

00:00:00	Music	Music	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw. A jaunty, jazzy tune reminiscent of the opening theme of a movie. Music continues at a lower volume as April introduces herself, and then it fades out.
00:00:08	April Wolfe	Host	Welcome to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i> , where women get together to slice and dice our favorite action and genre films. I'm April Wolfe. Every week, I invite a new female filmmaker on—a writer, director, actor, or producer—and we talk in-depth about one of their fave genre films, maybe one that influenced their own work in some strange way. And today I'm really excited to have writer Kiwi Smith with me! Hi!
00:00:27	Kiwi Smith	Guest	Hello! Thank you for inviting me! <i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:00:29	April	Host	Thank you so much for coming out on this balmy afternoon—
00:00:31	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah!
00:00:32	April	Host	—that we were just talking about.

For those of you who aren't familiar with Kiwi's work—I mean, where have you been? Please let me give you an introduction.

[Kiwi laughs quietly.]

Kirsten "Kiwi" Smith is a Washington native who moved to LA to attend Occidental College before uprooting to NYU to study film. Before becoming a screenwriter, she was a poet; and has had her poetry and essays published in more than 30 literary journals, like *Rookie*, *The Gettysburg Review*, and *LA Review of Books*.

If you're—if you went to like, an MFA in fiction and poetry like I did, you're like, "Ooh! *Gettysburg Review*!"

[Kiwi laughs.]

But I don't know, like—like, will people—like, our listeners will be like, "*Gettysburg Review*!" I'm like, "Oh!"

00:01:07	Kiwi	Guest	Right. "Oh!"
00:01:08	April	Host	<i>[Funny, impressed voice]</i> "Very prestigious! Wow!"
00:01:09	Kiwi	Guest	I mean it's like, one of the greatest accomplishments of my life. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:01:11	April	Host	<i>[Normal voice]</i> It's a <u>pretty good</u> journal. You <u>guys</u> .
00:01:14	Kiwi	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> Thank you!
00:01:15	April	Host	Like, definitely pick it up.

Her first YA novel, *The Geography of Girlhood*, was a novel in verse. Early in her career, though, Kiwi was reading and noting up scripts at CineTel, which took her on the film development path. From there, Kiwi teamed up with the writer Karen McCullah, and the two sold their first spec script, which is a little movie you might know called *10 Things I Hate About You*.

From there, Kiwi went on to cowrite *Legally Blonde*, *She's the Man*, *Ella Enchanted*, *The Ugly Truth*, and *The House Bunny*. A string of movies that imbued seemingly simple female archetypes with complex, nuanced emotions.

She recently executive produced and created the half-hour Netflix series *Trinkets*, based on her YA novel, which was recently reprinted as a tie-in you can get at Barnes & Noble right now.

00:01:59 Kiwi Guest

Mm-hm.

00:02:00 April Host

Audiobook is available, too. I know you podcast nerds might like that.

[Kiwi chuckles.]

Trinkets is light crime, we'd call it. Female friendship story in which our leading lady is intrigued by an untouchably beautiful girl who forms a friendship with her, and the two begin to share a shoplifting addiction.

00:02:14 Kiwi Guest

[Sing-songy, "that's interesting"] Mmm!

00:02:15 April Host

So Kiwi is also co-author of two comic book series, *Misfit City* and *Smooth Criminals*, the latter of which is a female buddy heist crime story.

And you can find her on [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) at @KiwiLovesYou.

00:02:26 Kiwi Guest

Hellooooo!

00:02:28 April Host

Kiwi, do you really love people?

00:02:30 Kiwi Guest

I—

[April cracks up as Kiwi laughs.]

I feel like I do! I mean, that became a handle and a corporation name when I realized that attorneys were reading contracts that had my name, and I felt that they might be sad in a room, and so then they could see "Kiwi Loves You", and they would feel less alone.

00:02:50 April Host

[Through laughter] I love this so much.

[Kiwi laughs.]

This is exactly what I would expect, and it's a great story. I love this.

Kiwi, the movie that you chose to talk about today—I'm real excited; it's one that I hadn't seen before you had suggested—it is Bob Rafelson's *Black Widow*.

00:03:04 Kiwi Guest

Yes.

00:03:05 April Host

Could you give me a little explanation of, you know, why this is one of your fave genre films?

[April responds affirmatively several times as Kiwi explains.]

00:03:11 Kiwi Guest

Well, I think it's one of my favorites—it—I saw it—it came out in 1986. I saw it in the movie theater. I was an impressionable teen, and I grew up in Seattle. Part of the movie's shot in Seattle. So that

was a bit of catnip.

But I loved the story of this female cop who was kind of underestimated in her job; she lived in this male-dominated world of the Department of Justice, and she becomes obsessed with this really mysterious, shapeshifting black widow, a woman who marries men and kills them for money.

And it's really—it becomes like a love story, a warped love story, a story of obsession between these two women who are kind of rocked out of their—their, like—their world. Their male-dominated worlds, and sort of—they refocus onto each other, and I just found that—

Just, I was always finding myself entranced with some fascinating rock goddess, or pop icon, or cool girl, cool older girl or something, and so I really identified with that feeling of like, "Who is this woman? How can I evolve as I—you know, through my interest in her, and how can I become friends with her?"

I don't know if I really wanted to like, you know, get in a cat-and-mouse game the way the movie is, but—

00:04:24 April Host

Yeah, exactly.

00:04:25 Kiwi Guest

Yeah.

00:04:26 April Host

Like, maybe not like a murder cat-and-mouse game.

00:04:27 Kiwi Guest

Right. *[Laughs.]*

00:04:28 April Host

Like, that's potentially too far for you, Kiwi, but—

[Both laugh.]

00:04:31 Kiwi Guest

[Laughing] Right.

00:04:32 April Host

But I see, I see your point.

[Both continue laughing and then wind down before April continues.]

For those of you who haven't seen *Black Widow*, today's episode will give you some spoilers, obviously, but that shouldn't stop you from listening before you watch. As always, my motto is that it's not what happens but how it happens that makes a movie worth watching.

Still, if you would like to pause and watch *Black Widow*, this is your chance.

00:04:49 Music Music

Tense string music plays under Kiwi and April speaking.

00:04:50 Kiwi Guest

[Interested] Mm!

00:04:51 April Host

And now that you're back, please let me introduce *Black Widow* with a quick synopsis.

Written by Ronald Bass and directed by Bob Rafelson for release in 1986, *Black Widow* opens with a mysterious woman, Catharine, watching as her toymaker husband keels over.

We jump over to DOJ desk jockey Alex, played by Debra Winger, who's noticing something strange about this tycoon man's death.

[Music cuts.]

