"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw. A jaunty, jazzy tune reminiscent of the opening theme of a movie. Music continues at a lower volume as Katie introduces herself and her guest, and then it fades out.

Hello! And welcome to Switchblade Sisters, the podcast where women get together to slice and dice our favorite action and genre films. Every week here on the podcast, we invite a new female filmmaker—a writer, director, actor, or producer—and we talk in-depth about their fave genre film, maybe one that influenced their own work.

I'm film critic Katie Walsh, and today we have actress, host, writer, and horror maven Clarke Wolfe!

Welcome, Clarke! [laughs.]

This is such a treat!

This is so exciting to have you here. Little bit about Clarke: actress, host, and writer Clarke Wolfe is one of the most well-known female voices in the horror community. Her thoughts on the genre have been read and seen on Nerdist, Collider, Syfy, IMDb, and more. She recently appeared in Fangoria's Satanic Panic, directed by Chelsea Stardust—another Switchblade Sister guest—and the acclaimed documentary Memory: The Origins of Alien.

She could next be seen opposite Barbara Crampton—another one of our Switchblade Sisters—in the holiday horror anthology Deathcember. Holiday horror anthology! Tongue-twister! [laughs.]

I know, right? Every time I promote it I'm like—or mention it, it's—it's definitely like a—

Just gotta get in the habit.

"Horror day, holiday—anthology, yes."

[Both laugh.]

So Clarke, today you have chosen my personal horror gateway drug, Wes Craven's Scream!

Yay!

So why did you choose Scream?

[Katie responds affirmatively several times as Clarke speaks.]

This movie has had such a big impact on me over the years. I have probably taken notes on this movie specifically more than any other movie that I can think of, just because it comes up in important conversation or on podcasts or whatever. Or looking at it from a writing perspective! And—but for me, this was a movie that came out...
when I was a little too young to see it. But I wanted to know everything about it, and my best friend Ginny, she got to see it, so she told me all the secrets, and she told me who the killers were—'cause I asked.

Normally I do not like to know the secrets before I go in, but when I was a kid I did. And then, you know, this was a movie that for sure—part of the reason that I love genre so much, and genre storytelling so much, is because I believe that what you're afraid of, or what scares you, says a lot about a person, about a society, about a place and time. And so this movie really resonated with people, and I think there is so much going on beneath the surface... that that really occurred to me, like, later in high school, early college, when I was studying film a little more closely.

And the more I have watched this movie, I think that it holds up. I mean, I—[stifles laughter] the one example that I always give is they keep calling the phones "cellulars." [Laughs.]

00:02:48 Katie Host I knowww!

00:02:49 Crosstalk Crosstalk Katie: Cellular telephones!

Clarke: [Laughing] So—yeah!

00:02:51 Clarke Guest So he keeps saying like "We cloned his cellular!"

[Katie laughs.]

Or "This cellular! What are you doing with a cellular?!" And it's like—it's very silly. But aside from that...

00:02:59 Katie Host Mm-hm.

00:03:00 Clarke Guest ...I feel like this movie feels very contemporary.

00:03:02 Katie Host Mm-hm.

00:03:03 Clarke Guest And so the—it's very meaningful for me in all of those ways, and honestly I—I am not a slasher fan.

00:03:10 Katie Host Wow!

00:03:11 Clarke Guest Not at all. And it's—in fact, it's probably my least favorite horror sub-genre.

00:03:17 Katie Host Interesting!

00:03:18 Clarke Guest But this movie is in my top five favorite horror movies of all time.

00:03:21 Katie Host Alright. So, we are gonna get into the nitty-gritty of Scream, but I'm gonna give a little synopsis first. I mean, I'm sure a lot of people have seen Scream.

[Both laugh.]

But! For those of you who haven't seen Scream, today's episode will contain spoilers. [Stifling laughter] Much like your friend spoiled it for you.

00:03:37 Clarke Guest [Laughs.] Yes.

00:03:38 Katie Host But that shouldn't stop you from listening before you watch. Like we always say, it's not what happens but how it happens that makes a
movie worth watching. Still, if you wanna pause this episode and watch it, now's your chance.

"Trouble In Woodsboro / Sidney's Lament" by Marco Beltrami begins to play, and continues until the first clip.

Okay! So in 1996, Scream, written by Kevin Williamson, directed by Wes Craven, revitalized horror with its smart and snarky take on the slasher genre. The film opens with a little bit of bait and switch. We all thought Drew Barrymore was the star of this movie, thanks to the poster.

She plays Casey Becker, who receives a creepy phone call at home, and the mysterious caller asks her [harsh whisper] "What's your favorite scary movie?"

[Regular voice] And then torments Casey with a deadly game of horror trivia.

Phone Voice: Name the killer in Friday the 13th.

Casey Becker: [Breathing hard, frantic] Jason! Jason, Jason!

Phone Voice: I'm sorry! That's the wrong answer!

So Casey and her boyfriend Steve end up disemboweled on the front lawn, a grisly murder that rocks the small town of Woodsboro. Which has already been rocked one year earlier, as we will come to find out, by the murder of Maureen Prescott, who's the mother of Sidney Prescott—played by Neve Campbell—who is our heroine, our final girl.

Gale Weathers: Only a year ago, Maureen Prescott, wife and mother, was found raped and murdered not far from this peaceful town square.

The killer—who they dub Ghostface because of his Halloween costume disguise—calls Sidney when she's home alone, and then attacks her.

Sidney Prescott: Nice try, Randy. Tell Tatum to hurry up, okay? Bye, now.

Phone Voice: If you hang up on me, you'll die just like your mother!

[Booming music sting and/or crash of thunder.]

Phone Voice: Do you wanna die, Sidney?

But of course she fights him off. She's very smart, [stifling laughter] very good, the—

Yes.

The little door move is very, uh, clutch in that moment.

Uh-huh!

