

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, but a reminder that we are remote recording now, and I’m recording from my bedroom. So I’m going to warn you right now that you will hear trash trucks, birds, um, a menagerie of cats. It’s all going to be going on in the background. The audio will be a little bit different than the studio’s, but everything else is going to be the same.</p> <p>The only thing different today, however, is our guest, because I’m very excited to have writer-actor Hannah Bos here. Hannah, how are you today?</p>
00:00:51	Hannah Bos	Guest	I’m okay. I’m a little tired. Pretty good, but pretty pooped.
00:00:54	April	Host	Oh, hanging in there.
00:00:55	Hannah	Guest	I’m on uh—got a toddler, so it’s keeping me very busy.
00:01:01	April	Host	Yeah, as it turns out, toddlers do toddle. They—
00:01:05	Hannah	Guest	Yeah. <i>[Laughs]</i> Yeah.
00:01:06	April	Host	They’re very busy.
00:01:07	Hannah	Guest	Pandemic and toddlers. It’s really bonkers.
00:01:10	April	Host	<p>So for those of you who are less familiar with Hannah’s work, please let me give you an introduction.</p> <p>Hannah is a Brooklyn-based actor, screenwriter, and playwright. She has written for HBO’s <i>High Maintenance</i>, Amazon’s <i>Mozart in the Jungle</i>, and Facebook’s <i>Strangers</i>. She’s also developed pilots with HBO, Scott Rudin, FBC, Paramount, and Amazon.</p> <p>But even before that, Hannah Bos and Paul Thureen founded the multiple Obie Award winning theater company, The Debate Society, and uh, along with director Oliver—is it Oliver Butler, I believe?</p>
00:01:39	Hannah	Guest	Oliver Butler.
00:01:42	April	Host	For the stage, then, Hannah has co-written with Paul nine full-length plays for the company, including <i>The Light Years</i> , <i>Jacuzzi</i> , and <i>Blood Play</i> . As an actor, Hannah guest starred on <i>High Maintenance</i> and appeared in the films <i>The Outside Story</i> , <i>The Incredible Jessica James</i> , <i>Photo Op</i> , <i>How To Follow Strangers</i> , and <i>Next Life</i> .

She received a Drama Desk award and Lortel nomination for her performance in Will Eno's play, *The Open House* and is on the faculty of the National Theater Institute.

Now, Hannah has co-written her first produced feature film, *Driveways*, directed by Andrew Ahn. *Driveways* stars Hong Chau as a woman who must clean out her deceased sister's house soon to sell it, while her son strikes up a relationship with a gruff Korean war vet, played by Brian Dennehy in one of his last film roles.

She and Paul were nominated for best first screenplay for the independent spirit awards, and currently Hannah, you're working with Paul on a commission for Playwright's Horizon, is that correct?

00:02:37 Hannah Guest Yes, we've finished that play, yes.

00:02:40 April Host Oh, lovely. Congratulations.

00:02:42 Hannah Guest Thank you. It took a long time, yeah.

00:02:45 April Host Oh, man. I bet. I mean, honestly, just doing all of these different things, are you tired?

00:02:52 Hannah Guest Uh, yeah. I think—I think I have pandemic tiredness, so it's a new level of tired. I was tired before. I should have taken a vacation a couple years ago. If someone had warned me, like an astrologer or something, I feel like I would have known this was coming and then I could have rested for this new level of tired.

00:03:09 April Host I really hope that you visit an astrologer after this. *[Laughs.]*

00:03:13 Hannah Guest I don't trust them anymore after this.

00:03:15 April Host Like, they didn't warn us!

00:03:16 Hannah Guest Yeah, Susan Miller is—yeah, they didn't warn us. Susan Miller's on my shit list. I took her at—not really, Susan Miller. I love, actually love Susan Miller, and I'm still checking. But uh, I don't know why no one saw this coming. But yes, I'm super tired.

00:03:30 April Host Hannah, the movie that you chose to talk about today is *Adventures in Babysitting*. Can you give us a little explanation why this is one of your fave genre films?

00:03:37 Hannah Guest You know, *Adventures in Babysitting* is just a bonkers film. Um, it's just—it's part of that period of time where there were like these kid, teen adventure movies, but this is a hybrid because it's also kind of an adult adventure movie. Kind of a la *Beverly Hills Cop*, kind of.

And it's also just coming—I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago in Evanston, Illinois, and this period of time with Chicago movies, all of the—I'm a huge John Hughes fan. And I chose *Adventures in Babysitting* because it's just a bizarre film, and it sort of celebrates Chicago even though it's one of those very Toronto-y Chicago movies.

