

00:00:00	Music	Transition	“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, then fades out.
00:00:08	April Wolfe	Host	Welcome to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i> , where women get together to slice and dice our favorite action and genre films. I’m April Wolfe. Every week, I invite a new female filmmaker on. A writer, director, actor, or producer, and we talk—in depth—about one of their fave genre films. Perhaps one that’s influenced their own work in some small way. And today, I’m very excited to have writer, producer, showrunner Raelle Tucker here with me. Hi, Raelle!
00:00:28	Raelle	Guest	Hi! So excited to be here, thank you.
00:00:30	April	Host	Uh, for those of you who aren't as familiar with Raelle’s work, please let me give you an introduction. Raelle Tucker was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and raised in Ibiza, Spain. Do you say it “Bitha”?
00:00:39	Raelle	Guest	I say “Bitha”, but please say it however you want.
00:00:42	April	Host	Okay. Um, “Bitha”, Spain, where she went to an international hippie school.
00:00:46	Raelle	Guest	Yes.
00:00:48	April	Host	She never graduated high school, but that didn’t stop her from pursuing film and television writing. Early in her career, she teamed up with Sarah Gamble, another former guest of ours, and they together got runner up on season two of the show <i>Project Greenlight</i> , which got them their first agents, and then a bunch of meetings. From those meetings, Raelle got staffed on the short lived ABC show <i>Eyes</i> , starring Tim Daly. But in 2005 she jumped ship to a quirky new show that would become a 15 season phenomenon called <i>Supernatural</i> . In 2008, she left the show to write and executive produce another cult hit, HBO’s <i>True Blood</i> , where she stayed until the end, at which time she became executive producer of A&E’s <i>The Returned</i> . Then, in 2016, she went to Netflix as executive producer of <i>Jessica Jones</i> , dabbling in that Marvel pool. 2018 marked a new milestone for Raelle when she began writing and producing a show she created herself. That was the first one, right?
00:01:43	Raelle	Guest	Yeah.
00:01:44	April	Host	Okay. It’s the Facebook Watch-Blumhouse produced anthology series <i>Sacred Lies</i> . Season 1 followed the story of a handless teen who escapes from a cult, and finds herself in juvenile detention, suspected of knowing who killed the cult leader. Season 2 begins streaming on Facebook Watch February 20, and I don’t know what

that's about.

- 00:02:02 Raelle Guest Season 2, because it's an anthology show, we do a different dark modern day fairy tale. We take like, a Grimm fairy tale and modernize it, but really we only do the obscure ones. So we're combining that with a true crime case this year.
- And it's the story of Juliette Lewis, who plays a telemarketer, and an armchair detective who listens to a lot of podcasts, and wants to solve the cases of unidentified victims, of Jane Doe's. And she gets—hooks up with a teenage foster girl, and they go on a hunt to figure out who she is, and how she's tied to these unresolved cases.
- 00:02:43 April Host Alright, alright. Um, so on February 20th, you'll be able to watch that. Uh, Raelle, the movie you chose to talk about today is *Kill Bill*. Which I read in an interview of yours, you said you were very obsessed with Quentin Tarantino's outputs, so I'm not necessarily surprised that this is something that you chose, but can you give us a little explanation why this is one of your favorite genre films?
- 00:03:04 Raelle Guest So for me, when I saw it in 2003, it—I'd never seen women at the center of films be cooler, or more badass, or more fierce. Ultimately, it's the story of a survivor, and Uma Thurman's performance in it is unbelievable, and breathtaking start to finish in, like, a four hour movie.
- Quentin Tarantino, for me, the reason why I love him is that he creates worlds that, as violent, and as someone would argue, even misogynistic as they are, are the coolest, fiercest, most interesting colorful, inspiring, and kind of masterful sort of love letters to cinema. And, I think when I saw this film in 2003, it showed me what we could do with women at the center of film in a way that I had never really seen until that point.
- And I wanted to talk about it today, though, because there's sort of a different context in which to view it, with all the information that's come out recently about the making of that film, and what went on behind the scenes, and all of that I think is interesting to talk about. Films that we love so deeply and passionately, and then learning about some shitty stuff that went on behind the scenes, and how do we resolve that, and how do we still keep loving the things that we love?
- 00:04:15 April Host Man, that's like half of our episodes.
- [They laugh.]*
- Genre, man. For those of you who haven't seen *Kill Bill*, Volumes I or II, today's episodes will give you spoilers on both, but that shouldn't stop you from listening before you watch. As always, my motto is that it's not what happens, but how it happens that makes a movie worth watching.
- Still, if you would like to pause and watch *Kill Bill* first, this is your shot. And now that you're back, let me introduce *Kill Bill* with what I

hope is a very succinct synopsis of both volumes.

00:04:46 Raelle Guest

Good luck.

00:04:47 April Host

Ready?