When her boyfriend Billy Loomis—played by Skeet Ulrich—suddenly arrives and drops a "cellular telephone." [Laughs.]
Sidney starts to suspect him, and he spends the night in jail, though he's eventually cleared through phone records, and the police start to suspect her father Neil. Anyway, their school is absolutely out of control.

[Clarke laughs.]

I cannot—[—rewatching it, I was like "What is going on?" People are like, pranking in Ghostface costumes, [stifles laughter] and the iconic Principal Himbry, played by Henry Winkler, who's one of my personal MVPs in this movie—

So good.

He suspends school.

Principal Himbry: Due to the recent events that have occurred, effective immediately, all classes are suspended until further notice.

[Students cheer.]

And of course all the teens decide to throw a party at Stu's house. Stu is played by Matthew Lillard, who is—he gives one of the most unhinged...

...horror movie performances I've ever seen, which is saying a lot. [Laughs.]

I love it so much.

Stu Macher: [Dramatically] I'll be right back!

[Teens "ohhh!"]

So at the party, video store clerk Randy—Jamie Kennedy—expounds on the rules of the horror genre, and his scream queen Jamie Lee Curtis.

Randy Meeks: There are certain rules that one must abide by in order to successfully survive a horror movie! For instance, number one: you can never have sex!

[Teens boo and jeer.]

Randy: Big no-no!

So aggressive news personality Gale Weathers ingratiates herself with Deputy Dewey—this is Courteney Cox and David Arquette, obviously. They infiltrate the party, she puts up—she sets up a little camera. And then Ghostface starts to claim a few more victims, including Tatum—played by Rose McGowan—who meets her doom on the wrong end of a garage door.

Meanwhile, Sidney just upends all the rules of the final girl.

Mm-hm!

[Stifling laughter] By having sex with Billy.

[Clarke laughs quietly.]
Who's then melodramatically stabbed by Ghostface. He has, like, an amazing death scene.

[Laughing] Mm-hm!

So there's only a few people left in the house, because all those... [stifling laughter] hellion teens go off to look at the principal's body.

Randy: They found Principal Himbry dead. He was gutted and hung from the goalpost on the football field.

[Group murmuring amongst themselves.]

Drunk Teen: What're we waiting for? [Laughing] Let's go over there before they pry him down!

So a distraught Sidney doesn't know who to trust. Suddenly, Billy is up and about. He survives. With a little bit of a nod to Psycho, he declares:

Billy: [Dramatic whisper] We all go a little mad sometimes.

And reveals that he and Stu are the two murderers. They framed Cotton Weary—Liev Schreiber—for the murder of Sidney's mother, and they killed her due to an extramarital affair with Billy's father, which broke up his parents' relationship. After a lot of movie references and psychobabble, and with a key assist from her former nemesis Gale Weathers—

[Clarke laughs quietly.]

Gale: [Breathing hard between sentences] I've got an ending for you. The reporter left for dead in the news van... comes to. Stumbles on you two dipshits. Finds the gun. Foils your plan, and saves the day.

Sidney: I like that ending.

—Sidney takes on her true final girl form and fights back, attacking Billy in the Ghostface costume and [stifling laughter] murdering Stu with the TV that is playing Halloween. [Laughs.]

So good. So good.

Obviously this movie revitalized horror in the nineties. It was—it had become kind of a joke—

Mm-hm.

—with all of the sequels, all of the direct-to-video, really low-brow type of franchise, like, you know... installment number ten.

Mm-hm.

But I think that Kevin Williamson was really smart in realizing that the way to come at a smart revitalization of horror was to talk about the genre.

Yeah!

And to have Sidney in the beginning say "Oh, I don't watch those movies. They're such an insult." Like, "I know all the tropes."

Right.

It's really smart writing.
Yeah! And I also think that the idea—one thing that I love about this script, and honestly I love about a lot of Wes Craven's better movies, is that he—they treat the audience as though they're smart.

You know? It doesn't—it doesn't—it's not like, too smart for its own good. But it also, you know, says "No. You'll keep up."

"You keep up with us." And you know, I think that that trusting—trusting the audience with that, in—and also trusting teenagers with that!

You know, that's something that I've—so Wes Craven is my favorite of all the horror auteurs.

And part of the reason why is because he's always treated his characters with agency.

You know, like the teenagers often are the ones who know exactly what's going on, and nobody listens to them. The grownups don't listen, you know? Or whatever.

Right.

And so I feel like that's so on display here, and I just—I love a smart movie, and I love a smart movie that like, really plays by its rules.

Yeah.

It's—it's just such a... it's such a well-written script.

Yeah. You know, it's interesting, because I don't know that I ever—like, when I initially watched the film—there's so many big characters. Like, Tatum is so fun to watch. And Stu, who's just off the wall. And then I think Randy's—you know, for the horror fan, he's kind of like our way in.

Yeah.

Like, he's savvy, he's knowing, [laughing] he survives.

Yeah!

Amazingly. But I think re-watching Scream when I—like, I re-watched it last night, and I was—this was the first time I was really struck by Neve Campbell—

—and her performance. And last night I was like, [laughing] "Oh no, she's really wonderful!"

Yeah! Well, you know what's funny, is that the last time I watched this movie, I was so moved and upset by the opening scene.

Oh my god.

Like—

Clarke, it is insane. I was screaming on my couch. How many times have I seen this movie? Last night I had full-on goosebumps, I was
screaming...

00:10:51 Clarke Guest Yeah.
00:10:52 Katie Host It's so effective! [Laughs.]
00:10:53 Clarke Guest It's real—I mean, it is well done for so many reasons, but I have to say that like, Casey Becker, the character, it—I mean I—like, last time I watched it I legitimately teared up.

