

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, and then it fades out.
00:00:08	April Wolfe	Host	Welcome to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i> , where women get together to slice and dice our favorite action and genre films. I’m April Wolfe. Every week, I invite a new female filmmaker on. A writer, director, actor, or producer, and we talk—in depth—about one of their fave genre films. Perhaps one that’s influences their own work, or something that haunts them at night. And today, I’m very excited to have actor and entrepreneur Jenette Goldstein here with me. Hi, Jenette!
00:00:29	Jenette	Guest	Hi, April.
00:00:32	April	Host	For those of you who would like an introduction fully to Jenette, please let me give a ‘this is your life’ of her life.

Jenette Goldstein was born and raised in Los Angeles, and knew when she was a kid that she wanted to become a character actor. To live that dream, she trained at Circle in The Square in New York, and Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London. It was in London where she auditioned for a scrappy horror sequel called *Aliens*, directed by James Cameron. Her role as Private Vasquez soon became an instant icon.

Along with her *Aliens* castmate, Bill Paxton, Jenette also moved to a different Cameron-affiliated horror film at the same time, starring as vampire Diamondback in Kathryn Bigelow’s *Near Dark*, which our listeners will remember Karyn Kusama talked about on her episode early, early on in the show’s incarnation.

She then hit another couple of Cameron properties, playing the Terminator-infected foster mom, Janelle Voight in *Terminator 2*, and the doomed Irish mother in *Titanic*. But some may also remember her as Alice, the maid in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, or from any other supporting role that she’s been blessing our screens with. She has exploded many times and often goes down with the ship.

Somewhere in her busy career, Jenette also became co-founder and CEO of Jenette Bras, LA county’s best bra fitting and swimmer boutiques, where quote, “the alphabet starts at D.” Jenette Bras is opening its fourth and fifth stores in Burbank and Atlanta in March, and that Burbank one just opened. Jenette lives with her artist husband and changing cast of children and cats in Virgil Village.

So, Jenette, the movie that you chose to talk about today is *Mandy*. Can you give us a little explanation on why this is one of your fave genre films?

00:02:08	Jenette	Guest	Oh, my god. Um, it just kind of instinctually sort of popped up. I guess it—I don’t know, I have a lot. But you had already done some, but it’s so crazy. It goes beyond crazy, and it’s beautiful, it’s an incredible love story. I mean, I think, to me, I think that, you
----------	---------	-------	--

know, genre is this kind of odd term for something really simple and pure and, I like the word scrappily-made, you know? Like, we have an ATV vehicle, let's ride it in, you know? There's just something.

*[April laughs and affirms.]*

But I, you know, it's wild, it's crazy, it's violent, and it's um, tragic and—and I had never seen anything like that before, and yet kind of felt like I'd seen it all before.

- 00:03:02 April Host Yeah. It's like, a complete repackaging of these kind of visceral feelings, or something.
- 00:03:07 Jenette Guest Yeah. Yeah, it's like, that raw, raw sort of—it's the scream of, you know, of loss, and it just keeps—you think it's gone far enough, and it just goes over, keeps going.
- 00:03:19 April Host It keeps going.
- 00:03:20 Jenette Guest But that's uh—that's Nicholas Cage for you.

*[Both laugh.]*

- 00:03:24 April Host Uh, for those of you who haven't seen *Mandy*, today's episode will obviously give you some spoilers, 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 watch *Mandy* first, this is your shot.
- 00:03:48 Music Music "Starless" by King Crimson
- 00:03:49 April Host ... And now, let me introduce *Mandy* with a quick synopsis. As quick as I can possibly be for this very complex film that is also quite simple.

Written by Aaron Stewart-Ahn and Panos Cosmatos, and directed by Cosmatos for release in 2018, *Mandy* stars Andrea Riseborough as Mandy, and Nicholas Cage as Red, two quiet, star-crossed metalheads living in the woods in 1983.

We watch them live out their idyllic existence, Mandy drawing elaborate and beautiful fantasy art that Red adores, Red working as a lumberjack and returning home on the twisty roads to the remote home. It's pretty nice. They watch TV and talk, both seemingly broken people who found one another and healed.

One night, Mandy recounts a tragic story from her childhood about some starlings. Red simply listens.

- 00:04:25 Clip Clip **Mandy:** My dad came walking across with a pillow case and a crowbar.

*[Low, dramatic musical cue plays.]*

**Mandy:** And there was something moving around inside of the pillow case, like squirming around. And he said we should gather around, he had something to show us, and so we all gathered

around. And he emptied what was in the pillow case on the ground, and it was a...

