

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	<p>Welcome to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>, where women get together to slice and dice our favorite action and genre films. I’m April Wolfe. 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.</p> <p>And you may already know from our last few episodes, but a reminder that we are remote recording now, and I’m recording from my bedroom. So yes, you might hear the cat. You might hear some birds outside. I live in LA, that’s what’s going on. Um, the audio is likely going to sound a little different from our studio’s, but everything else is the same.</p> <p>And today, the thing that is different is that the guest we have is writer-director Crystal Moselle. Hi, Crystal!</p>
00:00:51	Crystal Moselle	Guest	Hi. Thanks for having me.
00:00:53	April	Host	Are you in New York right now?
00:00:55	Crystal	Guest	I am. I’m in New York. I’m on my couch with my cat. Well, the cat that I’ve borrowed.
00:01:01	April	Host	You can just borrow cats in New York? Is that—
00:01:04	Crystal	Guest	Well, I put a listing on Facebook. I said, “I am looking to borrow a cat. I’m feeling a bit lonely.” And somebody replied and said, “My boyfriend is allergic to cats and my cat needs a home while we’re quarantined together.” So.
00:01:17	April	Host	Oh, wow. That’s so cool. Well, hi Isabelle.
			<i>[Crystal laughs.]</i>
			<p>For those of you who are less familiar with Crystal’s work, now you know that she has a cat, but let me give you a full bio so you can refresh on her.</p> <p>She’s a New York based director and is a storyteller, both documentary and fiction films. She is best known for her Sundance grand jury prize award winning film, <i>Wolf Pack</i>, which was later distributed by Magnolia Pictures. Crystal discovered the Angula—is it Angulo? I can never remember how to pronounce their name.</p>
00:01:47	Crystal	Guest	An-goo-lo.
00:01:48	April	Host	Okay. So, she discovered the Angulo Brothers, who were the subjects of the documentary on the streets of New York. In the past, she worked on short-form projects with publications such as The

New York Times, Vice, and Nowness. After the success of *The Wolf Pack*, she met a group of female skateboarders on the train, who would later become her main collaborators and subjects on three projects.

The first was a narrative short called *That One Day*, which she produced in collaboration with Miu Miu and saw its premiere at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival. Shortly after that, they expanded the film into a feature, which Crystal co-wrote and directed, named after the infamous group, *Skate Kitchen*. The feature premiered at Sundance 2018 and was later distributed by Magnolia, to critical acclaim.

In the same year, Crystal was nominated for the breakthrough director award at the Gotham awards for her direction of the film. Her third collaboration with the skaters is the upcoming HBO series *Betty*, a six episode comic drama show following the ups and downs of the larger than life characters from the film.

So, Crystal, the movie that you chose to talk about today is *Sexy Beast*. Can you give us a little explanation on why this is one of your fave genre films? 'Cause I was a little bit surprised, but I'm also very excited to dig into it and its differences from the way that, you know, you've crafted things so far.

00:03:05 Crystal Guest Yeah, I mean first of all it couldn't be any more different than the way that I make films. But I—I don't know. I just always have loved this film. From the first time I saw it, I accidentally—I think I was in California. I went to see a film and I was in the wrong theater, and I realized 15 minutes in that it was the wrong movie, and it was *Sexy Beast*.

[April laughs.]

And I had no idea what they were saying. I still watch it with subtitles, just so I can understand all the more.

00:03:38 April Host I did too. I do too. It adds a lot more when you watch it with subtitles. You're like, "Oh, that's what it was—okay."

00:03:46 Crystal Guest Yes! And also you think they say different things than they say, and you're like, "Oh, that's—okay, got it, got it." And uh, but what I really love about it is that, I love when you all into a story, almost like—it feels like he fell into the happy ending.

Like, he—this, you know, old gangster dude who's like, you know, this British guy, he's living the life that he always planned for. And he has—it's almost like he's with this family and he has this perfect life and the family is him and his lady and his best friend and his lady. And they have this—it's like this family that they've created, and it's like the perfect life for him. So it builds so much tension along the narrative of the film, because you just want him to get back to that perfect life, and everything just keeps fucking it up.

