

00:00:00	April	Host	<p>Hi, I'm April Wolfe of <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>. Um, you're about to listen to our episode with Zoey Luna talking about <i>Underwater</i>, and I think it's a really uh, phenomenal, important episode where we get into a lot of deep topics.</p> <p>But before we even get into that, I wanted to say something off script and just from the bottom of my heart. It has been a very difficult time for so many people, for so many of our listeners. And I just want to say that we appreciate you. This episode that we have, we recorded weeks ago, so, you know, it somewhat seems like a different world.</p> <p>But right now, in the top of the show, we just want—we want you to know that black lives matter. That we care about you, and <u>your</u> life matters. And with that, here's our episode.</p>
00:00:52	Music	Transition	<p>"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.</p>
00:01:00	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. Maybe one that's influenced their own work in some small way, or just, you know, piqued their interest.</p> <p>And you may already know, but a reminder that we are remote recording now and I'm recording in my bedroom. The trash trucks are not coming through today, but my cat may. So keep an ear out for Chicken. Maybe you guys can get a prize if you can catch her in the audio.</p> <p>Um, but, you know, the audio will likely sound a little bit different from our studio's. Everything else is the same, except for our guest. Because today I'm very excited to have actor Zoey Luna calling in here. Hi, Zoey.</p>
00:01:46	Zoey	Guest	<p>Hi, April! How are you?</p>
00:01:47	April	Host	<p>Pretty good, pretty good. From the other end of LA. We're both in LA, but worlds apart, you know?</p>
00:01:54	Zoey	Guest	<p>Yeah, down east LA I guess, but yeah. I guess it's a different place.</p>
00:01:59	April	Host	<p>So, for those of you who aren't as familiar with Zoey's work, please let me give you an introduction. Zoey is a trans Latina actress, born and raised in beautiful, sunny Downey, California.</p> <p>Uh, when she was just 16 and still in high school, she starred in her first role as Liz in Rosario Dawson's directorial debut, <i>Boundless</i>. A YA tale about three best friends who develop some cool technology and then have to come together to stop it from falling into the wrong hands.</p>

So, Zoey also made a small appearance on *Pose* as Lacey in the season 2 finale. And while filming for *Pose*, on Zoey's 18th birthday—how serendipitous—she was in the audition process for her now first feature role as Lords in the upcoming reboot of *The Craft*. The film will be released... sometime soon.

- 00:02:46 Zoey Guest Girl, I don't know. I hope soon.
- 00:02:49 April Host We'll keep checking back with Zoey and see where it's going. But later this year, probably.
- 00:02:55 Zoey Guest Yeah, hopefully.
- 00:02:56 April Host Yes. So, either way, it's directed by Zoe Lister-Jones, and co-stars David Duchovny, Lovie Simone—who you guys might remember from Tayarisha Poe's *Selah and the Spades*—um, and Michelle Monaghan and Gideon Adlon and so many others.
- So uh, Zoey. Let's talk about the movie you chose today for your discussion. Because you, you actually chose a newer film, and we usually get kind of like, the older ones. But you were like, it's right here on the tip of my brain.
- So you chose *Underwater*, which was release just this year, in January. Can you give us a little explanation on why that's one of your fave genre films?
- 00:03:36 Zoey Guest Well, it's one of my fave genre films because I love, you know, action. I mean, I never usually say that. But I love horror and I love the action that's involved in this film, and, you know, it's a very intense roller coaster ride, kind of like my life.
- And it's kind of just like very similar to how I had to do things throughout my life. Like, you know, the message at the end of the movie is like, you know, sometimes you have to feel less and just start doing. And I feel like my feelings have rooted me into like, doing more for myself.
- So in a way, I've kind of become addicted to feeling things, and then now I just kind of realize, you know, you've got to let go of some of the feelings, you got to put some of the heart's wants aside, and you have to make some tough decisions. And I think that's why I chose this film, because it really is indicative of my year. I don't know if indicative—whatever. I'm trying. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:04:26 April Host Yeah, yeah. Exactly. No, you got it. You got it. Um, so it's a lot about feeling and spiritual connection is what I'm hearing from you.
- 00:04:34 Zoey Guest Yeah.
- 00:04:36 April Host For those of you who haven't seen *Underwater*, today's episode will give you some spoilers, but that shouldn't stop you from listening before you watch. 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 *Underwater* first, it's available on VOD now.
- 00:04:52 Music Music "Under the C" off the album *Underwater (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)* by Marco Beltrami, Brandon Roberts