00:11:04 Katie Host Oh, wow.
00:11:05 Clarke Guest It just—it made me really sad. I think I'm also at the—I'm getting—[stifles laughter] as I get older—and I hear this about horror fans, like, when you have kids your relationship to horror can change. Or you know, as you get older, you know—I tell this story all the time, but my relationship with Rosemary's Baby has changed so much—

00:11:20 Katie Host Right.
00:11:21 Clarke Guest —the older that I get. It doesn't—it just—I—and I cannot make it out of watching that movie without crying.

00:11:26 Katie Host Mm-hm.
00:11:27 Clarke Guest 'Cause it's so upsetting to me.
00:11:28 Katie Host Mm-hm.
00:11:29 Clarke Guest And that's what's scary to me, is not the devil, it's the whole idea of, you know, getting—you're just sold out by the people who are—allegedly love you.

00:11:37 Katie Host By that horrible relationship? [Laughs.]
00:11:39 Clarke Guest I mean, it's just awful! But I say that to say that, you know, I take brutal violence, against young women especially, really harder! A lot harder now.

00:11:52 Katie Host Yeah.
00:11:53 Clarke Guest Especially when it's done well. And as you say, this sequence—I mean, it is just like—you can see why this movie was a pop culture phenomenon. Because that opening scene is vicious.

00:12:06 Katie Host It is! And I think—one thing that I was thinking about last night while I was watching it is that in slasher movies, we almost never see parents.

00:12:13 Clarke Guest Mm-hm.
00:12:14 Katie Host And—
00:12:15 Clarke Guest Yes!
00:12:16 Katie Host When her parents show up...
00:12:17 Clarke Guest Yes.
00:12:18 Katie Host ...and see her, it's like, devastating.
00:12:19 Clarke Guest We fi—they find her! Like, you're exactly right. I wrote that down, too.
00:12:23 Katie Host Yeah. [Laughs.]
00:12:24 Clarke Guest Like, you never see the mom and dad finding the body—
00:12:27 Katie Host Yes.
00:12:28 Clarke Guest —of their dead child. And we forget, too, because like—okay, Scream definitely—[laughs]!—this cast is perfection. I think he
Wes has always found superstars. Like, he just—his amazing—his taste in young talent is so impeccable. But these actors **look** like adults. **[Laughs.]**

‘Cause they are! And look, that is left over from a time, like, of the eighties, where grown—you know, 30-year-olds, **[laughs]** are playing—

—like, teenagers, and that’s **fine**. But my bigger point is we in the audience have to remember... Casey’s a child.

She’s a **child**. She’s home alone. Like, so if that—she’s supposed to be what, 16, 17? She—again, does not look 16 or 17. **[Laughs.]**

But if you think about that—if you think about the idea of this girl—‘cause I was really struck by like... talk about the rules. I mean, Casey’s boyfriend wasn’t sneaking over for her. They weren’t, like—you know, while her parents were out. Casey’s not drinking. She’s not sitting on the couch smoking weed, whatever.

And by the way, if she was doing **any** of those things, like, she’s good! She’s allowed! She—she **can**.

But my point is just, as we deconstruct the rules... Casey's staying in, watching a movie.

Yeah. She's very innocent.

And that is **so**... like, it's just... the slow motion when she's run—that choice—

—that he made, to let you see her running and **see** the penetration...

Like, this is something again that I love about Wes Craven, is he is—I would argue, you know, consistently directs violence, you know, **really**—so it **is** upsetting, and **is** jarring. But he always does it for a reason.

It's poetic, that scene.

Like, the fact that Ghostface reaches around and stabs her in the **heart**—

**[In the front]**? Like, you would—he's chasing behind her. You expect him to stab her in the back. And then she pulls the mask off, and we don't see who it is. But **you see** her—

—recognize. And... it's like, that little flicker of recognition is just **such**
a little beautiful performance piece, and like, little button on that scene. Ugh. It's so good.

00:14:34 Clarke Guest Who do you think is in the mask?
00:14:35 Katie Host Oh...
00:14:36 Clarke Guest Who do you think kills her? Because I—I did a lot of—so I know what I think.
00:14:40 Katie Host Mm-hm.
00:14:41 Clarke Guest But I did a lot of Googling, and the Internet seems to think differently, but I think they're wrong.
00:14:46 Katie Host My gut instinct is Billy.
00:14:47 Clarke Guest I think it's Billy, too.
00:14:48 Katie Host Yeah.
00:14:49 Clarke Guest And a lot of people were saying they think it's Stu, because you find out in the next scene that Casey and Stu dated for a minute, and she does have that flicker of recognition.
00:14:58 Katie Host Mm, mm-hm.
00:14:59 Clarke Guest And I think I read in one place that Kevin Williamson on Twitter said that in his mind it was Stu.

00:15:04 Katie Host Okay.
00:15:05 Clarke Guest But I think it's directed—I think it's Billy. I absolutely think it's Billy.
00:15:08 Katie Host Well, also Billy is the mastermind.
00:15:11 Clarke Guest Yes.
00:15:12 Music Music "Switchblade Comb" starts fading in.
00:15:13 Katie Host And Stu just seems along for the ride, so... Billy seems like he takes more pleasure out of killing people, and Stu is just like "Sure, whatever."

00:15:19 Clarke Guest Exactly.
00:15:20 Katie Host Alright. We are gonna take a little break.
00:15:21 Clarke Guest Okay.
00:15:22 Katie Host And when we come back, we're gonna talk more about Scream with Clarke Wolfe.

[Music continues at full volume until the promo.]

00:15:31 Promo Clip Music: Upbeat rock plays in the background.

Announcer: Dead Pilots Society brings you exclusive readings of comedy pilots that were never made, featuring actors like Patton Oswalt—

Patton Oswalt: So the vampire from the future sleeps in the dude's studio during the day, and they hunt monsters at night. It's Blade meets The Odd Couple!

[Audience laughs.]

Announcer: —Adam Scott and Jane Levy—
Jane Levy: Come on, Cory. She's too serious, too business-y. She doesn't know the hokey-pokey.

Adam Scott: Well, she'll learn what it's all about.

[Audience laughs.]

