

Media Contact: Gillian K. Willman

Cell Phone: 202-841-2574

Gillian@spokeswomanproductions.com

The New Woman: Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky Electronic Press Kit

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Spokeswoman Productions Announces the World Premiere of The New Woman: Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky, A Documentary Film, Opening Night of the DC Independent Film Festival

Washington, DC, February 19, 2013 – Spokeswoman Productions - The New Woman: Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky will screen on Opening Night of the DC Independent Film Festival on Wednesday March 6, 2013 at the Naval Heritage Center. The screening will begin at 6 pm and will be followed by *Ginger Ninjas*, another cycling-related documentary. There will be a Q&A after the film, followed by a reception. The evening is cosponsored by Docs in Progress and the Washington Area Bicyclists Association.

The New Woman is a 27-minute documentary film by director Gillian K. Willman that tells the story of Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky, a fiercely independent and free thinking young woman who found freedom by reinventing herself as the daring "Annie Londonderry"— entrepreneur, athlete, and celebrated globetrotter. The film shows how, by sheer force of will and bravado, Annie achieved the impossible.

In 1894, this 23-year old Jewish immigrant and mother of three changed the world for women by climbing aboard a 42-pound bicycle and setting off from the tenements of Boston to circle the globe. Annie's journey was more than one of miles—she left in full skirts as a nineteenth century housewife and returned in bloomers as a celebrated (and controversial) heroine of a new era. At the time, *The New York World* called her trip "the most extraordinary journey ever undertaken by a woman" and said it marked the birth of "the new woman"—independent, dynamic, and free. But for over a century, Annie's extraordinary story has remained practically unknown, lost somewhere along the dusty corridors of women's history. Until now.

The New Woman resurrects Annie's incredible odyssey and introduces her, for the first time in 119 years, to American film audiences. Historical reenactments, beautifully restored archival footage, newspaper accounts, and dozens of original animations bring Annie's story to life. The documentary is based on Around the World on Two Wheels, a book by Peter Zheutlin, Annie's great-grandnephew, who also features prominently in the film.

The film's director and producer, Gillian Willman, is available for interview. She can be contacted at 202-841-2574 or <u>Gillian@spokeswomanproductions.com</u>. A full electronic press kit, including images, can be downloaded here: <u>www.spokeswomanproductions.com/presskit.html</u>

About Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky







Until 1894, there were few female sports stars, no product endorsement deals, and no young mothers with the chutzpah to circle the globe on a bicycle. Annie Kopchovsky changed all of that.

Described as "the most extraordinary journey ever undertaken by a woman," Annie's odyssey was reportedly set in motion by a wager made by two wealthy clubmen in Boston. Her challenge was to circle the globe by bicycle in 15 months, earning \$5,000 en route. This was not only a test of a woman's physical endurance and mental fortitude, but also of her ability to fend for herself in a man's world. In June 1894, Annie Kopchovksy set out from the steps of the Boston Statehouse to prove the men wrong and to score a victory for the "new woman."

At first blush, it would be hard to imagine a more unlikely candidate for such a trip than Annie Cohen Kopchovsky, the 23-year old Jewish immigrant who pedaled out of Boston, leaving her husband and three small children behind. Yet despite having never ridden a bicycle before, Annie proved remarkably well equipped for the journey. A self-taught master of public relations, Annie was a consummate self-promoter and a skillful creator of her own myth.

Paid \$100 by the Londonderry Spring Water Company to carry its placard on her bike, the company also contracted with Annie to adopt their name as a promotion. Traveling with only a change of clothes and a pearl-handled revolver, Annie earned her way, in part, by turning her bicycle and her body into a mobile billboard, carrying advertising banners and ribbons around the world. When she returned to Boston in 1895, she had transformed into Annie "Londonderry," the bloomer-clad, PR-savvy, international celebrity.

After the trip was over, Annie moved her family to New York where, under the byline "The New Woman," she wrote sensational features for the *New York World*. Her first story was an account of her cycling adventures. "I am a journalist and 'a new woman,'" she wrote, "if that term means that I believe I can do anything that any man can do."

