

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 her guest, and then it fades out.
00:00:08	April Wolfe	Host	<p>Welcome to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>, where women get together to slice and dice our favorite action and genre films. I'm April Wolfe.</p> <p>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, perhaps one that influenced their own work in some small way, and today I'm very excited to have screenwriter/playwright Claire Kiechel with me. Hi, Claire!</p>
00:00:28	Claire Kiechel	Guest	<p>I'm so happy to be here!</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>
00:00:30	April	Host	<p>For those of you who aren't as familiar with Claire's work, please let me give you an introduction. Claire is a bi-coastal theatre-maker and film and TV writer. She earned her BA from Amherst College before jumping up to the New School of Drama for her MFA. Since then she's stayed very busy, receiving commissions from Actors Theatre of Louisville, South Coast Rep, and the Alley Theatre.</p> <p>Her plays include <i>Paul Swan is Dead and Gone</i> at the Civilians at Torn Page, <i>Sophia</i> at Alley Theatre All New Festival in 2019—with an upcoming world premiere at the Alley in 2020. She's also brought sci-fi to the stage with <i>Pilgrims</i> at the Gift Theatre, which got a spot on the Kilroys' The List in 2016. Her cabaret musical <i>Lulu Is Hungry</i>, with composer Avi Amon, went to Ars Nova's ANT Festival. And she also wrote a play called <i>Some Dark Places of the Earth</i>, which was inspired by her child—oh, wow! You have a childhood in Belgium?</p>
00:01:24	Claire	Guest	Yeah!
00:01:25	April	Host	<p>Wow! Okay.</p> <p><i>[Claire laughs.]</i></p> <p>I was like—I knew that I put that in there. Like, "A childhood in Belgium!"</p> <p><i>[Continuing the bio]</i> Uh, though theatre is wildly lucrative—</p> <p><i>[Claire laughs.]</i></p> <p>—Claire gave all that up to switch gears a little bit for a while and write for TV. She wrote for Netflix's second season of <i>The OA</i>, for which she was recently nominated for a Writers Guild Award for her episode "Mirror Mirror," and also wrote for HBO's <i>Watchmen</i>. For that, she is nominated for a Critics' Choice Award and two WGA Awards. So... it's been a nice run.</p>
00:01:54	Claire	Guest	It's been a good week, yeah! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:01:55	April	Host	<p>Yeah. It's been pretty good.</p> <p>So now she's staffed on HBO Max's upcoming feminist retelling of Greek mythology <i>Circe</i>, based on the Madeline Miller book. She also</p>

helped develop the *House of Dragons*, uh, *Game of Thrones* show in a mini room, and is developing a sci-fi dystopian pilot with Annapurna and E1, as well as writing a film for Disney with Secret Machines.
So—

00:02:15 Claire Guest Yeah!

00:02:16 April Host —a lot of stuff coming up. Right?

00:02:18 Claire Guest Yeah, it's been busy.

00:02:19 April Host I mean, so you're just gonna go right back to plays. Right?

00:02:22 Claire Guest I think so, actually!

00:02:23 April Host Okay.

00:02:24 Claire Guest I honestly think that plays sort of save my life. 'Cause I think that TV and film—I mean, I came in here having done exclusively playwriting for so long that when I got to TV and film I was like "Oh." Like, you don't get final say! *[Laughs.]*

00:02:37 April Host No! No.

00:02:39 Claire Guest At all! And I didn't understand that. So I kind of think that like, playwriting is great for my ego. 'Cause I can like—I can give everything to everyone else in like a TV room. I don't have to worry about my own ego and like, getting my ideas on every single page. And as long as I have my plays, I kind of have that little outlet.

00:02:57 April Host Yeah. Theatre's weird. It's fun.

00:02:59 Claire Guest It's weird. *[Laughs.]*

00:03:00 April Host Claire, the movie that you chose to talk about today is *Brazil*.

00:03:04 Claire Guest I did!

00:03:05 April Host Can you give us a little explanation on why this is one of your fave genre films?

00:03:09 Claire Guest Yeah! Well, I think it is one of those films that like... although I might have some different feelings about it today, when I was a kid, I saw it, and it sort of changed what I thought film could do.

00:03:25 April Host Mm-hm.

[April continues responding affirmatively as Claire elaborates.]

00:03:26 Claire Guest And I think it's Terry Gilliam's best work. I love his worldbuilding especially, and I feel like—especially thinking about *The OA* and *Watchmen*, both of those have so much worldbuilding, that I thought of *Brazil* while I was in both of those rooms as well. And there's something just—I feel that it's talking about right now! Like it's one of—I think in the 1980s we had so much crazy sci-fi and you know, like, the fact that we're living in 2019 which is the year of *Blade Runner*, you know, and *Watchmen* was also 1985, which was also this film. Like, everyone was like trying to process this really weird America in like a weird future world. I think *Brazil* is actually the one that got the closest to what we actually are today.

And so I think—um, lots of other reasons. It's also a Christmas film.

00:04:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk **April:** *[Laughs.]* Yes, it is.

Claire: Like your film *Black Christmas*.

[April laughs.]

00:04:21 Claire Guest So for people who don't like Christmas, *Brazil* or *Black Christmas* would be great! *[Laughs.]*

00:04:25 April Host Yeah! I was just—I was re-watching it today and just like "Oh, shit, it is a Christmas movie!"

00:04:29 Claire Guest It is!

00:04:30 April Host "Okay! Alright!"

00:04:31 Claire Guest Yeah. That and *Die Hard*. *[Laughs.]*

00:04:32 April Host Yeah, I mean, add it on the list, man!

00:04:34 Claire Guest Exactly.

00:04:35 April Host For those of you who haven't seen *Brazil*, today's episode obviously will give you some spoilers. But as always, that shouldn't stop you from listening before you watch it. 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 *Brazil* first...

[Claire laughs.]

Go ahead.

00:04:51 Claire Guest Yeah. Two and a half hours later.

00:04:53 April Host *[Chuckles.]* It is a long movie.

Now let's introduce *Brazil!*

00:04:54 Music Music "Brazil Office Theme" by Michael Kamen begins in the background.

00:04:55 April Host Written by Terry Gilliam, Tom Stoppard, and Charles McKeown. So! That's a nice trio right there. And directed by Gilliam for release in 1985. *Brazil* stars Jonathan Pryce as Sam Lowry, a government grunt who dreams vividly of rescuing a gorgeous damsel. One day a printer gets jammed with a dead fly and accidentally prints out a wrong name on an arrest form: Buttler instead of Tuttle. All hell is gonna break loose.

[Claire laughs.]

Agents SWAT the apartment of Buttler, pulling him from his family and leaving a handful of paperwork.

[Music stops, and does not resume.]