00:05:14	Clip	Clip	Alex: Two guys die within four days of each other! What does that <u>say</u> to you?
00:05:17	April	Host	It's chalked up to Ondine's curse, which is like the first time I had heard of that. I was like " <u>Ondine's</u> curse?"
00:05:21	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah!
00:05:22	April	Host	You guys gotta look this up.
00:05:23	Clip	Clip	<i>[Phone ringing in the background.]</i>
			Alex: Aaron Gonnell ran trash collection for half of Jersey. You don't die in your sleep of something called—
			Speaker: Ondine's curse. Damage of unknown origin of the part of the brain that controls breathing. It's rare, it's real, and happening.
00:05:34	April	Host	Through a period of years, we see Catharine show up and completely change her mannerisms and appearance, pleasing the man she wants to be with.
			In the meantime, Alex is growing ever more bored at her desk, and ever more concerned about the mysterious wives of these dead rich men.
			In all pictures, she notices that the wives look away from cameras instinctively. So there's never a great picture of them. She proffers to her boss that it's all the same person.
00:06:00	Clip	Clip	Alex: She doesn't <u>want</u> pictures; she <u>knows</u> the camera's there. She turns away, I can tell.
			Bruce: The Texas one is different. She's got a slimmer body.
			Alex: No no, it's the way she stands and dresses—
			Bruce: She's younger, Alex, at least five years younger!
			Alex: That's makeup, hair, attitude!
			Bruce: I think you're wrong.
			Alex: I—I <u>could</u> be right.
00:06:14	April	Host	They've got a black widow on their hands, apparently!
00:06:16	Kiwi	Guest	Yes.
00:06:17	April	Host	<u>But</u> , her boss, who clearly has a crush on her, says that Alex is just <u>too</u> obsessed with her work, and needs to get a personal life.
00:06:23	Clip	Clip	Alex: Bruce, I've been in this office for six years! This goddamn government office with green windows!
			Bruce: Yeah, I know, you want excitement. Well, a lot of people don't look to get it all from their job!
00:06:34	April	Host	Alex gets permission to tail this woman, whom she's tracked down from her attachment to a wealthy museum curator. Alex says she's a journalist researching a story about powerful women, and when word

gets back to Catharine, her chain is deeply rattled.

Still, Catharine does go through with it and offs her husband, disappearing again. Alex was this close. Time passes. Alex is bearing down on this Catharine, who's now shown up as a fresh-faced beach babe in Hawai'i—

[Kiwi laughs quietly.]

—trying to tempt a wealthy European hotelier, Paul.

00:07:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Kiwi: And there's a lot of talk about her hair; her hair is incredible.

April: It's beautiful.

Kiwi: And Debra Winger has curly hair, which is of course in the eighties like a really complicated thing to have.

April: Yep.

Kiwi: It still is, but...

00:07:15 Kiwi Guest

But she sees Theresa Russell's hair, and she's like, "Ooh, your hair," and—

00:07:19 April Host

Yeah!

00:07:20 Clip Clip

Catharine: He's having a party tonight! Do you wanna come?

[Pause.]

Alex: Oh, I—I can't. I—I left all my designer stuff back in Chicago.

Catharine: Well, that's alright! You can borrow something of mine!

Alex: Could I borrow your hair?

[They laugh.]

00:07:33 Kiwi Guest

Her body is a weapon. We'll get to that later.

00:07:35 April Host

Yes, but it is—she's—*[sighs]*. I love Theresa Russell, who plays this.

Okay, so Alex assumes the name Jessie, and befriends Catharine easily in Hawai'i. But Catharine catches on that Jessie isn't who she says she is.

Still, their friendship seems real. Even though its cat-and-mouseness is kind of overwhelming. Catharine wants to help Alex break out of her shell, and Alex does want to help Catharine feel more genuine emotions, perhaps remorse.

Alex goes to one of Paul's parties with her, and Paul shows interest in Alex.

00:08:04 Clip Clip

Music: Tropical music playing in the background.

Paul: Would you like to dance?

[Pause.]

Alex: ... No. Thanks. I'm—I have new shoes.

00:08:12 April Host Catharine helps set up Alex and Paul, seemingly abandoning her next marriage plot. But she also hires a PI to take photos of Alex and Paul together.

00:08:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kiwi:** *[Reveling in the drama]* Mmmm.

April: *[Exaggerated curiosity]* What is Catharine doing?

[Kiwi laughs.]

00:08:22 April Host Catharine seems to change her mind, then, seducing Paul, and then the two get married. Alex is really, really betrayed. And you know, she was trusting Catharine.

00:08:33 Clip Clip **Alex:** I helped you get here, didn't I? When you put us together, it made him want you all the more. So I guess you could say my wedding gift was the groom.

00:08:40 April Host So... she fell for Paul and it didn't work out.

But one weekend, Catharine goes out of town. Her MO for murdering husbands is when she goes outta town.

00:08:48 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm!

00:08:49 April Host And Alex tries to tip him off that Catharine's going to kill him.

00:08:52 Clip Clip **Paul:** This makes no sense—

Alex: Under three different names, she married three different men. All wealthy men.

Paul: *[Quietly]* What are you trying to do?

Alex: Paul... She killed all of them. She poisoned them. Now she's left town, and that's when they die! When she's gone!

00:09:04 April Host News reports that Paul has died, and Catharine uses her PI's photos to frame Alex. Alex is arrested. Catharine comes to visit her in jail, kinda to gloat. And in their conversation, Catharine reveals how she killed Paul.

But! Joke's on her. 'Cause it was all a setup to get Catharine's confession. And Catharine is arrested.

00:09:25 Kiwi Guest It's so sad!

00:09:26 April Host I know!

00:09:27 Kiwi Guest It's a sad ending.

00:09:28 April Host It's a really sad—it's a sad ending! Because, you know, they also kinda like each other! They don't wanna hurt each other, but they keep doing it!

00:09:33 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:09:34 April Host Before we get into the main conversation—

00:09:36 Kiwi Guest Oh.

00:09:37 April Host —I wanna give a shout-out to Robert Fischer, who is a—the director of some of the special features on the UK Blu-ray. Specifically a film

where he's interviewing Ronald Bass.

There's not—it's not that easy to find materials on this film.

00:09:50 Kiwi Guest

Yeah.

00:09:51 April Host

But you know, Robert Fischer was so kind to send me a link, and I just wanna thank him for helping me with my research today.

But let's get into the idea that neither Rafelson nor Bass thought that they were making a noir movie, really.

00:10:08 Kiwi Guest

Really?

00:10:09 April Host

Yeah.

00:10:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Kiwi: They didn't?

April: They didn't think they were making a noir.

00:10:11 Kiwi Guest

It's like a tropical noir—

00:10:14 April Host

It is!

00:10:15 Kiwi Guest

—'cause it's all in—most of it's in Hawai'i.

00:10:17 April Host

Yeah!

00:10:18 Kiwi Guest

So I like that idea of it.

How could they not, though? The opening shot is basically like—it's such a great opening, with their mirror, the mirror shot where like, one eye is in focus and then the other eye's not. It's like—

What did they think they were making?

[Both laugh.]

00:10:32 April Host

So—

00:10:33 Kiwi Guest

If it wasn't a noir?

00:10:34 April Host

Here—here's—okay, so Bass said that he thought—he's like, "I don't even know the term neo-noir. There's noir and there's not!" He was like, "It wasn't a genre film. It was a girlfriend film. A self-esteem film."