Written and directed by Quentin Tarantino, *Kill Bill* stars Uma Thurman as Beatrix, AKA The Bride, who lay bloody on a chapel floor after being attacked by the Deadly Vipers. We switch forward four years, the bride shows up at the house of the first Deadly Viper, Vernita Green, AKA Copperhead, played by Vivica Fox.

00:05:01 Clip Clip

"Ironside" off the album *Kill Bill* by Quincy Jones

[We hear the infamous Kill Bill sirens, followed by the sound of a punch.]

00:05:10 April Host

There, the two women engage in an all-out brawl, which is momentarily interrupted by Vernita's young daughter coming home from school.

00:05:18 Clip Clip

Nikki Bell: Mommy, I'm home.

Vernita Green: *[Out of breath]* Hey, baby! How was school?

00:05:21 April Host

You see, it's a lot that's happened since their old boss Bill ordered them to kill one of their own. The Bride kills Vernita, and we get a flashback of another Viper. Daryl Hannah's Elle Driver, dressed as a nurse, ready to kill the comatose Bride in the hospital, until Bill stops her.

00:05:39 Clip Clip

Bill: Elle, you're going to abort the mission. We owe her better than that.

Elle Driver: Oh, you don't owe her shit!

Bill: Will you keep your voice down?

Elle Driver: *[Quietly]* You don't owe her shit.

00:05:50 April Host

Now we go back to the Bride waking up from her coma in the hospital, to discover she's no longer pregnant. She breaks out of the hospital, and steals a pussy wagon, and spends her time teaching herself to walk again, meditating on revenge.

In the meantime, we can say that that's when she went back to Vernita, after she rehabilitated herself. Then, O-Ren Ishii, played by Lucy Liu, is her next target. We see O-Ren's backstory as a girl whose parents were murdered by the Yakuza.

00:06:16 Clip Clip

The Bride: She swore revenge. Luckily for her, Boss Matsumoto was a pedophile.

[Sword slice, followed by a death rattle.]

At 11, she got her revenge.

00:06:29	April	Host	<p>She took her own revenge after training as an assassin, and rose to lead the Yakuza. The Bride shows up at the House of Blue Leaves in Tokyo, where she brawls in an endless bloody battle with O-Ren's henchmen, women, girls, and boys—There's a lot of 'em. It's endless. It never stops—before winning her fight against O-Ren with blood on the snow.</p> <p>She gets info about Bill, but we see Bill at the end of this volume, asking if the Bride—well, we don't really see him—if the Bride knows that her child is still alive.</p> <p>Volume II opens with Beatrix and her husband-to-be rehearsing their wedding vows years earlier, when Bill, the father of the fetus, shows up and orders them killed.</p>
00:07:09	Clip	Clip	<p>The Bride: <i>[Screaming]</i> No! Bill!</p> <p><i>[Gunfire sounds for several seconds.]</i></p>
00:07:14	April	Host	<p>So now we get an explanation, finally, <u>why</u> she was in that chapel in the first place, and why she was a bride. In the present, the bride heads to Deadly Viper Budd's trailer. But he's ready for her, and knocks her out—</p>
00:07:28	Clip	Clip	<p>Budd: Ain't nobody a badass with a double dose of rocksalt that deep in her tits.</p>
00:07:35	April	Host	<p>—then buries her alive in the desert. We get a flashback of the Bride training with martial arts master Pai Mei, played by Gordon Liu. And then the Bride, using those techniques in the present, to dig herself out of her own grave. Augh! Metaphor!</p> <p>Meanwhile, Budd's waiting on Elle Driver to drop by his trailer to sell her the Bride's rad sword for a cool million. But, Elle comes and kills him with a poisonous snake instead, and then takes the sword and calls up Bill, and says that the Bride killed him.</p>
00:08:06	Clip	Clip	<p><i>[Sounds of shuffling are heard in the background.]</i></p> <p>Elle Driver: I have some tragic news. Your brother's dead. I'm so sorry, baby. She put a black mamba in his camper.</p>
00:08:18	April	Host	<p>The Bride gets the sneak attack on Elle in that trailer and plucks out her other good eye, before locking her in there with the snake to die. And then the Bride tracks Bill down to Mexico, with the help of a retired pimp, where she discovers her child is alive, and being raised by her father.</p> <p>Bill injects her with truth serum, and they come to a better, bittersweet understanding of the past. But Beatrix surprises Bill with her exploding heart maneuver, learned from Pai Mei years and years ago.</p>
00:08:51	Clip	Clip	<p>Bill: <i>[Strained]</i> Pai Mei taught you the five-point palm exploding heart technique?</p> <p>The Bride: 'Course he did.</p>

Bill: Why didn't you tell me?

The Bride: I don't know. *[Whispering]* Because I'm a bad person.

Bill: No. You're not a bad person. You're a terrific person. You're my favorite person. But every once in a while, you can be a real cunt.