00:05:27 Clip Clip **Arrest Official:** I hereby inform you, under powers entrusted to me under section 47 paragraph 7 of Council Order number 4-3-8-4-7-6 that Mr. Buttler, Archibald, residing at 412 North Tower, Shangri-La Towers, has been invited to assist the Ministry of Information with certain inquiries.

00:05:41 April Host But upstairs neighbor Jill Layton, who looks exactly like Lowry's dream woman with short hair, takes it upon herself to get Buttler released from his wrongful imprisonment. When Jill tries to make this report, Lowry spots her, but Jill is not in the mood to talk to government grunts.

00:05:56	Clip	Clip	<p>Jill Layton: I've <u>been</u> to Information Adjustments. They sent me here; they said you have a form I need to fill out.</p> <p>M.O.I. Lobby Porter: Have you got an arrest receipt?</p> <p>Jill: Yeah.</p> <p>Porter: Is it stamped?</p> <p>Jill: Stamped?</p> <p>Porter: No, no. There's no stamp on it, you see? I can't let you have the form until this is stamped.</p> <p>Jill: Where do I get it stamped?</p> <p>Porter: Information Adjustments.</p>
00:06:22	April	Host	<p>Later, Lowry's AC gets busted, so he calls in a complaint. But suddenly a renegade repairman, played by Robert De Niro—the actual Tuttle of this story—swoops in to save the day.</p>
00:06:34	Clip	Clip	<p>Sam: I called Central Services.</p> <p>Tuttle: They're a little overworked these days. Luckily, I intercepted your call.</p>
00:06:39	April	Host	<p>And Lowry has to make a decision: to protect this man, or turn him in.</p> <p><i>[Claire laughs.]</i></p> <p>Hmm! He protects.</p> <p>Sam takes a promotion to Information Retrieval, which is the <u>only</u> way he'll be able to find out information about his dream lady, Jill. He gets her info and then spots her in the building, and takes off with her in her cab. She tries to get rid of him, not trusting him at all, but he holds on for dear life, earning her trust the hard way after suspecting her of some terrible things.</p> <p>Lowry makes nice eventually by showing Jill that she's now listed as deceased to the government.</p>
00:07:14	Clip	Clip	<p>Music: Gently optimistic strings.</p> <p>Sam: You don't exist anymore. I've killed you.</p>
00:07:18	April	Host	<p>Thereby removing her from the bureaucratic grid. They make love, but are interrupted by government agents arresting Lowry. He's brought to a facility where Jack tortures and eliminates quote-unquote "problems."</p>
00:07:30	Clip	Clip	<p>Sam: <i>[Sobbing]</i> Jack, I'm frightened.</p> <p>Jack: How do you think I feel?! You <u>shit!</u></p> <p>Sam: Jack—</p>

Jack: Shut up!

[Jack's shout echoes. He pulls himself together and continues calmly.]

Jack: This is a... professional relationship.

00:07:45 April Host

But a resistance group swoops in, kills him, and rescues Lowry.

00:07:48 Clip Clip

Music: Triumphant.

Tuttle: You okay?

Sam: Tuttle!

Tuttle: Call me Harry.

00:07:52 April Host

Tuttle and Lowry escape, and Lowry's taken on a strange tour through the city and a funeral before he falls through a casket and into Jill's car, which drives away into the sunset. Of course—

[Claire laughs quietly.]

—then it's revealed that those last parts are all in his head, and Jack has successfully eliminated the problem of Lowry.

00:08:10 Claire Guest

That was very well done.

00:08:11 April Host

Yeah!

00:08:12 Claire Guest

Yeah.

00:08:13 April Host

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. That's, uh—there's a lot of other stuff that happens.

00:08:16 Claire Guest

Yes. Yes.

00:08:17 April Host

There's a lot of scenes that I didn't fully explore in that synopsis, but that kinda gets to the meat of what actually happens in terms of plot.

I wanna talk about the process of whittling down an idea to its kind of essence of what you need in a story. Gilliam said, quote, "I work in this strange sort of magpie approach. I just start collecting things, and having an idea—a central idea—works like a magnet. Things just start sticking to it. I might end up with basically all these ideas that I start shuffling around like a jigsaw puzzle, trying to make a story or some sense out of a thing."

Seems like a maddening way to work, but... this is just his process?

00:09:00 Claire Guest

I kinda love it! I mean, I feel like I'm a little like a magpie as well. Like, I—especially when I'm not doing an outline. I definitely feel like I collect, I collect, I collect—

00:09:10 April Host

Mm-hm.

00:09:11 Claire Guest

—and then at the end I'm like "Okay, what do I have?"

00:09:12 April Host

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:09:14 Claire Guest

And yeah! It's... it results in things, I think, that are like kind of unexpected and dreamlike, which—there's so much of just random scenes in this movie that like, are not about the plot, but are just so delightful. And that restaurant scene—I don't know if you...

00:09:33	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:09:35	Claire	Guest	... <u>like</u> that scene, but that's one of my favorite scenes of it. And it <u>feels</u> like it's been collected from somewhere, where it's like—okay, it's—he's basically having dinner with his mother, who's talking about her—you know, her—she got him a promotion, he's very angry about it, her friend got some new facial surgery...
00:09:54	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:09:55	Claire	Guest	And meanwhile, the waiter's trying to get him to say the number of the meal that he's supposed to order. And then there's a—just a terrorist event, and everyone just goes off on the rest of their day, and goes off on the rest of the meal, and it's just such a normal occurrence—
00:10:10	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Whoosh.]</i>
00:10:11	Clip	Clip	<i>[Chaotic background noise.]</i>
			Mrs. Terrain: Really, Sam, why can't <u>you</u> do something about these terrorists?!
			Sam: It's my lunch hour. Besides, it's not my department.
00:10:19	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Whoosh.]</i>
00:10:20	Claire	Guest	Something like that I feel like if you were structuring this film just for plot, you might not put that scene in there, but it says so much about the world and what you're—you're just understanding that it's—this is a world that is more of a metaphorical world—
00:10:34	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:10:35	Claire	Guest	—that is about how we ignore things, and how we just go on with our lives even though there is like, these terrible events that are—we're hearing about and are surrounding us every day.
00:10:43	April	Host	There's actually like a meta-ness to that scene, because—this is Jonathan Pryce talking about the restaurant scene—quote:
			"The restaurant scene we shot at Mentmore Towers, the home of Transcendental Meditation."
00:10:54	Claire	Guest	Oh my god.
00:10:55	April	Host	"Ironically it was one of our more violent scenes. You've got wealthy people eating at the restaurant. The explosion goes off, and they carry on with their meal. At the time, it was so big and violent, I thought it had gone wrong. I couldn't believe the size of the fireballs."
			So...
00:11:08	Claire	Guest	What?! Oh my god, you just blew my mind. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:11:11	April	Host	Yeah. So it was this, like, <u>really</u> kind of horrific, violent thing. You've got these people who are just kind of like in their <u>own</u> kind of like, wealthy, privileged, zenned out state of just like, not paying attention to anything around them. And yeah, it was like a—kind of a big shock for all the actors who were filming it, too, who were just like, "Oh! Just keep going on!" <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:11:32	Claire	Guest	They didn't even know it was gonna be that big!
00:11:34	April	Host	No!