*[Dramatic musical cue plays again.]*

**Mandy:** ... it was a bunch of baby starlings. And he told us that he was gonna show us how to kill them.

00:05:08	April	Host	One day, Mandy heads to her cashier job at a gas station and convenience store and passes by a van carrying the children of a new dawn hippie cult. Their leader, Jeremiah Sand, decides that he wants his follower, Brother Swan, to kidnap Mandy. There's just something about her.
00:05:23	Clip	Clip	<b>Jeremiah Sand:</b> I need you to get me that girl I saw. I need her. I need her now.
00:05:32	April	Host	Swan goes out in the van with a few other followers to call forth the Black Skulls, a demonic, cannibalistic biker gang fueled by some bad LSD, and they offer up one of their own as a sacrifice, so these dudes can help them take Mandy.
00:05:46	Clip	Clip	<b>Scabs:</b> Blood for blood.
00:05:51	April	Host	After, the cult goes to Mandy and Red's home, subdues Red and drugs Mandy to offer her up to Sand. He tries to seduce her with his folk music, but he simply laughs him into oblivion.
00:06:01	Clip	Clip	<i>[Mandy is heard laughing, distorted.]</i> <b>Jeremiah Sand:</b> Shut up! Shut up!
00:06:12	April	Host	As retribution, Sand burns Mandy alive in front of Red, who survives a stabbing, and grieves wildly in the bathroom, before recouping for wild, unhinged revenge the next day. Red visits his friend, Caruthers, to get his crossbow—Caruthers, played by Bill Duke, the legend—which he calls the Reaper. Caruthers tells him this hippie gang is backed by the Black Skulls, and to be careful.
00:06:36	Clip	Clip	<b>Caruthers:</b> When I seen them things, they were in a world of pain. But you know what the freakiest part was? <b>Red:</b> What's that? <b>Caruthers:</b> They fucking loved it.
00:06:56	April	Host	So, Red goes home and forges a battle axe, of course. He tracks the biker gang, but is caught and brought to their hideout. He breaks free, and manages to kill the whole gang while also digesting some of their jacked-up LSD, turning him into a hallucinating, feral animal. A man named The Chemist tells him where to find Sand, in a church, so he goes there and kills a couple of the brothers, one through a seriously mental chainsaw battle. <i>[Jenette laughs.]</i> Red beheads Sister Lucy then, and rolls her severed head out to Sand, who, without his little army, is a sad, pathetic man begging for

mercy.

- 00:07:31 Clip Clip **Jeremiah Sand:** *[Wailing]* I'll blow you, man. I'll suck your fucking dick. Is that what you want? Anything!
- 00:07:43 April Host Red kills him and sets his church on fire, then drives away in the dark, imagining the spirit of Mandy beside him.
- 00:07:49 Jenette Guest Just your average love story.
- 00:07:50 April Host Yeah, it's just, you know, star-crossed lovers.
- 00:07:54 Jenette Guest *[Laughing]* It was so good.
- 00:07:55 April Host Uh, the first thing, you know, connecting this back to your youth in LA, you said, you know, in your bio that you wanted to be a character actor since you were young. And I wanted to share a quote with you from Andrea Riseborough, who is um, you know, showing herself to be a bit of a chameleon herself in her career early.
- Um, and she said, "I don't relate to people that look like me. I find it deeply unsatisfying to play a version of myself. It was something I had to figure out really early on, when I was at Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, because I was being cast over and over again as the young, virginal thing. When I left RADA, I was on an absolute mission to never wear makeup. I never, ever wanted to get anything based on how I looked. I managed to slip through somehow, and I think perhaps only now people are starting to realize I might not be—I might be—I might not be so asymmetrical.
- "But it was really difficult to negotiate that path, because at every turn as a female actor, people want to compartmentalize you so that they don't feel uncomfortable. They don't want to feel threatened. Transformation as a female actor is allowed up to a certain extent, as long as they can still recognize you on a red carpet, and for a woman to be a shapeshifter and be that malleable in spirit is really not okay with the patriarchy."
- 00:09:03 Jenette Guest Interesting.
- 00:09:04 April Host I'm curious what your thoughts are on that, because when she was looking at this script—and you know,, this is a character that's very different—she also, in that year, released *The Death of Stalin*, and she's playing a very kind of like, clear-faced, like blonde, hysterical woman who's like the exact opposite of the character that she's playing in this. Like, literal polar opposites. And a lot of people didn't even know it was the same actor, and uh, and I think that that's—might be kind of a difficult thing to do, to try to set yourself as being a chameleon. If you want to be a character actor.
- 00:09:36 Jenette Guest It's—it's diffic—well, to me, it's the thing. I mean, why should somebody recognize you from role to role? I always thought, well, isn't that the idea? You know, that's the target. But, as—as a career, it's difficult when people don't know who you are, because they always—they, you know, I guess like she was saying, you know, she says it's the patriarchy. You know, who are you, what do you do? Um, let me put you into a box and so I can feel safe, and

you can do it again. So, I mean, it's interesting. When I saw—I didn't know who she was. I didn't know the name, I didn't know the actress, and so it's great when you have no idea. And I immediately, you know, IMDb'd her, to see who she was. Oh, she's English? Oh. And—and I know she's also—isn't she a writer and a director as well?