00:09:40 April Host Bill makes his peace with Beatrix, takes five steps, and dies. The Bride leaves with her daughter for a new life. Okay!

00:09:49 Raelle Guest Yeah, good job with that!

00:09:51 April Host It's a lot.

[Raelle affirms.]

There's a lot of time jumping, there's a lot of things going on. Let's just dig into, first, the fact that there had been a lot of time in between this movie, and the film that Quentin Tarantino had done before, and a lot of people were speculating that he had writer's block. There was like, all these kinds of rumors, like, "Oh, he's got writer's block." Which, I mean, like. That dude is not gonna get writer's block. I don't know, it's just probably not gonna happen for him.

Um, but, people were asking him about this in interviews when it came out, and he said, "I didn't have writer's block at all. I did so much writing in those six years, I'm hooked up for a while now. I wrote a big war film, and it was like a gigantic novel." *Inglorious Bastards*. "I ended up writing about three war films in the course of writing one. I had no anxiety about writing *Kill Bill*, but I was precious about it. It wasn't like I was afraid to let the world see it, I just wanted it to be really good. It took me a year to write one big fight sequence in *Kill Bill*, for instance."

So, a year to write the House of Blue Leaves. Just that sequence, right? And all this other time to perfect, you know, these stories, and these backstories. And I think that there are some films of his, where I feel like he rushed through them. This one, to me, feels like it's a very complete package. It knew what it was going to be, you know. And it succeeds. There is, to me, not many loose strings. It's a really, kind of, succinct—which is a really weird thing to say for a movie that is two movies, four hours, but it is, considering the story that it's telling.

And I'm curious, you know, there's something to be said for, kind of, writing your passion. Trying to just, like, you know, vomit something on the page, and like, having that in there, and just kind of going with it. But there's also something to be said for taking the time to get something perfect.

00:11:48 Raelle Guest Absolutely! I think it's insane that we expect filmmakers, writers, and directors, like—somebody like Tarantino to sort of churn out film after film after film. I mean, it's—it's incredibly hard to make

something shitty. Like, honestly.

[Both laugh.]

I have worked on things that I will not name, that we've spent years, you know, working on, and they still turn out to be pieces of crap. And hundreds of people did their very best, every day. Right? So it's truly a remarkable feat when anyone makes anything good.

But I understand, as somebody particularly who's written a lot of action, which is not something that, you know, I particularly love. Which is funny. I'm very squeamish about violence. For instance, it's weird that I love this movie, because I've never seen a Kung-Fu movie in my life. Never. But I ended up working on all these different shows, television shows, that have just, like, huge action sequences as a part of their DNA.

00:12:47 April Host Yeah, I mean, *True Blood* has, like, lots of, you know, vamp—all out brawls, pretty consistently, if I remember correctly.

00:12:55 Raelle Guest Yeah! Yeah, it's either an orgy or a brawl, like, every episode. And those things, they are really challenging to write, because it's choreography. It's really—not only do you have to figure out the story point, but a great emotional arc inside of each action sequence, and how you can make those distinct, because, yeah.

Just spraying blood alone, I think we've become, for better or worse, so sort of numb to that stuff. It's not enough anymore. How do you gut-punch people, how do you get them to care about watching these sequences? And I think that's a really—I think I find it a very challenging thing. So, while I don't believe he actually sat down every day for a year to write a sequence—

00:13:39 April Host No, I also do not believe that.

00:13:40 Raelle Guest —but I can imagine he had pieces of that in his head that were constantly evolving over a year. Because that thing is nuts. That particular sequence.

00:13:49 April Host Uh, you know, I wanna get into, you know, a little further about women in violence in your—because you are usually not into it. But I know a lot of people who love this movie, who may not be specifically into all violence, right?

Um, but this is what Tarantino had to say about women and violence. He said, quote, “Harvey Weinstein—”

[April shudders.]

“—was worried at one point that women would be turned off by the violence. I said, ‘Don't worry, they're going to love the movie. They'll be very empowered by it.’ I think thirteen year old girls will love *Kill Bill*. I want young girls to be able to see it, they're going to love Uma's character, the Bride. They have my permission to buy a ticket for another movie and sneak into *Kill Bill*. That's money I'm okay not making.”

There's a lot of things in that quote.

[Raelle affirms.]

A lot of the quotes of that time period have Tarantino namedropping Harvey Weinstein, for instance. He was the guiding force on this movie, completely.

00:14:48 Raelle

Guest

Yeah, I mean. It's hard to say without being inside of it how much of a guiding force a producer like Harvey was to this. I do think that Tarantino's a visionary. I hate to credit Harvey with this person's work. I would also never wanna excuse, you know, the years that people kept their mouths shut and looked the other way with all the shit that was going on.