00:11:35 Claire Guest That's an incredible story. Ugh, Jonathan Pryce, he pulled it off. *[Laughs.]*

00:11:37 April Host Yeah, he's like—he's the only one I think who has like, some kind of reaction on that.

00:11:42 Claire Guest Exactly.

00:11:43 April Host But like, Katherine Helmond—

00:11:44 Claire Guest Oh my god.

00:11:45 April Host —who plays his mother, is just like, very cool. Very cool. Just keeps going on.

00:11:49 Claire Guest "Can't you do something about these terrorists?"

[Both laugh.]

00:11:53 April Host Well, I also—I wanna draw attention to—and this is something I don't have a quote to back up, but the idea that the production design of these kind of—

00:12:01 Claire Guest Yeah!

00:12:02 April Host —futuristic worlds where technology is supposed to help us achieve all these great things. It's actually very clunky, as you say. Just as the dialogue is—can be clunky in these kinds of things. That the machinery is clunky.

00:12:14 Claire Guest Completely.

00:12:15 April Host It doesn't work, and it seems off, and it's just—it doesn't seem like it was designed for like, ergonomic, like, the best of what the future is.

[Claire laughs.]

But it is what just ended up happening. So it's just this kind of, um, not pristine vision of what technology in the future or in an alternate world looks like.

00:12:32 Claire Guest Yeah! And it's that weird combo. And I mean, I think that *Watchmen* has a little bit of that, where it's like, we don't have Internet. *[Laughs.]*

00:12:37 April Host Mm-hm.

00:12:38 Claire Guest But we have like, a lot of clones and other fancy technology that—like teleportation devices. But the thing I love about *Brazil* is that yeah, it's this weird—it almost feels like we're living in a world that already had its heyday, maybe like a couple decades ago.

00:12:54 April Host Yeah.

00:12:55 Claire Guest And like, was at the pinnacle of technology and innovation, and like, and then what happened was that all the sudden the bureaucracy drove out the imagination and like, will, of anyone who could actually come up with better ways.

00:13:10 April Host Mm-hm.

00:13:11 Claire Guest So they're all living in this sort of like, uh, deformed, you know, society that—that everything used to work, but no one actually has the skills or imagination to make everything—anything work.

00:13:23 April Host Yeah.

00:13:24 Claire Guest And the bureaucracy makes everyone like, so exhausted that they

can't even bear to do anything but survive.

00:13:28 April Host Yeah.

00:13:29 Claire Guest Which, maybe that's what—*[laughs]* maybe that's what it feels like to be in America now. I don't know. *[Laughs.]*

00:13:33 April Host Yeah. That's—well, it's in kind of a—like, there's a weird anti-intellectualism about it. You know?

00:13:38 Claire Guest Yeah!

00:13:39 April Host It's like, "Try not to be smarter than this."

00:13:40 Claire Guest Yeah!

00:13:41 April Host "Just be like—be at a minimum-to-medium level of intelligence."

[Police sirens are becoming audible in the background of someone's audio.]

00:13:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Claire:** That's such a good point.

April: "Because you're not gonna survive here if you're smarter than that."

00:13:49 Claire Guest That's such a good point. I didn't even think about that. But like, Sam Lowry, he's like—he's almost too competent for the world.

00:13:54 April Host Yeah!

00:13:55 Claire Guest 'Cause like he—he actually, like, is trying to be someone who is really passing by on his mediocre-ness.

00:14:03 April Host Yeah. And he would like to. It's just that he's like, slightly smarter, and that sucks.

[Sirens stop.]

00:14:08 Claire Guest Just the—like, all those—those tubes, right? Like, the idea that like—it's just incredible! It's like, above—like, behind the, you know, very *Jetsons*-like exterior, everything is just chaos.

00:14:21 April Host Mm-hm!

00:14:22 Claire Guest Like, and all the—the hero, the Indiana Jones of this world, is Robert De Niro, who is a heating specialist who just like, wants to do his heating fixing without paperwork.

00:14:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Claire:** I just love that!

April: That's the hero!

Claire: Yeah, that's the hero of this story! *[Laughs.]*

April: Just a guy who does—just is so tired of paperwork.

00:14:38 Claire Guest Right! And he's the only one who's sort of like—he keeps repeating that mantra that like, we see on the billboards everywhere, which is what—it's like "We're all in this together." We're all in this together. And he's the only one that like, believes the bullshit that the society has actually, like, advertised, and—but is actually doing something about it!

00:14:56 April Host Yeah.

00:14:57 Claire Guest Which I love. I love his relationship to Sam Lowry. It's so weird.

00:15:00	Music	Music	"Switchblade Comb" begins fading in.
00:15:01	April	Host	Well, we're gonna take a quick break. So we'll be talking a little bit about Robert De Niro, and then also Tom Stoppard being a part of this. Which—
00:15:08	Claire	Guest	Crazy.
00:15:09	April	Host	The—I love the way that he talks about his relationship with Terry Gilliam, and how they worked on the script together. We'll be getting into that and a whole bunch of other stuff, but we'll be right back.
			<i>[Music continues until the promo.]</i>
00:15:23	Promo	Clip	<i>[Computer beeps.]</i>
			Music: Funky electronic music.
			Ben: Hey, we're Ben and Adam and we're here to tell you about our <i>Star Trek</i> podcast, <i>The Greatest Generation</i> .
			Adam: "Why should I listen to a <i>Star Trek</i> podcast?" you may be asking yourself. Well, ours is actually good and funny.
			Ben: We joke around, we uh, we have a lot of fun. We talk about film production techniques that are used in <i>Star Trek</i> . We love to break down the stories and the characters, and we just have a blast while we're doing it. It's kind of like sitting around with a couple of buds, having a beer and talking about an episode of one of your favorite shows.
			Adam: So go to MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts and subscribe to <i>The Greatest Generation</i> .
			Ben: Yeah, whatever you're using to listen to this, just have it find us and subscribe.
			<i>[Computer beeps.]</i>
00:16:09	Music	Music	"Switchblade Comb" plays again, fading out as April speaks.
00:16:15	April	Host	Welcome back to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i> ! I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Claire Kiechel, and we are talking about <i>Brazil</i> .
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
			You talked a—you know, we talked a little bit about the love story and about Jill's character—
00:16:25	Claire	Guest	Yes!
00:16:26	April	Host	—and him not really seeing Jill for who she is.
00:16:28	Claire	Guest	Right.
00:16:29	April	Host	And so we should definitely talk about Jill—
00:16:30	Claire	Guest	Let's talk about that.
00:16:31	April	Host	—and Kim Greist. You know, when she was working on the film, she said "It's the depths of the psyche, the unconscious uglies, the things you run away from, the things you don't want to see," right? So she was really in love with it. The rumor is that her part had actually been

cut down significantly because Gilliam wasn't happy with her performance.