00:04:54	April	Host	<p>Now, let's introduce <i>Underwater</i> with a synopsis. I promise, it's as short as it can be.</p> <p>Um, written by Brian Duffield and Adam Cozad, and directed by William Eubank for release in 2020, <i>Underwater</i> stars Kristen Stewart as Norah, a mechanical engineer on a deep-water drilling rig. We meet her when she's brushing her teeth—</p>
00:05:14	Clip	Clip	<p>Norah: I dream about the first thing he ever said to me. Told me he didn't believe in time. Only moments.</p>
00:05:22	April	Host	<p>—and the next thing we know, it seems an earthquake ruptures the rig, and she has to run down corridors to escape the coming water and air pressure bursts, until she finds herself in a room with a colleague named Rodrigo.</p> <p>They make a split second decision to seal off the room, thereby preventing others from escaping with them.</p>
00:05:40	Clip	Clip	<p>Rodrigo: Norah, Norah! They are not going to make it! Close the door! We have to close the door, otherwise the whole rig will die.</p>
00:05:45	April	Host	<p>It's... emotional, but not really. It's kind of methodical in the way that it's presented. Together, they crawl through an incredibly tight space, and dig another colleague, Paul, out of some rubble, and finally get to where they should be—uh, where there should be escape pods, but there aren't.</p> <p>Instead, there is the captain, Lucien, played by Vincent Cassel, who's waiting for survivors.</p>
00:06:07	Clip	Clip	<p>Norah: Why are you still here? You should have gone up. There were pods here.</p> <p>Lucien: 'Cause that's what captains do.</p> <p>Norah: Who cares? You have a kid. You should have gone up.</p> <p>Lucien: Can you—can you sit down please?</p> <p>Norah: Any one of us would have shoved your ass into that pod immediately.</p> <p>Lucien: Listen to me! Everybody's getting out of here alive, you hear me?</p>
00:06:26	April	Host	<p>Finally, they meet up with other two survivors, Emily, a green research scientist, and Smith, an old friend of Norah's. The rig is ruptured and going to blow, so their only choice is to suit up and attempt a long walk across the ocean floor to the Roebuck rig, which should have escape pods.</p>
00:06:43	Clip	Clip	<p>Lucien: We go for the Roebuck.</p> <p>Paul: The Roebuck?</p> <p>Norah: That's a mile down and a mile that way. What are you</p>

talking about?

Paul: Yeah.

Emily: How would we even get there?

Lucien: We walk.

Paul: We what?

00:06:55	April	Host	The only thing is, they're starting to think this isn't an earthquake situation. In their suits, they pressurize and ascend into water, but Rodrigo's helmet cracks immediately, and he implodes in front of them. They forge on, and get to a transport vehicle that allows them to descend into the depths, but see a distress beacon from one of the pods below and go out to check it.
00:07:16	Clip	Clip	Norah: It's definitely stopped on the platform below us. Lucien: Survivor. It could be a survivor.
00:07:22	April	Host	They're attacked by a strange, tentacled creature out there, but survive, and continue descending. But the Kepler rig explores, and they have to quickly get into their suits again to submerge before they hit the ocean floor. They get attacked in an access tunnel, and Paul is pulled apart and explodes in front of them. And then, when they make for another walk across the ocean floor, Smith's oxygen is damaged by falling debris, and he's pulled into a cave by a weird creature. Captain Lucien goes after him, but he's pulled through the cave now, and Norah, who is attached to him, goes with him. That's where Norah encounters a terrifying creature who attacks them, and Captain Lucien cuts Norah free so she can save herself.
00:08:04	Clip	Clip	Lucien: Let go, god damn it! Norah: I can't, I can't. I can't. Robot Voice: Four percent. Three percent. Norah: No, no, no, no. Robot Voice: Two percent. Lucien: I'll be alright. Norah: No, no, don't do that. Robot Voice: One percent.
00:08:19	April	Host	Norah wakes up alone and finds her way to an abandoned rig, where she gets a map and make a plan. Against all odds, she finds Emily dragging Smith towards the Roebuck, and they reunite.
00:08:27	Clip	Clip	Emily: I... I didn't get very far.

Norah: Are you kidding me? I am so proud of you. You can't even believe it, honestly.

00:08:41 April Host When they arrive at the Roebuck, the outside is just covered with a bunch of disgusting, slumbering creatures. Norah sacrifices herself so Emily and Smith, who are in love, can be safe together, divulging that she lost the man she loved once and never recovered from it.

But Norah survives after the alien devours her and she shoots herself out of it. They get into the Roebuck, but an even bigger Cthulhu-like creature, bigger than the rig itself, begins attacking, and their options for escape pods are limited. Only two are functional, and Norah forces Emily and Smith into those.

00:09:16 Clip Clip **Norah:** If you stay, you're gonna die here, and then what are we even doing?

Emily: I can stay with you, and we can fix it together.

Norah: We don't have time for that. Come on. Get in the pod.

Emily: Hey! What are you—Norah!

Norah: Do you know what I would do for one more second, just one more second with him? Anything. Anything. Go, you have a whole life.

Emily: No, no, Norah, stop it.

Norah: Emily!

Emily: Stop it!

00:09:33 April Host And then blows up the ship, sacrificing herself to save Emily and Smith, and possibly humanity itself as well.

00:09:40 Clip Clip **Norah:** You lose your sense of time in the dark.

[There's a creaking and a groaning sound.]

Robot Voice: Three, two, one.

Norah: So let's light this shit up.

00:09:50 April Host Okay. So, that's it, in a nutshell. Let's talk about what Kristen Stewart has to go through in this role as an actor. Because it is incredible, and we'll get into that, like, that's gonna be maybe a significant chunk of this discussion.

But um, this is something that William Eubank said, quote, "When we sat down, it was my first time meeting Kristen, and she read the script. She then said, 'I hate underwater.' And she didn't mean the movie, and the title of the movie. She just really doesn't like water, the idea of underwater. She doesn't like swimming in the open ocean. She has a desperate fear of water.