Announcer: —Busy Philipps and Dave Koechner.

Dave Koechner: Baby, this is family.

Busy Philipps: My Uncle Tal, who showed his wiener to Cinderella at Disneyland, is family. Do you want him staying with us?

[Light audience laughter.]

Dave: He did stay with us, for three months.

Busy: And he was a delight!

[Audience laughs harder.]

Announcer: A new pilot every month, only on Dead Pilots Society from Maximum Fun.

00:16:20 Music Music "Switchblade Comb" plays again, fading out as Katie speaks.

00:16:27 Katie Host Okay! We are back. We're talking about Scream, one of my favorite movies, with the lovely Clarke Wolfe.

[Music fades out.]

It's an interesting thing to think—like, what you were saying about before, like, how horror as a genre helps us deal with...

00:16:39 Clarke Guest Yeah!

00:16:40 Katie Host ...fears that we have individually, as a group—and I think Wes Craven has said stuff about that, about how he's like "Let's get this out in the open!"

00:16:48 Clarke Guest In a safe space!

00:16:49 Katie Host Yeah.

00:16:50 Clarke Guest Yeah, that's the idea! The idea that you go into a theater, and you exorcise whatever fear or anger or anxiety you have, and then you have the luxury of walking out of there, and you've actually done something for yourself!

00:17:04 Katie Host Yeah, it's cathartic.

00:17:05 Clarke Guest Absolutely!

00:17:06 Katie Host So you're a writer—a screenwriter, and an actress, and I'm curious, when you were taking notes on Scream, what were you taking notes on?

00:17:13 Clarke Guest Oh my god.

[Katie chuckles.]
Well, I just—okay. So for me, I think that there’s a lot to be learned from movies that you think are effective, and then breaking down why you think they are effective.

And it could be different for everybody! You know, I think—but for me, you know, what I—I watched some—I’m writing a slasher movie. And I watch, you know, Bob Clark’s *Black Christmas*, or I watch *Scream*. Those are movies that I’m just like... "How did he—how did they do what they do? Why is this hitting me in a way that I’m saying ‘okay, this is effective’?"

And so, you know... this movie—okay. So my kind of, um, intense theory—and—or—or—

Yeah. I mean—or connecting the dots, rather. The reason that this movie, I think, is really, really important—and I think that it actually did resonate with so many people aside from being well-directed and well-written. So *Scream* came out in 1996. And Columbine happened in 1999.

And I think that this movie—the more I watch it, and the more I watch two boys, two white upper-middle-class boys, who have the whole—their whole lives ahead of them—but they decide they were wronged.

Or slighted in some way. And decide to kill high school kids.

I mean talk about, like, predicting—you know, and I listen to—so, what I take notes on or what I have been taking notes on with something like that is like... listening to the Maureen Prescott story. Because so much of that is delivered in dialogue or news reports, or in passing.

But if you put it together, Maureen was raped.

Yeah. They set—it—

It’s a horribly savage crime, yeah.

So when you know who has committed this crime—

Oh my god. I’m getting goosebumps.

Yeah! They sexually assaulted Maureen. They killed her. Billy had been dating Sidney for two years.

Right.

And we’re coming up on the one-year anniversary of this murder.
Katie Host

Oh my god...

Clarke Guest

So he had been playing this long game.

Katie Host

Ugh.

Clarke Guest

Or he learned about something and then decided—but like, this is a really savage, horrifying human being, in Billy Loomis.

Katie Host

Yeah. He’s terrifying.

[Clarke continues and Katie responds affirmatively multiple times.]

Clarke Guest

And I think that that’s really—like, the—and the idea of “I’m gonna punish everyone, because my mom left me.” You know, if you read anything about incels and what’s going on in terms of like, radicalization of young, specifically white men on the Internet... so much of it you read is dedicated to single moms. The feminization of men. And how their moms have ruined everything, whether they stay, whether they go, whatever.

And I was really struck last night when I hear Billy say, you know, “My mom left me. So it’s your mom’s fault. And now I’m gonna make everyone suffer.” And it’s like... that is so—

Katie Host

Right. It’s terrifying.

Clarke Guest

And—but this is 1996!

[Clarke laughs.]

Like, wh—oh my god! He—like, Kevin Williamson was so prolific—

Katie Host

I know.

Clarke Guest

—in terms of these motivations, it is fascinating to me.

Katie Host

And even just now when you’re talking about sort of—’cause I wrote down in my notes, like—I was like "Oh, this is very prescient in terms of like, the toxic masculinity conversation we’re talking about."

Clarke Guest

Totally.

Katie Host

Like, feeling entitled to sex?

Clarke Guest

Yep.

Katie Host

And the whole subplot about Sidney having sex or not, and like, that’s sort of played for "Oh, she’s not following the rules as the final girl," which is—we’re set out in the 1970s. Not even intentionally.

[Clarke laughs.]

Clarke Guest

Mm-hm!

Katie Host

I’ve actually asked both Jamie Lee Curtis and John Carpenter about final girl rules, and they were like "I don’t know what you’re talking about."

Clarke Guest

Yeah.

Katie Host

And I’m like "No, let’s talk about it!" And they’re just like "No, we weren’t thinking about that!"

Clarke Guest

Yeah.

Katie Host

And like, it’s so frustrating, but—they were just like "Yeah, we’re just writing a character!" But—anyway, but the sex and them not having
sex or having sex and the way he pressures her—

And she's like "Hey, my mom was raped and murdered a year ago. I'm a 17-year-old girl." And nobody is—I was like—last night I was like "Oh my god, her trauma is—everyone is re-traumatizing her all the time!" And she has this great line where she's like "Sorry my traumatized life is an inconvenience for you."

But yeah, he's being denied... sex. The fact that her daughter's boyfriend rapes... the mother.

Like, that is insane. But yeah, it's—it definitely is tapping into this like, bubbling sense of whether it's entitled upper-class kind of like masculinity, or that kind of like, you know—it's intimate partner violence.