[April confirms.]

And I just love Elizabeth Shue. I love her hair, which is like a whole character of its own in this movie.

- 00:04:33 April Host It still looks great!
- 00:04:34 Hannah Guest And I just love this—it still looks great. She’s just—and she’s just so damn charismatic. And the beginning of the movie, it like celebrates the like, obsession 80s movies with 50s music, and then just blues music and 80s music in 80s films and sort of like saxophones and dark alleys and weird lighting, and sort of like—it’s just such a weird movie and it’s sort of part fantasy, and it just—it sort of makes me laugh. And it’s just—it’s very funny to watch it as like, a grown ass woman also, picking up all these things I didn’t really realize as a kid were in it. But I just—it’s something I have a fond memory of, and I sort of just love Chicago movies from this time period.
- 00:05:18 April Host For those of you who haven’t seen *Adventures in Babysitting*, today’s episode will 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 pause and watch first, this is your shot.
- 00:05:33 Music Music “Then He Kissed Me” by The Crystals
- 00:05:36 April Host And now that you’re back, let me introduce *Adventures in Babysitting* with a quick synopsis, as quick as I possibly can. There is a lot of stuff that happens.
- [Hannah laughs.]
- Written by David Simkins and directed by Chris Columbus for release in 1987, *Adventures in Babysitting* stars Elisabeth Shue as Chris, a high school senior excited for her big date with Mike, only for it to get canceled.
- 00:05:56 Clip Clip **Mike:** My little sister got sick and my parents are going out tonight.
- Chris:** Well, um, I could come over and help out. We can make some chicken soup or something.
- Mike:** No, you don’t want to be there. She’s contagious. I don’t want you to get sick.
- 00:06:11 April Host Her friend Brenda tries to cheer her up, but Brenda only works herself up into a terrible frenzy and immediately runs away from home. Chris then has to babysit for some kids: Sara, who’s obsessed with Thor, Daryl, who’s in love with Chris, and Brad, Daryl’s brash friend who’s convinced Chris is this month’s Playboy centerfold.
- 00:06:30 Clip Clip **Daryl:** You gotta see this month’s Playboy, ‘cause there’s this girl in it and she looks exactly like Chris. I’m serious. She’s got these humongous—
- [There’s a slam.]

Brad: Oh, god.

00:06:38 April Host Chris gets a call from Brenda, who's stuck in Chicago at the bus station.

00:06:41 Clip Clip **Brenda:** *[Crying]* Chris, I'm begging you. It's really scary here. I've just seen three people shoot up, a bald Chinese lady with no pants on, and there's this old guy outside who wants his bedroom slippers.

00:06:50 April Host She takes her mom's car and the kids down to pick her up, but they get a flat tire and have to hitch a ride with a hook-handed tow driver, Pruitt, on the way. Unfortunately, Pruitt gets a call that his wife's lover is back, and he takes a detour to his house—

00:07:05 Clip Clip *[Two men exchange conversation via CB radio. Dialogue is punctuated by static of receiver cutting out.]*

Dawson: Dawson here.

Pruitt: Yes?

Dawson: I just swung by your place.

Pruitt: And what did you see?

Dawson: You won't like it.

Pruitt: What did you see?!

Dawson: A car was parked in front.

Pruitt: She's with that bastard again!

[The truck horn blares and tires squeal.]

00:07:16 April Host —where he gets into a shoot-out with the man. Chris and the kids run and hide in a car, only to realize that Joe Gipp is hotwiring it. They go with Joe back to a chop shop, and he promises to help them get where they need to go eventually.

00:07:32 Clip Clip **Joe Gipp:** Look, look, I tell you what. Why don't y'all come with me? I got a little business to take care of, alright? And then I can drop you off at a train station or something like that.

00:07:39 April Host But a big meeting goes down at the chop shop. They're locked in an office with the promise of being taken care of. In the office, Brad finds the Playboy with the Chris lookalike, steals it, and then all of them sneak out in the rafters, but end up, somehow, on the stage of a blues club.

House rules say that you can't leave until you sing the blues, so Chris improvises.

00:08:02 Clip Clip *[Blues music plays while Chris sings.]*

Chris: I've got the babysitting blues.

00:08:08 April Host And they get a head start out of the club and onto a train. On the train, they get between two rival gangs. Daryl sticks up for Chris and immediately gets stabbed in the foot.

