

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 *Switchblade Sisters*, 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.

You may already remember from the last few episodes, but here’s a reminder. We are remote recording now, since we’re all social distancing. I’m recording from my bedroom, so you’re gonna hear my cat screaming. She was already doing it earlier. The audio is likely going to sound a little different from our studios, but everything else is exactly the same.

Except for the fact that today, our guest got to call in from Tasmania, because I’m very excited to have actor-producer Essie Davis here with me. Hi, Essie!

00:00:51 Essie Guest Hi, April. It’s a pleasure to be here.

00:00:54 April Host So for those of you who aren’t familiar with Essie’s work, where have you been? But also, here’s a refresher.

Essie was born and raised in Hobart, Tasmania. She studied in Sydney at the National Institute for Dramatic Art, and then she graduated onto the stage, performing in the Bell Shakespeare Company, already securing coveted roles like Juliet.

When she moved into film in the 1993 detective story, *The Custodian*, and the 1995 Australian comedy, *Dad and Dave: On Our Selection* before appearing in *The Matrix Reloaded*, *The Matrix Revolutions*, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, *Code 46*, and *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, among many others. She returned to the stage, winning a Laurence Olivier Award for best performing actress for her turn as Stella opposite Glenn Close in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and was nominated for a Tony for her Broadway debut in *Jumpers*.

Essie was lauded in TV as well, being nominated for an award for her work in the mini-series *The Slap*. The television would find her again when she was cast Phryne Fisher in the internationally beloved detective series, *Miss Fisher’s Murder Mysteries*. Somewhere in there, she had the time to star in Jennifer Kent’s terrifying debut, *The Babadook* as a distraught mother trying to survive in a house haunted by a spooky children’s book character. You guys may remember Jennifer Kent already came on the show to talk about *The Innocence*.

You may also remember her as Lady Crane on *Game of Thrones*, or from the mini-series’, *The White Princess*, *The Last Post*, or the

*Lambs of God*. She's now starring in a nice handful of films coming soon—this is a very busy year for her, despite the pandemic—including Shannon Murphy's upcoming *Babyteeth*, *Miss Fisher and the Crypt of Tears*, and Justin Kurzel's *True History of the Kelly Gang*, in which she plays Ellen Kelly, an erratic woman toughened by poverty and British rule, into the—well, essentially, a Lady Macbeth of the badlands. After that, you'll see her in *The Justice of Bunny King*, opposite her *Kelly Gang* co-star, Thomasin McKenzie.

So, Essie, wow. That's just a lot. Are you tired?

- 00:02:49 Essie Guest *[Laughing]* I am tired, actually. It's uh, I am completely exhausted just listening to that. Um, I am very fortunate that I've worked an incredible amount for the past couple years, and it's a bit sad that everything I've done is just coming out now. However, it's also a time when everyone desperately needs to be entertained and respected and inspired, and hopefully this will give people the opportunity to be all of those things.
- 00:03:27 April Host Yeah, and you know, speaking of *True History of the Kelly Gang*, we actually have it playing at a drive-in theater here.
- [Essie gasps.]*
- So people can—yeah, I know.
- 00:03:35 Essie Guest Are you kidding?
- 00:03:36 April Host People are gonna get the old school experience. I'm not kidding.
- 00:03:39 Essie Guest That is fantastic. That is fantastic. I was just desperately—I'm—I love the drive-in more than anything. I used to love sitting in the back of mom and dad's car with my brothers and sisters with a blanket in our pajamas and watching the first feature and a double feature and falling asleep and waking up to bits of all kinds of amazingness. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and some incredible films I saw at the cinema—at the drive-in. And they don't exist in Tasmania anymore. They've gotten rid of all the drive-ins. I'm so glad that you still have them and people like, go?
- 00:04:19 April Host Yeah! Right now they're allowed to go. I mean, there's definitely some restrictions, but your movie's gonna be playing there, so.
- 00:04:26 Essie Guest That is the best news I have had this month.
- 00:04:29 April Host I know, it's gonna be—
- [April breaks off, giggling.]*
- Well, that's wonderful. And people in LA, definitely check it out at the drive-in. But, Essie, the movie that you chose to talk about today is *The Vanishing* from 1988, the original. Can you give us an explanation on why that's one of your fave genre films?
- 00:04:46 Essie Guest You know, it was really hard to pick a favorite. I've got so many. But I have to say, there's something about that film that is terrifying, and the level of dread that it fills you with, and really—I watched it again last night to refresh my memory, and it really is a film you can only