And I think it's really important to sort of look at it in context, because to me, I can only speak to my experience in 2003 when I sat in a movie theater, and I watched this film. And I felt this—you know I'm a survivor, and I have no problem talking about that. And I felt this sense of—you know, empowerment just seems like too trivial of a word. Like, there was a woman at the center who was allowed to be strong, and also vulnerable, and sometimes sadistic, and super brave. And, you know, sort of seeking for a kind of redemption. And I felt fucking—I felt fucking hugely empowered by seeing that film.

And then, now, you talk about what happened with Harvey and Uma, specifically, behind the scenes before this film happened. You talk about the car accident that almost cost her her life, and other things that happened on the set, and—and how do we come back from that? How do we reconcile these things that we love, right?

I don't think that the right answer is to say that this is not a feminist movie, or that this is a film that we should now banish to an archive, because that takes away Uma's victory. Like, if nothing else, she helped create this film. It's based on a character that she came up with with Tarantino. They worked on it for a solid year, and she gave everything to this, and it's remarkable. So to sort of shelve that, and be like, "Oh, this is no longer a feminist film," kind of, you know, irks me.

00:16:41 Raelle

Guest

Um, in terms of the violence, what I think is really exciting and interesting when rewatching this film right now, is that—so the violence, for me, normally, I don't show it on my shows. I think what's scary is the stuff that you imagine, personally.

But the way Tarantino handles it for most characters, it's hard to emotionally relate to all the people that Beatrix kills on this show. Because she does it in this sort of outlandish, cartoony, like, 450 gallons of blood spraying everywhere. It becomes operatic, kind of a ballet, there's something definitely poetic about it, but it's not sentimental. It's not emotional, it's not realistic.

But, in contrast, all of the violence that happens to the Bride in this film is visceral, and painful, and he lingers. Like, shit, like—she's slamming her fist into a board, for it feels like 20 minutes, you know,

and you're experiencing the pain of that. Sitting in the darkness as she's buried alive, for like, I dunno, feels like—one of my worst fears—forever, right?

And so, he's—some would say he relishes this violence, or that's how people read it, against her. But I see it as very intentional, as a way to connect you to what this woman has been through, and how incredibly badass and brave she is to survive it, and to give her license to do the terrible shit she goes on to do to all of these other characters that have wronged her.

00:18:08 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:18:09 April Host Yeah, and so, we're gonna take a break. When we come back, we're gonna be talking a little bit about that, too. There's a lot of things Vivica A. Fox has a lot of interesting things to say about the making of the movie, too. Also some editing stuff. Um, I love his late editor who he worked with consistently, so we'll get into all that. We'll be right back.

[Music fades.]

00:18:33 April Promo Do you have a to-do list that never seems to end? Running from a flight to Tokyo straight to the House of Blue Leaves? Still have to cook dinner for yourself? Well, Betabrand's dress-pant yoga pants are perfect for the office, home, and anywhere your thirst for vengeance takes you.

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00:19:20 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:19:29 Promo Promo **Music:** Upbeat, sci-fi sounding music plays.

Dan McCoy: Hey! I'm Dan McCoy.

Stuart Wellington: I'm Stuart Wellington.

Elliott Kalan: And I'm Elliott Kalan. Together, we are *The Flop House*.

Dan: A podcast where we watch a bad movie and then talk about it!

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Dan: New episodes available every other Saturday!

Elliott: Available at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

Dan, Elliott, and Stuart: *[In unison]* Bye!!!

00:20:16 Music Transition

“Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:20:22 April Host

Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*. I’m April Wolfe, and today I’m joined by Raelle Tucker, and we’re talking about *Kill Bill*.

So, I want to get into a couple of things that you were talking about before the break. One of them, um, I really do want to go over a quote that Vivica Fox had said that was uh, in her book. The background was that every person who was in this movie who had to be in a fight scene, no matter how short, had to train for four months in both China and in the U.S., in Culver City.

So they were training in Culver City for a very long time, and it was just every day from, you know, like 9-5, nonstop, right? And very, very hard things. And every Friday, apparently Quentin Tarantino would come in and evaluate how they were doing, and he was not happy. So on the third week of the training, you know, Vivica Fox was expecting uh, him to be like, “Oh, you guys are doing really good!” But he was just like, “You guys are fucked up. You’re not doing anything right.”

And uh, according to Vivica, she said, “I lost it on him.” And she said, “Is this a beat us up contest? Are we—are we fucking doing anything right? God damn. Everyone gasped. I felt Uma draw back. Lucy grabbed my hand and was trying to do a kind of acupressure on me, whispering, ‘Calm down, calm down.’ And then Uma said to me, ‘You have to learn to be quiet, speak less. He’s tough, but he’s not stupid. He’ll concede you something if it’s to make the film better. Learn to attack intelligently, Vivica, because he’s got the power to fire you.’