00:16:50 Claire Guest

Oh, wow.

00:16:51 April Host

The thing is that he had auditioned quite a few leading actresses from that time to be this character of Jill, but he wanted someone who was somewhat inexperienced, because he wanted to be able to kind of mold their performance on screen.

[Claire makes a sound of surprise or possibly dismay.]

So the only movie credit that she had to date when she booked *Brazil* was actually *C.H.U.D.* in 1984.

00:17:12 Claire Guest

Amazing film. Amazing film.

00:17:13 April Host

And so *C.H.U.D.* is a classic.

00:17:18 Claire Guest

Oh my gosh.

00:17:19 April Host

And he—I mean, I'm not even sure if Terry Gilliam had seen it. But he was just like "Okay, well, the audience won't have any prior expectations of her and who she is." He wanted kind of an unknown. You know? For—just like, "I want to build her up to be this character. And she's gonna be a dream projection for him, so here we are."

But he said later on that—when her material had to be reduced, he said, quote, that "Experience really does count for something." So...

00:17:51 Claire Guest

Oh my god, trash-talking Kim!

00:17:53 April Host

Yeah, he really did trash-talk Kim.

00:17:55 Claire Guest

That's not very nice. And I don't—I also just don't think the—*[laughs]*. I don't know if that's really fair, to be like "I want someone that I can mold and break." I think it's such a hard part, actually! Like, 'cause there is so little on the page. And maybe that's just 'cause the cut, of how much they cut of her stuff, but—

00:18:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk

April: Yeah, we will never know what her role actually was.

Claire: We'll never know!

00:18:13 Claire Guest

Yeah! And I think she does a lot with what she can, you know? Like, she does—you sort of—I—what I like about her performance, especially in the beginning, is how much she just like, does not want to play his games. Like, Jonathan Pryce's character keeps being like "I love you! I love you!" And she's like, kicking him out of—you know.

00:18:31 April Host

Like, "No!"

[April responds affirmatively several times as Claire continues.]

00:18:32 Claire Guest

Cars and vans and trucks and just like, "I—get out of here! I have nothing to do with your fantasy." And then once she starts to like, acquiesce to it, it feels kind of weird and bizarre and almost like that's part of his, you know, fantasy version of him? The fact that he can't—I always felt so bad. Is that like, she's like, "Okay. Maybe let's—you know, sleep together. I'm here." And he's so wrapped up in his like, hero fantasy, saving-princess fantasy, that he has to like run off. He can't even consummate the relationship.

And it's only like, when he comes back and she's wearing his mother's nightgown and maybe one of her wigs, or maybe that's just in his hair—head, because we don't see that wig on the bed when they get caught. But it's so fucked up! *[Laughs.]*

- 00:19:14 April Host Yeah, the—I mean, I'm not gonna say that Terry Gilliam is always great with women. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:19:18 Claire Guest Yes. Not his finest hour. I—
- 00:19:22 April Host He's—*[sighs]*. He's got a spotty record, and this character—the women in this movie are pretty... interesting.
- 00:19:32 Claire Guest Yeah! Well, you—it's—know what's weird about it? Is that I feel like part of it feels—yeah, like they all are kind of characters of themselves, except for maybe Jill.
- 00:19:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Claire:** But the mother, certainly.
- April:** Oh, yeah!
- Claire:** And all the—her mother's friend.
- April:** Her friend. Yeah.
- 00:19:46 Claire Guest I mean, it's so cruel to sort of like—*[laughs]* older women, and their desire. I mean, he's definitely poking fun on like, vanity. Even though I do—I kinda do love this idea that you have these like, dueling surgeons that are like, going farther and farther and farther—
- 00:20:01 April Host Oh, yeah.
- 00:20:02 Claire Guest —and making his mother younger and younger and younger.
- 00:20:04 April Host Yeah.
- 00:20:05 Claire Guest Like, that's so fucked up in such a delicious way. But yeah! I think—what's interesting to me is that I feel like the film is kind of—it's so knowledgeable of like, what it's doing about, you know, the kind of movies everyone's watching. Like, everyone's obsessed—it feels very like, "Everyone's watching their iPhones!" except they're like, weird little screens. And you know, she's watching—Kim's watching her movie in the bath, and they're all watching *Casa Blanca*.
- 00:20:29 April Host Mm-hm!
- 00:20:30 Claire Guest Like, they're in this like, romantic mode where he's projecting on everything, and he feels to me like he's in this like, hero's journey. That's all his fantasies at the end. And like, the truth is—with a hero's journey—is like, the woman has, you know, what Joseph Campbell basically was, you know, apparently once asked like, "What's the heroine's journey?" and he said "The heroine doesn't have a journey. She's like, the place that the hero gets—he's the—she's the place that the hero gets to."
- 00:20:54 April Host Mm-hm!
- 00:20:55 Claire Guest And like, that's what this—in a lot of Gilliam's movie feels like the female characters are sort of like a boon, as opposed to like a fully fleshed-out character.
- 00:21:03 April Host Yeah, and this one I would say I'm—I mean, I think that I'm always viewing it beside *12 Monkeys*, too.
- 00:21:11 Claire Guest Oh, yeah!