[Laughs.]

00:10:46 Kiwi Guest

[Incredulous] A self-esteem film?

00:10:47 April Host

[Laughing] I thought you would love that!

00:10:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Kiwi: *[Laughing]* That's so weird!

April: *[Laughing]* A self-esteem film!

00:10:54 Kiwi Guest

What?! He did—he didn't—did not know what he was talking—he doesn't know his own work. That's okay. Sometimes writers don't.

I mean, I guess there is a makeover scene in the movie, which is like, part of it being a self-esteem film I guess?

00:11:07 April Host

Yeah...

00:11:08 Kiwi Guest

But that doesn't make a lot of sense.

00:11:10 April Host

Here's the thing about Ronald Bass—and we should say, Ronald

Bass, also a Academy Award–winning writer.

00:11:16 Kiwi Guest Yes.

00:11:17 April Host Who did *Rain Man*.

00:11:18 Kiwi Guest For *Rain Man*. And *My Best Friend's Wedding*.

00:11:20 April Host Yep.

00:11:21 Kiwi Guest A classic romantic comedy.

00:11:22 April Host And—

00:11:23 Kiwi Guest And *Sleeping with the Enemy*.

00:11:24 April Host Yeah!

00:11:25 Kiwi Guest A sort of stalker Julia Roberts thriller.

00:11:27 April Host Great movie, too.

00:11:28 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm.

00:11:29 April Host He employs like a stable of eight women who write with him. And he—so he's able to pump out—he's been—he was able to pump out scripts very quickly, because he employed eight women writers behind him who wrote things—

00:11:48 Kiwi Guest Right!

00:11:49 April Host —with or for him.

00:11:50 Kiwi Guest I have heard about this! And I've never heard the specific number eight, though.

00:11:53 April Host I think it was eight.

00:11:55 Kiwi Guest And have there—it would be so cool to like, hear more about that process and know who some of those writers were, and if they went on to any kind of writing careers of their own without being under the moniker of his name. I wonder.

Do you know?

00:12:08 April Host I—[sighs]. Here's the thing. I was actually looking for that. I thought that that would be really wonderful to be able to bring up.

00:12:16 Kiwi Guest Do you think that two of the eight writers who might have been helping write this movie became obsessed with each other and got to role-play Catharine and Alex?

And do you think that—[laughing] maybe not.

00:12:31 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kiwi:** [Laughing] In my mind, perhaps it's—could happen.

April: I love that. I love that.

00:12:35 Kiwi Guest One of the curious things about this movie is that David Mamet has a cameo in it.

00:12:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kiwi:** In the poker scene.

April: Playing cards!

Both: Yeah.

00:12:43 Kiwi Guest And so I had this theory that maybe he was like, working on the script or doing some sort of dialogue polish on the script. Because it

seemed odd that he was in the film. And there was a lot of—there's great dialogue in the movie, and it seems like, "Okay, maybe that was a Mamet line," or—

00:12:59	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:13:00	Kiwi	Guest	But I didn't know it was a Vanna line!
00:13:02	April	Host	Yeah! We don't know who—and—
00:13:04	Kiwi	Guest	Who is Vanna? And this gives a mystery, like she's trying to figure out who is Catharine—
00:13:08	April	Host	Yeah!
00:13:09	Kiwi	Guest	—we're trying to figure out who's Vanna!
00:13:10	April	Host	Who the fuck is Vanna?
			<i>[Kiwi laughs.]</i>
			I mean, if Vanna's out there still, please tell us—
00:13:14	Kiwi	Guest	Yes!
00:13:15	April	Host	—who you are!
			<i>[Kiwi chuckles.]</i>
			I think the David Mamet cameo is something that I think I can probably explain just from a few things—
00:13:21	Kiwi	Guest	Oh, good.
00:13:22	April	Host	—of research. That, uh—and for those of you guys who haven't watched the movie, he is playing cards. Playing poker. And Alex, you know, she plays poker with all the guys.
			You know, she's a bit of a tomboy. She doesn't really embrace her femininity. And they cast David Mamet in that role because they were like "We want a man's man here."
00:13:41	Kiwi	Guest	Ohhh.
00:13:42	April	Host	"We almost—we want to like, symbolically be like, 'This is the guy who writes men.'" You know?
00:13:47	Kiwi	Guest	Oh, weird!
00:13:48	April	Host	And so it was just like, "Here's the man guy at the table, and she's sitting opposite him." And also the fact—you know, something that Ronald Bass loved is that you could just mention a name to Bob Rafelson—Dennis Hopper, for instance—and it'd be like, "Oh, okay. Yeah. Let's get him for this small role."
			Or you know, any person, and they were like, "Oh, yeah, David Mamet."
			<i>[Both starting to laugh]</i> And they can just get him for a fucking cameo!
00:14:08	Kiwi	Guest	That's so great!
00:14:10	April	Host	But you know, there's—it's a—one would hope that maybe he did a few zingers on the script, too. <i>[Laughs.]</i>

00:14:15 Kiwi Guest Right. Right. That's so—and doesn't he have a little line in it where someone says like, "Did you ask her out?" 'Cause everyone in the office is like, trying to ask out Debra Winger and she's just married to her job. And—

00:14:26 April Host Mm-hm.

00:14:27 Kiwi Guest What did he say? Oh, like he says that he took her to a Bulls game, and they're like, "What—what happened?" And then Mamet says "The Bulls lost."

[Both laugh.]

00:14:37 April Host *[Through laughter]* I love that line!

[They wind down.]

The—I mean like, you're getting into the dialogue, so let's maybe get into the—

00:14:44 Kiwi Guest Mm.

00:14:45 April Host —the dialogue and creating this kind of realistic dialogue.

00:14:47 Kiwi Guest Yes.

00:14:48 April Host In your work as well, you know, you have a really—like I was saying in your introduction, your bio. You know, these are seemingly characters that we've seen in movies before, but they're real. You know.

00:15:00 Kiwi Guest Mm.

00:15:01 April Host There's a kind of realness that's at—and obviously that is so much like this honed dialogue of trying to create real and robust women, specifically.

00:15:08 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:15:09 April Host Can you talk about that kind of process, and—

00:15:11 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:15:12 April Host —and you know, how you veto the bad ones, you know?

[Kiwi laughs.]

That kind of thing?

00:15:15 Kiwi Guest Right! I mean, I don't work with a stable of eight women, but I do—

[April laughs.]

—I do work in a mini stable with, um—often in collaboration, and Karen and I who I've written a lot of movies with, my long-time collaborator—lot of times we're writing out loud. So we're kind of just talking to each other and pitching lines to each other.

00:15:34 April Host Mm-hm.

00:15:35 Kiwi Guest So we're writing to sort of please each other, and if she says something great, she's on a roll, I'll be writing it all down.

00:15:43 April Host Mm-hm.

00:15:44 Kiwi Guest Or if I say something, she'll write it down. Or we just kind—we kinda

build it like, line by line, couplet by couplet, as we go forth. And if we're working on a joke, it's—you know. Whenever something one of us says makes us laugh, it goes in.