watch once. Even though it was extraordinary to watch it again, it's really tricky knowing what's gonna happen. But uh, the whole opening of it is such a powerful feeling of tension and dread. And I think what I love about it so much is that it's so—it so potentially could happen.

It's, you know, someone drives in, a couple drive in to a petrol station roadhouse. She goes in to get a drink, and never comes out again. And he—it's um, it's that—the terrifying fear of abduction or what would happen if somebody just disappeared out of your life, and this kind of quest to find them. Oh, I've got goosebumps thinking about it.

00:06:08	April	Host	For those of you who haven't seen <i>The Vanishing</i> yet, 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 <u>how</u> it happens that makes a movie worth watching. Still, if you would like to watch—pause this, watch <i>The Vanishing</i> first, go ahead. It's on Criterion channel at the very least, and you can definitely rent it online.
00:06:29	Essie	Guest	But you've got to make sure it's the right <i>Vanishing</i> , because the American remake is. Not. Good. I'm sorry to say, America.
00:06:37	April	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> Spoken from the words of Essie Davis herself. Okay.
00:06:39	Music	Music	Tense music begins to play under April.
00:06:40	April	Host	Okay. For those who need a refresher on <i>The Vanishing</i> and what happens, it's written by George Sluizer and Tim Krabbé, and directed by Sluizer for release in 1988, <i>The Vanishing</i> stars Johanna ter Steege as a playful woman named Saskia on a road trip with her boyfriend, Rex, played by Gene Bervoets. The relationship is antagonistic, but Saskia is pushed to an edge when Rex runs out of gas in a long, dark tunnel, and leaves her against her protestations to get some more fuel. Rex apologizes, but there's a sense that Saskia, no matter how joyful, knows that something is wrong.  She recounts to him a chilling dream she had about being trapped in a golden egg. The two reach a rest area where they play around on the grass. Saskia goes into the store and comes back with a frisbee. She goes into the store one more time, but this time, she doesn't return. Rex can't find her. We cut to the past, though it's not explicitly made clear. A family man chemistry professor named Raymond begins plotting to kidnap a woman. He tries and fails a few times, until a target actually gives him a great idea: abduct a traveler from a rest stop up the highway.  Then we get back to Rex, three years later, who keeps getting postcards from the man who says he's the killer. Rex shows up at a cafe in Nimes, across the way from Raymond's house, but Raymond's too chicken shit to go through with it. After Rex makes an appeal on television, Raymond finds him and tells him he'll tell Rex everything. Rex doesn't even care about punishment, he just needs to know what happened.

Rex gets in the car with Raymond, who then drives him down the highway, recounting a long, long story about how he decided he would kidnap someone, and how it was Saskia whoa actually approached him, and then got into his car to try to buy a gift for Rex. But Raymond refuses to say the rest. If Rex wants to know, he must experience it for himself. He must die.

Rex struggles with this, but eventually drinks a cup of drugged coffee. Then he wakes up buried alive in a simple wooden casket, flicking the lighter Saskia bought for him, understanding finally the last horrifying moments of the woman he loved.

00:08:40 April Host *[April makes a wavering, spooked out sound. Essie starts laughing.]*

Okay. Um, it's horrific. It's horrific.

00:08:45 Essie Guest It is horrific. It's horrific.

00:08:49 April Host And it's also um—because it's like, it's uncomfortable, and in fact I think that's something that, you know, we should begin with, is the fact that Sluizer, when he was saying that he is okay with things that make you feel disturbed, he said, "I don't mind disturbing the audience. Disturbed means you're required to think about what's right or what's wrong." End quote.