It's like a domestic violence story, even the climactic scene where it's the two of them and they're in the kitchen with Sidney.

I'm like "This is a domestic violence story!"

Totally! Well, and I love the reveal that Stu doesn't know this. That to me is such a choice. Now don't get me wrong, like, Stu participates willingly.

And I—you know, I think we'll get to this in a minute, but I don't know how many he actually kills. I have a theory.

And you know, I love—love—the choice of Billy tells, you know, Sidney what was happening with her mother, and the look on Matthew Lillard's face of like "Whoa, what?" Like, he has no—I mean, that is... [laughing] even more just like—

But you know, the idea that Billy is—you know, finds this—and I don't—again. I am not saying that "Oh, poor Stu." No. But you can see that Billy has been playing Stu this whole time.

And it's just this fascinating, like, "Whoa, what—!"

Well, it's—it's also very Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, in the sense that Eric Harris was like the psychopath, the mastermind, and Dylan was the one who followed along.

And he was more depressive suicidal, and Matthew Lillard is like—manic—
I love it! I love his—can I just say, for a moment of levity, I love Matthew Lillard in this movie so much. And I saw—I was at a WGA screening that—in January of maybe 2017, I wanna say? And Lillard did the Q&A—

So neither of them had seen the movie in so long. And Matthew Lillard actually was like "Oh my god, I'm so—" He said, he was like, "I'm a little embarrassed." Because "Wow! He really let me—I—he just really let me go on that one!" Like, "I'm so—it's so over-the-top!

And he's consistent the whole way through. Um, fun fact about Matthew Lillard being cast is that he was accompanying his then-girlfriend to an unrelated audition taking place in the same building. Casting director Lisa Beach saw him in the hallway and asked him to audition for the part. He got into the role with an "incredible ferocity," [laughing] quote-unquote.

Which I'm not surprised to hear at all.

And then the other thing is that he famously ad-libbed "My parents are gonna be so mad at me." [Laughs.] Or "My mom and dad are gonna be so mad at me." Which is so funny, and it really does add, though, to the character... kind of just going along on this like, kooky scheme and being like "Yeah! It's a mov—I'm gonna do it like a movie! We watched a lot of movies and took notes!" [Laughs.]
And—yeah. They're—they think they're Michael Myers.

Yeah—but—but—but do they?

[Stifling laughter] Yeah.

Does Stu really think that?

Katie: Right. That's true, yeah.

Clarke: Like, I just—

That is what is so... just—

I really—like, my—it is so... interesting, especially when we see young teenage boys doing what—committing violence on a regular basis.

Yeah, and this idea of like, do they realize what the real consequences are?

Sure.

And do they—or you know, and this gets into the, like, one of the major questions of the film, which is like, media effect. Which is like...

Mm!

Do horror movies make people violent? Or... no? [Laughs.] You know, 'cause like, I think that people could—like, people try to make those arguments all the time that like, you know, "Oh, watching scary stuff like desensitizes people."

Mm-hm.

And that was a very like, nineties argument. [Laughs.] Like the video games...

Mm-hm.

...argument, and also—and even the principal kinda gets into it. He—at one point he's like, talking to the pranksters and he's like "Desensitized!"

Yeah.

And I'm like "Oh, that's interesting that there's this undercurrent of these kids have watched too many horror movies and now they're all messed up."

That is a very Wes Craven thing.

Mm-hm.

He—Wes gave interview after interview addressing this his entire career.

Yeah.

And it's fun—if any of you listening haven't seen Wes Craven's New Nightmare recently—it pre-dates this movie by a couple of years. It sets the stage for Scream so—it is so meta. It is so—

Amazing.

—like, about movies.

Yeah.
And movies causing this, and all of that stuff, and I think that—you know, what Billy even says is "Don't blame the movies!" You know, "Movies only make us more creative."

Which is a great line. But I think what Billy is saying is like, Billy was gonna do this anyway.

He's a psychopath.

Exactly.

But I do love that Wes, as a creator, does get to actually tackle that conversation.

Yeah! And I think that the conversation is tackled really well in that—those lines of Billy's where he's like "No. I—this just made—this just gave me some ideas!"

Right. And you see Randy, too, by the way.

Who is harmless.

Exactly!

[Both laugh.]

Exactly! Like, it's so important to have those two different—

Yeah.

—characters playing off each other. And by the way, I would love for you to program and host a New Nightmare/Scream double feature.

Ohhh my god.

Oh my god.

"Switchblade Comb" is fading in.

Please.

[Laughing] Let's manifest that into the universe.

Please let me do that. Please, someone. Alamo Drafthouse, are you listening? [Laughs.]

Yeah. Yeah.

Okay, we are gonna take a quick break, and we will wrap up Scream when we come back!

[Music continues at full volume until the promo.]

Music: Sophisticated electronic/string music.

Hello, Internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy!
Travis: And together we present Shmanners.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette—

Travis: —for ordinary occasions!

Teresa: We explain the historical significance of everyday etiquette topics, then answer your questions relating to modern life!

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Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: Check out Shmanners!

Teresa: Manners shmanners... get it?

[Music fades out.]

00:28:30 Music Music "Switchblade Comb" plays again, fading out as Katie speaks.

00:28:37 Katie Host Welcome back to Switchblade Sisters. We are talking about Scream with writer, actress, host—podcast host—Clarke Wolfe. I am Katie Walsh, and, um—what's interesting about this movie is that it was such a huge marquee project for Dimension. Which was the genre... sub-label of Miramax.

00:28:59 Clarke Guest Mm-hm.

00:29:00 Katie Host And you know, notoriously shepherded by Bob Weinstein and Harvey Weinstein. Um, but—[stifling laughter] I—when I was reading up on the film, they tried to fire Wes Craven like multiple times over the dumbest things.