“Kristen does what her heart tells her, though, and she does what she wants to do. She said, ‘I love this movie. I love Norah’s character. But I’m gonna be frank, I hate water. So I want to do this.’ It really blew my mind how direct she was about what she loved, what she wanted to do, and putting her fears out there on the table. It was almost like a challenge to her. At that point, I was like, ‘We’re going to be really safe about any actual underwater stuff.’ And she was like, ‘Great, thanks. I hate it.’” End quote.

[Both laugh.]

00:10:58 Zoey Guest Well, she is an Aries, so it makes a lot of sense how she’s like, “I’m gonna tell you straight up how I am,” you know?

[April affirms.]

I love that about her. I think she’s so, just insanely amazing.

00:11:09 April Host So wait, do you like, go through like, all actors' like, sun signs, and you’re like, “Yeah, that makes sense, that makes sense”?

00:11:17 Zoey Guest Of course! Yeah, no I go through like, I go through their charts if I can find it online. Like I know, my favorite actress is Sarah Michelle Geller and she’s an Aries. So yeah, I do go through everyone’s, and I’ve noticed that there’s a lot of Aries Sagittarius moons out there that are just phenomenal actresses. Like Gideon. I just did *The Craft* with her, and yeah, there's a lot of them.

00:11:42 April Host Well, I mean like, let’s talk about those characteristics. Because, first off, she has the fear of it, and she says, “Okay, if I have that fear of it, then it seems more likely that I want to do this. Because even if I will never recover from that fear, I can say that I did it.” Can we talk about that in terms of what that means as an actress, um, you know, after kind of going into their craft and why you do what you do.

00:12:09 Zoey Guest I mean, I think that some people honestly are thrill seekers, and some people feel better under pressure. Like, I feel like I’m the type of person that likes to rehearse and practice and did all that. And then I’ve met a lot of different people on different sets that like, you know, I barely know the lines, but on the day of shooting I’m just gonna look it over while I’m getting my hair and makeup done, and then I’m fresh in it. And I’m like, girl, I would die. Like, when I got *The Craft* I think I knew all of the lines, not even just my own.

00:12:37 April Host You’re sitting there like, mouthing everyone else’s lines, like—

00:12:40 Zoey Guest No, yeah, I’m like, okay well everyone has to like, make it work, so. Yeah, I think like um, I knew all the lines from the whole script, I think, a month within, and like, in the audition process when they gave me the full script. So I don’t know how they do it. I think it’s insane and incredible and honestly, I aspire to be that, like, you know what, just go for it. Let’s do it. And I think it’s all about their life path and facing their fears, and I think that that is like, a representation of that.

00:13:08 April Host And you feel like, you know, in the career you’ve had thus far, do

you feel like you've done things specifically because you were scared of them? Or is there like, a list of things that you are kind of making, that you're like, this really freaks me out. Maybe this is something where I wanna go and I wanna do.

- 00:13:27 Zoey Guest I think I had to do that more with my personal life, because when I came out in the womb, like, I knew I was gonna be a star. I knew that that's what was gonna be happening for me in my life.
- 00:13:37 April Host *[Laughing]* Oh, Zoey.
- 00:13:38 Zoey Guest I really, like I'm not afraid of tact, I'm not afraid to do things. I guess the only thing I'm afraid to do is have hair consultations when you're getting your whole characterization look down. That was a challenge, because I—obviously I'm blonde right now, but with like, situations like that, with hair color and things, it can really fry and damage your hair. So like, I had to wear extensions throughout *The Craft*, and then I—we decided on a wig. It was just a lot.
- I just don't like talking to people about my hair in that type of situation, because I've been doing my own hair since I was like, twelve years old, with extensions, everything. So it kind of—it was a really big, scary thing, because like, okay I know how wigs look on camera. Sometimes they don't look good, and you know, I didn't want to look weird.
- And also, I don't know if you've seen the original *Craft* but like, she had a wig, the main actress, um, Robin Tunney, and I was like, "Oh my god, I can't look like her like that. We need to make this wig look good."
- But it looks good. I can't wait for you guys to see it. I think yeah, the most scariest part for me definitely has to be like, letting other people be in control of like, my hair, and like my look. I don't really care about the makeup part, but yeah, the hair.
- 00:14:42 April Host I mean, for you like, that kind of you know, getting to wear a wig, getting to kind of have someone who's turning your whole self into a new character, that has to be very fun and also maybe, I mean, if what you're saying in terms of like, being a trans actress and trying to represent that on the screen, it has to be a negotiation of control.
- [Zoey affirms.]*
- And you know, so I can see how that would be tense, but also fun and exciting, but.
- 00:15:14 Zoey Guest Yeah, it was definitely like, a journey I would say. It was really fun. I'm just glad, you know, it looked good at the end of the day. And I really, I think that you know, when it comes to style and choices the actors make with their character, I think it would be 100% collaborative between the stylist, like the wardrobe department, and with the hair department. I mean, obviously if you're gonna play a fucking alien, you're not gonna be like, "Oh, I think my alien should be purple." Like, the director's gonna decide. But yeah.
- [April laughs.]*

Otherwise I think you know, actors should have a little bit con—like, not control but just a little bit of a say in like, how they gotta dress themselves for the part. I mean, ‘cause everyone goes in with their character and they imagine how they’re gonna look, and so they kind of, you know, they feel it. So I feel like it should be a little more collaborative.