And this most definitely makes me think about what is right and wrong, although it's very obvious that you should not bury someone alive after abducting them. I'm sorry.

*[They both start laughing.]*

00:09:24 Essie Guest No. Do not do this in your own home. And certainly don't do it in a bush somewhere either. *[Laughing]* Just don't do it. Stop and don't! If you want to find out what happened to someone, don't agree to let it happen to you!

*[April laughs uproariously.]*

That is like a—that is a lesson in life. Sometimes things are best left a mystery.

00:09:54 April Host I know! Oh my—but the way that the builds that up, where this guy is maniacal to the point where he just needs to know what happened. You know,, he won't let it go, his relationship is crumbling. That's something that is—like, he's kind of building to this inevitably poetic ending where the only way that he could go on is if he also perishes. Um, and I would not make those choices, but I can see in some way how this character is making these choices at the very least.

00:10:24 Essie Guest I can, too. I can, too. But that's what—it is a shame that you have to give away that last moment, because that is the tension that drives you through, as an audience member, drives you through the watching of the film, is you not knowing. You not knowing and going, god, what would you choose, what would you choose? Would you just want to know? Because you as an audience want to know what happened, what happened?

00:10:52 April Host And I want to talk about what it's like, maybe as an actor and trying to build that suspense and also working with objects. Because Sluizer was saying, "The word suspense was always in my head, but it was not number one in the writing of the movie. In the making, I was more conscious about and more involved in building suspense. It was in the script, but then you have to play it or make it so you feel it. Do I know this, does he, does she? So, knowing and not knowing becomes affected. It's also objects having a value in that suspense. Is that truck important or not important?" End quote.

And I think, you know, for this, like you're saying, like she goes in, she buys a frisbee, there are drinks that she's buying, there's a keychain that we see that, you know, the killer is giving us a gift that we don't know is part of the story yet. But because there's a certain kind of magic imbued on these objects, on this truck that passes, you know, it's—you can tell that there's something there.

But I'm wondering, you know, as an actor, you also can't indicate. You know, you can't um, you can't give away that this is the key, that this is the clue. Because you already know the end of the script. But I wonder if that presents a kind of interesting challenge for a performer.

00:12:04 Essie Guest Well, it certainly can. I mean, there are—that—I also know that really is extremely important when you're doing theater work as well. That if you magic a prop with too much magic—*[She breaks off, laughing]* just by knowing it, you can—the way you hold it, or the way—then you can unwittingly give away something that really shouldn't be given away. And um, and the filmmaker does it in so many ways that, you know, depending on if you linger on anything for too long, or—it really—it's incredibly important to, when you're working, to know how much value to give something.

But it's also in how long a shot might linger on a prop, or in the editing of the storytelling, like, what's just something that can just be passed over, and just—just sprinkle it with a little bit of, um, thought, but without being pointed at. Sometimes that's enough, that you're standing there and you are thinking about a prop that's not even got any focus on it. It can actually—you can—uh, somehow there is a way of magic that you kind of give kind of resident value to an object just by thought, and that thought can be too much or not enough.

00:13:41 April Host Well, you must do that quite a bit with *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*. I mean, so much of it is gathering evidence. This character who is handling props, gathering evidence, and making sure that you're leading the audience along with it. Because of the type of show that it is, you can hopefully potentially figure it out on your own, if you wanted to.

00:14:04 Essie Guest Yes, but you've also got to be very clever, because Phryne's smarter than anyone, and she's meant to be figuring it out before the audience does.

*[Both laugh.]*

So you've got to go, "Hmm, this could be really important, but I'm just going to give it a different kind of energy that it might be important, but maybe it's important for a different reason." It's quite interesting.

I've been listening to Sherlock Holmes a lot lately. Stephen Fry's reading the entire works of Sherlock Holmes and it's amazing hearing a client read like, list all of the events that have happened and the things that they saw, the things that they touched, the things that they did, and then hearing Sherlock's take on all of those things is just like, "Oh, I see why that was important!" it's quite clever clue placing.