00:08:18 Clip Clip **Brad:** You big city scum sucker.

[Crowd ooo's.]

Chicano Leader: You just can't keep your foot out your mouth, can you, boy? Let me help.

[There's a thud and then a ruckus.]

00:08:31 April Host But Chris saves the day and gets him to the hospital, where he gets one stitch, and they're reunited with Pruitt, on the run from the cops now. Pruitt tells them it's fifty dollars to get the tire fixed at Dawson's garage, and at a frat party, a cute guy flirts with Chris and helps her raise at least \$45 for her car.

00:08:49 Clip Clip **Dan:** I could only get 45.

Chris: Oh no, that's great. Really, thank you so much.

00:08:53 April Host They get to Dawson's, and to Sara's surprise, he looks a lot like Thor, making her night.

00:08:58 Clip Clip **Sara:** Oh Thor, Mighty God of Thunder.

[There's a thud.]

Dawson: Who is this kid?

00:09:03 April Host And, you know, she melts his heart. They go to pick up Brenda, but find Mike on a date with another lady and ruin his night.

00:09:11 Clip Clip **Mike:** Get a grip, Jesus.

Chris: A grip? Do you have any idea what I've been through tonight?!

00:09:17 April Host Meanwhile, Sara sneaks off, and the criminals chase her into the building where her parents are at a fancy party. Chris and the boys follow her into the party and escape the criminals, with Joe Gipp's help. Brad hands over the Playboy he stole, the real reason the criminals were after him.

00:09:32 Clip Clip **Joe:** See, this is what they were after. Some notes and stuff, you know, that they need. I guess they're pretty important to them.

00:09:40 April Host Then they pick up Brenda, beat the kid's parents home, and pretend like nothing ever happened.

00:09:45 Clip Clip **Mrs. Anderson:** Any problems?

Chris: No, not really. Well, Brad stayed home, and Daryl's sleeping over.

Mrs. Anderson: Daryl? Oh, what a nightmare for you.

00:09:55 April Host Then Chris gets a visit from the cute frat boy, and maybe this night wasn't so bad after all. The end.

00:10:02 Hannah Guest *[Laughs]* So much happens!

[April laughs and confirms.]

It's so crazy how much you get for your money on this one!

00:10:11 April Host Yeah. I really kept forgetting um, half of the stuff that was going to happen, then I was just like, "Oh yeah, that's in my memory." And then when I was writing it out even, again, I was just like, "Oh yeah, and then they have to do this, and then they have to do this."

I think David Simkins uh, I realize has been a huge part of my television and movie watching life throughout my—my, you know, from childhood to adult. I mean, this guy wrote, you know, obviously this is his first produced film, and then he went on and wrote like, you know, *Angel*, *Charmed*, *Grimm*, all of these classics on TV, if you're into kind of fantasy or adventure kinds of things. And—but this was his first movie, and he was talking about pitching and kind of like, the hell that he had before he broke through with this movie.

And he said, quote, "The pain and humiliation is still too fresh after all these years. Slowly by trial and error and working with a few folks much more successful at pitching than me, I began to get hang of it. Pitching is a very important part of any storytellers career. It's how I usually figure out what a story is trying to be, by stumbling through a potential pitch with friends and family." End quote.

And so he finally figured out how to pitch with this movie.

00:11:27 Hannah Guest I feel like he just walked in the room and described that scene where she has her knife on the L and is like—

00:11:33 Clip Clip **Chicano Leader:** Don't fuck with the Lords of Hell.

[Crowd cheers.]

Chris: Don't fuck with the babysitter!

[Crowd ooo's and aww's.]

00:11:43 Hannah Guest 'Cause to me, I'm like, that's the point of this whole movie. That is it.

00:11:48 April Host I know! I know. I love it. And um, and you know, the funny part is that that was really not part of the original, if I remember correctly. Um, you know, it was something that they had added in after multiple drafts. And I like the idea that a movie this big in a studio, you can start with something that's completely different and then end on what we have now, which is a classic.

And I was curious about the things that you've worked on and your past and the kind of twisty-turny paths that they take. You know, like

how—how different have you gotten from your original concept before?

00:12:33 Hannah Guest

That's a great question. Um, you know, I should just preface by saying that, you know, *Adventures in Babysitting* is not like, the quintessential piece that's influenced my writing. But um, it's funny to think about that I chose something where so many things happen, because in a lot of things that I write, it's a slow accumulation of small clues and human moments and experiences and small things that lead to something sort of bigger at the end that I hope you keep thinking about after.