And I know that there is a lot of like, actresses that do do their own makeup and hair on sets now. Like, once you get to a certain point you can kind of just you know, collaborate with the people in charge of like, who does what. And you can get your own stuff done, and that’s hopefully what I want to start doing, so I think I have to go get a makeup degree or something like that, but that should be cool.

00:16:13 Music Transition

“Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:16:18 April Host

Why not? Uh, we’re gonna take a quick break. When we come back, we’re gonna be right back into *Underwater* and uh, some more stories from *The Craft*.

[*Music fades.*]

00:16:31 Promo Promo

James Arthur: Hi, I’m James, host of *Minority Korner*, which is a—?

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00:17:20 Music Transition

"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:17:27 April Host

Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*. I'm April Wolfe, and I'm joined today by Zoey Luna, and we're talking about *Underwater*.

So, you know, we got into the idea that Kristen Stewart was very frightened of doing this thing, and it's like, been such a you know, it was like a really big thing for her. When she actually got into it, it was even more difficult. But she understood that whatever fear that she was having would actually translate really well to the screen.

So she said, quote, "It was hard to have such weight on your shoulders without the help of the water." She's talking about the suit. "We were running through dug out sand trenches. In the suits, we were buried under rubble. It was either really freezing or really hot. The whole movie is deeply uncomfortable. It wasn't hard to scratch at because we were super legit dying. I would look over at my fellow actors and see lifeless, squinty, blinky eyes looking back at me, and I thought maybe the movie would be really good."
[Laughing] End quote.

Just seeing the fear and seeing how terrible they look, um and knowing that like, having those emotions actually running through them as an actor, feeling them, is going to translate to the screen and that whatever sacrifice you have is going to end up there. Um, and I can see that in this movie. I mean, this is a—it um—it is extremely claustrophobic, and there is no point in time where I feel like any of these characters are comfortable with it.

00:18:57 Zoey Guest

No. No, of course not. They're all like, extremely dehydrated, probably hungry. Like, not in real life, but obviously in the movie. And yeah, I mean, I honestly chose this film because I felt like it had a lot to do with how my personal life was going. I felt like it really was symbolic of the choices I had to make in order to get to where I was.

I felt like *The Craft* and all of the stuff I've done were all like, the pieces of cake. That was the cherry on top of my crazy, rambunctious life. And I feel like I really chose this movie because it's really about my journey that I've taken as just an individual to get to where I am today.

And I feel like—you know, because—I'm gonna tell you a little story. Do you have time? Do you want to hear about it?

00:19:43 April Host Oh my god, do we have time? Uh, I think we got a little time.

00:19:45 Zoey Guest Do we have time?

00:19:46 April Host Yeah, what is up?

00:19:47 Zoey Guest Okay, so—*[Laughing]* so basically, um, when I was younger, I did a lot of activism work with my mother. Um, because I was transitioning, and I was, I guess, a voice for the LGBT community. And um, being so young and not knowing a lot about what was going on, and also just trying to be the girl I am, you know, I thought it was a really cool idea for me to go and speak out to crowds and say, you know, it's okay to be trans. It's okay to accept us. We're all just human.

And um, a lot of the time people would love to focus on my mother's with media, because you know, it's so crazy to see like, a mother supporting a trans child. And—

00:20:29 April Host Yeah, it's still sadly very rare.

00:20:31 Zoey Guest Yeah. And it's horrible, and I think that growing up, I was placed under being trans so much of my life. Oh, look at your relationship with your mom. Oh, look at how cute that is, at how cute you are for being a trans girl, all this stuff. But what a lot of people didn't understand about me is that I was going through a shit ton of problems. I had so much trauma that I had never processed and that I wasn't allowed to process and you know, with PTSD it starts to effect you way after the events happen.

And so, without getting too, I don't know, gruesome, I was molested by my brother, and um—when I was very young, before I had transitioned. And so for me, *Underwater* really hits home to me, because when I was 14 I had told my mom about this, because it started really distracting my school life and my work environment and just everything in general with activism. And so I told her because my therapist was doing this deep recovery session where she got me to admit that that's why I disliked my brother strongly.

And so I told my mother about it, and she—like, I understand her reaction to why she did the thing she did. Because obviously like, you have two children here. Like, one's your son, one's your daughter. Your son is your baby and your daughter is also your baby, but your son is doing this now, and how are you supposed to put the blame on him?

Especially in the Latino community, I feel like a lot of moms really praise their first born son, and that was her first born son. So it was really hard for her to, you know, understand what was going on and he is also schizophrenic, and at the time, I believe, was 18 years old. So basically, she could have kicked him out when I told her, but she didn't because he was schizophrenic and suffering and where the fuck is he gonna go? He's just gonna end up on skid row like everyone else. Which I praise her for doing that, for taking care of him and for, you know, all of that stuff.