00:21:12	April	Host	And those two films and what they have to say about love. Because Gilliam said, quote, "To me the heart of <i>Brazil</i> is responsibility. It is involvement. You can't just let the world go on doing what it's doing without getting involved. And of course what Sam does is he falls in love, so he's falls vulnerable, and his whole world starts falling apart. Never fall in love."
00:21:31	Claire	Guest	Oh my god.
00:21:32	April	Host	That's what the movie is about for him.
00:21:34	Claire	Guest	No!
00:21:35	April	Host	Is "never fall in love."
00:21:36	Claire	Guest	But Terry Gilliam just <u>says</u> things.
00:21:38	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Claire: Like, that's part of like, Terry Gilliam— April: He does. He's <u>inflammatory</u> .
00:21:41	Claire	Guest	Well, he's also just like—I feel like he's just like a trickster character in that he'll say something one interview, and the other interview say completely the opposite, so you can never quite trust anything that he says.
00:21:50	April	Host	No. He'll—next one he was just like, "It's actually just a traditional love story."
00:21:53	Claire	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Oh my gosh. I mean, "Never fall in love," I <u>guess</u> ? I—the—I find it sort of a romantic film! I mean... not in <u>my</u> kind of romance, but I think that for Sam Lowry, like, the only escape he has in his <u>mind</u> , through, you know, this bureaucracy—
00:22:10	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:22:11	Claire	Guest	—is his fantasy of love!
00:22:13	April	Host	Well, how do you write romance? You guys just had— <i>Watchmen</i> just had—aired—
00:22:17	Claire	Guest	Oh, yeah.
00:22:18	April	Host	You know, by the time this show airs, the entire series will be—the first season will be done. And the romance at the center of this movie is really delicate, and really interesting on the screen in a way that I don't think we usually see in TV. So why does it resonate? How do you make something that resonates? A love story that resonates?
00:22:39	Claire	Guest	Yeah. I mean, I... I'm... I just saw the final cut of episode eight last night.
00:22:47	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:22:48	Claire	Guest	And I thought it was such a beautiful love story, and I actually haven't seen—nine is the only one that I haven't read or seen.
00:22:53	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:22:54	Claire	Guest	So I don't know how it ends. I mean I know part of what it does, but I don't know how the love story will play out by the end. But I think why eight feels... so—I think that like, <u>longing</u> is always, like, at the heart of <u>any</u> love story. I mean I think that it's the thing that we <u>all</u> understand on such a primal level. It's not togetherness. It's often separation.
00:23:18	April	Host	Mm-hm.

00:23:19 Claire Guest It's often that I can't be with that person.

And then for me, as a playwright, I think something that I always think about is like, "What's the moment or thing that connects characters?" My teacher used to call it—in grad school—was always like "It's the Red Coat Moment." Where like—I don't even know where she got that from. But it was—it's like, the moment where you realize that this person was kind of made for you, or that their trauma equals your trauma, or somehow fits together.

00:23:44 April Host Mm-hm.

00:23:45 Claire Guest That it's a true recognition, and you have to find a way to dramatically illustrate that. And I think in *Watchmen*, that was—it was hard! Because we had to figure out how Dr. Manhattan... him and—him understanding Angela, and Angela not knowing him, like—he had to sort of like play this game in a way that was, you know... what is he willing, eventually, to sacrifice for her?

00:24:18 April Host Mm-hm.

00:24:19 Claire Guest And that—we ended up being like "We can't actually do..." You can't be in a relationship with someone who knows everything! Who knows the future, who's always thinking about the past and the future and the present simultaneously at all times! I mean, that would be the worst boyfriend!

00:24:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **April:** Oh, god, yeah!

Claire: And he mansplains all the time! *[Laughs.]*

00:24:35 April Host And I think that that—I think that episode also illustrates how bad that would be.

00:24:39 Claire Guest My—yeah! Like, you don't wanna be a superhero's, like, girlfriend. Like, he's not a good—he's not—in the comics he's not a good boyfriend. He like, you know, keeps leaving his girlfriends for 16-year-olds. And like, you know, not understanding emotional, like, you know—he sort of like, doubles himself and makes himself a clone to like, give his girlfriend a threesome without her consent. And she's like "What the fuck?!" You know?

00:25:03 April Host Oh, yeah.

00:25:04 Claire Guest *[Laughs.]* "What are you doing?"

[April laughs.]

So he's not someone that has a lot of EQ. So I think we had a fun time distinguishing between what Cal was like and what Dr. Manhattan was like.

00:25:14 April Host Mm-hm.

00:25:15 Claire Guest And like, where they sort of fit together. And yeah, just that they've—Angela and Dr. Manhattan both really have experienced a lot of trauma in their lives, and a lot of loss. And ultimately Angela expects everything to go wrong. Like, everything in her life has—like, her parents have died.

00:25:35 April Host Mm-hm.

00:25:36 Claire Guest Her grandma dies. Like, that's just what she expects. So weirdly, a

man that says "This will end tragically in 10 years" actually aligns perfectly with like, her own knowledge of like... "Of course. Well, that's always gonna happen."

00:25:49 April Host Yeah. Like "Oh, yeah. Yeah, I—well, it's better than not knowing."
[Laughs.]

00:25:52 Claire Guest Exactly! She hates not knowing, right? She hates that ambiguity.

00:25:55 April Host Yeah.

00:25:56 Claire Guest And like, whereas like, Cal wants—like, Dr. Manhattan wants that ambiguity.

00:25:59 April Host Yeah.

00:26:00 Claire Guest He actually is like, "I always know. And so the thing I want is that—can I just for 10 years pretend not to know anything?"

00:26:07 April Host Mm-hm.

00:26:08 Claire Guest And like, actually experience what it's like to be a human.

00:26:10 April Host And *The OA* also has its own kinda different types of love stories. It's not necessarily a traditional sense, but—

00:26:15 Claire Guest Absolutely! I mean, I think the thing with *The OA*, which was so funny 'cause we were in that writers room for part two, and we had some writers—we had an older white male writer who was very very lovely, very very smart, but he kept being like "Why does everybody like Homer? Homer's so lame."

[April laughs quietly.]

"Like, obviously the OA, Prairie, should get together with Karim! Like, he's so much sexier. He's the detective. Like, what—why would she even, like, care about Homer?" And what we realized was that like, Homer is the princess. Like, he is in the fantasy—he is up in the turret, and OA has to save him.

00:26:51 April Host Mm-hm!

00:26:52 Claire Guest And like, that's actually the gender-flipping that we're just not used to seeing in stories. That it's like, it's not a physic—their relationship is actually all about the fact that they spent seven years together falling in love without being able to touch. And it's that longing and that separation, like, that goes back to like, primal...

00:27:08 April Host Mm-hm.

00:27:09 Claire Guest You know, Pyramus and Thisbe, or Romeo and Juliet. Like, it's so ingrained in our psyche of like, "Oh my god, they wanna be together, but they can't be together!" And like, just increasing that in every world that OA and Homer are, is that like, they're so close and yet like, they still can't get together.

00:27:25 April Host Mm-hm.

00:27:26 Claire Guest And the fact that like, yeah! Like, Henry couldn't really—he eventually understood that, but it—because we don't see that a lot in film and TV, it's just not a—it's not an archetype that we naturally understand right away.

00:27:41 April Host No. It's a paradigm switch.

00:27:42 Claire Guest Yeah.

00:27:43 April Host We talked a little bit about playwriting, so let me bring up Tom Stoppard's quote. He said, quote, "I think he only came to me—" that's Gilliam—"because the whole thing was a lot older, and the pages had just gotten flattened out. And he wanted somebody to stir them up a bit and see what came to the surface."

00:27:59 Claire Guest Mm!