Um, when I was watching—re-watching this to chat with you—which, by the way, it's pretty hilarious and sort of weirdly moving that we're two women in bedrooms across the country talking about *Adventures in Babysitting*.

[Both laugh.]

I just love that it takes a pandemic to like, celebrate this movie and put it out in the zeitgeist again. But um, so many things happen in this movie and um, and I like that. And I did think a lot of times about like, I'm sure that this movie got a lot of notes and a lot of input on needing all these other things to happen. But you know, I guess in my work, I start with an idea and I start with a world, and I overwrite and then chisel out with my writing partner and figure out the story we want to tell, with lots of different layers. But it's a lot less explicit in this kind of storytelling.

But I usually sort of know a very general outline, and it stays sort of track. But there's always—there's always things that influence it and you know, feedback, and sort of taking a step away, and dreaming on a project, and going back and realizing that there's a big thing missing or there's a big discovery and then we change it. But they don't—they aren't usually that off. But I'm dealing with smaller pieces, usually.

00:14:30 Music Transition

"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:14:38 April Host

We're gonna take a quick break. When we come back, we'll talk all things *Adventures in Babysitting*.

[Music fades.]

00:14:47 Promo Promo

Janet Varney: Hey. I'm Janet Varney, host of *The JV Club* podcast.

[School bell rings. The muffled sounds of talking in the hallway.]

Janet: Ah, high school. Was it a time of adventure, romance, and Discovery?

Speaker 1: *[Cheering.]* Class of '95! We did iiiit!

Janet: Or—

[Rain sound effect.]

Janet: A time of angst, disappointment, and confusion?

Speaker 2: We're all tied together by four years of trauma, at this place, but enjoy adulthood, I guess!

[A chorus of boos.]

Janet: The truth is? It was both!

Music: Bouncy music fades in.

Janet: So, join me on *The JV Club* podcast, where I invite some great friends, like Kristen Bell, Angela Kinsey, Oscar Nunez, Neil Patrick Harris, Keegan-Michael Key, to talk about high school: the good, the bad, and everything in between.

Speaker 3: My teenage mood swings are *[voice dropping into something gruff and aggressive]* gettin' harder to manage!

Janet: *The JV Club*. Find it on Maximum Fun.

[Music fades out.]

00:15:33	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:15:39	April	Host	Welcome back to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i> . I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Hannah Bos, and we're talking about <i>Adventures in Babysitting</i> . Um, so you know, as we kind of touched on before, the script went through a bunch of changes with David Simkins. At some point he said, quote, "The first draft was pretty much what you saw after it turned into this very complicated <i>Ocean's Eleven</i> heist film. That was the script Lynda and Debra read that their unpaid intern, Stacey Sher—who's now a big deal—she got it to them and it was pretty quickly when Lynda and Debra said to me, 'We're not doing all this crazy heist stuff. That's way too expensive.' And that's when it became a series of adventures." End quote. So it was a heist film. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:16:22	Hannah	Guest	There's so many bad guys. There's so many bad guys, and I want to know what—I mean, Elisabeth Shue is so sweet and nice, but I want to know in the heist story, like I forgot that there's such an important—an important part of this is this Playboy, and she keeps being compared to the centerfold. Which with my like, 20/20 mom eyes, I'm like, "What? <u>What?</u> " Everyone thinks she's so charming and she's famous from this Playboy, and the mobsters are—I mean, to me, I just totally missed that, and now I'm like, ugh, that irks me now a little bit.
00:17:00	April	Host	It's uh—okay, so Elisabeth Shue at this time, you know, this was the first big movie that she was carrying herself, you know? She wasn't the sidekick, um, or the love interest. And so that Playboy thing was actually a lot of um, anxiety for her, because she was you know, a

young woman who, at 19, could have become a lawyer. She was like, going to go to Harvard to study law, and ended up acting just because she thought it was fun. And then all of a sudden people were kind of treating her like she was stupid, and so this was a really difficult time, and a very difficult thing for her.

She said, quote—this is to her interview in the *LA Times*—quote, “Please emphasize I did not take off my clothes for the shoot for the magazine. Posing for the mock centerfold was the toughest thing I’ve ever done. I’m not going to do nudity on camera or a Porky’s type exploration film to become a star. I don’t think it’s necessary to promote yourself as being sexy and placate the fantasies of a film’s audience, and I also don’t imagine men will desire me after seeing *Babysitting*. When I actually was a babysitter, nobody paid me much attention, except the kids liked me because I let them stay up late.” End quote.

