husband controls the Red Flag Group - really, Ching Shih in charge of a major portion of that. But she's the one who has formed this confederation. And she and her husband are really the de facto leaders of this entire group of all of the pirates in Asia.

KN: Wow!

[ad break]

18:54-24:49

Jamie Goodall: There were also Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese pirates. In Japan, they were known as Wokou. The Wokou weren't just of Japanese ethnicity - they could be Korean. They could be Chinese. It was just the name that the Japanese gave to pirates who operated in the region, but the [Vietnamese] Tây Sơn dynasty was an incredibly powerful group. And they used piracy to their advantage to maintain a prominent presence in the region. And so a lot of Chinese pirates developed relationships with the Tây Sơn dynasty as a means of learning more about piracy, and how they could be most effective negotiating with governments and different types of officials, and how that works in reality versus sort of your imagination, if you will.

Jamie Goodall: For Ching Shih, the connection to Vietnam was not just that a lot of the pirates that she oversaw had received instruction from the Tây Sơn dynasty, but also that it is the location where her husband is killed. Some say he was killed by members of the dynasty. Some say he was killed by a natural disaster, just off the coast of Vietnam. There's no real concrete evidence of what happened to Zheng Yi.

OM (to KN): In 1807, he's dead, and the leadership of the entire Pirate Confederacy is up for grabs. Ching Shih *immediately* takes control, and she solidifies that control by banding together with her stepson. Zhang Bao was kidnapped as a teenager by his eventual adoptive father, Zheng Yi, and then became the adopted son of this pirate king - and goes on to become Ching Shih's second husband, eventually.

KN: Wait... stepson becomes husband?

OM: Her stepson becomes her husband.

KN: [laughter] Okay.

OM: This was a really smart move. They seem to have been genuinely fond of each other, but also it's a really smart political move because he's the heir apparent.

Jamie Goodall: She chose him because of his loyalties to Zheng Yi and the idea that the crew members were also really loyal to him, and she figured that by marrying him, she could further secure her leadership role.

KN (to OM): Those adoptive relationships - they're really really common. Almost a norm among pirates, all around the world.

OM: Yeah. This is how you build your dynasty is -

KN: They believe in chosen families.

OM (to KN): Yeah. And that makes sense if you need to... you know, how much differently could the royal houses have gone if you could pick someone who was *good* at the job instead of just your kid. [laughter]

OM: So Ching Shih takes over as commander of the *entire* fleet. Her stepson is now commander of the Red Flag Fleet, and Ching Shih is in charge of the entire Pirate Federation

Jamie Goodall: By that point, she commanded over 1,800 ships. So a massive jump in the number of ships in her fleet, commanding over 70,000 men *and* women.

KN (to OM): That is crazy! I mean -

OM: It's mind boggling.

KN: It's an empire of the sea. I mean, she's an empress of ships.

OM: It is. She really is - but to me, this is one of the most fascinating parts. This is totally destroying our narrative of what pirates are. When we think of an effective pirate captain, a good pirate leader, we have a very specific image in our mind. This is a macho, masculine leader who is fierce and strong and scary. It's more about bravado and physical strength. And apparently what actually really matters in this style of piracy is management skills. [laughter] She's a CEO.

KN: Yeah.

OM: She's managing this enormous workforce!

KN: But do you think she was scary?

OM: I'm sure she has to be, right?

KN: Yeah

OM: She has to be a fierce, scary warrior pirate *and* really good at HR. She has to know how to manage people, and she's running a business. I mean, she is managing this huge enterprise that is scattered all across the ocean. And she is so effective at it that she is unchallenged for *ten years!*

KN: Yeah. A pirate bureaucrat.

OM: Yeah, this is not how we think of pirates. It's still a very swashbuckling career, but -

KN: Well, maybe by 1805 - like I said this is like 100 years after the Atlantic pirates - they've professionalized and they figured it out and she's like 'the reason that Blackbeard got annihilated off the coast of North Carolina is because he didn't have his spreadsheets put together right.'

OM: [laughs]

KN: Maybe she just hacked piracy and figured it out.

OM: Well, clearly. I mean she was spectacularly successful.

KN: Hmm!

24:49-27:38

OM: And I think this really also does demonstrate the clear major difference between western piracy and Eastern piracy. I think, especially in the last few years, we've been rewriting the narrative around what pirates are, right? Growing up, pirates were this very chaotic, dangerous, desperate -

KN: Yeah

OM: They were the bad guys. And that's what made them fun. And now it's become much more popular to talk about pirates as this democratic sort of nation-state, right? This floating Utopian ideal of equality. And, as Dr. Goodall points out, that's true to varying degrees. There are a lot of democratic ideals going on in a lot of these pirate ships, although she spends a lot of time reminding people that they were *still* bad guys. These were *still murderers*. [laughter]

KN: Oh, of course.