00:22:21 Zoey Guest But I also think that I was a 14 year old girl having to live with my

abuser every day and at a certain point it just became too much for me, and she would n—like, I had tried to go out and talk to therapists, and I had tried to get help. But all of those times that I would try to get help, CPS would get involved, social services. And my mom would give me the ultimatum, either I go with them and I turn into a foster, or I sit here and mine my way out of it, so that he doesn't have to be removed from the house, because he won't have anywhere to make it.

So growing up all my life I had been doing things for others, kind of like Norah did. You know, if you notice the whole scene in the beginning where she's talking about doing stuff for others and glass half empty and the spider thing, you know.

00:23:05 April Host Yeah, immediately that image, it gives you the sense that like, this is—like I'm continually sacrificing myself, or burying things for the good of other people feeling better around me. Because if I were to say these things out loud, if I were to give voice to them, it would be a lot of trouble. *[Laughs.]*

00:23:25 Zoey Guest Yeah. And so it was really frustrating for me when I was you know, younger and having to do all these amazing, inspirational things to help other people with my mother, and brag about her and be like, "Oh, she's so accepting, she raised me, like, she's my hero." It was really difficult, and like, against my own grain. Because obviously she did do all these amazing things for me. She helped me get to be the woman I am today. She literally birthed me. But she also you know, was holding this secret and constantly showing me like, if I don't follow what she's saying I'm gonna be thrown to the dust. And so I couldn't take doing all of these documentary tours about our relationship. I couldn't take doing any of that.

And I got into a relationship with my partner, who took my virginity, and I had even told her about that when I was young, because I was really—she was really close to me. So I had told her about that and she was just like, "Oh, I'm glad that you can have sex even though, you know, all of the things that Javi did to you." And I was just like, "If you can be acknowledgeful of that, why can't you acknowledge that he needs to be removed?" You know what I mean? And so that kind of led me into a really, really harsh place, and my boyfriend had kept, you know, telling me. He was just like, you know, "You should express how you truly feel to your mom. Like, everything out on the table, and be like, this is the facts, this is what's going on. And if all else fails, you can come live with me."

So, this one night I was in my room, I had just come back from his house with him, and uh, my dog was outside. And my brother, he goes in and out of jail constantly, so he had came back from jail and was acting erratic and throwing a skateboard around in our big backyard, and my dog was out there with him.

So my mom asked me, she was like, "Hey, can you get the dog inside?" And I was like, "Why?" And she was like, "'Cause he's acting erratic." And I was like, "My dog is basically 160 pounds. I'm almost his size. Like, why is it not okay for him to be out there, and okay for me to be in the room where the backyard is? Like, it

doesn't make any sense. Like, if he's a threat to my dog, he should be a threat to me."

00:25:20 Zoey

Guest

And so we had this long discussion about you know, basically you're not showing up for me as a parent, and you're allowing me to still be reminded of what I've gone through, and I'm not being able to go through school. I had actually, I think, dropped out of high school my senior year, and then I finished out the end of the semester, but I was out of school.

And she wasn't doing much for me, and I was just really upset, because I was like, do you not see what your responsibilities are here? Like, I'm a 17 year old girl at this point and I'm asking you to do something for me as a parent, and you're not doing that. So like, what is the problem? What am I doing wrong? Like, I started internalizing it and basically in that moment, I just kind of realized, sometimes you have to stop feeling and just start doing.

So I was like, "What are you gonna do? Are you gonna kick him out or are you gonna like, not do anything?" And she was like, "I'll tell you what you can do. You can pack all your things and leave." And so, at 17 years old, I got kicked out of my house because I was standing up for my abuse, and because I was asking my mother, out of all people, to be there for me.

And so after then, it really was like I had to stop feeling. I just had to keep doing. After that point in my life, it was just survival and trying to see where I was gonna live. And I think that that's why I really chose this movie, because it really is serendipitous of my—of my experience. And I feel like the journey I went through after that was really intense and really crazy, but honestly, super fun, because I was a 17 year old girl with a whole year ahead of her, about to turn 18, just living in a bunch of different people's homes. I learned a lot about people and I learned a lot about myself.

And I think that this movie, when I saw it in 2020, I was just so happy, 'cause I really related to it. And the whole situation that I went through was totally claustrophobic. I was losing sleep, I wasn't eating, I was smoking cigarettes, I was really fucked up. But I ended up making it back home. In 2020 I moved back in with my mom and now we have an easier relationship. It still is really tricky for me to deal with, obviously, because of the trauma and stuff.

00:27:22 April

Host

Yeah. But I mean, it seems like you can relate in these very, very specific ways to what this character is doing. I can easily see how somebody in your situation would kind of project onto her, of just like, "Ah yes, I see this. Like, I see the unfeelingness, I see the numbness."

And you know, Kristen Stewart gets like, so much shit for being so numb in her performance, but in a situation like that, you know, she's playing it real. Like, that's something that you do. You bury those emotions, because they're too much to deal with. They're too much to—to give space to, I think, sometimes.

Um, I wanted to ask you real quick, I mean Jessica Henwick, who

plays Emily, the—the research assistant, the scientist. There is something that when William Eubank was—Eubank was talking about this, that they weren't sure who was gonna play that part. And they had all of these different people. Like, so many casting videos, so many sessions, and it just—nothing really clicked.