They wanted to shoot it in Vancouver, Wes Craven wanted to shoot it in the States so that it looked very American. And they almost fired him over that. I was like "Why would you fire Wes Craven over a location?"

00:29:23 Clarke Guest After they allegedly just hounded him and hounded him and hounded him to take the movie. Like, Wes passed on the movie.

00:29:29 Katie Host Mm-hm.

00:29:30 Clarke Guest And—so like, hound him, hound him, hound him, and then try to fire him throughout the whole process. [Laughs.]

00:29:34 Katie Host Right! And then—yeah, they tried to fire him again when they were looking at dailies, and they didn't think it was scary enough. So then Wes Craven and editor Patrick Lussier—who went on to direct Dracula 2000, My Bloody Valentine, Drive Angry, and Trick—they put together a work print and... so then they were like "Okay. It'll be scary enough." [Laughs.]

00:29:56 Clarke Guest Yeah. Yeah.

00:29:57 Katie Host And then poor Wes Craven, like, had a—a time trying to get it not NC17-rated!

00:30:03 Clarke Guest Oh my god. I mean—

00:30:04 Katie Host Had to like, lie to the MPAA! He's like "Oh yeah, I only have one take
of that. Sorry. Ehnh. [Laughs.]

Yeah. No. The whole—I mean, Wes Craven, I think there's no love lost between him and the MPAA.

Right. [Laughs.]

Like, I think they were the bane of his existence forever. But yeah, man! The—it—the whole legacy of the Scream franchise, and firing Wes Craven, and firing Kevin Williamson...

Mm-hm.

And the Weinsteins just doing everything they can to make these two people's lives completely miserable... It's just wild to me!

Mm-hm.

And you know, I wonder if—you know, I mean Kevin Williamson has—he's got an incredible career, still. And—but I do wonder now that—[laughs] the Weinsteins have fallen out of favor, if maybe he'll start being a little more candid?

Right.

About, just, the process! Because you can watch these movies—I mean obviously like, Scream 2 has this history of, you know, being written on set and things changing—

[Laughs.] Right.

—and just like, so frantic, and honestly I think it is a miracle that that movie is as good as it is. I love Scream 2.

Mm-hm.

But 3 I hate. And allegedly, movie was taken away from, you know, Kevin Williamson and given to Ehren Kruger. And then to come back for Scream 4, allegedly, you know, Williamson had a whole nother trilogy planned, and he was promised all these things. And then they did it again and took the movie away and gave it to Ehren Kruger, [stifles laughter] and you're just like, "What is happening? I don't understand." I don't know if—how much of this is actually true.

Right.

But, um—or what the process of it all was.

It's probably worse than we know. [Laughs.]

It is! That's the thing that is so interesting to me, and I would—I would just be—but yeah. The—the—[chuckling] you know, the Weinsteins, bad for many reasons.

Right. And—yeah. I mean, you always hear the notorious stories about—I mean. About Harvey Weinstein, but also that he would just like, edit...

Oh, yeah!

...the living shit out of movies, beyond the director's wishes, and so many filmmakers are just like "Ugh. Screw him."

Yeah.

For a number of reasons. But esp—before we knew about all of the... criminal acts he was doing, uh, he was cutting movies to shit. [Laughs.]
Clarke Guest

Right. Exactly.

Katie Host

So—you know, we talked a little bit about how this movie was like, super influential.

Clarke Guest

Mm-hm.

Katie Host

In... you know, you becoming a budding horror enthusiast. But I'm curious, like, how it has kind of shaped what you do, or how, just, like, discovering horror through this movie has like, shaped, you know, your role in sort of talking about horror, acting in horror, writing horror? I mean, what are your thoughts on that, and the way that it's like, influenced your life?

Clarke Guest

It's actually been incredibly influential for many reasons. I would say I fell in love with horror as a teenager because I was always interested in the politics of horror.

Katie Host

Right.

Clarke Guest

And this was a movie that was a huge gateway into that. And thinking about genre and what scares you in a bigger way.

Katie Host

Right.

Clarke Guest

And then that led to more and more of an appreciation for the genre. Because I think even though now horror is booming: it's on TV year-round, it's in— you know, movies year-round. Some of those movies go on to great acclaim. You know, even—it's still a little bit of a, you know, disrespected genre.

Katie Host

Right.

Clarke Guest

And so—

Katie Host

It's amazing to me that people still... are like "Ew, no. Horror."

[Katie responds affirmatively several times as Clarke speaks.]

Clarke Guest

Of course! I mean, but I think it's because people—this is my true belief. A lot of people, most people, do not like to feel uncomfortable. They do not like to look at things that make them uneasy. And when you're talking about teen boys killing their classmates, that sucks! That's not fun to watch! When you're talking about, you know, alcoholism in The Shining—you know, when you're talking about—the list goes on and on and on.

So I think that that's why those movies—certain horror movies—resonate, and do become like cultural phenomenons, and kind of have broad appeal, is that they're talking about things that are bigger-picture issues.

But, um, so that was a big introduction to me that led into studying horror academically as a film student. Which led into writing about horror. Which led—which allowed me to find my first internship in Los Angeles. Which allowed me to—you know, when I met Ryan Turek, and he invited me to cohost The Bloodcast with him, you know, that led to—it's like—you know what I'm saying? So like, this movie, and understanding that there is more to horror than what necessarily meets the eye, opened up so much for me.

And in terms of now, you know, I—as I am writing more... structurally, and... treating the audience with respect, and treating
the audience as though they are smart, but also being one step ahead. To me, those are the things that I try to take away from—that I love about this movie, that have influenced me as a writer.

You know, you talking about sort of like, how do we deal with the death of teenagers when we're constantly, you know, experiencing the tragedy of the death of teenagers? Also ties back to Scream because of the news element.