“So I watched her argue with Quentin intelligently and successfully for wardrobe changes and even dialogue rewrites. She made it a true collaboration, pushing him away from simply making an ode to the samurai films he made us all watch with him, towards something new. *Kill Bill* is an astonishing work because of their shared efforts.

It's because they each approached it not as a job, but as a cornerstone of their careers."

00:22:17 April Host And I think that's like, a really astute way of maybe talking about the collaboration of filmmaking and, you know, he's—Quentin Tarantino I think is a great artist, but at the same time he's working with some of the best collaborators, you know, and they're getting his best work, right? And I think that this movie shines differently because of Uma Thurman, as we were talking about before. When she's getting costume changes and dialogue rewrites, that's just not something an actor is gonna get.

00:22:46 Raelle Guest I mean, yeah, absolutely. I think—I think it's kinda crazy how we credit a single filmmaker with any film, or any creative work. I mean, it's nuts. There's so many reasons why things succeed, and typically they have to do with a certain amount of luck, and mostly to do with the incredible people that you're lucky enough to surround yourself with. For instance, I just finished wrapping a season of working with living legend Julia Lewis, you know, who's the star of my show. And I come in with a very clear idea of what that character is, because I've been working on it for like, at least eight months, and I've written most of the entire script's backstory and arcs, and I have this whole idea, and I might even have wardrobe.

And, there's a part of you that just, you know, wants to get as close as you possibly can to the thing inside your brain, that is the little thing that sparked all of this, and is getting you to persevere and get through it. But the magic—and I'm not just saying this—really happens when it's somebody who's an equal artist comes into a project, and is like, "Well, no, that's not how I see it. This is who she is. This is what this character means."

And Julia, you know, definitely pretty quickly was like, "This is what she's wearing, this is what she's eating." And a certain amount of it was negotiating and talking about the lines day to day, because she comes into it, and she's looking at it from a completely different place that I'm looking at it from. I have so many different things that I'm balancing, and concerned about, and she's just living inside of this one experience.

And that kind of insight into what we're doing, and me being able to—in needing to trust her to bring that, is what makes the work, I hope, great. [*Laughs*] What made the experience actually exciting, you know, day to day. And unpredictable, and fun, and rewarding. And sometimes hard, but I think, that's part of it.

00:24:53 April Host The—it's interesting that you're talking about when you met Julia, the things that she knew about this character, I do think about the Uma Thurman story about, uh, actually, Quentin Tarantino, this is the way he told it.

When he met her for *Pulp Fiction*, he was auditioning people for her role, that she was the only one who didn't come in and have homework done on the character. And he liked that, because he was so attached to the idea of what he had in his head, and what ended up happening is that she just talked to him about herself, and

then he really liked it so much that he changed the character for her. And, so she—I feel like she's got like a life long of just, kind of like, taking the back entrance into the way that she wants to work, you know? Finding the ways to successfully—maybe not manipulate people, but find a way to work with other people.

00:25:50 Raelle Host

I cannot speak for Uma, but what it sounds like to me from the outside is she's an incredibly intelligent woman who's done what she needed to do to succeed inside of a male dominated industry. Where you're, as a woman, not allowed to get angry, or raise your voice, or tell him he's a fucking asshole. You're just not allowed, right? So you have to find other ways you can communicate, and to get your own way.

And I've certainly experienced that. I know all of my female showrunner peers go through that, and think a lot about it, actually. We spend a certain amount of our free time calculating how we're going to have the conversation with people that I think, other people, other—you know, men, mostly, walk in and just have the conversation! Have it go wrong! And I'm up all night writing notes about it, you know?

00:26:40 April Host

Yeah, like, "How can I calculate this?" You had talked earlier—you'd mentioned before that Uma Thurman had just had a child when this had gone through. And the thing was that they had this idea earlier, you know, they had—we can talk about this a little bit too. It's just that, when they were working on *Pulp Fiction*, they had had this idea of a female samurai warrior who was hellbent on revenge. Tarantino wrote eight pages, put it away, seven years later she was like, "Do you still have those pages?" He was like, "Yeah." And then they started it in earnest, you know, seven years later. And then, of course, she got pregnant.

So, he ended up staying with her. He could have gone with a different actress, and she probably would have been crushed. She said she would have understood, but he said that it felt like cheating on her to do that, so he didn't. But, the process of working with her actually turned out great that it'd taken a little bit longer time, and that she'd had a baby, because it changed the entire arc of *Kill Bill*.

And he said, "If I had written it there, at that time, I probably would have based it on Uma of the time, a 22 year old girl. So maybe none of the aspects would have fit into what we have now. And I've gotta tell you that in the writing process, I didn't really know that B.B., the Bride's daughter, was alive for like, the first year of writing it. Because I write until I get to the end. It was only in the last four or five months of the writing process that I realized that B.B. was alive. Until then, I was like Uma's character, I didn't know. And I was going on getting revenge.