I think Gal is like, my dream man. Like, I want to live—

00:04:44	April	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Just a sunbaked thief. Ugh, yes.
00:04:47	Crystal	Guest	Yeah! I want to—I want to live in like, the hills of—where are they, Ibiza or something? They never say exactly where they’re at, but I’m pretty sure that’s where it is. And they like, live in a villa. It’s beautiful. They like, just chill. They have the nice little pool boy who’s like, fun and, you know, it’s great. And he’s in love, and you can tell like, he probably fell in love later on in his life. You know, it’s like—it’s like the story of like—for me it’s like, inspiring. I’m turning 40 this year. I’m like, “Oh, I could have like, a future like this. This is my future. I love it.” And this—
00:05:22	April	Host	Crystal, I love that this is your— <i>[Both laugh.]</i> —your inspiration. It’s so like, hashtag life goals, <i>Sexy Beast</i> .
00:05:31	Crystal	Guest	Yeah. Like, I don’t have any kids. I’m ready for that life.
00:05:36	April	Host	Well, let’s get into it. I’m gonna give a quick synopsis. Um, but first, for those of you who haven’t seen <i>Sexy Beast</i> , today’s episode is obviously going to 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 pause and watch first, this is your shot.
00:05:56	Music	Music	“Sway” by Dean Martin
00:05:57	April	Host	And now that you’re back, let me introduce <i>Sexy Beast</i> with a full synopsis. Written by Louis Mellis and David Scinto and directed by Jonathan Glazer for release in 2001, <i>Sexy Beast</i> stars Ray Winstone as Gal—the aforementioned Gal that Crystal was talking about—a retired criminal who spends his days sunbathing by his pool on the Spanish coast.
00:06:16	Clip	Clip	<i>[Sound of crickets can be heard.]</i> Gal: I’m sweating here. Roasting. Boiling. Baking.
00:06:29	April	Host	One day, a boulder rolls down a hill and almost kills him before landing in the pool and smashing the bottom tile. It’s a harbinger of bad things to come, further exacerbated by Gal’s bad dreams of demonic—this is weird—a demonic rabbit hunting him down in the desert. <i>[Crystal chuckles in the background.]</i> Gal and his wife—I always forget about that part—Gal and his wife, Deedee, are also entertaining their friends, Aitch and his wife, Jackie. All seems well until Jackie shows up to dinner with a face as white as a sheet. Gal thinks the couple is just having a fight, but it turns out Jackie is terrified, because an old criminal friend of theirs,

Don Logan, played by Ben Kingsley, has just called, and he's on the way to Spain to enlist Gal for another heist job.

00:07:11 Clip Clip

Gal: Tell him what the fuck you'd like. Tell him anything.

Jackie: You can tell him yourself.

Gal: What?

Jackie: Yeah.

Gal: He's coming over?

Jackie: Tomorrow.

00:07:23 April Host

It's immediately apparent that everyone is terrified of Don. Don arrives, and he's a bulldozer of a human being, but Gal says he doesn't want to do another job. The life gave him more emotional turmoil than he'd ever let on, and he's happy now.

00:07:38 Clip Clip

Gal: Look, Don.

Don: Look, Don.

Gal: It's like this.

Don: Like what?

Gal: I'm... retired.

[Don scoffs.]

Don: Are ya?

Gal: Afraid so. I've not got lots of money. I got enough. I'd do anything not to offend you. But I can't take part. I'm not really up to it.

00:08:08 April Host

Still, Don hangs out at the house, a menace to their idyllic life. When Gal suggests maybe Don only came because he wanted to see Jackie—he'd slept with her before—Don demands to be taken to the airport. But Don's also ejected from his plane for being an asshole and not putting out his cigarette, and just being generally terrible.

00:08:25 Clip Clip

Air Hostess: Your cigarette. You have to put it out.

Don: Cigarette? What, this? No, I'm not gonna put it out.

Air Hostess: You must.

Don: Why's that?

Air Hostess: If you don't, we can't take off.

Don: Well, that's your problem, isn't it?