But he said, quote, “She read for us, and she floored me immediately with the scope of what she could do with that character. You're always trying to see someone's range, and she delivered these moments with accuracy and pinpoint precision. She seemed so thorough with her characterization of Emily in the film, and you know right away when you see it. When you're watching tapes, you're like, ‘Oh, this could be good, this could be good.’ And then suddenly you see one where you're like, ‘Oh wow, that's the level.’ She's just one of those people where you're watching something happen.” End quote.

00:28:51 April Host

Um, and I you know, I wanted to talk about those moments as an actor. Like, you know, Emily was self-taping for this as many people do, as, you know,—and it could be a great experience or it could be a weird experience, depending how comfortable you are with yourself, alone often with a camera. But trying to bring that level of accuracy and precision that he's talking to—talking about, I think, comes with knowing the script forward and backward in a certain way, or knowing the accuracy of those emotions and trying to pinpoint where they turn.

So I'm curious, for you, you know, when you're self-taping, is it hard to find, like, pinpoint those moments that you know where like, this is the part of the audition where I'm gonna shine, or like, this is the thing that's gonna set me apart?

00:29:45 Zoey Guest

Yeah. I mean I think for me it's like... I don't know. I kind of just read the character, I get the vibe, I create her in my mind, and then like, I kind of just like put her out there. Okay, the way that I do it is like, when I'm kind of getting ready for a character, I look for inspiration through other actresses. So like, for me, a lot of the time I look for inspiration in Emma Roberts' character for uh, Chanel in *Scream Queens*, and for uh, what's that other one? *AHS: Coven*, when she played Madison.

I don't know what it is, but like, I love those two characters. And when I get um, like a role, usually when I get a sex worker role to audition for, I usually go to her for those. I don't know why, but she has this like, weird like, bitchy type of attitude that's like, “I'm white and I'm super like, above everyone.”

And I feel like a lot of trans girls that I've met—'cause like, most of the parts I get are for trans women—um, a lot of trans girls that I've met who haven't really you know, got a lot of security in themselves and haven't really like, found their own voice and their own path, they kind of tend to go towards that more Eurocentric attitude. That like 2002's baby.

So, for me, I'm really practiced in doing the bitchy type of like, I don't know, like sassy girl stuff. So for me, when I'm trying to get ready for

a role, I usually just watch like, any film that reminds me of a character, and I look at that character, and I'm like—

00:31:10 April Host Just like a murderer's row of bitches. *[Laughs]* So many bitches. Just watch them back to back.

00:31:14 Zoey Guest Yeah! Yeah, I love bitches. Honestly, I'm waiting for the time I gotta just play a bitch on a TV show. I just wanna play a bitch. Someone cast me as a bitch, I would do really well.

00:31:24 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:31:27 April Host *[Laughing]* Alright, we're gonna take a quick break. When we come back, we'll get more into *Underwater* and some of Zoey's stories from the set of *Craft*.

[Music fades.]

00:31:40 Promo Promo *[A telephone rings.]*

Hotshot Hollywood Producer: Listen, I'm a hotshot Hollywood movie producer.

Music: Fun, grooving music begins to play quietly in the background.

Producer: You have until I finish my glass of *[articulating]* kom-bucha to pitch me your idea. Go.

[Slurping sounds.]

Ify: Alright! It's called *Who Shot Ya*: a movie podcast that isn't just a bunch of straight, white dudes. I'm Ify Nwadiwe, the new host of the show and a certified BBN.

Producer: BBN?

Ify: Buff Black Nerd.

Alonso: I'm Alonso Duralde, an elderly gay and legit film critic who wrote a book on Christmas movies.

Drea: I'm Drea Clark, a loud, white lady from Minnesota.

Ify: Each week, we talk about a new movie in theaters and all the important issues going on in the film industry.

Alonso: It's like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* meets *Cruising*.

Ify: And if it helps seal the deal? I can flex my muscles while we record each episode.

Producer: I'm sorry, this is a podcast?! I'm a movie producer. *[Disdainfully]* How did you get in here?

Drea: Ify, quick! Start flexing!

Ify: [Dramatically] Bicep! Lats! Chest! *Who Shot Ya*, dropping every Friday on MaximumFun.org, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

[Music ends.]

00:32:33 Music Transition “Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:32:39 April Host Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*. I’m April Wolfe, and I’m joined today by Zoey Luna, and we’re talking about *Underwater*.

Um, so something that um, William Eubanks is really, really open about is that he understands that he’s kind of building on this tradition when he’s working in genre. And he knows that there’s been quite a few movies that are made in this area—I mean, this film that he’s making, obviously, has been compared to um, to Ridley Scott’s *Alien*. And he became—he became close, I think, with Ridley Scott after you know, they shared some similarities in their filmmaking.

But he—William Eubanks, as he’s making this movie, he was extremely open about what movies he wanted influencing this. You know, he was like, I’m building on other things so you guys should know what it is. And he was also thinking, you know, about like, how to do trailer shots, for instance.

But he said, quote, “Near the end of the movie, I went into the camera guy’s room at one point, and there was this massive list of movies that they’d been writing on the wall. And I was like, ‘What is this?’ And they were like, ‘That’s you. It’s all you talk about is these movies and getting those shots just like these shots for the trailer.’ Sometimes I just feel like it’s easy to distill what you’re working on if you’re actually thinking about how you’re going to get people to see it in the first place.