00:28:00 April Host "Terry would like to have met more often, talked more often, and I didn't want to do that."

[Claire laughs.]

"I just wanted to talk to him a couple of times, take the whole thing away, and have him trust me for a couple of months, and then he'd get 120 pages back, for better or worse. More people would like to meet twice a day with the writer, to have a draft in the morning and a new one at night. Terry considers that the director is the ultimate author. He'd just say 'That's fine; when we're shooting, I'll be on-set, and I'll be the one who's writing it.'"

[Claire laughs.]

"And I'd say 'Okay, that's fine. But today, let's get it on paper!' Most writers dream of directing their own scripts. It's why many directors write their own scripts, even if—*[laughs]* they're the ones who can't write." *[Laughs.]*

00:28:38 Claire Guest Oh my god. Tom Stoppard speaking truth. Wow.

00:28:43 April Host He's just—he says it so matter-of-factly. He's like "Terry's great, but like, you know... like, you're gonna do whatever you want, but like, let's just get it on the paper!" He's like "I haven't seen the new script. I don't know what they ended up shooting, but..."

00:28:54 Claire Guest I think that's one of the reasons that like, as a playwright I'm drawn to TV, is that like, you—you—there is more of like an authorial presence.

00:29:02 April Host Mm-hm.

00:29:03 Claire Guest And like, Damon is very much—Damon Lindelof—is very much like, "Here's my vision," and like, "The directors are my co-collaborators," in that he really works with his directors, but it is... it is like, one sort of primary vision.

00:29:18 April Host Yeah.

00:29:19 Claire Guest With a writers group—a room, obviously, to support that. And yeah! There's something, I think, about Brit and Zal that do the same thing that I really admire. I mean, I think it's also like—directing for film really feels like directing is writing in a lot of ways.

00:29:32 April Host Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:29:33 Claire Guest Which is maybe why, you know, I feel like there's a lot of writers who—including me—who are like "Ooh, I do wanna one day direct, so that I can have final cut." *[Laughs.]*

00:29:42 April Host Yeah!

00:29:43 Claire Guest Yeah.

00:29:44 April Host I mean, like, final cut. Wow.

00:29:45 Claire Guest Wow. Could you imagine?
00:29:46 April Host Wow. Can you imagine?

[Claire laughs.]

00:29:47 Music Music "Switchblade Comb" starts fading in.
00:29:48 April Host We're gonna take another quick break. When we come back we're gonna talk a little bit about burying surprises in every scene, and being met with nervous executives, and the idea of liking all of your characters.

00:30:00 Claire Guest Ooh! Love it!
00:30:01 April Host We'll be right back.

[Music continues until the promo.]
[Sound of a gavel banging three times.]

00:30:06 Promo Clip

Music: Upbeat music plays under dialogue.

Speaker 1: Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

Speaker 2: Judge John Hodgman ruled in my friend's favor.

Speaker 3: Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

Judge John Hodgman: I'm Judge John Hodgman. You're hearing the voices of real litigants. Real people, who have submitted disputes to my internet court, at the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I hear their cases. I ask them questions—they're good ones—and then I tell them who's right and who's wrong.

Speaker 1: Thanks to Judge John Hodgman's ruling, my dad has been forced to retire one of the worst Dad Jokes of all time.

Speaker 3: Instead of cutting his own hair with a Flowbee, my husband has his hair cut professionally.

Speaker 4: I have to join a community theatre group.

Speaker 5: And my wife has stopped bringing home wild animals.

Judge John Hodgman: It's the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. Find it every Wednesday at MaximumFun.org, or wherever you download podcasts.

[Sound of a gavel banging three times.]

Speaker 1: Thanks, Judge John Hodgman!

[Music ends.]

00:31:02 Music Music "Switchblade Comb" plays again, fading out as April speaks.
00:31:08 April Host Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*! I'm April Wolfe and I'm joined today by Claire Kiechel, and we're talking about *Brazil!*

So! Burying surprises.

00:31:15	Claire	Guest	Mm!
00:31:16	April	Host	Here's what Terry Gilliam said about this. Quote: "I find that most films are a little bit like fast food. I mean, you have them, and it's fine and it's over and it's done with, and that's the end of it. And I like the idea of going back and re-discovering, or discovering new things all the time. It's partly this thing of trying to create a world, certainly a world with some—within some logic. And you've gotta do—have all the <u>things</u> in there. A telephone isn't just a regular telephone in my movies, though. It <u>does</u> things. And it becomes a character that our protagonist has to deal with. To me, that's what life seems to be about. It's <u>dealing</u> with things."
00:31:47	Claire	Guest	Hm.
00:31:48	April	Host	"Either they help you or they get in your way, they frustrate you, they drive you crazy. You spend your life trying to make money to buy them so you can serve you. And then they don't serve you properly. It goes on and on. I think we're living in a fairly materialistic world. That's why things are so important in it."
00:32:04	Claire	Guest	Oh my god! That's so beautifully articulated.
00:32:06	April	Host	I like that—I think that his idea of populating scenes with things that have a life—
00:32:15	Claire	Guest	Mm.
00:32:16	April	Host	—that are part of the world, is... it kind of owes itself to the process that he has. I have another quote in here that I can probably find if I look hard enough. But he's really interested in having people from all parts of all the departments come up with ideas for other parts of the departments, you know?
00:32:35	Claire	Guest	Mm!
00:32:36	April	Host	He's always looking for more ideas. He said, quote: "I just try to break that system down, by trying to get everyone involved in doing everything on the film. So the costumer is coming up with ideas for sets, and the set designer might be coming up with an idea for the costumes."
00:32:51	Claire	Guest	Wow.
00:32:52	April	Host	"You try to get the right team of people to feed it, and then they feed you, and it goes back and forth. I think that's why there's so much detail, because people are thinking about it, and the detail becomes as important as the characters in the film." So he's really—he and his team, and he tends to work with a lot of the same people—they're thinking about it in terms of "How can we create every piece of this—um, frame, has a kind of character in the objects that exist in it?"
00:33:15	Claire	Guest	The production design is incredible in this film, and I feel like it—you can see its influence in so many other films.
00:33:20	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:33:21	Claire	Guest	But like, just in terms of the objects... Like, remem—when you're talking about these things that like, have dual purposes, there's that desk that he like, shares with his officemate.

00:33:30 April Host Yes.

00:33:31 Claire Guest When there's a—there's like a wall in between their offices, but they share a desk that they keep like pulling back and forth. And it's just incredible! And it's all you need to like, explain how annoying, like, a coworker is next to you that's like blasting their music too loud. It—

00:33:45 April Host No dialogue. Doesn't matter.