It wasn't always—that wasn't always our process. When we first met, we wrote *10 Things I*—we lived in different states, so we wrote *10 Things I Hate About You* in two different places.

00:16:09	April	Host	Yeah!
00:16:10	Kiwi	Guest	And we got together and outlined the movie, and then we wrote separate scenes. We mailed them to each other, 'cause it was like a pre-email time.
00:16:19	April	Host	Oh, wow!
00:16:20	Kiwi	Guest	And— <i>[laughs]</i> . And then we would re-write each other, and so sometimes that would lead to disputes, back-and-forths, and we found that our happier place was when we were getting together to re-write based on other people's notes. So then we could be like, "Fuck their notes!"
			<i>[April laughs.]</i>
			"Okay, fine, well I guess we have to do them. We're <u>forced</u> to do—okay." And then we would get together and be like, unified against an evil authority instead of being against each other, you know? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:16:48	April	Host	Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah! I like that.
00:16:50	Kiwi	Guest	So I don't know, we tend to write more things in the same room with each other now. Which is really—it's really fun! And it's hot out, so we sit—we can sit by the pool, <i>[laughing]</i> and we can make our own tropical noir stories by the pool.
00:17:02	April	Host	Yeah!
00:17:03	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah.
00:17:04	April	Host	Well, you do—I mean like, definitely face to face. And—
00:17:06	Kiwi	Guest	Face to face, yep. Yep. Face to face and, um—I mean, it's so—we love crime stories. We always—we're always trying to write mysteries. We're always selling mystery ideas and then once we get into it we're like, "Oh, fuck. We have to like, crack a mystery plot."
00:17:25	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Kiwi: So that is always—it's been—it's hard. April: They're fucking hard, dude!
00:17:28	Kiwi	Guest	We haven't gotten any of our mysteries made. And our mysteries obviously have comedic elements and tone, and—
00:17:34	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:17:35	Kiwi	Guest	But it's really the building blocks of a mystery are super hard. I think that's one of the things I like about <i>Black Widow</i> , is it's—it's sort of a <u>simple</u> mystery, in a way.
00:17:44	April	Host	Mm-hm!
00:17:45	Kiwi	Guest	It's sort of a character-driven mystery, which I like.
00:17:47	Music	Music	"Switchblade Comb" begins fading in.

00:17:48 April Host Oh, we're gonna take a quick break. When we come back I wanna get a little bit further into Theresa Russell.

00:17:53 Kiwi Guest Yes.

00:17:54 April Host A little bit further into some of Ronald Bass's process on this, and also how the story came about from the pitch. But we'll be right back.

[Music increases to full volume and continues until the promo.]

00:18:07 Promo Clip **Music:** Twangy country music.

Tusk Henderson: Hello, my name is Tusk Henderson, and I am an outdoorsman.

Narrator: Are you looking for a new comedy podcast? This month's episode of *Beef And Dairy Network Podcast* has, as its guest, the wonderful Nick Offerman playing the part of Tusk Henderson, adventurer and outdoorsman.

Tusk: Think about fitting yourself, a month's worth of provisions, and a half-ton cow into a kayak.

Narrator: So if you've never listened to the show before, this might be a good place to start.

Tusk: I string a bowstring between her horn tips and I can fire a spear off the top of her head. And, uh, took in some very delicious cod.

Narrator: So! If you're after a new comedy podcast, why not try *The Beef And Dairy Network* from Maximum Fun? Download it now!

[Music ends.]

Tusk: You flip a cow upside-down, they make an excellent toboggan.

00:18:57 Music Music "Switchblade Comb" fades in to full volume, and then drops to play quietly as April and Kiwi speak.

00:19:04 April Host Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*. I'm April Wolfe and I'm joined today by Kiwi Smith, and we're talking about *Black Widow*.

00:19:09 Kiwi Guest *[Excited gasp.]* Oh, yeah!

[Music fades out.]

00:19:10 April Host Okay, so you know, you had also mentioned—you know, when we were talking about dialogue, so I'm gonna back up just a little bit.

00:19:16 Kiwi Guest Yes.

00:19:17 April Host When we were talking about dialogue and the way that you guys write, which is kinda back and forth, making each other laugh sometimes.

00:19:24 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm.

00:19:25 April Host Just trying to get that realism in there. And I wanna talk about something that Ronald Bass said about his earlier career. He said, quote:

"I've always over-directed and over-revealed in my writing. Barry Diller, when he read the script—" Barry Diller, who is—

00:19:38 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm.

00:19:39 April Host —who is at Fox.

"This kid—said 'This kid will never make it because he has all this prose where he's telling you what everyone is thinking or feeling. And he puts full stops in his sentences to tell you when to breathe and how to talk.'

In that day I was writing—if the character would say 'I don't know,' I would say 'I dunno,' because it seemed rhythmically to be the natural speech. I do a lot less of that now."

But apparently the script for *Black Widow* did have those tendencies. This is the first script that Ronald Bass had sold.

00:20:07 Kiwi Guest Oh, wow!

00:20:08 April Host And so he did have all of those kind of colloquialisms and things—

00:20:11 Kiwi Guest Hm!

00:20:12 April Host —in the script, and Debra Winger took him to task and did a reading of it. And did a reading of it where she over-enunciated every single word that he had written. Like, "I dun-no."

[Kiwi gasps.]

You know, like that kind of thing?

00:20:26 Kiwi Guest Oh, wow!

00:20:27 April Host And then Bob Rafelson was just like, "See?"

[Both laugh.]

00:20:31 Kiwi Guest *[Through laughter]* Oh my god!

[No longer laughing] She's tough!

00:20:34 April Host *[Winds down.]*

She's—I mean, I love her! She—

00:20:35 Kiwi Guest I love her, too!

00:20:36 April Host Everyone says she's kinda bitchy or whatever, but that woman is just like—she's good enough—

00:20:40 Kiwi Guest Yeah!

00:20:41 April Host —to be whatever the fuck she wants to be, you know?

00:20:43 Kiwi Guest She was like, pretty—she was at a high point in her career when she made this movie, too. I think it was post-*Officer and a Gentleman*, which was shot in my hometown—

00:20:50 April Host Mm-hm.

00:20:51 Kiwi Guest —of Port Townsend, Washington. So she kind of probably had her pick of scripts at this point. I think.

00:20:58 April Host She did. And actually—

00:21:00 Kiwi Guest *Urban Cowboy* was around this time?

00:21:01 April Host Yep! Same thing. And one of the things that was really difficult for them was that she was the largest female star at this time.

00:21:10 Kiwi Guest *[Gasps.]* Wow.

00:21:11 April Host When they cast her. There was like a window of time where she was like, it.

00:21:15 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:21:16 April Host And they really, really wanted her to play Catharine.

[Kiwi gasps.]

They wanted her to play Theresa Russell's role.

00:21:22 Kiwi Guest Oh—

00:21:23 April Host And she didn't—and in fact, quote. This is from Ronald Bass.