00:08:37	April	Host	<p>Don returns to the house, to everyone’s surprise and terror, and tries to jackhammer Gal into doing the job. In a fit of rage, he says he’s gonna kill Gal and smashes a bottle over Gal’s head, incapacitating him. We see Deedee pull a gun, and then we’re swept to a later time, with Gal in rainy London, where the heist boss, Teddy, is questioning Gal about Don’s whereabouts. He’s gone missing.</p>
00:09:02	Clip	Clip	<p>Teddy: Where’s Don, Gal? He never left Spain, Gal, I know that. He never got on the plane. Well, he did. Then he got off again. And there’s no record of him getting another flight. I can only assume he’s still in Spain.</p>
00:09:34	April	Host	<p>So, Gal says he doesn’t know and participates in the heist. Everything goes as planned, drilling through a sauna pool in the bank vault’s next door. Flashbacks reveal, though, that Deedee shot Don, and then all of them got their piece of flesh until Don was dead.</p> <p>Gal pockets some earrings from the job, gets paid ten pounds for his work—Teddy knew Gal killed Don, and that’s his kind of ransom for it—and returned home a happy man. Except for the telltale heart of Don buried under Gal’s pool, that is. And it’s apparently just going to haunt him, and he’ll just be sunbathing for the rest of his life, listening to Don shit-talk him.</p>
00:10:11	Clip	Clip	<p>Don: I told you you’d do the job.</p> <p>Gal: Yeah, well you were right though, technically speaking. But you’re dead. So shut up.</p>
00:10:31	April	Host	<p>So that’s about it. Um, I—</p> <p><i>[Crystal giggles.]</i></p> <p>I want to talk about career directions. This was Jonathan Glazer’s debut feature, and he had already been directing a ton of music videos and, you know, a ton of commercials. He’d kind of mastered the short form, and especially in experimental short form. And you know, for some bands he was working with, he was going into a more narrative space. You can see a lot of that with what he was doing with “Karma Police” for Radiohead and some other videos from the 90s at that time, and early 2000s.</p> <p>But he said, quote, “I wanted to get into films for three or four years, but I wanted to get to a point of control where I was in a position where I could get the most out of the material I was making, rather than do a studio project just for the sake of it. Because I’m definitely developing this work myself, which is taking up most of my time right now. Feature films I definitely want to concentrate on, because it’s what I enjoy the most, but there’s a lot of interesting experimentation you can have with commercials and videos. So even someone like Ridley Scott would go back and do a commercial from time to time. So there’s merit beyond the obvious financial benefit.” End quote.</p>

Um, I think for him, he was talking a lot about the kind of obstacles to creativity and originality that you might have for feature films. You know, especially if they're not independently financed. And I think he's probably right about that. He had the means to wait. He a making quite a bit of money doing music videos and commercials, so that was an obvious benefit. But, you know, I think you can tell in this film that he had more control of it than so many debut filmmakers will ever have.

First, I would like to talk about the fact that like, how long—how long do you long to be a feature filmmaker but you are doing other things because you feel like you should um, I don't know, hone a craft or get more power to the point where you can ask for what you want and actually get it?

00:12:34 Crystal Guest I mean, for me, I worked in commercials and making fashion films for many years. Like, maybe like six years, seven years. And the documentary *Wolf Pack* really just fell in my life, because I met those guys on the street. And it was a real instinct that I had when I met them, and I think that's like, I really learned about my instinct through the process of making that film. Because I didn't even know I was smacking that film when I was working with them. I had like, several scripts that I was writing. I think a lot of, you know, short form directing is finding your voice. Because I was making these fashion films that nobody would recognize my work if they saw them now. They're actually very choreographed. My early work was very choreographed, and I just really—

00:13:33 April Host Really?

00:13:34 Crystal Guest Yeah. I sort of flail into that type of work form, you know, filming behind the scenes of photoshoots, and then a brand would hire me to actually make their film, and I worked with Kate Spade, and yeah. It was more choreographed, more rhythmic, more timed out, and then making the *Wolf Pack* set me free, because I was just able to like, run around with a camera and do exactly what I felt, and I, you know, I think I really formed my style through that process.

00:14:11 April Host I think that maybe that might be a reason that you connect with *Sexy Beast*. You can like, see these kinds of maybe origins of what you were working in previously, the appreciation of them.

00:14:24 Crystal Guest I love—I mean, I love—I love like, finding kind of the connections in films, like there's a whole thing with like, the pool at Gal's house and like, the two hearts in the pool representing his perfect honeymoon love that's gonna last forever. And then—and then when he goes on the heist, they have to break through a pool, which is like, represents like, pain and the devil, and like they almost get electrocuted, and it's like the complete opposite.