- 00:18:14 Hannah Guest Oh, I love her. I love her.
- 00:18:17 April Host I know! Yeah, she was saying that, quote, “The last thing I ever wanted was to have someone see the film and see me as a sex object.” End quote. And I thought that that was um, I mean yeah, she was 23 at the time that she was giving these interviews. People were kind of treating her like a baby or sweetheart. And that was something that people kept latching on to, especially men in those interviews, where they were just like, “Hey, hey, Playboy centerfold,” and she was just like, “Mother fucker,” like—*[Laughs.]*
- 00:18:45 Hannah Guest I kept like, really leaning in when they would cut to her responses every time the centerfold would come up. And there was something where I was like, damn she’s a good actress, because there were so many actresses I feel like at this time that could have played up the sexuality, the *Weird Science* moment. Like, just embracing the sexuality. And the way that she—all her takes, there’s something in her eyes that are like—she’s in the power position, and she never cracks a smile, never uses her sexuality to get what she wants in this. But everyone else’s misinterpretation of it, they’re the fools. Do you know what I mean?
- 00:19:28 April Host Yeah. Actually, Chris Columbus said something really interesting. He said, quote, “Elisabeth has a strong sense of morality that clearly emerges in her acting.” End quote.
- 00:19:36 Hannah Guest I mean, she’s so—she really holds on to, like—there’s something about how she carries herself in this movie that makes me not barf at the ways that it could go wrong with her character. Even, dare I bring up the controversial blues scene, where normally I would just—just totally cringe. There’s something where she’s even charismatic while she’s badly singing blues on stage. I mean, she somehow has such dignity. And I know we’re still talking about *Adventures in Babysitting*.

[April confirms.]

But there’s something in how she carries herself, and she’s just so damn charismatic and in control, except she’s 17 in the end, in that last moment, I’m realizing this college guy is coming—is following

her in the middle of the night. It's after one o'clock, and she's 17.

[Both laugh.]

So, I'm a goddamn mom, so I need to just, yeah. Doesn't stand—that part's a little funky, but that's okay.

- 00:20:35 April Host Do you—I mean, do you think about this in terms of your own work, too? You know, like where you're a mom now, and you're like, "What, why would they do that? I'm not gonna write that!"
- 00:20:44 Hannah Guest I mean, a hundred percent, you know? I wrote our movie *Driveways* when I was pregnant, and it was like—it was—I was already starting to change my view on things, and sort of—sort of just really get introspective and think about my life and what this is gonna mean and what it meant. And that sort of was—it was very critical in when I was starting to write our movie.
- 00:21:22 April Host Mm-hm. I mean, it changes. I mean, talk about morality, maybe it changes your morality of what you want your characters to do or how you expect them to be.
- 00:21:24 Hannah Guest Yeah. It's like, making you think about responsibility in the characters you put out into the world on a different level. Or you think about your own relationships with your parents and how you're gonna learn from either makes or learn from good things, and yeah.
- 00:21:43 April Host I have to say, I mean, you know, we talked about John Hughes. And John Hughes was very much a kind of close colleague and mentor for Chris Columbus, and this was his first feature film as a director. Chris Columbus had obviously written before, but I watched this movie and I kind of almost prefer it to um, some of the John Hughes movies in the way that the women are um, treated or not treated, or their agency perhaps.
- But I—you know, you had mentioned Molly Ringwald, and um, as David Simkins said, quote, "Paramount bought the movie. They optioned the script. We were in development for a year. *Ferris Bueller* was kind of the big inspiration for this, so they had Molly Ringwald there. Debra and Lynda took the script to Molly, thinking it was a slam dunk. She said, 'No, I'm done with this stuff.'
- "Paramount had a dilemma. They were trying to figure out who in their roster of stars they had deals with that they could put in the *Babysitter* role. For about a week, we all seriously considered Bette Midler, which would have been a major rewrite. Then that fell away, thank god. Then they brought us Cher. Then they put us in turnaround and we were all kind of bereft. I thought my career was over. I looked for another job. Debra, Lynda, and Chris, bless their hearts, took it and chopped it all the way down and got to Disney. Jeffrey Katzenberg said yes and it happened right away." End quote.
- I—*[She breaks off, laughing.]*
- 00:23:14 Hannah Guest I really want to see the Cher version. I gotta say. Oh my god.

[Both laugh.]

Oh my god. This would be so amazing. Oh my god.