And the way in which Gale Weathers and these really aggressive news personalities, who are sort of in the like Geraldo mode—

—of like, chasing after people and like, shoving microphones in their face. But I mean, that—in the nineties, that was the way news was. These like, scandalous—that was like, you know, bad, bad news. Was these like, scandalous news magazine programs, like, searching for tabloid-ish kind of stories, and even Gale's book, and—

Yeah.

—speculation about who did what, and... you know, that—the film is really playing on these ideas of like, how violence is media—mediated in news media. And it's interesting to think about like, how that's changed now, and how we consume news now, and it's not the Gale Weathers model, but it's like the—[laughs] constant Twitter model, or news notifications model, and like, what that does to our psyches and how we experience real-world violence.

Yeah, and there is a performative nature to Gale which I love. So the idea that there is a—the duality to her, of she presents—she even says it! Tacky, sleazy tabloid journalist. Which, by the way, I cannot say how much I love Courteney Cox in this role.

She's so good!

Like, she is so—every time I watch. And to think that she was just on Friends, where she's playing this, like—or meaning she had had one or two seasons of Friends where she's playing this very specific character, and then to just turn around and do this... You know, she's so underrated. But in this one in particular—but I love that she says, you know, like, "I don't think Cotton's guilty."

Yeah!

"And I stand by that." And, you know, yeah.

Katie: And she says it based on evidence and testimony.

Clarke: That's exactly—and research.

Yes.

So I love that! And I—but I also think that, you know, [laughs] I would say the performative nature of on-camera hosts or journalists reporting what they think is going to get a rise out of people, but also believing something differently behind the scenes, is quite prolific!

Clarke: You know, because—

Katie: Yeah, no, it—it anticipates clickbait journalism.
Clarke: Yeah!

You know? [Laughs.] It's like—it's—like, Kevin Williamson was just like, telling us what our world was gonna be.

Yeah!

While also commenting on the world that we lived in.

Yeah. I mean, talking heads, and like the idea of like, you know, crazy and sensational on camera but then if you talk to them behind the scenes they're actually have a good head on—you know, they know what they're doing is performative and nonsense. And it's like, conflating that with news...

Mm-hm.

...is something that I think is very prolific.

[Stifles laughter.] I love when the one—there's a different host. After Sidney punches Gale.

Yes.

And it's the next day, [laughs] and this host runs up to her—this is a high school student—[laughs]—runs up to her, shoves a microphone in her face, and says:

[Whoosh.]

Replacement Reporter: So how does it feel to be almost brutally butchered?

Deputy Dewey: Hey! Come on, leave her alone.

Reporter: People wanna know! They have a right to know!

[Whoosh.]

[Laughing] I was like "What the hell is going on?!!"

Do you know who that was?

[Still laughing] Who was it?

Linda Blair!

[Still laughing] No! Oh my god!

[Stifling laughter] That was Linda Blair!

[Still laughing] I didn't realize!

Yeah! Yeah! "What does it feel like to be almost brutally butchered?!" Yeah!

[Still laughing] Yes, brutally butchered!

Yeah! Yeah! Oh, but also, think about—you're right! You're right to bring up Twitter.

[Katie laughs again and then stops.]

I mean, the difference is that now you have thousands of people finding these kids who are survivors and Tweeting at them!

Yeah.

I mean—!
Katie Host
Oh my—I—[laughs].

Clarke Guest
Like, at least Linda Blair is like, polite about it!

[Both laugh.]

You know? Where now on social media it's like a thousand Linda Blairs—

Katie Host
Oh my god...

Clarke Guest
—being like "Neh, neh, neh, neh, neh, neh, neh, neh, neh, neh!"

Katie Host
Yeah, that's such a good point.

Clarke Guest
I mean, it's insane!

Katie Host
Oh my god.

Clarke Guest
It's insane, but Court—I—but yeah. Oh! But anyway, what I was gonna say is last night while I was watching this movie, I absolutely Googled "lime green skirt suit" because I am being Gale Weathers for Halloween next year. [Laughs.]

Katie Host
Okay. I—let's get a group.

Clarke Guest
Yes!

Katie Host
Because I really wanna be Casey!

Clarke Guest
I have—

Katie Host
I was like "I'm gonna be Casey Becker. I'm gonna get a phone..."

Clarke Guest
It's so good. I—

Katie Host
"And a wig."

Clarke Guest
I will have to show you—one of my girlfriends did Casey—

Katie Host
Oh!

Clarke Guest
—did a Scream thing, and they were—

Katie Host
Amazing!

Clarke Guest
It was so good.

Crosstalk Crosstalk
Katie: Okay.

Clarke: Open call! [Laughs.]

Katie: [Stifling laughter] Whoever wants to be in our Scream 2020 Halloween costume—

Clarke: Yes.

Katie: We're gonna have a Billy.

Clarke: Oh my god.

Katie: We're gonna have a Stu. We're gonna have a Randy. We're gonna have a Ghostface. It's gonna be amazing.