"We always wanted Debra. She was the biggest star in that way and a genius actress and interesting person. We all wanted her to play the killer, though. She insisted on playing the cop. Fox gave her the right to name a list of actresses to play the killer, and she came back with a list of one."

[Kiwi gasps.]

"Theresa Russell was the only name on that list. And if they didn't use Theresa Russell, she wouldn't do the film."

00:21:48 Kiwi Guest I am tearing up right now. That is so cool!

00:21:52 April Host That bitch will fight for you.

00:21:53 Kiwi Guest *[Through laughter]* Yeah!

00:21:54 April Host Right?

00:21:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk **April:** That's who I want on my side.

Kiwi: Debra Loves You! *[Laughs.]*

00:21:57 April Host Yep! Mm-hm!

00:21:59 Kiwi Guest Wow! I love that she hand-picked Theresa Russell!

00:22:02 April Host But it—I think, you know, if you look at the way that—I try to imagine Debra Winger as the killer.

00:22:09 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm.

00:22:10 April Host And I can definitely see that. You know, 'cause they—like, this was a time where like, Debra Winger was like, sex appeal. Like, that was—

00:22:14 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

[Kiwi replies affirmatively as April continues.]

00:22:15 April Host Like when men looked at her, they were like "Yes." And she was like "No! I'm gonna do a little bit frumpy and a little bit tomboy." Like, that's a lot of courage to have if you're like, a woman at the height of your kind of sex appeal career, you know?

00:22:28 Kiwi Guest Yeah. It's also maybe a little bit of a "fuck you," too.

00:22:31 April Host Yeah, it is.

00:22:32 Kiwi Guest It's like, "I'm in this world where you want me to be the sexy one?"

00:22:35 April Host Mm-hm.

00:22:36 Kiwi Guest Like, "No. I think I'm gonna go be the one who's like, studying the sexy one."

00:22:41 April Host Yes!

00:22:42 Kiwi Guest Or kind of melding with the sexy one, 'cause I feel like they're—those characters are two halves of a weird eighties female coin, you know?

00:22:50 April Host Mm-hm!

00:22:51 Kiwi Guest Like the sort of underestimated workaholic and then the like, [*faux sultry*] seductive, you know, woman who just is like—lures men.

00:23:00 April Host Let's talk about these archetypes, too.

00:23:03 Kiwi Guest [*Normal voice*] Okay.

00:23:04 April Host Because they're real interesting to get into. Debra Winger's character, what you said, is—you know, like the over-worked eighties woman.

00:23:10 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm.

00:23:11 April Host And that's something that was like—we could see edging into a lot of films around that time. You know, *Mr. Mom* was like a huuuge comedy and that was about like, a guy who had to take over for an overworked, you know, wife.

00:23:24 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:23:25 April Host And everyone was like, changing into pumps at the office, and it was just a different time. And I'm just curious, did that kind of trope ever influence you when you were working on some things like *Legally Blonde* or any of that?

[*April responds affirmatively several times as Kiwi answers.*]

00:23:39 Kiwi Guest Oh, for sure! I mean, I feel like all of these movies—I mean, *Working Girl*, and the idea that you could be both kind of sexual and feminine and be out there slaying it in the workforce was I think a—you know, one of the things about Elle Woods that was really appealing, and people seem to—it seems to have stood the test of time as well, but—but yeah!

Just, also the kind of scrappy but also scrappy and sexy, I mean—I mean, *Working Girl*, Melanie Griffith, that was a great example of like, a woman who was—she was so sensual and also so smart.

And yeah, I think that—huge, huge influence. But also being—I mean, I love Debra Winger's attitude of this kind of defiant, like—she had a defiant streak. Like, guys were telling her, "No, you need to stay in the office, and you need to do, like, your research," and she's like, "I wanna go out in the field!"

And I like that. I like that kind of anarchistic, like, "fuck you" to patriarchy.

00:24:44 April Host And she has that moment where her boss, like, sticks his hand down, like—

00:24:48 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:24:49 April Host —her chest, and it's like—he's like giving her a back-rub 'cause they're close, right? They're like, really close friends, but he wants to be closer, and he like, lets his hand slip a little bit between her breasts.

And the elegant way that she brushes him off is something that I was just like—

00:25:04 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:25:05 April Host That scene in itself, I think, is so beautifully directed.

00:25:09 Kiwi Guest Yes.

00:25:10 April Host So beautifully acted. She just like—she kinda like, completely changes the subject. She's like a master of it.

00:25:17 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:25:18 April Host It's almost like she's not even affected by it. She's just like—switch is turned off, and then she like—she redirects him.

00:25:22 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:25:23 April Host So brilliantly.

00:25:24 Kiwi Guest Yeah. I know, you're right. It's wild. I mean, there's another great scene, too. She has so much control, it seems, over her sexuality. Remember the guy, the coworker who asked her out and she says no, she doesn't want to, and then he finds some key piece of research?

00:25:41 April Host Mm-hm.

00:25:42 Kiwi Guest In the case about Catharine, and she like, runs up and like, kisses him on the mouth.

00:25:47 April Host Mm-hm.

00:25:48 Kiwi Guest So it's like she's in control of when she gets to drive, like, a sexually charged interaction. Like, she'll kiss you, but only if you're finding out good research about the case.

00:25:56 April Host Yeah! Yeah. And you know, she dreams bigger than what anyone else wants to do for her. You know?

00:26:05 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:26:06 April Host She brings that gun to work one day, and she's just like, "What?"

00:26:08 Kiwi Guest Right. *[Laughs.]*

00:26:10 April Host That's target practice! You know?

00:26:11 Kiwi Guest Right! Gun, A.K.A. phallus.

[Both laugh.]

Then also the scene where she meets Catharine in the—and they're—she's—they're giving—she's giving her like, CPR?

00:26:23 April Host Mm-hm.

00:26:24 Kiwi Guest Like, basically they have a great kissing scene.

00:26:26 April Host Yeah.

00:26:27 Kiwi Guest It's so gay, in the best way.

00:26:29 April Host Yeah! But I have—

00:26:30 Kiwi Guest Oh, you know—we don't get to that yet.

00:26:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **April:** No, I actually had—

Kiwi: There's more to say. *[Laughs.]*

April: I have something.

00:26:34 April Host Ronald Bass actually had some ideas about whether or not there was like, any kind of sexual attraction between the two.

00:26:39 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm.

00:26:40 April Host 'Cause...

00:26:41 Kiwi Guest I mean yes, there's so much. It's like—

[April laughs.]

It's oozing off the screen.

00:26:46 April Host *[Stifling laughter]* Here's—here's the thing, though. Like, this is what Ronald Bass thinks, right?

00:26:59 Kiwi Guest *[Dismayed]* What?

00:26:50 April Host Quote:

"The fact of sexual attraction between the women was never explored in the film. There was warmth and intimacy. Did either of them fantasize they wanted to have sex with each other? I would say no. But you have one person who was completely adventurous, and would never have thought about—anything about it. She might do it out of desire to trap her prey.