- 00:23:25 April Host It's—for you in your career, I'm curious, because you've done you know, a lot of stage work, a lot of TV work, um, and with this feature film, are you a person who has had to kind of rewrite for casting quite a bit? Or has that been kind of free and clear, like casting is already done, you know, we don't have to think about that.
- 00:23:49 Hannah Guest Um, I—a lot of—a lot of my plays, I've written for actors. My—Paul Thureen and myself used to write just for ourselves, our early plays. And then we'd start—we'd write specific roles for actors that we admired or wanted to write for. And then when we started writing TV, we were writing for specific characters that were already cast. And then, uh, and I guess—and this is my first feature—I always have people in mind but usually with plays, but I think um, I write usually for just the characters now that I have in mind.
- Um, and I haven't—I haven't had the experience where I've had to sort of adjust things. I guess with *Driveways*, we had to sort of do some adjustments with Brian Dennehy, who was in my film, because he was older and there were some physical things that we had some limitations on. But in the end, um, you couldn't really—it didn't really matter.
- 00:24:55 April Host Like, you didn't have big action sequences.
- 00:24:58 Hannah Guest *[Laughing]* No, it is not an action film by a lot. No. Uh, we just literally had to do some things where we're like, "We're not gonna shoot the lawn mower scene with him driving on it. Maybe we'll just have him next to it." Like, small things about very, very minor things.
- 00:25:14 April Host I mean that's like, tiny losses for the major gain of having Brian Dennehy in your movie.
- 00:25:20 Hannah Guest Oh my god, yeah. Um, rest his kind soul, yeah. Um, he was amazing. Just an absolute dream to work with. And just, you know, he's 81 when he shot with us, and he was just so on it and just loved being there. He was great. So yeah, if we lost a few moments of riding a lawn mower, we're fine.
- 00:25:40 April Host *[Laughs]* Oh, it wasn't like, "Aw man, that's like everything that I need in this movie. If he doesn't ride the lawn mower, then we're screwed!"
- 00:25:49 Hannah Guest Definitely not. No, it's not like adventures in lawn mowing. It was not necessarily for our plot twist at all, and there was nothing hidden in the lawn mower, and there were no mobsters.
- 00:26:00 April Host Um, I'm curious also, because you, you know, as both a performer and a writer, have you gotten into spots where you've had to—or where people have had to rewrite for you, after you've been cast in it, from the other side of things?
- 00:26:16 Hannah Guest Maybe not rewriting. I've had opportunities where—I like to improv, and if someone wants to improv or wants to have like, a scene go longer, I've had really lovely experiences where I could just sort of

in the moment, in character, just keep going or change something that you know, I guess would be more suited to me as I figure out the character. And that's just like, a lovely bonus to working in a good collaboration.

- 00:26:41 April Host Nice that you kind of segued for me, but uh, they did quite a few improvised rehearsals for this film. Which, I mean, you can I think potentially tell, because the laugh lines always hit.
- But Keith Coogan, he said, quote, "We did a lot of improvised rehearsals. The director and the producer said, 'As long as you have two or three great, memorable sequences, then you have a movie.' So they focused on the blues bar scene, the train sequence with the gangs, and then the chop shop. All that stuff with Joe Gipp was amazing." And that's uh, played by Calvin Levels by the way. "His line, 'A mall? Where do y'all think you are, Boise, Idaho?' was improvised, totally him. And a lot of those lines came out of those kind of improvised rehearsals where we really peeled open the scenes and had a lot of fun playing with them." End quote.
- And—
- 00:27:33 Hannah Guest Calvin Levels is the best actor in this movie by a lot. I feel like he's in a much better movie than everyone else. By far my favorite. I mean, he is so good.
- 00:27:44 April Host You know, I feel like we probably can't talk around this, but when it comes to the idea of a bunch of white suburban kids in Chicago meeting a person of color, a Black man in Chicago, there's going to be in, in the 80s, a kind of um, racism written into those roles.
[Laughs.]
- 00:28:04 Hannah Guest Blind spots. Yes. This is a very controversial film to me now. I feel like as a kid I didn't realize it, but yes, the casting choices on this and the way that characters are portrayed are not to my liking. Um, and—but I feel like Joe Gipp really probably did the best job he could in a really funky situation for a movie. Um, yeah the blues scene too, is really controversial. Yeah, the gang scene is controversial. There's a lot of things in there that do not—that are pretty funky.
- 00:28:46 April Host Um, for—for you, I mean, what's been your experience like of, you know, writing about race now and you know, 2019, now 2020?
- 00:28:59 Hannah Guest I mean, I—I only write form like, my experience. Um, but um, you know, we wrote *Driveways*, which is uh, which Andrew Ahn, when we was interested in the film, he had suggested to our producers, he asked them if they could cast these characters with Asian-Americans and the producers said yes. And—which is wonderful, and that's how we came about our story. Which is really lovely, and I'm excited that our producer said yes. And we were very excited to have Ahn in our cast.