00:33:46 Claire Guest It doesn't matter! It's so—and there's a lot of those little details that you're just like, "Oh my god." Like all the Christmas gifts that they have? Like how weird, and like, everyone has the same Christmas gift that they keep giving to everybody else. *[Laughs.]*

00:33:59 April Host Mm-hm!

00:34:00 Claire Guest Yeah!

00:34:01 April Host Jack the torturer has a whole pile of them. He's just like, "Merry Christmas!"

[Claire laughs.]

You know? He's just like, anyone who comes by gets the same fucking Christmas gift.

00:34:07 Claire Guest Oh my god, yeah! And that—the—his mother's house is just incredible, and like, the whole—yeah, the whole production design of like how that bureaucracy works. Or—ugh. Or that casket that is in his imagination full of like, jelly bones.

00:34:21 April Host Oh, yeah!

00:34:22 Claire Guest Yeah, so gross.

00:34:24 April Host There's a—I think that, you know, *[stifles laughter]* sometimes I get exhausted watching his movies, but I think that that's what he wants, in a sense.

00:34:30 Claire Guest Oh, yeah!

00:34:31 April Host Because if you get exhausted, then you might—your eye might stop moving around the frame. And you might miss some things. But then all of a sudden you watch it again, and you're like "Oh, I'm looking at a different spot in the frame!"

00:34:40 Claire Guest It has—exactly. It has that level of detail. I mean, we had really amazing production designers and costume designers and everything else on both *OA* and *Watchmen*, but *Watchmen* I think is like, filled to the brim with like just... references and easter eggs, and tiny little things that like, it rewards that kind of—I feel like we're in the—you know, for some shows you're in this like Reddit mind, where it's like, you wanna give that kind of fodder to the fans who want to look at things—

00:35:07 April Host Mm-hm.

00:35:08 Claire Guest —and like, discover stuff, and I understand it! 'Cause I kind of like, have to watch an episode sometimes twice, and I—you know, wrote on it! But I'm like "Ooh, I feel like I missed some of that! And now I have to go back." 'Cause it's so dense.

00:35:20 April Host Mm-hm!

00:35:21 Claire Guest And for some people, like my mom, it's too much.

[Both laugh.]

00:35:27 April Host She's like "Honey, I love you, but..."

00:35:28 Claire Guest "What is happening?" [Laughs.]

00:35:30 April Host "I really don't know, like..." [Laughs.]

00:35:32 Claire Guest Yeah, yeah! But I think that's the thing about Gilliam, you know, and all these—it's like—I don't know, you only can make a movie or a TV show for yourself. And for like, people—you can only do it for—it's hard to do it for everyone. And I think Gilliam really does make movies that like, make him—give him pleasure.

00:35:48 April Host It is—it's an interesting—I mean, I like thinking about your career and the weird things that you're doing, because I do think that you're really only making things for yourself. [Laughs.]

00:35:55 Claire Guest Yeah!

00:35:56 April Host And then other people are just like "Yeah, I'm on that train!" You know?

00:35:58 Claire Guest Yeah!

00:35:59 April Host So you're just happy when someone jumps on the train with you. You're like "Oh, great!"

00:36:02 Claire Guest I know!

00:36:03 April Host "We're all a bunch of weirdos!"

00:36:04 Claire Guest I mean, I think it's—you know, I know, like, we're in this age of vertical integration where like all these companies are coming together and now everybody's like "Well, we want *Game of Thrones*, where it's four quadrants and everybody watches it!"

00:36:15 April Host Mm-hm.

00:36:16 Claire Guest But I find that like, the stuff that I like the best are—is like, the weirdest—like, *Los Espookys* on HBO, where I'm like—

00:36:23 April Host Great show.

00:36:24 Claire Guest "What an amazing show. Who is its audience? Is it just me?" You know, like—

00:36:28 April Host Mm-hm!

00:36:29 Claire Guest And that feeling—I mean, I was talking to Brit about you know, like when *OA*—you know, I think *OA* was very popular the first season with like, women 25 to 55.

00:36:39 April Host Mm-hm.

00:36:40 Claire Guest And like, "Oh, I'm so sorry. You're only popular with women 25 to 55." And it's like... is that a bad thing? What if we just like, make things for that market? Like, actually isn't that kind of an exciting thing? Like, *Watchmen* I think people were really like "Is this just for fans of the comic book?" [Laughs.]

00:36:57 April Host Yeah, yeah, yeah!

00:36:58 Claire Guest But I think that specificity makes it so that people—even if they don't know the comic book!—are able to like, feel the depth and richness that like, "Oh, this is being made for someone like me, or someone like... that I want to be."

00:37:12 April Host Yeah! I was not familiar with the comic book.

00:37:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Claire:** Oh, really? And you understand it. *[Laughs.]*

April: Or the original movie. And I understand it.

00:37:16 Claire Guest Oh, great!

00:37:17 April Host I'm a thinking human, you know?

[Both laugh.]

I—

00:37:21 Claire Guest I'll tell my mom.

[Both laugh.]

00:37:23 April Host Tell your mom to give it a chance!

00:37:25 Claire Guest *[Laughs.]* She is—she's super supportive. She is.

00:37:27 April Host Aw, that's really sweet.

So I wanted to talk about Terry Gilliam and his idea of liking all your characters. He said, quote, "Strangely enough, the characters in *Brazil* I actually like!"

00:37:35 Claire Guest Hm!

00:37:36 April Host "I don't agree with them, I don't approve of them, but I somehow feel that they're all trapped in a world of their own making. Even the bad guys, the shock troops. One takes his helmet off and he's talking about his eyebrows. I left that in just because I wanted to give those guys a moment, too, of being human beings and their own little sets of problems. They're very polite, but they still bash his brains out.

I think at times I despair at the way things are in the world, but I haven't given up."

That's the—his idea of like—

00:38:01 Claire Guest Wait, what's the part with the eyebrows?

00:38:02 April Host So there is a little moment where like those—the troops, like the little SWAT guys?

00:38:07 Claire Guest Yeah.

00:38:08 April Host Like, they're in a car. They're like in transport, and like, one of the guys—like, he's—they've got their helmets off. And the guy's just like "Ugh, I just keep sweating and it goes into my eyes."

[Claire laughs quietly.]

And the guy's just like "I've got big eyebrows, and so what it does is it diverts off into my ears."

00:38:22 Claire Guest Oh my god, I forgot about that.

00:38:23 April Host And so it's... the dumbest little thing, but he's just kind of made sure that every character had some kind of human moment in this very inhumane film.

00:38:33 Claire Guest Hm! I—yeah, I don't know! I mean, I think... I always—I have a hard time with the word "likable."