Katie Host
So any last thoughts on Scream before we wrap up?
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00:40:03</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>Yes. The—I did wanna point out that I love the choice to set this—to show us that these houses are all kind of in the middle of nowhere.</td>
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<td>00:40:11</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>Yeah!</td>
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<td>00:40:12</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>So like the opening scene, you know, you see the long drive-in for Casey. And then when Sidney's home alone, you see that gorgeous shot where she's out on her—the patio, and it just overlooks all the hills.</td>
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<td>00:40:23</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
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<td>00:40:24</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>Like, these kids are so—and then Stu's house, of course.</td>
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<td>00:40:26</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
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<td>00:40:27</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>Like, so isolated. I think that's so brilliant and scary.</td>
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<td>00:40:29</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:40:30</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>And then there were a couple of lines that I just wanted to point out that I think are amazing. One of them is &quot;There's always some stupid bullshit reason to kill your girlfriend.&quot; [Laughs.]</td>
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<td>00:40:40</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>[Laughing] Yeah!</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:40:41</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>[Laughs.] Randy says that. And it's just like—I—yes, you're right. Amen.</td>
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<td>00:40:45</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>I love that scene in the video store.</td>
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<td>00:40:46</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>Oh my god. It is excellent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:40:48</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>I love when the girl walks up and she's like &quot;What's the werewolf movie with E.T.'s mom?&quot; [Laughs.]</td>
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<td>00:40:51</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>Yeah! Exactly! That one. And then of course, like, at the very end of that exchange between Randy and Stu and Billy, Randy like looks at Stu and goes &quot;Tell me that's not a killer.&quot;</td>
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<td>00:41:01</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>[Stifling laughter] Yes. Yes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:41:02</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>You know, like, I—I do love how there is no subtlety to Skeet Ulrich at all.</td>
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<td>00:41:07</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
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<td>00:41:08</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>And yet we still believe what we see! And that is so great! You know?</td>
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<td>00:41:14</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>Yeah. I also—I was thinking about this, like... the amount of times that he has to protest that he's not the killer to Sidney is insane. If-like, girls, if your boyfriend—</td>
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<td>00:41:25</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>Seriously.</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:41:26</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>—keeps having to tell you that he did not try to murder you... [laughing] he tried to murder you.</td>
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| 00:41:31 | Clarke   | Guest  | I mean, yeah. There's—well, and you know what's so funny? Is that Sidney actually says, in the grocery—to your point—in the grocery store, to Tatum, "Whenever he touches me, I can't relax!"

[Katie laughs.]

But then she goes "Oh, but it's my fault, because I'm messed up." And you're just like "No, girl, that's your gut!"

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<tr>
<td>00:41:45</td>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Host</td>
<td>[Laughing] I know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:41:46</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Guest</td>
<td>You know? That is your intuition!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
00:41:48 Katie Host Yeah.
00:41:49 Clarke Guest But I also love—yeah, Randy tells you everything you need to know in that video scene.
00:41:55 Katie Host Yes.
00:41:56 Clarke Guest I actually wrote this down. He also says "Maybe Sidney wouldn't have sex with him" for motive.
00:42:00 Katie Host Yes.
00:42:01 Clarke Guest You know. "I'm telling you, dad's a red herring. It's Billy. That's the—"
00:42:04 Katie Host I love that too! And I love that Kevin Williamson just openly—
00:42:09 Clarke Guest Yep!
00:42:10 Katie Host —puts all of this structural analysis and like—into—just, on the surface.
00:42:15 Clarke Guest Yep.
00:42:16 Katie Host It's so smart.
00:42:17 Clarke Guest It's so smart. And then essentially, again, he—you have to have a master craftsman in your script and in your direction to tell you all of this and show you all of this, and you still go "Well it can't be Billy, because the police said."
00:42:31 Katie Host Right.
00:42:32 Clarke Guest "It can't be Billy because this."
00:42:33 Katie Host Right.
00:42:34 Clarke Guest Even though you're like "No, it's totally Billy!" And I think that's really indicative of us and our, like, true—you know, like, I think that's really indicative of us as a—especially—I can't speak for all women, but some women who are like "No, no, no, it's me, it's me, it's me."
00:42:48 Katie Host It's gaslighting, yeah.
00:42:48 Clarke Guest Yeah, exactly!
00:42:49 Katie Host Yeah.
00:42:50 Clarke Guest The last line that I wanna point out is—and it struck me when I watched it last night, and it struck me when I watched it earlier this year and took notes, was Dewey says "Don't worry, Sid. It's school. You'll be safe here."
00:43:02 Katie Host [Laughing] Oh, god.
00:43:03 Clarke Guest I mean, sorry to be a downer, guys, but like, that's—that is—uh, talk about things that have not aged well?
00:43:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk Clarke: That line—
00:43:15 Katie Host Yeah. Yeah, oh my gosh. That is so ironic. I love it.
00:43:15 Clarke Guest That and "cellular."
00:43:17 Katie Host [Both laugh.] Yeah, "cellular." Well, Clarke, this was the best conversation—
00:43:19 Clarke Guest Ohhh!
00:43:20 Katie Host I had so much fun talking to you.
00:43:22 Clarke Guest Me too!
00:43:23 Katie Host So thank you for coming on the podcast, and thank you for picking Scream.
00:43:25 Clarke Guest Oh my gosh. Thank you for letting me pick Scream—
00:43:27 Katie Host [Laughing] Yeah.
00:43:28 Clarke Guest —and for inviting me!
00:43:29 Katie Host Is there anything you wanna share, you know, promote?
00:43:32 Clarke Guest Yeah! If you guys enjoyed this, you know, deep dive into a pop movie, I have a podcast. It's currently on hiatus but there's two seasons' worth of content.
00:43:41 Katie Host Yeah, check it out!
00:43:42 Clarke Guest So it's a total of 60 episodes, and the show is called Sending—S-E-N-D-I-N-G—The Wolfe, like the Pulp Fiction line. And yeah! My guest picks an—a movie off of any AFI list and we talk about it, and then they get to add a movie to the list and we talk about that. It's really fun.
00:43:58 Katie Host Cool!
00:43:59 Clarke Guest I have an incredible roster of guests—directors, actors, writers, all of it.
00:44:04 Music Music "Switchblade Comb" starts fading in.
00:44:05 Clarke Guest And yeah! You can find me on Instagram and Twitter at @clarkewolfe, Clarke with an E, Wolfe with an E!
00:44:09 Katie Host Yay! Thank you so much, Clarke! And thank you all for listening.

Thank you for listening to Switchblade Sisters with me, Katie Walsh! If you like what you're hearing, please leave us a five-star review on Apple Podcasts. If you wanna let us know what you think of the show, you can Tweet us at @SwitchbladePod or email us at switchbladesisters@maximumfun.org. Please check out our Facebook group, Facebook.com/groups/switchbladesisters.

Our producer is Casey O'Brien. Our senior producer is Laura Swisher. This is a production of MaximumFun.org.

[Music finishes.]