"But yeah, it had everything to do with it. It took me a year and a half to write the script, and I spent that year and a half hanging out with Uma. I was living in New York, writing it there, and we were just doing it together. I was writing it, but she was reading it, and we were talking about it, and we're hanging out, and I'm getting to know her all over again. And a lot of things have changed with her, so I

was getting to know her all over again, her rhythm of speech, and that kind of stuff you want to do as a writer. And while getting to know her, I'm getting to know Maya, her daughter, and I'm being warmed by that. And all those things started coming out, and during that time, Uma was a mother, that's what she did. So as you start learning about her, that's what you start taking away."

So, I thought that that was like a really lovely tribute to that kind of collaboration. That specific quote, that interview, that it kind of changed him as a person. Hanging out with this mother and seeing what that could add to a character in a story.

00:29:16 Raelle Guest

Yeah, and I think I wanna give him credit for actually recognizing that, and being malleable enough to say there's a deeper level to this character, and to the story that I'm telling. Because I do think he's pretty gifted, and I think he could probably write the surface level of that movie, where she wasn't a mom, and she's just kicking ass, and everyone would be like, "Yay, that was fun."

[April affirms.]

Right? But there's what separates, for me, this film from all the rest of his films, and it's by far my favorite of his films, is really that story line. The kind of depth of Uma's character, of Beatrix, and how sort of vulnerable and flawed she's allowed to be. Like, we talk about mothers, and how we see them and how we write about them. And I've been in so many writers rooms, where we talk about, "Everyone's gotta be a great mom!" And, "If you're a mom, then you can't be sexy," and "if you're a mom, you can't kick ass," and "a mom would never do that!"

And I think, you know, there was something really revolutionary about her being a mother, and that sort of softness that she played alongside that ferocity.

00:30:25 April Host

Oh, yeah. I mean, that's the thing that Uma was saying to, was the fact that she felt okay with a very wide tonal range that had a lot of whiplashes in it, because she was comfortable with Tarantino, and felt that he could bring that out on the screen, and make it work in the edit. Um, otherwise it was really hard for her.

She said, "That's one of the fun things with Quentin, to emotionally turn on a dime. The opportunities were there all over the character, but it is switching. His movies always switch from one feeling to another very quickly. He has an incredibly sensitive pulse in his films. So it gives you a lot of confidence to try crazy things, and do one thing very funny, and the next scene very intense, and to believe that the director actually encompasses enough tonal range that that actually would work in one movie, which is very unusual."

It's wonderful that he's doing that, and that he can do that, but could you—I mean like, what is your experience trying to pitch something that's just like, "No, it's like this, but also this, but that!" You know, I think there's only a few people that are trusted enough to be given money to actually execute something that has so many tonal shifts, you know? It's hard to sell things.

00:31:44 Raelle Guest *[Laughs]* I hear you, I will say at this point in my career—and you know, it’s funny, I’ve gone back to where I started it this way. But I rate everything everything on spec these days. So I don’t go in and try to pitch shows very often, and then sell them that way. Because the things that I wanna do hopefully are not things you’re super familiar with, and are taking risks, and are really hard to explain. So you’re standing there being like, “So, imagine, this is a show about a girl, and she doesn’t have any hands, and she’s in juvenile detention, but it’s really about a cult, it’s all told in non-linear flashbacks.”

[April laughs.]

Like, everyone’s just gonna roll their eyes at you, and be like, “Okay, when is this meeting over?” But, I went and auctioned a book that that’s inspired by, and based on, and I wrote it myself on spec, invested my own money, and went and sold it, and turned it into a show. And there’s no other way it could have been done.

Um, so, yeah, everything I do is pretty much that way. And I think that he mostly writes in his own little bubble. Like, he writes stuff, and he has to put it on the page for you to understand what it is.

00:32:46 April Host I would say that that’s probably the only way to get things through that are weird, right now.

00:32:52 Raelle Guest Absolutely! And I think that’s okay, because—I mean, as writers, I think that’s okay, because I think this is what we’re here to do, right? We’re here to write. And the pitch process is interesting, because what happens when you pitch a project is that other people get involved, right from the get-go. And you’re sort of giving away a certain amount of your creative control, and vision, and point of view to all your collaborators before you really have the tone you’re going through on the page.

[April affirms.]

So, I’m a big fan of, just, go write what you wanna write, and dream big, and do something weird. And if, you know, if there’s something in it that works, people will—if you build it, they will come.

00:33:31 Music Transition “Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:33:32 April Host Well, let’s take a break, because when we come back, I wanna get into the rhythm, because you already brought that up, and I wanna talk about the rhythm of the editing. So we’ll take a quick break, and we’ll come right back.

00:33:45 Promo Promo *[Radio interference followed by laidback music with a snare drum beat. A phone rings as the DJ speaks.]*

Radio DJ: Welcome back to *Fireside Chat* on KMAX. With me in-studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes.