“I know that sounds silly, cheesy, and cheap, but I love thinking like that. When you think about the movie from the trailer and what a trailer shot would be, it distills your movie in your head of what’s important and what’s not. All these choices cost so much money, and you can only do certain ones. So I’m not afraid to admit that I’m often just going for the cool shot.” End quote.

And I think that, for him, you know, he’s looking at all these cool shots, quote-unquote, from all of these other movies, other trailers, and he’s just like, “Can we emulate this? Is there a way to emulate that?” And I think, you know, like he’s saying, some people can think that it’s like, cheesy or cheap or cheating. But it’s also kind of um, giving people what they like and what they know sells to them a certain kind of idea or image, and kind of putting like, a sense memory in their head, where they’re just like, “Oh, I remember that!” And then your brain just kind of goes back to that place, because you remember it. So it’s kind of a shorthand for a lot of those things.

And um, and I can see that in here. There’s quite a few shots where I’m just like, “Oh yeah, that’s reminiscent of this, that’s reminiscent of that.” And it’s sometimes kind of fun to pull those apart and to—to know what the influence is. But I don’t see it as necessarily um,

cheap.

And I'm curious, you know, when you were on set, were you ever aware that what Zoey was filming was going to be the cool shot? The shot that she needed to be, that she needed to hit, that was going to be in the trailer? Were you ever aware of those moments?

- 00:35:34 Zoey Guest Oh, hell yeah. Oh, hell yeah. Definitely, a hundred percent. There's—I can't spoil anything, because I will get killed, but—*[She breaks off, laughing.]*
- 00:35:43 April Host Oh yeah, that's what they do. They just straight up murder you. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:35:47 Zoey Guest Yeah no, like I'll never get a gig again. I'm done. Um, but yeah, no, there was definitely some really amazing shots that I knew were definitely gonna be in this trailer. And when I knew those were coming on, I just kept thinking like, it's Britney bitch. Like, that's all I kept thinking. I don't know why so many white women have birthed who I am, but they have. They just give me so much inspiration, and it sucks.
- And this is also what I want to change in media is the fact there's so many white women who are all the same, constantly repeating these empowering messages, but there's no fucking Latina girls like me other than fucking Selena. So, we need to change that shit. We need to start having more trans Latina girls in films, and we need to start having more people of color in films.
- Like, you know, there's also a really good show that I just watched, uh, *Never Have I Ever*. Have you heard of it?
- 00:36:40 April Host Oh yeah, it's a great show.
- 00:36:42 Zoey Guest It's beautiful, and it's really just so touching, because the whole fucking show was led by, you know, not white people.
- [April laughs.]*
- So I really feel like Hollywood might just be afraid of, you know, doing a story that isn't Eurocentric, because they're afraid that it might not be relatable. But it's totally relatable, you just have to have the right people on the team, you know?
- 00:37:04 April Host Yeah, and I think that you're, you know, you're hitting on the difference between film and television, too.
- [Zoey affirms.]*
- Which is, you know, 'cause television I think has maybe more opportunities, because it's less of a kind of global thing. Because everyone's afraid of being like, showing nonwhite faces to people across the globe, when you're like, well most people aren't white.
- 00:37:24 Zoey Guest Yeah, exactly.
- 00:37:27 April Host Um, but you know, like that's a larger issue for Hollywood to figure

out, whereas television I think is maybe making it a little bit easier in that correct direction.

00:37:37 Zoey Guest Yeah, and we gotta start changing it in film, and that's why I'm just so happy I'm—I really just am so grateful to be a part of *The Craft*, and I'm glad that I was chosen. 'Cause as soon as I got the audition notice, I was like, I'm doing this for the kids. 'Cause there was no kids doing this for me, so I was like, alright, time to be my own fucking hero. Gotta do it.

00:37:55 April Host *[Laughing]* Put that lipstick on and go.

00:37:58 Zoey Guest Outta here.

00:37:59 April Host Um, so you know, you were talking about, kind of tapping into real life emotion to have a kind of like, more depth for your character. But I'm curious about fear, because fear is something that's very interesting to film and very hard. Horror films, you know, any kind of genre, there's gotta be fear, and the fear has to be very real.

So, William Eubank said, quote, "We did some SCUBA training, and there's some actual underwater scenes. The suits that they wore were about a hundred pounds." Which we said before. "When they actually went underwater, the suits were over two hundred pounds. They needed to have that weight to go underwater. Once you get sealed in like that, it's like being in a coffin. You can't get yourself out. They had to go through dry—"

I'm sorry. "They had to go through diving training on all of that stuff, and Kristen was just like, 'What are we doing?' She also said, 'As soon as I get in his thing, turn the camera on, because it's going to be real fear.' She told me that. So those shots where you see her going underwater for the first time, that's her working extremely hard to overcome something that would make most of us look terrified." End quote.

So she was really aware in the time of like, what she was going to feel, and was just like, in a sense kind of collaborating with her director by saying like, "This is what this is going to evoke from me. This is what you can get from me. You can use that." You know like, that—I'm giving you a level of kind of knowing myself and knowing what's going to happen. But that's what you should catch and that's what you should put the camera on.