- 00:10:19 April Host Yeah, she's been producing stuff. She produced a movie called *Nancy*, who Christina Choe, who was on the show last year or the year before, directed. Um, so she's—she's got her hand in a lot of different things, I think, which is maybe helpful in controlling that kind of narrative about yourself.
- 00:10:35 Jenette Guest It's great. I mean, I—I absolutely agree. I mean, I don't know, at my—I never could play the young ingénue. I mean, the way—the way I looked was always—I never, like she said—I don't run into people who look like me, in a way. So I've always felt like, well, I kind of looked like this little animal as a little kid. And even as a young girl, I knew I was never the ingénue. Um, which is great, because I—acting for me is like putting on masks and pretending to be other people, so, you know, that's like—I don't know. It would be weird to sort of be myself.
- 00:11:09 April Host To be yourself.
- 00:11:11 Jenette Guest I'm myself all day long. Who wants to, you know, be paid for that?
- 00:11:14 April Host Getting bored with that bullshit.
- 00:11:15 Jenette Guest Yeah, exactly. Once I figure out who she is, I'll let you know.
- 00:11:19 April Host Someday someone will write you a script that's about a bra entrepreneur. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:11:22 Jenette Guest Right, and I'll never—
- 00:11:23 April Host —be the lead role.
- [Jenette affirms.]*
- It'd be like, "I don't want to play that."
- [Both laugh.]*
- Um, so on taking the stole, Andrea said also—'cause this was not something that most people expected her to take. It was—it was very different from, obviously, what she was doing. And she said, "I was sent the script and, to be honest, I had never anticipated doing a Nick Cage movie. It wasn't something that looked like it might be on my horizon. He's such a great person to work with, and so professional and kind and cool, but for me it felt like a left-field choice. I read the script, and it was so wonderful and sane and beautifully written. It took me about two minutes, though, to say yes, and you can not even imagine how insane it's going to be."
- And, now that we've seen the movie, yes we can.
- 00:12:03 Jenette Guest Yeah, as well—I mean, I, as a um, an actor and also as an

audience member, I was like, “Wow, what—you know,, how did she come to the film? How did everybody come to the film?” I mean, that’s the great thing about independent film, those grindhouses, that you don’t recognize usually. Or, you don’t recognize him, or there’s the guy you always know, like Bill Duke. You’re like, “Yes, of course!”

- 00:12:24 April Host Yeah, when Bill Duke shows up, and you’re like, “Of course.”
- 00:12:27 Jenette Guest Yeah, so you see the same person over and over who repeats for the director. I mean, that’s part of what uh, grindhouse is. There’s certain actors that appear and then there’s the ones that, you know, they’re not actors at all and that’s kind of part of the fun.
- 00:12:42 April Host *[Hums in agreement]* I mean, like talking about actors that appear, like you were, you know, like you were kind of a staple of the Cameron stable, you know, beginning kind of early in your career. So, you were kind of shuffled int different roles—
- [Jenette affirms.]*
- with a lot of the same people, it seemed like.
- 00:12:59 Jenette Guest Well, he gave me my first film job, so I had never been on camera or done TV or anything. So, he had taken a chance on me, and um, from there, how I ended up in Kathryn Bigelow’s film, in *Near Dark*, was because they had been working together and he was mentioning her and the script, and I had come back to the states and—I don’t even think I—no, I didn’t agent, not an American agent. And um, Kathryn couldn’t find me, and Jim knew my mother’s phone number.
- [Both laugh.]*
- And so I just—it was like that. I just got a phone call that was like, “Hey, you know, can I send you a—” It was so funny. It was like that, and that’s how I got the script, and then how Bill and Lance and I kind of ended up together. That was almost kind of coincidental in a weird way. But it did come from the connection through Cameron.
- 00:13:49 April Host Yeah, I would assume that, just like, okay, I’ve worked with these people who are very amazing, have really kinetic energy, good faces. Like, yes, of course I would like to use them, you know?
- 00:13:59 Jenette Guest Yeah, you already have a history. We’d known each other for the longest time, and then you’re supposed to be a family that’s lived an eternity together. It helps.
- 00:14:08 April Host Yes! It’s—I was actually looking for any kind of interview with Panos Cosmatos where he could talk about, um, why he offered the script to Andrea Riseborough, but that was the one thing I couldn’t find.
- 00:14:22 Jenette Guest Huh. Where he had seen her, and where—
- 00:14:23 April Host Yeah, like what exactly it was that drew him to her. Um, so there wasn’t—I don’t know exactly what that is. Maybe we’ll find it. Maybe I can ask him at some point in time.

00:14:34 Jenette Guest Her face is amazing. I mean—

00:14:35 April Host Those eyes! Like, the big, kind of watery, big—

00:14:39 Jenette Guest Massive. Yeah, I was looking. And then I was fascinated with that scar, that jagged scar that never was explained, and I was so glad that it was never ex—I love that. I mean, I wondered, did she, as an actress, say “I want a scar”, or—I mean, for process. I mean, I love that. And I, um, I like the fact that you don’t know. People say, you know, it hints at something darker. My mind was like, “Ooh, that looks like she went through a windshield.” You know, that kind of thing, and it hints at, you know, a darker—obviously she’d gone through something. But I was like, why not? Why not have a scar and not—no one say anything?

00:15:20 April Host Have you done that for any of your roles, where you kind of suggest like a weird kind of charm in a sense, that’s like unexplained—

*[Jenette affirms.]*

—on your character? Like, for what, what do you—

00:15:29 Jenette Guest Well, um, it was for Vasquez, I had um—I don’t think it was ever in a shot. I had a tattoo on my inner forearm that said Inez.

00:15:41 April Host Oh. And it would be never explained, what that was?

00:15:44 Jenette Guest You know, I don’t even know if it was in a shot, or what. We got to um, personalize our lockers and our clothing and things like that for ourselves, and um, that was the name—for me, that was um, my daughter. That was a kid I had. But it didn’t—you know, people have things you don’t explain. You don’t walk up to someone, “Hello, so, you see the shirt that I’m wearing? Let me give you some exposition about this t-shirt and how I got—” you know.