[Click.]

Go ahead, caller.

Caller: Hey. Uh, I'm looking for a music podcast that's insightful and thoughtful, but like, also helps me discover artists and albums that I've never heard of.

Mordan Rhodes: Yeah, man. Sounds like you need to listen to *Heat Rocks*. Every week, myself—and I'm Morgan Rhodes—and my co-host here, Oliver Wang, talk to influential guests about a canonical album that has changed their lives.

Oliver Wang: Guests like Moby, Open Mike Eagle, talk about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.

Caller: Yooo! What's that show called again?

Morgan: *Heat Rocks*. Deep dives into hot records.

Oliver: Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

[Music suddenly gives way to static and a dial tone.]

00:34:36 April Host Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*. I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Raelle Tucker, and we're talking about *Kill Bill*.

I think, um, one of the things that you can do with a movie like this, is apparently you can go fourteen million dollars over budget, multiple months over production.

[She breaks off, laughing.]

00:34:54 Raelle Guest Yeah, no female director within my lifetime is gonna have that experience, probably, sadly.

00:34:59 April Host Um, Uma Thurman was defending it, in a sense, though, and I actually agree with her. The fact that what they were able to accomplish still with not the greatest budget, and with only fourteen million over, and that particular amount of time is not actually that bad for what they were able to get out of it. I mean these were, like two separate very well-selling movies, you know, this wasn't like some kind of flop, it was like—they got some great footage out of this.

00:35:27 Raelle Guest Oh, hugely profitable! Yeah, critically successful, like, iconic, a lot of people would argue, and hugely profitable. And in the end it all worked out for him, he's lucky. He's lucky it's so good.

00:35:40 April Host Here's another thing he was lucky with, though. He was lucky that he got tired while he was shooting, because he chose not to play a part in the movie. I'll say, quote: "I've done all the training on Pai Mei, and we shot for 8 weeks in the House of Blue leaves, and somewhere in the fifth week of shooting in the House of Blue Leaves, I was just like, 'You know, I'm just having, 1: So much fun directing this, and 2: It's taking everything I have to direct it, that all of a sudden, I wasn't looking forward to playing Pai Mei anymore.' It seemed like a big pain in the ass, and I just wanted to concentrate. And then I had Gordon Liu in the wings, who was just so perfect for

it. It was almost criminal not to cast him, so it became a very easy decision.”

Thank you for letting Gordon Liu play Pai Mei.

- 00:36:28 Raelle Guest I know, God help us! Help us if that had not happened, I mean, Jesus.
- 00:36:35 April Host I just would not have wanted to go over the think pieces of that, whatsoever. The appropriation on itself, the—ugh.
- 00:36:45 Raelle Guest Yes, yes. The symbol of him being the master at the center of the entire—
- 00:36:52 April Host Exactly. Do you feel like you are in a position where you would like to be directing?
- 00:36:58 Raelle Guest Yes I would, at this point. You know, what’s funny is that I started out directing, and I did AFI’s directing workshop for women, and made a short, and I directed a lot of theater. But I didn’t do any directing on any of the shows I’ve been on, because my job is so fucking insane in terms of the amount of thing’s I’m already juggling, and how creatively involved I am.
- 00:37:21 April Host Yeah, you are controlling a lot of the scripts, making sure that everything is through a certain voice, through the entire arc of a series, right?
- 00:37:30 Raelle Guest Yeah, and beyond that, I’m hiring the production designer, and I’m hiring the costume designers, and I’m approving every set, every prop, every t-shirt, you know what I mean? So, just the sheer amount of creative input I already have, it felt to me like, “Okay, let’s leave this for—let’s leave directing to people, particularly women, who have really, since I’ve become showrunner, really were a champion. Female directors leaving it to people who, this is their dream. This is what they wanna do.
- But, as I’m going into my next projects right now, I have a couple things in development. And the dance of sitting next to a director, and sort of having to negotiate the shot I want, that I see so clearly in my head, at this point, is getting a little tiring. Like, I feel like I’m expending more energy to a certain extent.
- 00:38:23 April Host “Fine, I’ll just do it myself!”
- 00:38:25 Raelle Guest I know! It’s bad! And that said, I’ve had incredible collaborations with amazing directors, and I’m grateful, and they’ve taught me so many things. That’s why I think maybe I could give it a shot at this point. But I’m getting ready to do some of that.
- 00:38:37 April Host I think that we should say a little bit of something about David Carradine, though, as we close up, because, uh. R.I.P. Very lovely actor who was in so many genre pictures, from beginning to end of his life, and was just game for whatever. Always brought every kind of weird emotion he had to—I don’t know, he’s such a strange actor, um.

But he said that it was an interesting process working with Tarantino, just because everything was constantly re-written on set, all the time. There were new pages all the time, all the time. And you know, he was working in T.V. for a long time with his show, and like, he was like, "I don't—I don't feel like that ever happened with me."