So it's like—I feel like there's like, a real play between darkness and lightness between the two worlds. And like, in his world like, with his friends, they're like happy and laughing at dinner, and there's this real kind of bougie, sweet, like you know, he's this gentleman and they have their ladies and stuff. And then when you're like, in the heist world, there's like, close ups of all these like, men, like fucked up teeth, laughing. I don't know, I just love that kind of just like

playing, like the parallels. I don't know, there's just really great details that I love to look at, and see the representation of them.

00:15:43 April Host I mean, this is something we can get into, too. Um, because the art department on this had a huge, huge job for what the um, what the actual budget was for this.

[Crystal confirms.]

But we need to take a quick break.

00:15:57 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:15:58 April Host So what we do—we'll come back and then we can talk a little bit about the art department. I want to get into some performances, too, and a little bit more about this choreography that you're talking about. Because you're on to something, and he's got some really great points about this. So, we'll be right back.

00:16:16 Promo Promo **Music:** Straightforward, thump-y electric bass guitar beat with light drums.

Jackie: Hi, I'm Jackie Kashian.

Laurie: Hi. I am Laurie Kilmartin.

Jackie: And we have a podcast called *The Jackie and Laurie Show*. Who are you, Laurie Kilmartin?

Laurie: Oh my god, so much pressure. *[Stammering]* Stand up. I've been doing stand up since 1987. Uh, I'm a writer for *Conan*. I've written a couple books, have a couple CDs out, have a special out. Who are you, Jackie?

Jackie: Well, I too am a stand up comic since 1984, and uh, I do the road like a maniac. I don't have a cool writing job, but I have four albums out. Working on a new album. We talk about stand up, we talk about all the different parts of stand up comedy. So, that's *The Jackie and Laurie Show*, and you should subscribe on Maximum Fun if you want to hear that.

Laurie: And I would encourage you not to.

00:17:00 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:17:07 April Host Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*. I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Crystal Moselle in New York, and we're talking about *Sexy Beast*.

This is technically a heist movie, but it's not a heist movie, and Glazer said, quote, "He looks like he did the gangster stuff before," talking about Gal. "In a way, it was trying to be a film that wasn't about a gangster. When the film finally goes to London, it doesn't want to go to London. It doesn't suddenly become *Rififi*. It doesn't become a big heist movie. It's trying to say, 'Don't worry, we're taking an intermission in this trip to England. We'll be back to Spain before you know it.' And that was key. It's very hard to have a film

about a heist and avoid making a heist movie.” End quote.

Um, but that also encapsulated one of the reasons why I love it so much, is because you think that you’re getting into, oh, he’s gonna convince him to come and do this heist, and then you’re gonna do the heist, and it’s gonna be building the team or doing this other stuff, but it’s not. It’s not that at all. It’s a personal drama about a guy who just wants to stay with his beautiful wife in his beautiful home. *[Laughs.]*

- 00:18:06 Crystal Guest Exactly. And that’s—I think that’s why I love the film so much, because it takes you on that journey, but you’re—it’s an emotional journey, really. Like, you could care less about—and when he makes no money at the end, you’re like, “Fine, great. Just fucking bring me back to my life-life.”
- 00:18:24 April Host Mm-hm. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think I can probably relate that, in some way, I would say *Skate Kitchen*, and also uh, *Betty* in the sense that you are doing a movie that has “skate” in the title, and yes, there’s skating in it, but it’s not about a kind of like, competition in a way. It’s not—it’s not like a skate film. There’s such a long history of skate films, but that’s not what you’re doing. Skating is very clearly part of the milieu that you’re presenting, but it’s more about the personal relationships and those dramas.
- 00:18:58 Crystal Guest Yeah, actually one day that we were shooting *Skate Kitchen*—now we didn’t lose a day, because we shot it, but we ended up cutting it out. We had a—the narrative was a bit different, here there was a, like a whole skate contest, and one of the girls gets hurt and everything. And we, I think we have like, 400 extras, we have Elissa Steamer, who’s like a famous skateboarder there. All these people, and—and then like—and then we ended up cutting it out. So, you know, it just got too big.
- I think sometimes—sometimes like, you know, when you’re in the writers room, because like, for *Betty* we’re in the writers room, and you’re making these pitches, and you’ll say like, oh, bad pitch, I have this idea. And the bad pitch is this really—it’s like the sentiment of the idea. You’re like, “Okay, bad pitch, like she meets—she meets like, some dude on the street and falls in love,” but like, you know, you’re trying to actually figure out what is this connective tissue that’s gonna bring us to the next moment that you have with the bad idea. But then you come up with a good idea that it’s place for the bad idea. You understand what I’m saying?
- 00:20:12 April Host Yes. I do, yes. ‘Cause you need to know the impulse of what you’re supposed to do before you know the impulse of what you should do, which is fighting against the should.
- 00:20:24 Crystal Guest Yeah, and unfortunately, we—the bad pitch was like, actually filmed with 300-400 people and brought to the edit, and then in the edit we’re like, “This isn’t working.”
- 00:20:34 April Host *[Emphatically]* Oh no!
- 00:20:36 Crystal Guest We just need them to go skating together, and for her just to get hurt while they’re skating, trying to skate like, a bigger um, trick or