00:16:09 Music Transition “Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:16:10 April Host Yeah, totally. Uh, so we’re gonna take a quick break, and we’ll come right back. We’ll talk about Jóhann, and then we’ll also talk about a little bit more of the intimacy that Jenette was bringing up, and some of the processes that Nick Cage went through to get to those emotional places in this film. So, we’ll be right back.

*[Music plays for several more seconds, then fades.]*

00:16:32 Promo Promo **Music:** Fun, upbeat music.

**Dave Hill:** Hi! I'm Dave Hill. From before. And I'm very excited to bring [Dave Hill's Podcasting Incident](#) back to Maximum Fun, where it belongs! You can get brand new episodes every Friday on [MaximumFun.org](#). Or, you know, wherever.

And what my partner Chris Gersbeck and I might lack in specific subject matter on our podcast, we make up for in special effects! Chris, add something cool. Right here!

*[Gunshot or whip snap.]*

Also, we have explosions!

*[Explosion.]*

Animal noises.

*[A goat braying]*

And sometimes, even this!

*[Two comedic timpani "boings," a springier "sproing" sound, and what sounds like a human scream.]*

*Dave Hill's Podcasting Incident!* Every Friday on Maximum Fun.  
Chris, do another explosion right here.

*[Another explosion, right here.]*

00:17:17	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:17:23	April	Host	<p>Welcome back to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>. I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Jenette Goldstein, and we're talking about <i>Mandy</i>.</p> <p>Um, so before the break, Jenette had mentioned the score and Jóhann Jóhannsson um, did a really fantastic score for this movie. And, you know, he had done other kind of higher profile, more um, you know, almost Oscar-ish movies, you know? And then this one came along and it turned out that Panos Cosmatos did not have him in the running for score whatsoever. Um, and that was because he seemed like he would be kind of um, too classic, too uh, too perfect, and he wanted something that was a little bit metal in this.</p> <p>And it turned out that Jóhann Jóhannsson was a metalhead. Panos said, "I didn't have him in mind. I didn't immediately think of him as an option, but it turned out that he had seen <i>Black Rainbow</i>—" uh, Panos' previous film. "—and wanted to work with me, much to my surprise. But after talking to him for a bit, he's a sensitive guy, but he's also, I started to realize, an Icelandic metalhead. He has this whole other side of him that he wanted to express that he hadn't really done before in a score, and that excited me, as well."</p> <p>So, you know, very sad Jóhann died. Love that he was able to express another self of—uh, another side of himself in this project before that ultimately happened. And I think that that much be such a hard thing, you know, that comes up a lot in the show, kind of being pigeonholed for what you are good at and what you are so clearly excelling at, but then having this other, personal side of yourself that you don't really get to express all the time.</p>
00:18:58	Jenette	Guest	<p>Well, I was—I've always found, yeah, the creative people will recognize creativity in the individual, and they'll know that they can create in a different genre, or they can um, they're not—they don't pigeonhole. I've always been amazed at the roles that I've gotten where the director just goes, "I know you can do it." That doesn't—it doesn't like, prove it to me. It's like, I've seen—I've seen—I know, and I get the fact that you can—you can recognize someone who's</p>



like, really creative and you don't have to—they don't have to do the same thing. No one wants to do the same thing over and over and over.

00:19:40 April Host Yeah, it gets boring. Well, some people want to. *[Laughs]*

00:19:43 Jenette Guest Yeah, you know, there's a few—you know. For awhile, and then—  
*[Both laugh.]*

00:19:48 April Host But yeah, you get bored.

I wanted to talk a little bit about um, Nicholas Cage's coming to Red—his character, Red—specifically because it was kind of a blank slate for him on the script. He said, "I came to *Mandy* more from the perspective of it being a script an da filmmaker that could create a world unlike anything else I'd ever done. But I'm excited by it, and I'm very enthusiastic about it. But also, the Red character is a vessel where I can, I believe, conjure up the emotional content necessary, whether it be through my life experience, or my dreams, or my imagination to play the part authentically."

He saw it as kind of this blank slate where he could really put himself into it. Um, so there was, you know, a kind of slimmer outline of who this character could be.

00:20:38 Jenette Guest Well, it's funny, 'cause I was, um, I read an interview where actually Panos was thinking of him as the—

00:20:46 April Host Jeremiah Sand, yeah.

00:20:47 Jenette Guest Jeremiah Sand, and he said, "No, it's Red I want to play." You know, and I thought that was so interesting, because of course you think, you know, Nick Cage, the villain, the crazy, whacked-out—

*[April affirms.]*

—you know, and Linus Roache was incredible. But um, the fact that you take a person with all this life experience and the way he looks and you put him as the male, the lead, the lover, you know, the usual pretty-boy, nice body, all that kind of cliché that you would think, but you don't know, and have him—he doesn't have to do as much. I mean, that's a weird thing to say about Nicholas Cage.

*[Both laugh.]*

It was very minimalist. But in a way, he didn't have to—there was no backstory about, you know, was he an alcoholic—I mean, everything was there 'cause it was Nick Cage, and it was really—I thought it was—it was great to see how he does the leading man.

