

(She Was A) Hotel Detective In The Future Commentary

They Might Be Giants

[David Remnikopf:] Hi, this is the commentary track for the They Might Be Giants song, "Hotel Detective In The Future".

[Anne Hathaway:] Hi. Welcome.

[DR:] Hi. We should start by saying who this is. I'm David Remnikopf and I did the computer assisted, three dimensional special effects for the song. I work out of my home studio which is called Animotion, and about eight months ago I received a print of the song with instructions for the type of visual effects that the Giants were looking for. And I and my team set to work.

[AH:] My name is Anne Hathaway and I did the foley work, which means doing the sound effects. They Might Be Giants are really great to work with. I mean, the e-mail they sent is so typical of their humor. I love this type of work. I guess I'm the type of girl who loves foley work.

[DR:] You mean you're doing a girl's voice?

[AH:] No, no. (sigh) I am a girl. I'm a girl.

[DR:] Okay let's begin. This is the beginning of the song. This is what we call the establishing shot of the intro with some kind of little guitar thing ...

[AH:] Yeah there's some kind of bells.

[DR:] Uh huh. And now, the vocal. Pretty much classic Giants. Really tinny vocals. Very uncomfortable sounding. I don't know how he does that.

[AH:] Does he use a computer?

[DR:] Now for the chorus, here, this is the chorus. They wanted some sort of big explosion, like something that would really grab the listener by the throat, and shake their throat.. a lot. So, I spent several weeks creating a very expensive effect, here. Uh, they didn't really like it. They wound up using something else; I don't know what they did.

[AH:] Yo, yo.

[DR:] How'd you make this crunching noise, in this part of the song, here?

[AH:] Well, it's, it's really a combination of... I-I used celery. I broke celery sticks, and then pitched it down, and I added lots of reverb. I guess I'm giving away some trade secrets here.

[DR:] But nobody will ever really know exactly how much celery you used.

[AH:] I also added corn starch, and then we went and crashed our van. And recorded that. And I mixed it in.

[DR:] It sounds incredible.

[AH:] Yeah. It's really a shame they mixed it down so low, you can't really even hear it at all on the final version.

[DR:] It sounds incredible. So this is... I think this is... They referred to this part of the song as the "bridge". I don't know why. I don't know what

that is. Maybe you can explain it.

[AH:] Well, I, I think it's the part of the song where they used up all the other ideas. You've heard the same things over and over. And, just when you--

[DR:] Right. When you're completely tired of it--

[AH:] Yeah, that's when they put in the bridge. Which is maybe not as catchy as the verse or the chorus.

[DR:] But, it comes as a big relief. That's really the craft of the artistry of song craft.

[AH:] Yeah. Here comes your big moment...

[DR:] Right. This is where the whole song is supposed to turn completely inside-out. You've gotten all comfortable with this notion of what you think "Hotel Detective In The Future" is supposed to mean. And then, all your preconceived notions are completely--

[AH:] Those aren't real humans...

[DR:] No, no we used models painted to look like humans and then set on fire.

[AH:] Wow. They're so real. What about the bugs?

[DR:] Those are real insects. I don't want to say where we got them. I don't want to get into trouble. And this is where things get a little messy--

[AH:] Ewwwwwwwwww... totally gross.

[DR:] Ah ha ha ha... that's what the Giants asked for. And, I live to serve.

[AH:] You're such an ass.

[DR:] Well, that's it. End of song. Thanks for listening. I'm David Remnikoff.

[AH:] And I'm Anne Hathaway. Bye bye.