00:15:02 Music Transition

"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:15:03 April Host

And we're gonna take a quick break. When we come back, we're gonna come back to something you keep talking about, which is a really beautiful part of the film. Which actually is only for about 11 minutes total, or about 8 to 11 minutes total of the film, and that's the relationship between Rex and Saskia that's developed. So, we'll talk about that right after the break.

*[Music fades.]*

00:15:26 Promo Promo

**Music:** Fun, cheerful music.

**Kirk Hamilton:** Video games!

**Jason Schreier:** Video games!

**Maddy Myers:** Video games! You like 'em?

**Jason:** Maybe you wish you had more time for them?

**Kirk:** Maybe you wanna know the best ones to play?

**Jason:** Maybe you wanna know what happens to Mario when he dies?

*[Someone chuckles.]*

**Maddy:** In that case, you should check out [Triple Click!](#) It's a brand new podcast about video games.

**Jason:** A podcast about video games?! But I don't have time for that!

**Kirk:** Sure you do. Once a week, kick back as three video game experts give you everything from critical takes on the hottest new releases—

**Jason:** —to scoops, interviews, and explanations about how video games work—

**Maddy:** —to fascinating and sometimes weird stories about the games we love.

**Kirk:** *Triple Click* is hosted by me, Kirk Hamilton.

**Jason:** Me, Jason Schreier.

**Maddy:** And me, Maddy Myers.

**Kirk:** You can find *Triple Click* wherever you get your podcasts, and listen at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

**Maddy:** Bye!

*[Music finishes.]*

00:16:11	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:16:17	April	Host	<p>Welcome back to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>. I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Essie Davis from Tasmania, and we are talking about <i>The Vanishing</i> from 1988. Um, one of the things that we have obviously gotten into is Johanna ter Steege's performance. It's amazing.</p> <p>She said, "George asked us to come to France one week before we started shooting, and we went to the south of France and worked every day together, the four of us. We talked about the film, the story, the characters, and he also wanted to see how the three of us were together in daily life. He wanted to know us. He's an actor's director. He wants to know who you are, and that's what he uses for the film.</p> <p>"And I'm in the film for only 11 minutes altogether, and my part with Rex is probably maybe only 8 minutes, so it was a very short time to show what a relationship is between the two people. So we worked very precise on every second, every minute in the scene. I knew that we had to show the audience that the relationship between Saskia and Rex is very intense. They love each other very much, but they are also very insecure about the future. There's also a power game going on with them. Who is the smartest, who's the funniest." End quote.</p> <p>I, you know, I wanted to get into the fact of the—the preparation that they did, you know, where George Sluizer is watching them interact with one another, and really designing the characters around their kind of natural tendencies of who they are. And, you know, there was of course, obviously, the script and what Sluizer thought they could be like, but then he just kind of accentuated the actors' natural personalities and their natural push-pull relationship with one another.</p> <p>Have you had an experience before where a director worked that closely with you to kind of make the character so, so much about you?</p>
00:18:05	Essie	Guest	<p>I have, but it's not necessarily about you. It's about you as this character. It's about what you bring out or what things about yourself that you bring out to play this character. And we all uh, as</p>

actors are capable of expressing a myriad of a million different little subtleties about humanity that we observe or that are naturally our own. But all of those things, I find you tend to dip into yourself and either exaggerate yourself or just put on display what is—what you feel is like, the cards that your character is holding from your own experience.

I mean, the script and the story are everything. The clues, all the research that you do. And then you—I mean, I am not Amelia in *The Babadook*, and I am not Phryne Fisher, and I am not Ellen Kelly. But all of those characters are characters that I have created in a way that is “what would Essie do in this situation?” I wouldn’t necessarily be any of those characters to start with, but if I were that character, what would I do in that character’s situation.