And I think that organically, the story that we wrote, it really got deeper when, you know, this Korean war vet, which was scripted, just happened to be, you know, played by Asian-Americans. Um, and it's not on the nose, and it's not really about that, but it is about

that. So, I think it's a fine line of really lucky casting and really uh, brave and uh, a series of yesses, and Andrew did that, which is just awesome.

00:30:05 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:30:12 April Host We're gonna take another break. We'll be right back.

[Music fades.]

00:30:19 Promo Promo *[Three gavel bangs.]*

Music: Laid back music plays under the dialogue.

Speaker 1: *Judge John Hodgman* won a Webby, in the Comedy Podcast category. After 10 years of production, *Judge John Hodgman* has finally won: the Susan Lucci of the Webbys. What is *Judge John Hodgman*?

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[Music fades out.]

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:31:10 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:31:16 April Host Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*. I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Hannah Bos, and we're talking about *Adventures in Babysitting*.

I want to talk about language and how to write for young people. Um, because David Simkins, you know, in the 1980s, he was growing up with—you know, John Hughes dialogue became normal, and it became normalized in terms of letting, you know, teenagers be crude, letting kids be a little bit cruder and being kind of honest with that.

He said, quote, "Somewhere along the line, executives, movie

makers, storytellers realized that there was this audience there for kids who were not being spoken to, who were not being presented with the things that entertained them. If you're going to write for kids, to kids, about kids, I think you have to, obviously, write the way that they speak, or risk not being truthful." End quote.

Um, and for him, that was uh, very important in terms of letting—especially the boys talk to one another in this movie. But at the same time, he said, quote, "The central relationship was between Brad and his friend and if I remember correctly, they did a lot of down and dirty talking about love and relationships and sex. It was more of a boy centric film at the time that I wrote it, but then it changed into Elisabeth's point of view." End quote.

00:32:41 Hannah Guest Wow, I—I sort of thought that the—the boys were pretty unrealistic, but maybe that's just uh—maybe it's just dated. But I really thought that Sara, the young sister, was a lot, coming from—I thought her dialogue was just a lot more believable than the boys. But it's probably just dated. I really like writing for kids. Kids and old people. But there's something—it's a hard—it's a hard thing to try to get it right. But I thought Sara, the sister, was much more believable, and the guys were kind of um, sort of the cliché of the time to me.

00:33:16 April Host Yeah, do you think it was like, over the top, them kind of drooling over a Playboy mag or something, or?

00:33:20 Hannah Guest Yeah. A hundred percent. Um, yeah but I feel like that was—1987 was definitely the time of sort of um, celebrating the drooling over women and the high fives and, to me, maybe it wasn't that it wasn't realistic, it's just maybe not my taste these days.

00:33:39 April Host *[Laughing]* Yeah. Oh, really? That's not your taste?

00:33:43 Hannah Guest I know! I don't even think it's funny. It's like, I'm so—I'm so on the other side of things, where I'm like, so put off by it. But it didn't—it wasn't—it's uh, it seems sort of just very movie-y to me. It didn't seem like real kids.

There are some nice scenes though between like, Brad and Chris. I think that Brad sort of pawing over her is sort of realistic and sweet. Those seem more grounded to me, but.

00:34:11 April Host I feel like we should also get to that scene, you know, and you already talked about this, but "don't fuck with the babysitter" on the L train. And um, you know, we were talking about kind of like, language and boy centric things and lewdness, and that is a moment where we get to see Chris kind of wielding that language. Because she's not that person, but she wields it as a weapon. It's a very coarse word.

And that was something kind of very calculated that Chris Columbus and David Simkins did. They gave her one moment that felt shocking, because it punctuates that scene. So she's like, able to kind of break into that kind of darker side of herself, and you know, save these children. And I think that I appreciate that kind of thing, where they withhold, withhold, withhold so much for her, and give her one moment of uh, kind of shock. And uh—

00:35:10 Hannah Guest I fucking love that moment.

[Both laugh.]