00:21:45 April Host Yeah. I wanted to get into um, the fact that Nicholas Cage also came from smaller, independent films, too. And that kind of fuels his choices, and has fueled his choices throughout a lot of his career. Because he would do big movies, and keep going back to doing independent films, and then big movies, and never quite did just one. And he said, quote:

“I came out of independently spirited movies, and I think that in many ways, they are the pictures that have created the most original opportunities for me. The higher up you go in the scale of cost, the more difficult it is to make a movie that’s an original movie. I think that when the cost of a film is under control, like *Mandy*, there are fewer cooks in the kitchen telling the director what to do. There’s more oxygen in the room with which to be creative, and the actors and the director can be more collaborative, and that’s what’s happened with *Mandy*.”

00:22:36 Jenette Guest Yeah, I can definitely—I definitely agree with that. I mean, the more money that’s at stake, and the more suits come to visit the set, it’s just, everyone is just scared, and, “Oh my God, I’m gonna make a mistake, and, you know.”

00:22:50 April Host Yeah. I mean, what’s your...

*[Papers rustle.]*

Do you feel like you’ve been able to give, like, your best performance for bigger budget things, or do you feel like sometimes that’s hindered?

00:23:00 Jennette Guest I’m trying to think—I don’t know, I haven’t really been in very lar—I mean, if you think about *Aliens*, I mean, the budget—

00:23:06 April Host —was crappy.

00:23:07 Jenette Guest Sixteen million dollars. That was it. It was a low budget film, it was a Corman film. I mean, we had a joke where everything—anything that broke, we would just gaffer taped it.

*[April laughs.]*

It would just—it was a low budget. You know, and they thought, “We’re gonna shut the set down.” And he was like, “No, no, we’ll fix it, we’ll just ga—” It was like being on a Corman film. I mean, I know like a horror film that I did, and they tried to get this film, it was called *Autopsy*. And they had—I get my arm cut off at the end, and it’s this big scene with the final girl?

*[April hums in interest.]*

And they had this whole prosthetic, and the thing and the blood, and they tried to get it—and at the end, all I did was just tuck my arm underneath.

*[They laugh.]*

I just tucked it under! And it worked fantastic.

00:23:53 April Host Oh, I mean, speaking of arms, I mean like, *Terminator 2*, like. That had to be a really weird experience, you know, it didn’t—it was like a level up of budget from what you guys had.

*[Jenette affirms.]*

And then you guys had pretty complex VFX at that time, too. And then, part of that was your arm.

- 00:24:10 Jenette Guest I mean, I wasn't doing—I mean, yeah, this was like the first kind of visual effects. I mean, for me, all I had to do, they had to stick my arm in goop and make, you know, a fake arm of it, and I just had to put my arm behind my back at set in that time, because. They do blow up a lot of rules with VFX. There's no doubt about it, so.
- 00:24:23 April Host A lifetime of putting your arm behind your back!
- [They laugh.]*
- 00:24:25 Jenette Guest Exactly! And then somebody told me what I was doing, like, you know, "Move your eyes here, move your eyes there, move your eyes here, move your eyes there." And then, you know, I see it, as an audience member, I finally see what the computer's doing.
- 00:24:37 April Host Oh, I like that, that's funny. But, it has to be a lot of trust on that set, in that time, because I mean, like—Tito blew up a lot of rules with VFX. There's no doubt about it, so.
- 00:24:48 Jenette Guest I—you know, they—when Dennis came to me, and kind of tried to explain to me what was gonna happen, things were gonna melt. And you're just like, "Okay, yeah. Sure. I have no idea what you're talking about."
- [She breaks off into laughter.]*
- 00:25:02 April Host Um, I would love to talk about your version, or how you define success, when you come to roles, and when you see a final product in a film. And you see yourself in T2, and you're like, "Okay, I did what I was supposed to do, this is my success." Um, in regards to Nicholas Cage, and him defining his own success in movies, like, whether or not he thinks he did well in the role. He said, quote:
- "The question I ask myself is: Did I achieve and realize my dreams that I had hoped for with my performance? With *Mandy*, I would say absolutely yes. I think Panos and I guided a character that was very satisfying, but more importantly, I'm excited that an audience member, a film enthusiast, is going to get in step with it and go along for the ride. For me, that is the ultimate response. To be in a theater, and to get that 40 second story in 1975 feeling, where people were catcalling in the theater at midnight. They're freaking out. I love that kind of response, and to me, the bar for success is if you get an audience going."
- And he's, I mean, he's coming to this as not an actor who worked on the stage, too. Which, to me, it seems more like something that an actor who works on the stage would want to have that immediate feedback, or know how to play to an audience, you know? Specifically.
- 00:26:18 Jenette Guest Yeah, I mean I—my idea of success is, because I come from the stage, is: "Does it work with the story? Am I telling the story?" Um, as opposed to, you know, like, it's less about me and what I've

achieved as, “Does it move the story along, and you believe what’s going on?”

And then, going to see it, of course, it’s the audience. I mean, I love going to see it, like he said, on 42nd street. Going to see it with an audience. Because if you don’t get the reaction from the audience, as the storyteller, the person listening to it is the reason you’re doing it. It doesn’t matter how you feel about it. I mean, I’ve had some of my worst takes, or worst performances, where I’m like, “Ugh, I was so bad.” And then, somebody will come up to you, and just be like, “That was the most amaz—it made me think of this, and feel this.” And that’s why you’re doing it.

00:27:11 April Host And you’re like, “Oh, shit, it doesn’t matter what I think.”

00:27:12 Jenette Guest Yeah, exactly. And that’s why you would never say anything about, you know, how you felt.