In those days, you wouldn't do that because it takes over. It's like pineapple on a pizza. It's a flavor that wipes everything else away in the movie. It just becomes a lesbian movie then. You wanna do that? Do what Todd Haynes does and do that story wonderfully. Don't just throw it in with something else."

00:27:25 Kiwi Guest Wow. I mean—

00:27:27 April Host Thoughts about that, Kiwi?

00:27:28 Kiwi Guest Well, I feel like they totally are obsessed with each other, and it feels pretty electric. I mean, I feel like they—it's a little bit of a love triangle in the back half of the movie with Paul.

00:27:42 April Host Mm-hm.

00:27:44 Kiwi Guest But I feel like they basically are having sex with him because they wanna have sex with each other. *[Laughs.]*

00:27:49 April Host Mm-hm.

00:27:50 Kiwi Guest I mean, that was my reading on it. And then they're sort of playing this like, sexual one-upmanship of like, who can fuck him better than the other and obviously Theresa Russell wins that battle.

00:28:01 April Host Mm-hm.

00:28:03 Kiwi Guest But it's—yeah. It seems like... I mean, there's a—they just are—when they even meet and they're in their bikinis, and they're in the

swimming pool, they're in the water, and then they're sort of looking at each other's bodies and saying—it's just a sort of lingering, like, "Let's look at each other and figure out how to be more like each other, i.e. sorta how to marry together."

And it...

00:28:28	April	Host	Mm-hm!
00:28:29	Kiwi	Guest	Seems pretty erotic to me.
00:28:30	April	Host	It's—
00:28:31	Kiwi	Guest	And then they—then they swim <u>again</u> , and they almost <u>drown</u> in the ocean, and they have to like, share the scuba mask to get—I mean, it all seems layered in a great way.
00:28:42	April	Host	Yeah!
00:28:43	Kiwi	Guest	Like they're—and then Theresa Russell saves her just because continuing the flirtation and the back-and-forth is way more exciting than just <u>dating Paul</u> .
00:28:53	April	Host	Mm-hm.
			<i>[Kiwi laughs.]</i>
			It's weird! I'm—I can see things both ways from Ronald's points of—
00:28:58	Kiwi	Guest	Mm-hm.
00:28:59	April	Host	—point of view. Right? I think that he does have a point in terms of just like, "Are you just gonna <u>flavor</u> this with a lesbian affair?" You know?
00:29:06	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah.
00:29:07	April	Host	Like, is—does it feel <u>real</u> , or are you gonna do like what Todd Haynes does and like, make something feel real and the characters have these genuine emotions for each other?
00:29:15	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah.
			<i>[Kiwi continues responding affirmatively as April continues.]</i>
00:29:16	April	Host	And I think that that's great, but also at the same time, like, wouldn't it be great if we just kind of like <u>normalized</u> lesbian relationships? I think at <u>that</u> time, maybe in 1986 it would be a little bit more of like what he's saying, pineapple on the pizza, where it's just like it sucks the oxygen outta the room because you're like—
			<i>[Cartoonishly scandalized] "Oh god! Women kissing!" You know?</i> <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:29:36	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah. Right.
00:29:38	April	Host	"Heavens!" You know? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:29:39	Kiwi	Guest	Right.
00:29:40	April	Host	So I can understand that in terms of the context of that time. But you can't deny that maybe one or two of his like, <i>[laughing]</i> stable of women writers was like—
00:29:50	Kiwi	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah, right.
00:29:51	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	April: <i>[Laughing]</i> "No, this is <u>definitely</u> them like, in love with each

other."

Kiwi: Yeah. Right. Yeah.

00:29:55	April	Host	I mean, it—for you, like, writing any characters who are, you know, like, attracted to same sex—
00:30:03	Kiwi	Guest	Mm.
00:30:04	April	Host	—or you know, maybe pansexual or anything like that.
00:30:06	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah.
00:30:07	April	Host	Do you think about, you know, the—like, the audience reception of that? Like, "Are they gonna get caught off-guard by it? Are they—?"
			You know, like what does that mean to you when you're writing?
00:30:18	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah. I mean, I have—in <i>Trinkets</i> , the Netflix show, which is a YA show, we—the lead character is queer, and it was—I mean it felt just perfectly <u>of</u> the moment in time, because it's so many—I mean, gender's so fluid; sexuality's so fluid for a young adult audience in particular.
00:30:37	April	Host	Oh yeah, Gen Z, they're <u>so</u> easy to—
00:30:38	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah.
00:30:39	April	Host	—to embrace it now.
00:30:40	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah. So that felt like a strong choice and update from my novel, where she was straight in it. But you know, it's interesting! I mean, we—and we're writing a romantic comedy now where one of the characters is gay, and I mean <u>I</u> feel like now more than <u>ever</u> it's just a—it's like, that's something that you will only <u>enhance</u> your story.
00:31:03	April	Host	Yeah.
00:31:04	Kiwi	Guest	And <u>only</u> be more real and true to life.
00:31:06	April	Host	Yeah. 'Cause it's pretty normal.
00:31:08	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah.
00:31:09	April	Host	Like, I don't—I mean, who the hell doesn't have a gay friend, isn't gay, <i>[laughing]</i> doesn't know, like—
00:31:13	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah! Yeah!
00:31:14	April	Host	I'm like— <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:31:15	Kiwi	Guest	Right. I mean, I just feel like I've always—I mean, I identify as straight but I just feel like I'm always really more <u>interested</u> in <u>girls</u> .
00:31:23	April	Host	Mm-hm.
			<i>[April responds affirmatively as Kiwi continues.]</i>
00:31:24	Kiwi	Guest	Like, I'm interested in movies about girls, I'm interested in friendship stories, I'm interested in female relationships, female ensembles, female lead characters, so yeah.
00:31:33	Music	Music	"Switchblade Comb" begins fading in.
00:31:34	April	Host	We're gonna take another quick break. When we come back we're gonna get a little bit into kind of the milieu of the 1980s films, how this fits in there, and the philosophy of structuring this movie. We'll be right back.