whatever. So, it was kind of funny, but I think those are like, the moments that you really learn about—I mean, that was like, a good lesson for me to learn about other, you know, other ideas for other projects.

It's like, sometimes I have to take a look and be like, does this look too big for my story? Can we just bring it—like, what's the emotional connection in the story that's like—what is the meaningful emotional connection? What am I—what beat am I trying to make here, and how can I make it more just like, grounded and smaller?

00:21:15 April Host I'd love to move on to um, something that was extremely frustrating for Jonathan Glazer in making this, and that had to do with dialogue, because that is not what he was used to working with. He was used to working with any kind of visuals he wanted, and then there would be voiceover somewhere there would be music, and he just never had to kind of bother himself with that.

So he said, quote, "The visuals have always been key to my work. I've always been better informing the audience through visuals than words. But I took on a script that was so dialogue intensive that the words had to do all the informing, and it was frustrating." End quote.

Um, and I thought that that was something, you know, that perhaps a lot of people might not maybe anticipate when they're moving through different mediums to get to feature work or something, where you have this appreciation of just the visual image, but at some point in time there's some times where people need to talk.
[Laughs.]

00:22:17 Crystal Guest True. Very true. I feel him, man. For me, it's like I—I am terrified of dialogue, because—I mean, I'm not as much anymore as I used to be. But because I have such a strong obsession with realism, and when I hear something being read where it feels read, it drives me crazy. But I think what I really learned is—I mean, for my work, and it works really well in the stuff that I do. I'm not sure if it would work for *Sexy Beast*—but by the way, I can't believe that he even said that, because it feels so effortless. Like, it's incredible performances.

But um, I usually just tell my actors to go off the script. I'm like, "Just don't worry about the words, but let's do another version where, you know, it's improv." And usually they'll stick pretty closely to the parameters of the script, and get what you need, but like, it takes off the pressure of them reading it in their mind. And it's just really about what do I need to accomplish in this scene, what is my action, like, what do I want in this scene? To me, it really helps with bringing uh, a more natural performance.

00:23:35 April Host Something I thought was really interesting, Ray Winstone said that they didn't change a single word in *Sexy Beast*.

[Crystal responds emphatically with a drawn out "wow".]

Um, and like they came with exactly the script that he used, which is—I mean, it's interesting partially because I think that maybe some

of that might have had to do with the fact that Glazer was, at that time, fairly uncomfortable with dialogue. And so deviating from that would mean deviating from his very kind of um, strict storyboarding of how he was going to shoot things and how they were going to look. Um, so it seems like it probably would have been more of a frustration for him to even kind of do that. So, he was just expecting his actors to come with that.

But another trick that he was using, he said, quote, "I felt like I was shackled by dialogue and plot, but I knew that going into it that I have to be architectural about it and keep the second act absolutely angular. What I mean is, the first act was supposed to be stupid. I tried to shoot it as if Ray Winstone's character had shot it, like of holiday snaps, just so simple. When his wife comes in, it's supposed to be curvaceous and fantastical. And when Kingsley shows up, it's supposed to be architectural, abrasive, and spare.

"In London, I felt like I could actually move the camera and enjoy the paranoia of the camera a little bit more. I find redundant camerawork really intrusive. So, I was trying to allow the words to do all the dancing, and for me just to witness the, rather than track around the tables every five minutes, which is an easy temptation to fall into." End quote.