And so, certainly working on *True History of the Kelly Gang*, Justin has this extraordinary way of working where he gets each—he gives each actor like, a manifesto of things to do to prepare for the role. Which is five full script pages of, okay, I want you to read this, listen to this, um, go to this concert, wear these clothes, buy new boots, change your shape, eat this, do that, listen, go, watch these fighters, watch the weigh-in of these particular female fighters and how the male fighters react and behave, how they challenge each other, listen to Patty Smith, watch all of her concerts, watch her interviews, how is she masculine, how is she feminine, what do you do, how—what would happen if you joined a band, I would like you to join a band and write some punk music and perform it—

*[April laughs and guffaws multiple times as Essie continues.]*

—in fact why don’t you guys—I’m booking you in for a gig in three weeks’ time. Pick up an instrument and you’d better have a set ready to go, because we’re gonna have this, we’ve booked you in and you are being advertised, your band has a fake history, and people are coming to see it.

00:21:19 Essie Guest

He’s just—I mean, I, George MacKay, and Earl Cave, Sean Keenan, and Lola Hewison play Ned Kelly, and Dan Kelly, and they’re best friends. They play the gang, and um, Ben Corbett, who is also a punk musician, who played his first role as Red Kelly, he has his own band called Six Ft. Hick, where he does this extraordinary Jiu jitsu self-flagellating kind of bottle smashing onto his body, kind of crazy dancing with his brother and their band. And we together, while the boys are writing music and crashing drums and writing songs inspired by their characters’ stories in the film, punk music, we are dancing and kicking and oozing.

And then, you know, and we had uh, George and I also, we were going bushwalking together, and we were—he was learning to chop wood and ride horses. We were doing all kinds of things together. We had punk music playing, the band was playing while we were rehearsing scenes, so that we would rehearse a scene while three of the boys would be playing a song, and George and I would be in the middle of dancing with Dan, or gut running through our lines, and then cut.



00:22:58 April Host Essie, is that why you're so terrifying in this movie? You are so terrifying in this movie.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:23:05 Essie Guest Thank you.

00:23:07 April Host Deeply terrifying.

00:23:10 Essie Guest Well, I think there is this—thank you.

*[April laughs louder.]*

She's mercurial, isn't she? She's—I mean, I think that the amount of preparation that you can do for a role, really, can be, if you have the opportunity to do it and especially if you have someone as extraordinary as Justin Kurzel saying, try this, try that, go here, do this, listen to that. 'Cause he has such an immense knowledge, and such a wide ranging interest in life and art and sport and history and the world. And so, you know, to have someone kind of go, "Come on, embody this, I want you to step into this person's shoes."

And you know, he can look at a character and just go—on the page it can be confusing and not necessarily a complete character, and then when you try out all of these different ways of being, and try them together and bond it together and weld it together with the people you're working with, it can become—it all joins together. Because it doesn't have to, it's—you are the—you are the gunpowder and the wick that gets it from A to Zed in the blink of an eye, because you know what's going on and the audience doesn't necessarily have to witness how you got there. It's like, you just have to be ready to take massive leaps of faith.

And similar with Jennifer Kent on *The Babadook*. We, you know, we had a similar shorthand, because we knew each other extremely well, as Justin and I do, and—and um, and so, you know, the level of bravery that you have to have as an actor. And you have to be able to reveal a bit and be vulnerable and available to your director. At least, certainly to the camera and to that kind of level of openness, it becomes um, incredibly important.

The preparation that you do together, and how intimate you can be all allow that kind of deep or intimate performance to be shared with an audience through the camera, because you've reached a place of trust, I guess. That, and the kind of intimate work just means that when you're completely vulnerable, there is like a massive wealth of information going on underneath it all that—that you don't necessarily have to show, that an audience can feel.

00:26:21 April Host I think that when you're—you're talking too about, you know, those kinds of leaps or jumps between a character feeling one way and then having a kind of tonal or mood shift that feels organic but is very sudden. And that's something that I'm seeing also with this character that Johanna is playing, I have to say.