OM: They weren't nice people. This isn't a Utopian ideal that we should aspire to as a humanity. [laughs] But the lawless, wild, outlaws of the movies *or* this Utopian democratic ideal are not the model for this type of piracy. In the South China Sea, this is not a democratic model. This is *extremely* authoritarian. This is extreme hierarchy, *very* stratified layers of power here. She's at the top. Everyone knows where they stand, and you don't get out of line. Now that's extremely Chinese, right? This is sort of a Confucian ideal -

KN: Sure

OM: piracy. Hierarchy, order, obedience, clarity. That makes her success even more striking to me because she *really is* in control of all of this. She's **the** boss. And the fleet sinks or sails based on her leadership.

KN: Yeah

OM: So the fact that she was actually successful, that they were almost unstoppable for a decade, is pretty astonishing. She really must have been an absolute genius at her job.

Jamie Goodall: I think it's really interesting because I don't think she initially had a plan beyond just wanting to be in charge of this Pirate Federation. But she very quickly developed a strong set of codes, like a code of laws, for her Federation.

27:38-29:43

OM (to KN): She creates a pirate code that is extremely different from the pirate code in the west.

KN: Hmm!

OM: This pirate code is very much **not** 'guidelines.' [laughter] They are actual rules, and you will be held to them on pain of death. No disobedience will be tolerated.

Jamie Goodall: Any pirate giving his own orders or disobeying those of the superior was to be beheaded on the spot. So better listen to her, or else.

OM (to KN): Most interestingly to me: a lot of very clear rules laid out around the treatment of female captives.

KN: Mhm!

Jamie Goodall: So, for example, if a pirate raped a female captive, he would be put to death.

OM (to KN): Even if you *marry* a female captive, and it's consensual, right? She consents to marry you, and you get married...

Jamie Goodall: He had to be faithful to her, or he would be tortured and murdered.

KN (to OM): Wow!

OM: You **will** be faithful to your wife.

This is not the piracy that we are used to thinking about. And though this is a perpetual controversy - whether these rules are created by Zhang Bao, her stepson/husband, or by Ching Shih

Jamie Goodall: Given the treatment of women. I suspect that she had a significant influence on those codes. I don't think that's something Zhang Bao would have necessarily taken upon himself to map out. I think those laws really speak to what she's hoping to achieve, which is this equality between men and women in this world where men dominated. And this provided women opportunities that they wouldn't have otherwise had, to make money beyond being a sex worker or working in the fields or, you know, living in abject poverty. So, I think that's probably what she was trying to achieve.

29:43-32:46

OM (to KN): Once stepson/husband, Zhang Bao, takes over the red fleet, he begins attacking the Chinese Imperial fleets in earnest. And in one year, he destroys half of the Chinese provincial fleet.

KN: Dang!

OM: He was very good at his job, too. And the pirates take over a huge, huge chunk of ground - I guess, water? ocean?

KN: Yeah

OM: and move up the Pearl River, where they've never been before. This is really important. This means they effectively control shipping for the entire area. *And then*, in 1809 -

KN: Uh-oh

OM: Ching Shih is under attack by the Portuguese and Zhang Bao arrives with ships to aid her, when the Portuguese ships - six of them, to be precise - round the corner and start firing on Ching Shih and Zhang Bao. And then 93 ships from the Chinese fleet join the Portuguese and blockade -

KN: Whooooa

OM: Ching Shih and Zhang Bao are trapped in this bay. For about two weeks, there's a standoff.

KN: Two weeks?!

OM: Finally, the head of the Chinese fleet gets frustrated, but nothing's happening. And so... he sets 43 of his ships on fire

KN: Oh, classic move!

OM: and pushes them toward the pirates.

KN: Oh

OM: Exactly. He turned his own ships into weapons.

KN: He pulled a Francis Drake!

OM: and he's hoping it'll work, and he's hoping it'll set the pirate ships on fire.

KN: Yeah

OM: The pirates are better than that.

KN: Uh-oh

OM: They divert the fire ships. They tow them on shore, put the fire out, and use them for firewood -

KN: [laughs]

OM: *except* for two of the fire ships that are still floating in the bay when the wind changes

KN: Ah!!

OM: ...and they are blown back into the Chinese fleet, light two of the Chinese fleet's own ships on fire, and - taking advantage of the wind and that distraction - Zhang Bao and Ching Shih break through the blockade and escape.

KN: [laughs] What?!

OM: The Chinese fleet lost 46 ships, at least 74 men. The pirates lost 0 ships and 40 men.

KN: Wow!

OM: It was just - things like this keep happening. They're very clever. They are patient. They don't make stupid decisions, and working together as a team, they can outsmart pretty much every fleet that comes at them. They are unstoppable.

32:46-37:06

But, as the years pass, Ching Shih can tell the tides are turning. The European powers are coming in and they are much harder to combat than the Chinese Provincial fleet. Having seen many of her pirate cohort suffer the fate of execution at the hands of the British or Portuguese, she decides... to retire.

KN: Oh! [laughs]

OM: She leads a delegation of seventeen women and children to Guangzhou, and negotiates with the Qing representative - a man named Bai Ling. He agrees to her terms: freedom, 20-30 ships that they can keep in a private fleet, and none of their pirates will be punished or executed.

KN: What?!

OM: He agrees, which is amazing!

KN: Wow!

OM: This is the most notorious pirate in history.