I think that's an—to me, that's a really kind of enlightening way to look at the way that he's shooting dialogue in that scene, because he is just kind of witnessing it. He isn't tracking the dialogue. You know like you don't see him doing just like, oh, here's a reaction shot to this, here's a reaction shot to this. He's not just spinning around the table to get that. He's just kind of a voyeur in a sense. And if he doesn't catch the person who's talking on camera at that point, then that's okay, because he's still getting the rest of the scene.

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| 00:25:36 | Crystal | Guest | I'm all about non sync, because I'm a documentary filmmaker, so there's sometimes nothing you can do about that. Like, not having person speaking when you're not shooting them. But I think reactions actually are so important for the architecture of the scene, and getting the actual like, tone and the way that the room feels when these things are happening is super important. Yeah, that's something I like, actually have been having a lot of conversations about, because I'm uh, right now I'm shooting a new documentary on a robot named Sophia. |
| 00:26:18 | April | Host | <i>[Enthusiastically]</i> Oh, that robot! |
| 00:26:21 | Crystal | Guest | Yeah. |
| 00:26:22 | April | Host | Yeah, I've seen her. |
| 00:26:24 | Crystal | Guest | I've been co-directing with my friend John Kazby and I—like, a few years ago I saw her on, I don't remember where it was, but she had just gotten her Saudi citizenship and I was instantly intrigued and started just doing a ton of research and going down this crazy rabbit hole. And I ended up having a conversation with David Hansen, who is the—the man behind Sofia. |

[April confirms.]

Yeah, no, he's the person who made Sofia. But like, my first conversation with him I had was, you know, why are you doing this? And he said—

[April laughs.]

Yeah, why? That's the question. And he said, "I'm interested in consciousness." And it was just unexpected that that would be the answer. But yeah, we've been talking a lot about—with my editor, we've been talking a lot about synch and non synch and where you're putting the camera and how it relates to the scene.

00:27:32 April Host Well, you may actually then have more in common with, you know, Johnathan Glazer's style than you perhaps thought otherwise, because it seems like you're working with the same idea of witnessing people. At least, you know, when they're speaking, when you're not you know, trying to impose your own visuals or directorial intent on things.

00:27:55 Crystal Guest Yeah. Well also, he's—his work, I mean, like the other film that he made, *Under The Skin*, it's—it's very different. I mean, you can see the similarities, but his experimenting's really fascinating. Like, I heard—I heard that like, Scarlett Johanssen, he had her just like—like drive around and talk to people on the street. And I like kind of experimenting with the way that you kind of, you know, bring your characters into the world. I always do that. I, you know, when Jaden Smith was in *Skate Kitchen*, I had him go, you know, hang out with these kids from Queens for a week. I was like, "You need to understand where they're coming from, their world. Like, what their world's like, because it's very different than your world."

00:28:46 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:28:47 April Host We're gonna take another break. When we come back, we're gonna have to get a little further into that. But uh, you know, perhaps some of the casting choices, too. It's a cool movie. Um, but we'll be right back.

[Music fades.]

00:29:03 Promo Promo **Music:** Relaxing ukulele music.

Manolo Moreno: Hey, you've reached *Dr. Gameshow*. Leave your message after the beep.

[Music stops.]

[Beep!]

Steve: Hello, this is Steve from Albany, talking about my favorite podcast, *Dr. Gameshow*. *Dr. Gameshow* is a show where listeners submit their crazy ideas for gameshows, and the two hosts have to play them. And they often bring in celebrities and small children to share in the pain and hilarity.

At first it might seem like Jo Firestone has a contentious relationship with listeners, but that is only mostly true. She actually really respects us. It's a lot like *Lethal Weapon*, where Jo, is like, "Aw listeners, you're all loose cannons! You're out of control!" And we're like, "No, Firestone, you're too by the book. You've forgotten what it's like out there."

And that's why I love the show.

[Beep!]

[Music resumes.]

Jo Firestone: Listen to [Dr. Gameshow](#) on *Maximum Fun*. New episodes every other Wednesday.

[Music fades out.]