Because if I think about even your character, Ellen Kelly, versus

hers, I mean, even though they're quite different—one is very spritely and one is terrifying—there is so—there's wheels turning constantly. To the point where, you know, the choices that everyone's making is like, you can be extremely serious one moment, and then you might crack a joke, you might have like a defense mechanism that will be like, "Oh, now here's where I tease." But you'll be serious underneath that. And so there's these moods where this person is not just sad or angry, but there's all these different emotions together.

And I was thinking of that in terms of—the scene that was really hard for Johanna to play, which was in the gas station, she said, "When you see Saskia, you see a very happy person who loves life and adventure. Why he picked Saskia, we'll never know. You can also see that Saskia picked him. I said there is one moment I find very difficult to play to George. I put my coins in the machine and I turn my back, and suddenly, I begin to talk to this man, and I don't know why I do this. I ask him before to change my money, and then I go back to Rex. But this is the character. She is very spontaneous, I realized. She goes from one moment to another moment, and she says, 'You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to drive a car.' That's her. She's very playful, and I had to come around to that." End quote.

So, I thought that was really interesting that like, with all of these tonal shifts that Johanna is playing with, she still couldn't quite bring herself to understand why her character would bet he one to strike up a conversation with this, you know, this would-be serial killer that she's about to meet. Then she had to kind of talk through, like, well, here's why she would do this.

- 00:28:27 Essie Guest Quite often that happens, I think, with actors where you're going, "Hang on a minute, hang on a minute, why would I do this? Why would I put myself in a situation?" And yet the character does. The character does put themselves into that situation, and so you have to find the little, tiny little threads that get you there. And yes, spontaneity.
- Also, it's very easy when you know a full story to um, feel the warning signs that you might feel as highly sensitive. We're all highly sensitive beings, actors, generally, who wear our hearts on our sleeves and, you know, are able to bring things to the surface very quickly, because are thin-skinned and—
- [She breaks off, laughing.]*
- Volatile and, you know, ridiculous people. But when you know a story, or when you feel in the story there is a kind of level of dread, then your instincts as an actor quite often can step in there and go, "Uh, don't talk to that person, no, no, no!" 'Cause you are being an audience in a sense, but in fact—
- 00:29:57 April Host But you have to cut that out.
- 00:29:59 Essie Guest You have to cut—you have to—sometimes you have to cut out both instinctual parts of yourself, where you're going, actually, I'm outside

of this situation as the third eye. I need to cut out my third eye and put myself inside the situation and be much less aware of what is going on as an audience or a director, and let the director be the third eye and just live life without—with less knowledge, I guess.

Or, you know, put your own directorial eye off. Get it blindfolded and go, okay, I need to um, yeah. Just from my perspective, this is just nerdy guy asks for some change, and because I've spoken to him before, I trust him the next time I see him. Um, just oh yeah, we're all in a big, safe public place.

00:31:06	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:31:12	April	Host	<p>We're gonna—we have to take another break. When we come back, we're gonna get a little bit further into him as a character, how these actors related to one another to bring out that threat. We'll be right back.</p> <p><i>[Music fades.]</i></p>
00:31:28	April	Promo	<p>Hey, Max Fun is running a survey to figure out which advertisers are a good fit for our audience.</p> <p>We are still primarily audience supported, as you may well know, and that will always be the case. But advertising can be a helpful source of income, especially right now. So the results of the survey will help us talk to new advertisers and convince them to give us a short.</p> <p>And the survey is short. I took it myself. It shouldn't take you more than ten minutes, it took me less than that. And you'll get a discount at the Max Fun store for filling it out. Also, our gratitude.</p> <p>So go to <a href="http://MaximumFun.org/adsurvey">MaximumFun.org/adsurvey</a> to fill it out.</p>
00:32:00	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:32:06	April	Host	<p>Welcome back to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>. I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Essie Davis, and we are talking about <i>The Vanishing</i> from 1988.</p> <p>I would love to talk about casting some things, and the way George Sluizer found Donnadieu, who was the guy who played Raymond. He said, "The main part on which everything is build is I wanted originally Triniant, but he was off working for a year." Another actor. "So, I had to think about other actors while thinking of different French actors.</p> <p>"I remembered one or two lines in a movie, <i>Twice A Woman</i>, a film I made ten years before. An extra who came from nowhere and played a little part in a little scene. I remember how he threw away the cigarette he was smoking. He was flirting with the ladies. I said, 'Oh, that is someone who can, in throwing a cigarette away, create a whole character.' I said, 'I must find out what he's done in ten years.' Apparently he'd done a lot of television. So, I met Bernard-Pierre, asked him to read. He liked the story very much and said, 'I want to do it.'" End quote.</p>