00:27:16 April Host Zipped lips.

00:27:18 Jenette Guest Sometimes you feel spectacular, and it’s just a total mess.

*[They laugh.]*

There’s the opposite too, right?

00:27:26 April Host I mean, yeah, you don’t really know how it’s gonna turn out, or what’s going to—again, it’s trusting that director, like Nicholas Cage, being like, “Well, I saw his last movie, and I know that he can do this, he can accomplish this.”

00:27:37 Jenette Guest Yeah. Seeing the director’s film, the last film, is really important. And trusting the director, because that’s the final say, the control.

00:27:48 April Host Be honest, did you immediately trust James Cameron to make *Aliens*?

00:27:51 Jenette Guest You know, I saw *Terminator*. I saw it like the night before I went in for the first meeting, and I didn’t even know what film I was going in for. And I met Gale Anheard, she was 29? I think? Oh my God. In his office, and there was a poster of *Terminator*. And I went, “Oh my God, I love that movie!” And she goes, “Oh, that’s ours.” And I thought she put it up, like, on her bedroom? I was like, “You too?”

*[They break off into laughter.]*

00:28:19 April Host “Oh, that’s one of my favorites, I’m such a big fan, too! Let’s girl out about it!”

00:28:25 Jenette Guest I was so stupid. Um, but oh God, I loved it. I loved that movie. I mean, again, it was just an incredible love story. And so I was very excited, because of that.

*[April affirms.]*

And um, I’d seen... Well, that was the only one, I did not see *Piranha 2*. So.

00:28:47	April	Host	I had.
00:28:48	Jenette	Guest	You'd seen <i>Piranha 2</i> ?
			<i>[They laugh.]</i>
			Maybe I would not have...
00:28:55	April	Host	I'm glad that you chose to see <i>Terminator</i> though, instead of <i>Piranha 2</i> . Either way, I dunno. I think <i>Piranha 2</i> 's pretty great, with what he had, so. You can trust me. Unless you've seen it since.
00:29:06	Jenette	Guest	I haven't! I haven't.
00:29:07	April	Host	Well, now you got some weekend viewing plans, Jenette.
			<i>[Jenette laughs.]</i>
			Um, I would love to take a break, when we get back, we're going to talk a little bit more about process, and I swear to God, we're gonna get to that bathroom scene. Because I feel like the people who are listening are like, "Talk about the bathroom scene!" And there is quite a bit that went into that, because it's very pivotal, in terms of holding a story together. So, we'll take a quick break, and we'll come right back.
00:29:24	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:29:39	Promo	Promo	<b>Music:</b> Gentle, upbeat piano music.
			<b>Helen Hong:</b> Hey, J. Keith.
			<b>J. Keith van Straaten:</b> Hey, Helen! I hear you have a true/false quiz you want me to finish!
			<b>Helen:</b> I do! Here we begin: We host a trivia gameshow podcast on the MaxFun network called... <i>Go Fact Yourself!</i>
			<b>J. Keith:</b> True!
			<b>Helen:</b> Correct! The show is all about celebrity guests answering trivia questions about things J. Keith enjoys.
			<b>J. Keith:</b> False. We sometimes <u>don't</u> talk about baseball or cats.
			<b>Helen:</b> Thank god. It's questions about things <u>they</u> enjoy! Next, we bring on surprise experts <u>every</u> episode.
			<b>J. Keith:</b> True!
			<b>Helen:</b> Correct! Final question: It's just the two of us sitting alone with these guests.
			<b>J. Keith:</b> False.
			<b>Helen:</b> Correct! We have a live audience at the Angel City Brewery!

*[Audience cheers and claps.]*

**Helen:** See?

*[A bell dings.]*

**Helen:** You can hear *Go Fact Yourself* every first and third Friday of the month, and if you don't listen, you can go fact yourself!

**J. Keith:** True!

*[Music finishes.]*

00:30:26	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:30:33	April	Host	<p>Welcome back to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>. I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Jenette Goldstein, and we're talking about <i>Mandy</i>. Um, so, I'm gonna begin with a story about a happy accident that happened on set. Um, and it is in that bathroom scene. Because, if viewers will remember when they saw it, it was a long, kind of static scene—or, well, not static, it was a slow push-in actually, so they were on rails, and they were pushing the camera in very slowly while Nicholas Cage is feeling grief, and freaking out, and trying to figure out what he's gonna do. So, Panos Cosmatos said, quote:</p> <p>"He did one take, and then I gave him some notes and modulation on where I want to transition rather quickly. And he did it again, and it was magical. But in that scene, in that shot, when he was actually pulling the towels out of the drawer, he accidentally threw the towel onto the dolly track. And so we were dollying forward, and the dolly got caught on the towel, and we realized it pretty quickly, and we reached out to pull it out of the way. You can actually feel the dolly stopping as it stops on the towel. But I ended up only being able to take so much to the site, and it was kind of beautiful."</p> <p>And, apparently, in that shot, because they used that second one where the towel landed on the dolly, there is a kind of jerk-jerk.</p> <p><i>[Jennette exclaims.]</i></p> <p>Like a really minimal jerk, that worked with the emotional tone of the story that they ended up keeping it. The funny thing though, is Nicholas Cage doesn't like happy accidents. He's a very prepared person, which is something that is antithetical to people's thoughts about him, I'm sure.</p>
00:32:13	Jenette	Guest	Well, you know what, it makes sense to me. I've never read that, but it makes perfect sense. Because in order to be able to lose control, you have to feel safe, and that things are set up so that you <u>can</u> lose control. So it makes perfect sense to me.
00:32:30	April	Host	<p>I think, absolutely. He said he's not completely against them, you know, sometimes they happen. But it's just, like, he wants the precision on set. He said, quote:</p> <p>"I certainly think that there are happy accidents that can occur on</p>