Though Annie became a global sensation in the mid-1890s, she has otherwise been forgotten by history for more than a century. *The New Woman: Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky*, resurrects Annie's amazing journey and introduces her, for the first time in more than 119 years to American film audiences.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER







*The image in the middle and on the right are from "Back in Bloomers," a 2006 fundraiser, where we re-created the first leg of Annie's historic ride from Boston, MA to New York City. Like Annie, we cycled in bloomers, and we think we raised as many eyebrows today as she did in 1894.

GILLIAN K. WILLMAN

Director, Producer, Writer, Editor of "The New Woman: Annie 'Londonderry' Kopchovsky

The New Woman is the directorial debut for Washington, DC filmmaker Gillian K. Willman and has been a seven-year long labor of love. In addition to producing this independent documentary, Gillian is also Producer / Writer at Cortina Productions, a multimedia production company, where she has written, directed, and produced video and interactive content for more than a dozen cultural institutions, including presentations in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum, the Virginia Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Tolerance, the Capitol Visitor Center, the Sports Museum of America, and the Lincoln Cottage Visitor Education Center.

Gillian has played a key role in the research and production of several long and short form documentary projects, including *Peter Jennings Reporting: Guantanamo, Trade Secrets: A Moyers Report,* and *Discovery Education's "The Science of Plants."* She is a graduate of Cornell University and lives in Washington, DC with her husband, Ben, daughter, Leila, and cats, Lucy and Oscar. She is originally from Saddle River, NJ.

Contact information:

E-mail: Gillian@spokeswomanproductions.com

Mobile: 202-841-2574

Website: www.spokeswomanproductions.com Facebook: www.spokeswomanproductions.com Facebook: www.spokeswomanproductions.com

Twitter: @thenewwomanfilm

Frame from *The New Woman #*1



Animation frame from the "Annie goes to NYC" sequence in The New Woman

Frame from *The New Woman #2*



Animation frame from *The New Woman* showing Annie's technique of selling advertising space on her body.



1894 Studio portrait of Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky with her Columbia Bicycle, taken in Boston prior to beginning her journey around the world.

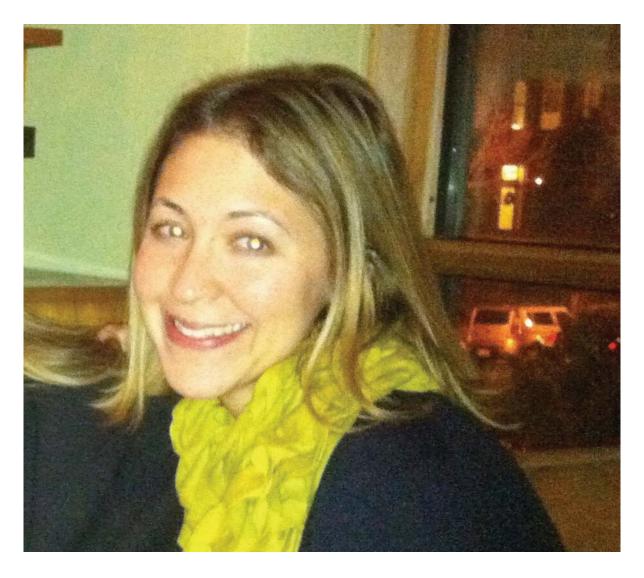


MISS LONDONDERRY.

1895 Newspaper sketch of Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky donning bloomers atop her Sterling bicycle



1894 Studio portrait of Annie "Londonderry" Kopchovsky prior to embarking on her bicycle journey around the world



Gillian K. Willman, Director of The New Woman



*Gillian K. Willman (Second row, center) and the production team kicks off "Back in Bloomers," a 2006 fundraiser, where they re-created the first leg of Annie's historic ride from Boston, MA to New York City. Like Annie, they cycled in bloomers, sold ad space on their jerseys, and held press events along the way.



From the steps of the Boston Statehouse, Gillian K. Willman addresses the crowd at the kick-off of "Back in Bloomers"