And I think that's a really interesting thing for an actor. You're talking about small things, and how small things do a lot, and um, how that can kind of tip a director off to say, like, oh this person can build a character. There's something I was thinking when I was watching *True History of the Kelly Gang*. There's a scene between you and Nicholas Hoult, and it's, I think, just a one shot through the entire thing. You know, him talking, and you reacting.

And um, you know, you're not actually doing much for most of the scene, but there's quite a bit of reacting and kind of body movement and facial movement. And if I think about those kind of small things that build up character, you know, that's all part of it. And are there things that you do or that you have done to develop characters in that way, those kind of small movements before?

00:34:02 Essie Guest I think one of the things that I understand about myself and the way that I work is that when you know what a character is thinking, you know your character in a way. If you are thinking like your character, you have—there is something about film where it reads so much. And quite often I think I am guilty of doing too much, because I'm still learning. And certainly in theater, I know how profound it can be to think a thought as you say a line or as you do something, and know that the audience, the one thousand people out there, get it, because it has this kind of um, special, profound connection somehow.

I know that on camera, you can think and the camera can see those thoughts, and that might be the tiniest of things. It's not necessarily—it's um, it's not necessarily choreography, it's filmed thought. And perhaps in the way that he threw a cigarette away, maybe it was because he had a lot going on that was romanticized in that butt.

*[April laughs uproariously.]*

In the way he was flirting with those women. I'm not sure, I didn't see it. But you know—I'm trying to think of the name of the film. Um, ugh, it's gonna come to me. In fact, I'm gonna ask you, is it *45 Years* or something? It's um—I'm gonna forget everyone's names now.

00:36:12 April Host *45 Years*, yeah. From 2015, that drama that won, yeah.

00:36:18 Essie Guest Who's in it? Sorry.

00:36:19 April Host Uh, Charlotte Rampling.

00:36:21 Essie Guest Charlotte Rampling. Okay.

00:36:24 April Host And uh, Tom Courtenay.

00:36:26 Essie Guest So, that is—that film has got an extraordinary, I mean they're both really beautiful in *45 Years*, but Charlotte Rampling at the end of that film when she's dancing alone at the end of the film, she might even be dancing with him. It's a long shot that goes on and on and on, and there's about 17 million thoughts that go through her head,

and you could just—you're just going, "Oh, my god!" It's like—it's like one of the greatest pieces of acting ever. You're just going, how did you convey so many ideas in this extremely still moment with just every thought that went through you? Ugh, it's extraordinary. And it is tiny. I think I've gone off track a little bit, but—

00:37:26 April Host No, no. I mean, it's just—I think, you know, in terms of technique and craft for acting, it just feels like you spend so much of your time trying to live inside these characters, which is something that seems a little bit froufrou, you'd tell people. But um, you know, just like the techniques to get inside of their brain, I find that fascinating. Um, and just how it kind of bleeds out in your mannerisms, you know, how it becomes a different person.

00:37:57 Essie Guest Well, it is fascinating. It's like—it's fascinating. I don't—I don't know how to explain it, but—

*[April laughs.]*

You know, it's unexplainable.

00:38:06 April Host Essie, you need to explain it right now for us.

00:38:08 Essie Guest No. And I mean, Joaquin Phoenix in *The Joker*, that is one of the most extraordinary performances. And he is really—I'm a bit envious. I do find that um, that some people get to spend a lot more time preparing or working on a character than others necessarily. But I-like the level of detail in that performance, in the physical change is brought about by what he has to go through and what he does. He's quite extraordinary, Joaquin, in the way his physicality changes with each role he plays.