00:31:52	Promo	Clip	<p><i>[Music increases to full volume and continues until the promo.]</i></p> <p>Music: Upbeat, simple electronic music.</p> <p>Janet Varney: Hi! I'm Janet Varney, and like many of you—brand new sentient robots excluded—I used to be a teenager. In fact, just about all of my friends were, too!</p> <p>Including folks like comedian Danielle Radford.</p> <p><i>[Into interview.]</i></p> <p>Danielle Radford: And of course all of us, you—you take on that theatre accent, and our teacher would say, "No, that isn't how people talk!"</p> <p>Janet: Right?!</p> <p>Danielle: "Don't do the super theatre kid accent; it's the worst!" But so when I was doing theatre in high school, of course I immediately was talking about <i>[pseudo-British accent]</i> being in the theatre.</p> <p>Janet: <i>[Laughing]</i> Uh-huh?</p> <p><i>[Both laugh.]</i></p> <p><i>[Out of interview.]</i></p> <p>Janet: So join me every week on the <i>JV Club</i> podcast, where I speak with my favorite women artists, innovators, and humans as we reminisce about the past and how it led us to becoming who we are. Find it every Thursday on Maximum Fun.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>
00:32:35	Music	Music	<p>"Switchblade Comb" fades in to full volume, and then drops to play quietly as April and Kiwi speak.</p>
00:32:41	April	Host	<p>Welcome back to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>. I'm April Wolfe and I'm joined today by Kiwi Smith, and we're talking about <i>Black Widow</i>.</p> <p>So when Rafelson was reflecting on this kind of movie-making career that he had—as obviously a really kind of temperamental, interesting figure. <u>Very</u> interesting figure.</p>
00:32:57	Kiwi	Guest	<p>Mm.</p>
00:32:58	April	Host	<p>Lot of <u>weird</u> jobs that he had before he started making films. He said, quote:</p> <p>"When I started making films in the late sixties, I had the good fortune that despite the fact that my films broke with popular taste, they were synchronous enough with an attitude of the time to be successful. We're now going through a period that reminds me of the 1950s, in that there's very little defection from popular taste. We don't seem to hear the voice of the minority very loudly these days, whereas when I started out, that voice was a bit more clear."</p>

00:33:24 Kiwi Guest Hm!

00:33:25 April Host I thought that was an interesting there where—when he was talking about coming back to *Black Widow*, 'cause this is the first movie that he had made with five years off. There was an incident where he punched someone on set.

[Kiwi gasps.]

And he was thrown off this show or movie; I can't even remember which one it was. So he took some time off and he like, went hiking around the world. Like...

00:33:46 Kiwi Guest Wow.

00:33:47 April Host Got into his old hobby of anthropology and archeology, and then came back and was like "Yeah, I'm gonna make this movie." And this was kind of his—not like a mea culpa; it was like "Hey, I'm back. You can't get rid of me. I'm gonna make something a little bit more mainstream, but it's also gonna be weird."

00:34:07 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm.

00:34:08 April Host And it was his answer to the movies of the 1980s.

00:34:10 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:34:11 April Host And I was wondering if you could talk about your experiences of working with different kinds of directors, and—

00:34:16 Kiwi Guest Yeah! I mean, Robert Luketic directed *Legally Blonde* and *The Ugly Truth*.

00:34:20 April Host Mm-hm.

[April continues responding affirmatively as Kiwi continues.]

00:34:21 Kiwi Guest And he was—I mean, he's very prepared. And he comes in and just like, wants to capture and do just a few takes and get it and move on, and keeps it very like, light and fast-paced and super collaborative. Was super collaborative with us, in terms of if there's any kind of story thing or—he like, would pull us in and we would be there to work beside him for any time he needed it.

Which is not always the case. Sometimes on other projects, directors are more wanting to say "Thank you for the script; now let me go shoot it and do what I like." And so we're—I mean, Robert I feel like was—is a really great collaborator in that way.

And working on this Netflix show *Trinkets*, I got to collaborate deeply with the—Sara St. Onge, who directed the first two and the last two episodes of the season. And I mean, she was really tough and really focused, but getting to prepare with her was a real delight of TV that I hadn't experienced so much as a writer. Like, really having input on every single aspect of the production was great.

00:35:35 April Host I mean, that prep time is so invaluable.

00:35:40 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:35:41 April Host And just feeling like you know—*[stifling laughter]* or that you have some kind of fucking plan—

00:35:46 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm!

00:35:47 April Host —before you spend a bunch of money! *[Laughs.]*

00:35:48 Kiwi Guest Yeah, yeah!

00:35:49 April Host And get a bunch of people in a place.

00:35:50 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:35:51 April Host I wanted to get a little bit into Rafelson's philosophy of structure, too, though.

00:35:55 Kiwi Guest Great.

00:35:56 April Host Because you had mentioned earlier, and so I want to return to that, the opening shot of this.

00:36:00 Kiwi Guest Yes.

00:36:01 April Host Which is fixing the hair in a—in the mirror.

00:36:06 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:36:07 April Host One eye in focus, one eye not.

00:36:09 Kiwi Guest Yes.

00:36:10 April Host This kind of intricate shot that we're seeing. And he said, quote—and this is Rafelson—

"The first shot is to grab the audience and the last shot is to redeem yourself."

And then this article says "Though Rafelson prepared for the opening shot by filming it 30 times with a video camera, it still proves to be a tricky piece of business. A complex optical effect that takes place in an airplane—a mock-up of a jet was built at Fox—and pivots around a magnification in the glasses of a woman applying makeup. The shot reveals the endlessly patient Theresa Russell to be a real pro."

So.

00:36:43 Kiwi Guest *[Gasps.]* Oh! It's such a good shot; I love it so much. Yeah.

00:36:47 April Host I mean, what's your philosophy of first and last scenes?

00:36:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk **April:** First and last—opening images and closing images?

Kiwi: Oh, that is—

April: And like what do you—do you have a philosophy for that?

Kiwi: Right.

00:36:55 Kiwi Guest I don't know if I—for the—for images, I mean, I talk to my life partner a lot about the generative image. You know, that idea that you get this picture in your head and then that can be the one thing that the whole story is built around.

00:37:10 April Host Mm-hm.

[April again responds affirmatively as Kiwi continues.]

00:37:11 Kiwi Guest You probably have talked about that a little bit, but I mean, I find the closing—I mean, the opening image and the opening scene is always just much more polished because it's—you re-write it over

and over and over and over again.

And the last scene is usually—I mean oftentimes—in *Legally Blonde* the ending was re-shot, because I think when writers get to the end of a screenplay, they're tired.

[Both laughing] 'Cause they've been—they've been writing—

00:37:39	April	Host	Big secret, you guys! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:37:40	Kiwi	Guest	They've been writing and re-writing the whole movie, and so sometimes they end up with like not a great scene at the end, because of their fatigue of working on the rest of it. And oftentimes I've experienced that where it's like, "Well, let's just figure out the ending later."
00:37:52	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:37:53	Kiwi	Guest	And I honestly think that's why endings get re-shot. Because we just—too many other big fish to fry to worry about the ending.
00:38:02	April	Host	Yeah! You're fucking tired.
00:38:03	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah.
00:38:04	April	Host	Or sometimes, like, your budget changes or something. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:38:06	Kiwi	Guest	Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Right. I mean in <i>Legally Blonde</i> , our ending was we had sort of a parade of people complimenting Elle at the end after she wins the trial, and like, they're—and it was sort of like a—she was standing there receiving guests.
00:38:22	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:38:23	Kiwi	Guest	And we screened that version and people were like, "What is this?" And then we re-cut it, and then we screened a version where she and Luke Wilson kiss at the end, and then audiences were like, "Fuck <u>this</u> ! It's not about her getting a <u>boy</u> !"
00:38:37	April	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Oh!
00:38:38	Kiwi	Guest	"It's about her finding <u>herself</u> and her <u>own</u> glory!"
			So we had to re-shoot, you know, quite—pretty close, a couple months away from release, a new ending where she finally tells Warner to go screw himself and then she gives the graduation speech. All of that whole piece was shot in London, like, many, many months after the principle photography was wrapped.
00:38:59	April	Host	I always wonder—I mean like, I wonder what the actors think of that, every time they have to do like a re-shoot. You know?
00:39:04	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	April: They just—do they treat it like a job? Kiwi: I know!
00:39:06	April	Host	Or do they have like, thoughts or opinions? Are they like—is their opinion of the character changing for each kind of scenario because of, you know, what they chose to do?
00:39:18	Kiwi	Guest	I know! I would love to find out. I mean, I feel like actors have an amazing ability to like, lock back in to the character.
00:39:25	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:39:26	Kiwi	Guest	It was funny on <i>Legally Blonde</i> , 'cause they were all wearing like

different wigs. All of their hair had been cut and changed.