set, and usually when that happens, I refer to it as the messiness of reality. And sometimes those accidents really make it into the movie. But for me, the joy is really when you have a target, and you hit out an idea of where you can go, and you want to hit that target, and then you do. That's a kind of blissful moment, of afterwards I go home, and I say, 'Thank you.' And those moments don't always happen, but when they do, I would say that that is the best feeling."

You know. He's still looking for that precision. But I like what you're saying about having—having that calm, and peace on set. Or like, the order, and then you get to go insane.

00:33:12 Jenette Guest

You have to—absolutely. You've gotta be safe, I mean, like in a fight sequence, you have to have everything choreographed, and you have to make sure everything's safe, so then you can actually go to that place.

*[April affirms.]*

I mean, I'm sure other actors have a different process, you know.

00:33:28 April Host

Well, I mean, let's talk about that kind of grieving thing, and how to put that on the screen.

*[Jenette makes a disgusted noise.]*

Because, in this, like there's a lot of grieving, and um—so Nicholas Cage was talking about, you know, how he works up to it. And he said, quote:

"It's a very hard thing to describe with words. It has more to do with memory and sound, and kind of like a trance, really, where I know where I have to go. And I'll surf emotion throughout the day, leading up to the moment of action, just to see if it's there. Is it at my fingertips? Is it in my throat? Is it in my eyes? And bring it back, bring it back. On other movies, I've written notes to myself, and put them in my pocket. And the moment of action comes, out comes the note. And I'll put it back in there, and there we go. But in that particular instance, in *Mandy*, I don't know what I was thinking about, or recalling in the bathroom. But it's not—it is not like going into some sort of other dimension, and trying to pull up something from a well, that's tucked away or buried in the Earth somewhere."

So he was doing kind of practical things on other movies, definitely, you know like, a note, a sad thing, a memory that he would recall, and then putting it in his pocket. And, maybe he's gotten to the point in his career when it's just like, you can have an easier recall. Because he was talking very frankly about his life being, you know, in some ways a disappointment emotionally up at this time. And he felt that he had like, a kind of well of emotion he needed to get out, anyway, which is one of the reasons he wanted to play Red.

00:34:56 Jenette Guest

Wow, yeah. I mean, some actors are really thassle with—when I say emotion, I'm referring to, like, tears. Like, that kind of...

*[April affirms.]*

And you know, I've never been—

*[Jenette stutters.]*

It scares me, um, you know, there's all these—you know, you think about this, like you said, the thing in your pocket, a song, and you know. And there's the pressure that you have to do it on cue, which is—and then you're nervous, and the nerves shut down, and you're emot—you know, it's um, it's not for me. It's never been easy, and it's always, um... It definitely comes from the idea that, um, in your body. For me, it's more of the feeling, a song, um, as opposed to just, "Oh, I'm gonna think about the time when my cat did—" That's just too in my head, and too analytical.

*[April affirms.]*

And sometimes, you know, if you just start wailing. You do the sound of wailing, it triggers this emotion of—it triggers a mind-body of when you—like you know how you can make yourself laugh? And you start to laugh, and things become funny? It's the same thing with—

*[April laughs.]*

So you start that, as opposed to starting. For me, it's interesting, like, I always connect more—I first do what the body is, like, I like to see what kind of shoes am I, I'm an outside-in kind of—more active as opposed to, like, remembering things. Because then I get too much into my head.

00:36:25	April	Host	Yeah. and I mean, that kind of stays true to everything that you're talking about, in terms of just being in the body, you know. Like, knowing the body, feeling it, letting it guide that—I could potentially see that Nicholas Cage is in his kind of body, in that particular grieving scene.
00:36:41	Jenette	Guest	Yeah, I was impressed, yeah. Incredibly impressed, because it was just, such a—the most horrible thing to witness, and then just to be there, alone, in the bathroom, just grieving. But it made perfect sense, of like what he—the stages of what he was doing, you know. He had to stay alive, and cauterize his wounds. I thought that was really interesting, and it was like a real practical, "I'm gonna bleed to death if I don't do this." Not cauterize, we're not talking about—antiseptic—
00:37:12	April	Host	Sanitize!
00:37:13	Jenette	Guest	Sanitize, yeah! So I love that, the sort of practical—so he wasn't there like, "Oh, I'm gonna go to grieve." Because that's, "No, I'm gonna go there, because I need to stay alive." And then he starts drinking, and it all goes, and that transformation. And then he becomes this avenging angel in his underpants.

*[April affirms.]*



Which was fantastic, the lack of vanity. That was something else that I really enjoyed. The lack of vanity, in the film. Of all of the actors.

00:37:42 April Host Mmhm. They're okay with being a little bit quote-unquote "ugly".

00:37:46 Jenette Guest Absolutely.

00:37:47 April Host I mean, you know—

00:37:49 Jenette Guest Well, just looking like a real person.