He was working, you know, with Roger Corman, early in his career, and he was like, "That didn't happen with me. We never got this level of rewrites." And he said, quote, "Quentin is open to changing with the wind, and he did it with his writing right up until the very end. That whole final monologue changed like, five times. The last time it changed was the day I came in to do it. I had the whole thing committed to memory, and he just threw it out the window and started over." [Laughs.]

00:39:47 Raelle Guest I mean, again, it's one of those moments where it's like, bless him, but I would rather burn or be buried alive than have to do that. As a creator myself, um, I'm the person who kind of writes everything before we start filming, usually, so that every single department can prep, and all my actors have every single script before we start shooting, and we've talked about the entire arc.

And of course shit changes on the day, when you get into it in a rehearsal, and there's like, "That doesn't really work," and you know, "The couch isn't where it's supposed to be, and that line of dialogue isn't syncing." But, you know, to rewrite a monologue like that, up until the very day of, is so not my process that it sounds like Hell. And I bless all the actors that have to deal with that, because I don't think anyone can argue that that's a great way to work with people who have to memorize lines.

00:40:42 April Host It's hard.

00:40:43 Raelle Guest It's super hard! But I also understand, maybe, I guess, just trying to come from Tarantino's side on it a little bit. He has read that thing two zillion times over however many years, and he's gotten to this moment, and he feels like he has a greater, deeper understanding of what it means now, and he wants to get it right, but.

00:41:02 April Host I think the quote in Carradine's context, too, was the fact that he had worked with directors where they knew something might be wrong, or the location wasn't perfect, but they're gonna do it anyway, because this is the job, and they have to do it. Whereas, the experience working with Tarantino is just, like, if it's not right, then it's not right, and we have to change it.

And of course, again, going back, he has that power to be able to do that, which a lot of people, again, would not be able to go over fourteen million dollars, because they know something was wrong. It's a privilege and a luxury, and he uses it. And I think he wielded it for better in this, because Bill's monologue is really wonderful. The end scene of *Kill Bill*.

Everything about it is really kind of tonally perfect and precise. Um, it is beautiful, and it's emotional, and it's something—the thing that Uma Thurman said drew her to all of this in the end was that even

on set when she had finally killed Bill, she went to her dressing room, and she was like screaming and laughing, and being like, "I killed Bill! I killed Bill!"

But the idea that that wasn't really what the movie was about. That it had to end with killing Bill, but it wasn't about that.

00:42:17 Raelle Guest Yeah, it's the most toxic relationship story ever, right? It's this horrible love affair, it's this horrible kind of abusive relationship love affair, by the end. Um, and yeah, that monologue talking about good and evil, and who we pretend to be, vs. who we really are, is profound as, probably Quentin has ever been.

00:42:39 April Host Monologues are not easy to write.

00:42:41 Raelle Guest Oh my God, they're so hard/

[April laughs.]

They're so hard. But you know, I would say, yes, they're hard, but you know what's harder, is like, just speaking. Because if you sit in a room, and you get to decide how people say the most important thing that they're ever gonna say, for like, days, weeks, years.

Yeah, that's hard, but you have time to really do that and think about it. What's so much harder is just, doing things like sitting here and actually trying to sound articulate for like an hour, without having the benefit of some incredible writer writing all of that for you.

00:43:14 April Host Well, Raelle, you did a great job, and thanks for wrapping up the episode for me. Uh, thank you so much for coming on the show, and talking about *Kill Bill*. And again, your show, is going to come out. You have a new title for it, though, right? Because of the anthology.

00:43:28 Raelle Guest Yeah, it's *Sacred Lies: The Singing Bones*, and it comes out February 20th, 2020, so this Thursday! Um, and it's ten episodes, they're a half hour, and it's on Facebook Watch. Which means it's free, and you don't even have to have a Facebook account. I'm not even supposed to say that. But if you just Google *Sacred Lies*, one can watch it pretty much anywhere in the world for free, and uh, it's a totally binge-able true crime, female driven kind of kick-ass dark mystery.

00:44:00 April Host My God, just watch it! Okay, thank you so much for coming on, Raelle.

00:44:04 Raelle Guest Thank you.

00:44:05 April Host Thank you for listening to *Switchblade Sisters*! If you like what you're hearing, please leave us a five-star review on Apple Podcasts. Madcoil says: "This is an endlessly entertaining show with incredible hosts, one of the greats!" Please be like Madcoil, and leave us a five star review on Apple Podcasts!

If you want to let us know what you think of the show, you can tweet at us @SwitchbladePod or email us at

SwitchbladeSisters@maximumfun.org.

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

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

[Music fades.]

00:44:48	Clip	Clip	Elle: Oh, you don't owe her shit!
00:44:49	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:44:51	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:44:53	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:44:54	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.