00:39:30 April

Host

Yeah.

00:39:31 Kiwi

Guest

So everyone—almost everyone in the re-shoot's wearing a wig.

[Both laugh.]

00:39:37 April

Host

Something that seems silly, but also I think great to talk about—'cause it's small but it's really big in terms of this movie. That Ronald Bass said, "I've never been a fan of a chiron that says 'Two years later.' It apologizes for what seems like a weakness in the story. It creates a lot of questions in the mind I prefer to ignore. We let the story tell itself, and if you care about the characters and what you're watching feels like a sensible progression, then..."

00:40:04 Kiwi

Guest

I love that!

00:40:06 April

Host

And I thought that would be something good to talk about in terms of—the first kind of half of this story is time passing, time passing—

00:40:13 Kiwi

Guest

Yes!

00:40:14 April

Host

—time passing, time passing. It's a structure that is kinda unlike other structures.

00:40:18 Kiwi

Guest

That's true. I just cut a "six months—" or "two months later" out of a script yesterday.

00:40:23 April

Host

You did?

00:40:24 Kiwi

Guest

So I am pleased to know that Mr. Bass would support this tactic, yeah.

00:40:27 April

Host

He would be like, "Brava."

00:40:28 Kiwi

Guest

[Laughing] Yeah, right.

00:40:29 April

Host

"Brava."

00:40:30 Kiwi

Guest

"Take it out."

[April laughs.]

Yeah.

[Kiwi responds affirmatively as April speaks.]

00:40:32 April

Host

I mean, that is—I mean, "apologizing for what seems like a weakness in the story." That makes sense!

The thing that I like about this movie, too—and something that I'm really happy that they didn't explain—is that Theresa Russell, we actually don't know why she's doing what she's doing.

00:40:51 Kiwi

Guest

We don't. And then there's even this like, playful thing where Debra Winger says—her boss is questioning her about her own motives, like "Why are you pursuing this case?" And she says something about like—she tells him a story about her dad beating her up, and she tells—kinda tells it in this like, grandiose way, and her boss, Terry Quinn, looks kinda sad about it.

And then she's like, "Ha-ha-ha, I'm just joking!" Like, "Sometimes it isn't about that!"

00:41:14 April

Host

Yeah!

00:41:15 Kiwi Guest "It has nothing to do with that!" So it's sort of a—defiantly refusing to give backstories for either women—either woman, which is neat.

00:41:23 April Host I fucking love that.

[Kiwi chuckles.]

I love it so much! And actually, I'm writing a piece on that particular kind of thing that we do with female characters, where we—we constantly feel like we have to pathologize—

00:41:33 Kiwi Guest Mm.

00:41:34 April Host —or you know.

00:41:35 Kiwi Guest Mm-hm.

00:41:36 April Host Give a sob story, or make them abuse survivors.

00:41:37 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:41:38 April Host And like, while that's true—you know, like, *[stifles laughter]* I would say most women that I know have survived abuse in some manner, but that's not necessarily what defines them. And sometimes when you put that in a script, it seems like that's the only thing that defines the character.

00:41:51 Kiwi Guest Yeah.

00:41:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Kiwi:** That's interesting.

April: It's like, the easy way.

00:41:55 Kiwi Guest In writing *10 Things I Hate About You*, we got a studio note of like, "Why—why is Kat such a bitch?" Like, Julia Stiles' character. And her—in the—in our draft, the—her parents were married, and you know, they were like—she was product of a pretty normal household. So we had to get rid of the mom. Get her outta there. Parents divorced.

00:42:13 April Host Mm-hm.

00:42:14 Kiwi Guest Single father. So she had some kind of wound that she was like, pining for her mom.

00:42:18 April Host Yeah. Yeah. Here's the thing, though.

[Kiwi laughs.]

Sometimes girls are just bitches—

00:42:22 Kiwi Guest Yeah! *[Laughs.]*

00:42:23 April Host —because they're feeling a lot of shit and the world is terrible! *[Laughs.]*

00:42:27 Kiwi Guest *[Winding down]* Exactly.

00:42:28 April Host Something that we should all remember. *[Laughs.]*

00:42:30 Kiwi Guest Yes. *[Laughs.]*

00:42:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **April:** *[Laughing]* Thank you so much for coming and speaking with me today, Kiwi.

Kiwi: Thank you!

00:42:34	April	Host	And then people should be watching <i>Trinkets</i> on Netflix.
00:42:37	Kiwi	Guest	Yes.
00:42:38	April	Host	And you know, keep up with that. Take a look at some of the comics that Kiwi wrote as well.
00:42:41	Kiwi	Guest	Yes.
00:42:42	April	Host	And anything else you feel like you wanna plug?
00:42:44	Kiwi	Guest	Well, I would love for people to read the book that I wrote that <i>Trinkets</i> is based upon, which is out in the world again after the show, and it can kinda tide people over between season one and our season two which will come out next year.
00:42:56	April	Host	Awesome. Yeah.
00:42:57	Kiwi	Guest	Yeah.
00:42:58	April	Host	Take a trip to Barnes & Noble. And thank you again to Robert Fischer for the wonderful research materials. Please check out his short interview films, specifically this one is great with Ronald Bass on the UK Blu-ray that they have for <i>Black Widow</i> .
00:43:10	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Kiwi: I'm going to. April: Thank you guys so much!
00:43:11	Music	Music	"Switchblade Comb" begins fading in.
00:43:12	Kiwi	Guest	Yay, thank you so much!
00:43:14	April	Host	Thank you for listening to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i> . If you like what you're hearing, please leave us a five-star review on Apple Podcasts. If you do, we'll read it on-air.

If you want to let us know what you think of the show, you can Tweet at us at [@SwitchbladePod](https://twitter.com/SwitchbladePod) or email us at switchbladesisters@maximumfun.org.

Please check out our Facebook group. That's [Facebook.com/groups/switchbladesisters](https://www.facebook.com/groups/switchbladesisters).

Our producer is Casey O'Brien, our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and this is a production of [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org).

[Music increases to full volume and finishes.]

00:43:43	Clip	Clip	Alex: Could I borrow your hair?
00:43:44	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
00:43:45	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
00:43:47	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:43:48	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
00:43:49	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.