00:37:50 April Host Yeah, not like a Hollywood movie, 'cause this is not a Hollywood movie by any means.

*[Both laugh.]*

What was the—what's the hardest piece of emotion that you've ever had to pull out when you've been working on-screen?

00:38:06 Jenette Guest Well, I—it's the—I don't—you know, I'm just trying to think, have I ever done an emotion—the one—on television there was this one scene where I had to—my um, my son was being taken away. Again. I was a crack addict, you know, of course. But there was this scene, you know, where I had to get up and just talk to him and I knew where it should be, you know, and if I would cry. And that was um, I was, "Oh my god, I'm gonna blow it, I'm gonna blow it!" You know, I mean, that's just my mind. "Oh, no, no, no," you know.

And um, it was—it was good. It worked. I mean, I did it. You know, that was the whole thing. I just—I—you have your tricks and your things that you do so that you can be in the moment there. But that really was the only time—I mean, like, with *Titanic* the interesting thing was I couldn't cry, and all I wanted to do was cry. Because it was so sad. I mean—

00:39:04 April Host Yeah, the whole entire, yeah.

00:39:05 Jenette Guest And so my thing was, it was don't cry. And a lot of times they'll tell you that in acting class. People don't try to cry. They try not to cry. And that's the whole thing, you don't, "I'm going to cry now." You try not to, and it just comes out. So you're doing a counterpoint.

00:39:20 April Host Yeah, you're working on multiple levels of emotion always.

*[Both affirm.]*

I mean, this sounds pretty easy to me.

*[Jenette affirms and they both laugh.]*

You know, and also I wanted to say, like, to get back to something else that you brought up that is a big thing is, you mentioned the wallpaper in the bathroom, and I would say that in every scene and every shot there is uh, meticulous attention to that kind of detail. And so, something that might resonate with your time working on *Aliens* would be this, um, where Panos Cosmotos said, "I read a quote years ago, and I wish to god I could remember where it was

or who said it, but it was basically along the lines of it's as important what you don't show as what you do show. And for my very first super short film, I really always was kind of inspired by that, because by isolating a certain part of a room or environment, you can make it feel like it extends a lot. If you choose the right wall and the right frame, you can let the audience fill in the gaps in their mind, and it can make something seem a lot larger in scope than it actually is, literally."

I thought that was lovely.

00:40:26 Jenette Guest Really smart. I mean, I noticed that with um, the creatures, the—

00:40:33 April Host The Black Skulls.

00:40:34 Jenette Guest —The Black Skull gang. You never see, you know, and I didn't—and you—yeah, you couldn't see them, you couldn't quite figure out what was their face and all of that, and the same thing with um, where—the house that he was chained up in.

00:40:53 April Host Mm-hm. Yeah, their hideout, the gang's hideout. I'm curious, you know, we talked a little about this earlier, too, um, 'cause on the set of *Aliens* you guys were building a world, and it had to look very populated by things, but it couldn't have been a huge set. It had to be pretty small. So it seems like he had to be isolating certain things and make it seem like it was bigger.

00:41:15 Jenette Guest No, it was big. It was—

00:41:16 April Host It was?

00:41:17 Jenette Guest Yeah, it was—well, the set of where the power station was, where we first go when we find the aliens, was an actual power station. A disused—yeah, it was an actual power station. It was a disused power station, I don't know what kind, and they built into it, into the set. So you were actually going up, you know, the creaky iron stair.

00:41:39 April Host It's almost like a haunted house that they built, like a—

00:41:41 Jenette Guest Yeah, so you were walking into it, and the same thing for—so, when you were inside the ship and going down the um, the tubes, you were actually inside, you know, three-dimensional, crawling down something. So, it was, yeah, same thing for *Titanic*. I mean, you'd be like, down the—down a plank and down around corners and the strangest thing was all of the sudden coming—looking at a camera.

*[Both laugh.]*

You know, 'cause—

00:42:07 April Host Oh, I forgot, we're on a movie.

*[Jenette affirms and they both laugh.]*

Well, you're always on a movie. Someone's always filming you somewhere right now. Yeah. I want to thank you so much for coming and joining me today to talk about *Mandy* and to talk about your work and your bras.

00:42:25 Jenette Guest My bras, yeah.

00:42:26 Music Transition “Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:42:27 April Host And uh, people can find you where?

00:42:30 Jenette Guest Uh, oh you mean the bras?

00:42:32 April Host Anything. Where they find you, they can find your bras.

00:42:34 Jenette Guest Um, the bras is [JenetteBras.com](http://JenetteBras.com). And uh, me, I’m just uh, I don’t know, hanging around the local Trader Joes. *[Laughs.]*

00:42:44 April Host Yeah. Catch her if you can.

*[Both laugh.]*

Thank you so much.

00:42:47 Jenette Guest

Thanks a lot.

00:42:48 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.

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](mailto:SwitchbladeSisters@maximumfun.org).

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

Our producer is Casey O’Brien. Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and this is a production of [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

*[Music fades.]*

00:43:15 Clip Clip

**Caruthers:** They fucking loved it.

00:43:18 Speaker 1 Promo

[MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

00:43:20 Speaker 2 Promo

Comedy and culture.

00:43:21 Speaker 3 Promo

Artist owned—

00:43:22 Speaker 4 Promo

—Audience supported.