KN: That's very trusting, too, like - that he believes that she can just say to everybody 'aaaand we're done. We won't be pirates anymore.' And they'll all just... stop.

OM: Yeah, I mean he must really have believed that she was **the** boss.

KN: Yeah

OM: And that she was honest, right? Honesty among thieves.

KN: Sure.

OM: Or maybe she's just so powerful that he doesn't dare say no, I mean, you know, what - what's the alternative here? It's an *amazing* interaction, and I would give almost anything to be a fly on the wall and see what actually happened there.

KN: Oh, me too!

OM: But the end result is that she and Zhang Bao surrender 17,318 pirates and 226 ships, and retired to the country.

KN: [laughs] Wow! And was nobody really punished?

OM: Nobody was punished. All of these pirates simply retired. Many of them -

KN: Wait

OM: are absorbed into the Chinese military, including Zhang Bao, who becomes a lieutenant in the Chinese navy!

KN: Wow, well, that's wise - like, take these expert leaders

OM: Right! Use the skill.

KN: Yeah, yeah. Wait, so they all lived happily ever after?

OM: Well, she sure did. She died at 69 years old

Jamie Goodall: Leading a relatively peaceful life after the death of Zhang Bao, she was allegedly the proprietor of an infamous gambling house somewhere in Guangdong. So by all accounts she led this very successful pirate life, and then led a very successful post-retirement life.

KN: [laughs]

OM: She had a lovely, financially secure retirement, and died rich and happy.

KN: I mean -

OM: It really does feel very made up and storybook - but it's what actually happens.

And again, I just love the way she breaks all these narratives. I love the way she's changing the way we think about what leadership might look like.

KN: Mm, yeah. And what the end of piracy might look like. They might just get tired and be like 'meh.'

OM: Yeah! How much smarter to just kind of pay off your pirates with a few ships and a gambling house, give a few of them military positions, and let them fight on your side as the Portuguese are becoming a threat to China. Let's fight *them* instead of our own pirates.'

KN: Yeah

OM: and just... leave them alone? I mean, it's very odd.

KN: [laughs] I like it

OM: You know, any woman who can bring together *70,000 pirates* - that's a skilled negotiator.

KN: Yeah! Too bad they didn't put her in the government, like -

OM: Yeah!

KN: Maybe she could have saved China.

OM: Yeah. What else could she have accomplished, right?

KN: Who knows?

37:06-42:21

OM: One thing I had not thought of, that I find totally fascinating, that Dr. Goodall points out, is *where* she acquired those skills.

KN: Mm!

Jamie Goodall: Her business acumen, like her ability to negotiate and her political savvy, all comes from her role as a sex worker - where she was involved with politicians, and government officials, and businessmen of varying ranks. And so she got a lot of street smarts, and she used those to her advantage, which was really important to her rise as pirate queen.

OM (to KN): All of these skills seem to have come with her from her days as a sex worker, and she *was* involved with very high ranking men. She had insider knowledge and she is using those skills to her advantage in this new career.

KN: Sure

OM: And I think clearly one thing that you learn in that career is how to get men to agree with you and to think that it had all been their idea in the first place. I can absolutely see a scenario where Bai Ling is 100% convinced that this was *his* idea, and *he* convinced the most notorious pirate in history to retire.

KN: [laughs] Sure

OM: He's a hero... and she got exactly what she wanted. Just absolutely brilliant and so confounding and fascinating.

Jamie Goodall: One of the interesting aspects of Ching Shih is that she's brought to the western world through *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the franchise. Mistress Ching, one of the 9 pirate lords, is inspired by Ching Shih. Being a lesser-known figure, I think more and more people are interested in her life. Hopefully over time, we can take a less euro-centric view of piracy and maybe we'll uncover more women in the East, compared to in the West, who engaged in piratical activities. It would be

great to have like a Ching Shih pirate film. [laughs]

OM (to KN): I love her, and I hope that we find out more as people are really digging into her story, and something that's been sort of ignored. Because piracy for westerners has been a western story, when this was a *huge* operation -

KN: Yeah

OM: this was way, way bigger than any European piracy or American Piracy, and there's so many stories to tell here. All of these women who were pirates under Ching Shih, all of these people who were operating this entirely different system. And I really hope we start seeing more of those stories coming out, because I think there's a whole new world of *ways to look at this* that are opening up. And I am very, very excited about it.

KN: Yeah. Oh, I'm here for it.

OM: So, Dr. Goodall's book is amazing - *Pirates of the Chesapeake Bay*. Absolutely incredible book, highly encourage you to read it. The National Geographic issue is incredible. We have links to all of those on our website. So everybody go check those out, because if you like pirates, you're gonna love it!

KN: Fun.

OM: And if you don't like pirates - what is wrong with you?!

[laughter, music with prominent woodwind instrument swells]

[final credits]

[post-credits outtake scene]

KN: Yes, yes, yes!

OM: [laughs]

KN: Oh no! My GarageBand crashed because of the loudness of my yes.

OM: [laughs harder]

KN: Wow! My recorder crashed because of the loudness of my yes... I'm back. Wow!

OM: [still laughing] Totally worth it.