00:38:38	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:38:39	Claire	Guest	When it comes to characters, 'cause I think it often has a lot of weight, especially around female characters.
00:38:44	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:38:45	Claire	Guest	That it's often a word that people are like "She's not likable enough!" and like the same thing that a man would do, a male character would do, is something that people start to worry about when a female character does.
00:38:55	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:38:56	Claire	Guest	So—but I like this idea that like, it's like a fondness, is what it seems like he's sort of talking about.
00:39:01	April	Host	Yeah.
00:39:02	Claire	Guest	Is that if you're <u>fond</u> of your characters, if you see them all as human, if you're not judging them—like, even in the midst of this SWAT team, that you're letting them also show little glimpses of like, just their weird humanity.
00:39:13	April	Host	Mm-hm!
00:39:14	Claire	Guest	It kind of helps us, I think, believe in the world more.
00:39:17	April	Host	I mean, in terms of what you've been doing in playwriting and writers rooms, I mean, how do you guys approach that kind of fondness... characteristic?
00:39:27	Claire	Guest	Yeah! I mean I think... that was something that we really—I mean, I— it's so funny; there's just all these... it's so much of a balance of like, archetypes, and like, what we expect from a character, and just making something feel really real in whatever character that is. So like, Laurie Blake in <i>Watchmen</i> . Like, we knew that she was gonna be likable, because I think that people always like the kinda like, acerbic badass woman.
00:39:54	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:39:55	Claire	Guest	Who is like, "Oh," like, you know—she's always commenting on all— how everything else is dumb. Like, she's our like, audience surrogate. So—
00:40:03	April	Host	She's like Daria.
00:40:04	Claire	Guest	Yeah, exactly! So even though if she's a little bit—we—like, the way to balance that her—yes, she's kind of an asshole, but she's likable because she's also voicing the same things that the audience might feel.
00:40:12	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:40:13	Claire	Guest	And I think with Angela, like, that was a little bit harder, 'cause she's keeping so much inside and keeping so many secrets. And so it was—it <u>was</u> like a balance of like, how do you show a character that is not revealing everything?
00:40:26	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:40:27	Claire	Guest	And then like, letting us into that character more and more as the season goes on.
00:40:32	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:40:33	Claire	Guest	So I don't think we talked—we didn't talk that much about like, her...

likability, but it was like, just the question of like—I think we like active characters, and so how do we keep people active?

00:40:45	April	Host	Yeah.
00:40:46	Claire	Guest	Like, it—I think there's a weird thing that like, as—just as an audience member, you're always excited by the character who's making choices and who's doing things.
00:40:53	April	Host	Yeah.
00:40:54	Claire	Guest	And if characters get too passive, that ends up being the thing. Even if they're doing like kind of weird, you know, messed up shit, they're—we'll be on their side as long as they are like, pursuing something.
00:41:06	April	Host	Yeah.
00:41:07	Claire	Guest	And, uh... yeah! And with <i>The OA</i> it also feels like kind of a similar thing in terms of like, "How do we continue to make Brit's character as active as possible?"
00:41:19	April	Host	And also I mean I would say, like, in terms of Brit's character and Angela, you have two characters who have an unknowability.
00:41:26	Claire	Guest	Exactly.
00:41:27	April	Host	Both that <u>we</u> don't know them, but also that they don't know a lot from their past.
00:41:30	Claire	Guest	Totally.
00:41:31	April	Host	And so it seems like that's a really nice kind of trick, is that to get to know them, they actually are getting to know themselves. So you—they don't have to reveal anything and betray their character of being—'cause we are all learning at the same time.
00:41:44	Claire	Guest	Completely. And I think that we—they're <u>both</u> detectives, actually, right?
00:41:49	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:41:50	Claire	Guest	Like, both Angela <u>and</u> the OA are sort of detectives also of their own lives.
00:41:53	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:41:54	Claire	Guest	And it's so true that yeah, Regina's character is like, has to go investigate her grandfather's past to understand herself. In the same way that like, she has to—like, and that's the only way that Angela understands <u>who she is</u> —
00:42:09	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:42:10	Claire	Guest	—is by understanding where she came from. In the same way—she has to like, integrate that experience, in the same way that like, the OA is actually sort of like... repressing Nina? She's repressed the like, consciousness of the body that she's come into. And the only way that she can like, get to the next side and like grow and discover what's actually going on is by embodying and integrating this body that she's suppressed. This like—and pretending to be Nina and integrating this other consciousness and understanding, like, who this person would be if she had lived in this universe.
00:42:46	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:42:47	Claire	Guest	So, yeah! They weirdly—it—we—I feel like we watched a lot of

Vertigo, 'cause it has a lot of like, "You're the femme fatale and you're the noir detective. What is that in one person?"

[April laughs.]

What is that in one character? Like, how do you do that?

00:43:00	April	Host	Well, it's nice that you have a thread going in your work. [Laughs.]
00:43:04	Claire	Guest	Yeah! I didn't think about that, but I do think that I am—even in my plays, I'm really interested in like, how you surprise yourself.
00:43:12	April	Host	Mm-hm!
00:43:13	Claire	Guest	And I think as a writer I'm always interested in like, those moments in which you're like "Oh, fuck! <u>This</u> is why I'm writing this play?" or this movie, or this scene. And you don't even—the things that I feel most compelled to write are the things I don't know why I'm drawn to, or why I need to write them.
00:43:28	April	Host	Mm-hm.
00:43:29	Claire	Guest	And if I did, I probably wouldn't write them in the first place. Because I would already have the answer. So it's the process of writing and getting through it that I answer a bigger question about myself, or about some other concern that somehow relates to me.
00:43:43	April	Host	It's therapy!
00:43:44	Claire	Guest	Isn't it! [Laughs.]
00:43:46	April	Host	Thank you so much for coming on the show, Claire!
00:43:49	Claire	Guest	Yes, thank you so much! Thanks for having me.
00:43:50	April	Host	And people should be able to see your stuff coming up on HBO soon, and then take a look, uh, check out your Disney movie that you're going—
00:43:55	Claire	Guest	Yeah, yeah! <i>Circe</i> will be coming up in HBO Max like, you know, next year or the year after. Who knows? TV takes a long time. But I'm also on Twitter and Instagram as Claire Kiechel.
00:44:04	Music	Music	"Switchblade Comb" starts fading in.
00:44:05	April	Host	Wonderful. Thank you so much!
00:44:07	Claire	Guest	Thank you so much for having me! This was great.
00:44:08	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 or email us at switchbladesisters@maximumfun.org . Please check out our Facebook group, that's Facebook.com/groups/switchbladesisters .
			Our producer is Casey O'Brien, our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and this is a production of MaximumFun.org .
			[Music finishes.]
00:44:37	Clip	Clip	Mrs. Terrain: Really, Sam, why can't <u>you</u> do something about these terrorists?!
00:44:41	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
00:44:42	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .

00:44:44	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:44:45	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
00:44:46	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.