00:29:50	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:29:56	April	Host	Welcome back to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i> . I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Crystal Moselle from New York, and we're talking about <i>Sexy Beast</i> .
			Um, so you know, we were talking a lot about the dialogue in this and how it can be so cumbersome, but the thing is it's actually, I think, fairly good. I like the way that these characters are talking to each other. I like the way they're a little oblique sometimes, and they seem um, to be in character. Like, I believe that they're thieves. I believe that they are gangsters. I know, Crystal, you were really into um, one point that Ray Winstone's character, Gal, was talking to his wife.
00:30:33	Crystal	Guest	I mean, he's so romantic, but he's kind of a—he's this like, romantic gentleman, but says just the most absurd shit. Like he's like, "I love you like a leopard loves his partner in a jungle."
00:30:45	Clip	Clip	Gal: I love you like a rose loves rainwater. Like a leopard loves his partner in the jungle. Like... I don't know what like. I love you.
00:30:56	Crystal	Guest	He knows it's ridiculous, but he's saying—he's trying to find something better than this leopard thing. But it's really just—he just—he just loves her.
00:31:06	April	Host	It's just so sweet. I mean, that's the kind of thing too, and I think that dialogue also rings true with how Glazer was directing these characters. Which is, he's making them kind of animalistic. Um, and you know, it is almost like a predator-prey situation, because Don is the kind of big fucking lion who comes to the watering hole and scares all the other animals away, because he's just so much of a presence.

And you know, I like the idea that it's kind of a watering hole, because they're all gathered around this fucking pool in the desert, you know? It feels like that. And so, when you get like, a little piece of the dialogue, you know, of that dumb kind of silly, romantic gesture, I think it all fits in. It feels like a complete circle, a complete

picture to me.

- 00:31:58 Crystal Guest Yeah. Also, something very interesting that that just made me think of. Every character, we get to see their vulnerable side. Even like—every single one, you know? Like, the moment where Don’s like, you know, talking to himself in the mirror like, about what he said earlier, and he’s like—he’s almost like, mad at himself for revealing his vulnerabilities to Gal. And uh, and then even like—even like the other guy that uh, what’s his name? The one that lets Gal go at the end, what’s his name?
- 00:32:41 April Host Uh, Teddy.
- 00:32:42 Crystal Guest Yeah. I mean, Teddy, we get to see a very vulnerable side of him. Even if it’s just for a moment, but we—it’s not just all like, these guys like, being tough guys. Like, we get to see the different—and there’s like, very um, like each character has something dynamic about them, which I appreciate a lot of time.
- 00:33:06 April Host Yeah, I mean for you, do you think—is that something that’s on your brain all the time, when you’re working on something? It’s just like, did we show this character’s vulnerabilities enough?
- 00:33:17 Crystal Guest Absolutely. For me, in my work, I don’t believe in antagonists. I understand that someone can be antagonizing, but the—just to say that somebody is bad and somebody is good doesn’t—like, that’s not life. So, it’s—to me it’s always, when I’m in the writing process, it’s important for me to like, try to show as many sides to this person as possible.
- Like, I think showing—I think we just went through, you know, I’m putting together a narrative right now, I can’t talk about what it is right now, but I think that there was a moment where I was like, wait, we need to find where their vulnerabilities—we need to find a moment where their vulnerabilities shows through. And uh, I think that’s really important when you’re telling a story, because everybody has them. That’s life.
- 00:34:15 April Host Yeah, and to even show just a tiny split second of where their—where their cracks are. I mean, it’s great just for narrative construction, honestly. It makes your job easier, I think, when you’re doing that. *[Laughs.]*
- Um, I wanted to talk a little bit about the—I guess the idea that any first of any project will present the same kind of growing pains. Because Johnathan Glazer was, again, he was—this was a very hard shoot for him, even though he’d done other things.
- He said, quote, “As a learning curve, making this movie was the steepest, sharpest I could have. To be honest with you, *Sexy Beast*, I feel the same way after I made my first music video or made my first television commercial. I thought, ‘Okay, I can do this. But I need to step up to the mark. I need to know what the rules are, and in doing so, I can feel where I can improve.’” End quote.
- Um, so it’s kind of that—the growing pains that gets you again and again and again, the second that you’re trying to do something

different. You know, like you think you've mastered this art form and all of a sudden you're like, "Oh, this is hard again." *[Laughs.]*

00:35:25 Crystal Guest Absolutely. I was talking to one of the girls the other day about that. You know, 'cause she's like, "I don't know if I can do this. I've never done this before." I don't know—I don't remember what she was talking about. I was like, "That's how I feel every single time I take on a new project." We never know what we're doing, 'cause it hasn't been created before. And we're, you know, obviously we get more experience so that we have more tools thereabout to try to figure things out, but it's always about like, stepping into the unknown and just trusting it.