And um, I think that there is—yeah, there's just something as you—I mean, I like to not see the same person in the mirror when I'm playing a character that I would see in the mirror of the next character I play. I want it to be a different person. I want it to inhabit physically and have a different space. And um, you know, sometimes—sometimes that is all about preparation and actually working out where your character sits in your body, and where someone's voice lies or how present they are in their eyes or not.

But it can be as simple as what music do they listen to, and how—and I mean, I am still—even though I'm not in any school—I probably should be in school—but um, I'm still learning, and I think constantly hoping to get better at that kind of depth of profoundly becoming another character.

00:40:19 April Host Well, I gotta say, I can't think of any three roles that are more different than what you did for *Babyteeth*, *Miss Fisher and the Crypt of Tears*, and *Real History of the Kelly Gang*. So, I think you're doing alright, Essie.

*[Essie laughs.]*

I want to thank you for coming on the show today and for talking to us about *The Vanishing* and your own career and work. And um, again, I mean people can see *True History of the Kelly Gang* online,

VOD anywhere. But also in LA, it's playing at the drive-in, so keep an eye in for that. Um, and *Babyteeth* I heard is coming out later this summer, is that true?

00:40:55 Essie Guest I don't know. I know that it's um, that it was going to be. I don't know when it might be delayed now. I'm really not sure when *The Justice of Bunny King* will now be showing. We'll have to wait with bated breath and hope that we have enough content for everyone to get totally—there's a lot of incredible films, and this is definitely worth seeing, *True History of the Kelly Gang*. Please. Get to that drive-in.

00:41:29 April Host So head out to the drive-in. Yeah.

00:41:31 Essie Guest Or download it.

00:41:33 April Host Yeah. I would love a double feature if it was with Miss Fisher's movie. Thank you so much.

*[Essie laughs.]*

Uh, and have a great day in Tasmania. We appreciate you calling in.

00:41:45 Essie Guest Thank you so much, April. It's been a delight.

00:41:47 April Host And if you live in LA, definitely check out *True History of the Kelly Gang* at the Mission Tiki Drive-In in Montclair, California.

And thank you for listening to *Switchblade Sisters*. We're going to start doing something a little different, as you guys know. At the end of each episode, I'm going to be giving you a staff pick now. A recommendation of a film directed by a woman.

So, I know you guys have a little bit of time on your hands sometimes, once you put the kids to bed, and I wanted to recommend some movies for you all to watch. And this show is all about highlighting the great work of women filmmakers, so, you know, this is your shot.

Um, the one that I want to recommend today is a—oh god, do I describe it as like a neon noir? It's an interesting film directed by Betty Gordon from 1983 called *Variety*. It's about this woman who I think is a little bit repressed, you might say, and she works in this pornography theater. And she develops this fascination with pornography and voyeurism, because she's selling these tickets to all these men who come in.

And then she also gets fascinated with one man in particular, who she ends up following around the city. So, in turn, this woman becomes the kind of man you might see in a Hitchcock film, like *Vertigo*.

So, it's really interesting, really ahead of its time, and you might see a nice little small part from an actor who became much more famous, Luis Guzmán. And also some other people who are very interesting. But it's a great film for 1980s New York City as well, to see that kind of old type of city that used to be there before Rudy

Giuliani.

00:43:25	Music	Transition	“Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:43:26	April	Host	Anyway, if you want to let us know what you think of the show, you can tweet at us @SwitchbladePod or email us at <a href="mailto:SwitchbladeSisters@maximumfun.org">SwitchbladeSisters@maximumfun.org</a> .  Please check out our Facebook group. That’s <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/switchbladesisters">Facebook.com/groups/switchbladesisters</a> .  Our producer is Casey O’Brien. Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and this is a production of <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> .  <i>[Music fades.]</i>
00:43:52	Speaker 1	Promo	<a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> .
00:43:54	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:43:55	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:43:57	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.