I—well, I love—I love that moment. I love seeing her being so good. I love her carrying in her pocket, like the cough syrup with her that she’s still trying got get people, right before that scene, to like take naps. And then she gets to drop the F-bomb and she does it so well, and it’s what I remember from that moment. And it really makes the whole film better.

And like, this gives this movie more gravity. I am a huge F-dropper. I always have been. I was raised by my single mom, who also swears—uh, I hope she’s not listening. But um, I—I, you know what, F-bombs are something I thought about a lot while writing my film. Um, the single mother, Kathy, talking to her son, she swears. And I think that people swear, and I think that sometimes, um, like I think that saying fuck sometimes really is what you’re feeling, and there’s no other way of expressing something.

And I feel like—I didn’t even realize this now, but *Adventures in Babysitting* does it to like, the purest degree. I think that movie is better because of that F-bomb. And it shocked me, because I forgot it was there. Even though I knew it was coming, but to hear it, I was like, “This is so satisfying. This is like, giving her some power.” In a movie also where it could be so many other versions of a ditzy character, or again like, using her sexuality. Um, but I loved how she is sort of—she’s sort of like a little Wonder Woman in this way.

00:36:48 April Host When you’re, I mean, you write for TV a lot. Is that something that you’re thinking about, in terms of language and whether or not you’re giving your characters like, too many swears? Or are you kind of tuned in?

00:37:04 Hannah Guest I’ve been lucky. I’ve been lucky to be on cable, so I don’t—I don’t have as many constraints. But I know I’ve definitely had drafts of things where I was like, “This person is swearing a lot. We’ve got to take a lot of this out.” You know?

00:37:20 April Host *[Laughing]* Like you’re re-reading it like, “Oh shit, what was that?”

00:37:24 Hannah Guest I’m like, “Oh fuck, there’s a fucking shit—yep. Oh, okay, yeah, that’s a lot of swear words for that person. Uh, let’s take out almost all of those.” Yeah.

00:37:32 April Host Yeah. So you have to do a swear pass. *[Laughs.]*

00:37:35 Hannah Guest I definitely have to do a swear pass always. I think I had to do one on *Driveways* also. Um, especially to make sort of some stuff that happens later in the film um, land better. Um, I definitely had to.

00:37:48 April Host Yeah. Sometimes there are fuck moderations for sure.

00:37:52 Hannah Guest Yes. A barometer. A fuck barometer.

[Both laugh.]

That's why podcasts are fun. Do you have an amount that you can have in your podcast?

- 00:38:02 April Host No. We're just explicit. That's it.
- 00:38:04 Hannah Guest You're free! You're free!
- 00:38:07 April Host I know, which is good for me, 'cause I don't think I'd be able to handle it.
- Um, *[Laughing]* I want to thank you so much for coming and uh, well, you didn't go anywhere. I want to thank you so much for being in your uh, bedroom or your apartment, and uh, talking about *Adventures in Babysitting* with us. And also, how can people watch your movie, *Driveways*?
- 00:38:26 Hannah Guest Um, you can see *Driveways* on—you can rent it on Amazon, and Apple, and a lot of cable providers. You can go to [Filmrise.com](https://www.filmrise.com). It's on the internet it's hopefully easy to find now, and it came out, and yeah, please check it out.
- 00:38:38 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
- 00:38:41 April Host Go check out *Driveways*.
- 00:38:43 Hannah Guest Thank you.
- 00:38:44 April Host And thank you for listening to *Switchblade Sisters*. Uh, obviously we've started doing something a little different at the end of every episode. From now on, I am giving you a staff pick. A recommendation of a film directed by a woman. And, you know, hopefully you guys have a little extra time in between you know, panicking, work, kids, pets, all of that, maybe gardening, baking, so you can watch a movie.
- Um, but the staff pick today is a little thematically linked, as I've been doing. This one is maybe the darker side of a teenage girl going on adventures to try to save a family. This one would be Debra Granik's *Winter's Bone*. That one got Jennifer Lawrence her breakthrough role, and you know, obviously her career has taken off. Debra Granik is a past guest of ours, too. She talked about Sam Fuller's *Pickup on South Street*.
- But *Winter's Bone* is a fantastic movie and is also its own kind of adventure film, you know, just with a lot, maybe more, at stake. Uh, so take a look at that if you have a chance.
- And 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](https://www.maximumfun.org).

[Music fades.]

00:40:11	Clip	Clip	Chris: Don't fuck with the babysitter.
00:40:14	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:40:16	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:40:17	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:40:18	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.