00:35:53 April Host Are you ever surprised by the rules though? You know, like when you go into a new medium. Like, you went from features to a television series, working with you know, a cable channel. I feel like there have to be completely different rules for that.

00:36:06 Crystal Guest Mm, no.

[Both laugh.]

I mean, for me it was like—it was more like, oh, I have more people to help me write this thing. This is cool. But I really—I can't do something unless I really feel it, and unless it's something that feels like it's my voice. So I've really taken my time to make sure that I get to be able to create thing that I feel, and I instinctually can create. Because I'm, you know, I get sent scripts all the time, and I'm just not—I just don't feel like I can fully commit to something that I don't completely feel.

00:36:55 April Host Um, I like it when, you know, people kind of go on their own artistic paths, as you know, Glazer is doing. You know, he ended up doing a lot more, obviously, where he's working with quieter actors. But I did want to point out, this brings up to this point, something that he kind of learned to do and how to direct with his characters, is that he specifically told you know—the people in the scene that had the most power had a certain stillness about them. You know, he told them that if you have the power in the scene, then you are still.

He said, quote, "I was trying to get Ben to be as still as possible through the entire film. He's got such an expressive face. You can't take your eyes off of him. But he needed to be still." End quote.

And that, I think, is a really interesting um, way of conveying power in a scene. And something that he, you know, went to an almost extreme with, going into both *Birth* and *Under The Skin*. There's so much stillness, there's so much silence that he's playing with in both of those movies.

And here, it comes as almost like um, like friction against the rest of the, you know, the color palette is so candy-colored, and the music is so kind of raucous, and all of the sudden you have this character who is like—uh, listens a lot and then springs into action, but his body is still almost constantly.

00:38:29 Crystal Guest No, I think it's beautiful. I think stillness is one of the most beautiful

things in films. And I think, you know, working on—with *Skate Kitchen* and Rachelle Vinberg, who plays Camille. Like, she's—she says so much with just—you can feel what she's thinking, and I think that's like, also about like, casting and really finding talent that says a lot more on screen. For me, it's like the behind the scenes, it's so much about collaboration and connecting.

You know, Rachelle's a writer, and I think will be a director one day. And I really just connected with her over her experiences and her story, and with the show, I was able—I mean, it was really exciting to be able to expand the stories out further.

'Cause there was so much like—there's so much rich material and so many—you know, I think, right now, with everything that's happening in the world, um, and you know, the issues of *Me Too* and you know, there's no better people to navigate it than a group of young women that are trying to change the game up.

00:39:49 April Host The future is bright. So, so bright, because it's just gonna be about a hundred and ten degrees on Earth.

[Both laugh.]

I want to—we're all gonna be baking like Ray Winstone in the sun, and I can't wait. Beautiful, beautiful leather body.

I want to thank you so much for coming on the show, Crystal, and for talking about your worn, and also enlightening us about your thoughts on *Sexy Beast*. And um, people can watch *Betty* how, when, where?

00:40:18 Crystal Guest May 1st. It will be—the first episode premieres in the United States.

00:40:25 April Host And we should keep an eye out for this documentary on Sophia and then all these other projects that you're doing that you're not allowed to talk about.

00:40:32 Crystal Guest Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:40:34 April Host Thank you so much. I hope you enjoy your rental cat.

00:40:36 Crystal Guest *[Laughing]* Thank you.

00:40:37 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:40:38 April Host Thank you for listening to *Switchblade Sisters!*

We're going to start doing something a little different at the end of each episode. If you've already listened to a few of these, you know that we're giving a staff pick of a film directed by a woman. Any woman. Something for you to do with any of your extra free time. If you've got kids, maybe after they've gone to bed. If you've got pets, when they're sleeping.

So the staff pick for today is Kathryn Bigelow's *Point Break*. It's a fantastic film, and it's a heist film that is not a heist film. It's more of a buddy film and a friendship film than it is a heist film, in the same

way that Johnathan Glazer's heist movie is much more of a romance instead of a heist film. So watch it, love it, tell me what you think of it, and you can also re-listen to the episode we did on it with Shaz Bennett awhile back.

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.]

00:41:50	Clip	Clip	Don: Cigarette? What, this? No, I'm not gonna put it out.
00:41:55	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:41:57	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:41:58	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:41:59	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.