And I just really appreciate that in terms of her kind of knowing. I mean, she's a veteran at this point of having to feel fear. I mean, if you've seen any of her previous films. And um, for you, did your char—like, do your characters, have they had to feel that kind of visceral fear on screen?

00:39:48 Zoey Guest Yeah. For *The Craft*, yeah, I would say so. Um, because—well, I can't—I wish it was out already so I could just be like—

00:39:56 April Host I mean, talk around it. Talk around it.

00:39:58 Zoey Guest So definitely like, there was a couple scenes where I had to be fucking scared, and like I said, I always pulled on my inspiration of

white women. *[Laughs.]* And I went—I was like, okay, Sarah Michelle Geller on lock, got it. *Buffy, Scream*, all of them.

So I was just like, I know for me, it's a hundred percent in the eyes. The eyes have to be watery, they have to be confused, they have to be—like, I feel like you see most emotion through eyes for some reason, and I think that when it comes to being scared, I always think, alright, the eyes have to be watery.

And I—for me, this isn't necessarily fear, but it was scary to sort of cry on camera for one of the scenes in *The Craft*, and um—it was very funny—um, I told them that I had to watch a video on my iPhone before I could take the shot, because um, I had—you've heard of *The Fox and The Hound*, right?

00:40:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk

April: Oh yeah.

Zoey: You know—

April: Oh shit. Really? You had to—

[Zoey laughs hysterically.]

00:40:51 Zoey Guest

I had to fucking have my phone and just watch the scene where the mom is giving up the fox and sending him out into the forest so that I can get a fucking tear out. And yeah, so for me, it was definitely like, I really was like emotionally torturing myself. I was like, remind yourself of how your mom kicked you out. Remind yourself of how your mom kicked you out. *[Laughs.]* And then you'll cry. And I was like, *[She makes a sobbing sound.]*

And so yeah, I really, I think it—showing fear on camera is definitely really tricky, and a lot of people don't really understand what fear looks like, because a lot of people don't really let themselves feel like they can be afraid. And that was one of my problems, definitely. I mean, I was going through such a scary time in my life. They had to fricking fly me out of the country for the film. I hadn't even had a real home in like forever, so it was definitely very scary having to like, live in this new country, that was amazing. It's America lite. Canada is America lite.

And it was a very scary time, and I definitely did not want to feel scared. So when I did have to shoot that one scene where I was really scared, it was kind of a little tricky, because it was like, "Oh, hey old friend. I don't know you anymore. How do I do you?"

So it was very tricky—

00:41:59 April Host

Bring me *The Fox and The Hound!* *[Laughs.]*

00:42:00 Zoey Guest

Seriously! And everyone was watching me watch this little scene and hearing the little—what ever she fucking says, but in that old raspy voice, and they were just like, "Is she gonna do it? Like..." I just remember hearing, "Zoey, whenever you're ready! Whenever you're ready."

[April laughs.]

And I was just like, “One minute!” So yeah.

00:42:21	April	Host	Like, believe me, I’ve got this. Just give me a second.
00:42:25	Zoey	Guest	When I did it, everyone was super shocked. They were like, “Are you serious? Like, this is really happening?”
00:42:29	April	Host	If that’s what you need to do. Look, know thyself. Um, but I mean, that’s the anxiety of being a young actor. And you know, I hope that if anything from today’s discussion, you remember the Kristen Stewart of yourself, and the fact that she was earned this control in her life, in her creative life. And now she gets to control her image, and she gets to control how it’s distributed. And that’s something that I think every actor or creator in this field should always strive for.
			I want to thank you so much for coming on the show today and for uh, picking this movie to talk about. And we’ll keep everyone updated when we know when there will be a release date. But of course, people can go back and see your role on <i>Pose</i> . They can go—and I think that, um, that uh, the role you had um, in that short, the YA short, is also um, available on YouTube for people to watch, so they can check you out.
			Where else can they find you?
00:43:23	Zoey	Guest	They can find me on Instagram @IAmZoeyLuna. Um, you can find me on—just look at my Instagram, girl. I don’t know if the other apps are available. But um, yeah. I do—
00:43:35	April	Host	And you can find her in Downey. Just chilling at home like the rest of us.
00:43:40	Zoey	Guest	Yeah, of course. At the park, you know.
00:43:41	Music	Transition	“Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:43:42	April	Host	Thank you so much, Zoey.
00:43:43	Zoey	Guest	Thank you so much.
00:43:45	April	Host	And thank you for listening to <i>Switchblade Sisters</i> !

As you know if you’ve been listening recently, we’ve started doing something a little different. At the end of every episode, I’m giving a staff pick. A recommendation of a film directed by a woman. And you know, maybe you guys have some time to watch it. This one, you know, I’m trying to pair these thematically. This one is, I think, deeply familiar and connected to this movie, and it just so happens to co-star Kristen Stewart’s ex co-star from *Twilight*, Robert Pattinson.

This is Claire Denis’ *High Life* is my recommendation for today. I saw it in the theater. I’m glad that I did. It is a phenomenal movie about being isolated, about thinking that you are the last one of yourself, the last one of your kind, and the struggle of that isolation.

And the struggle of sacrifice, and what that sacrifice means for humanity. If it is banal sacrifice or if it is honorable. And it is such a fantastic movie. It begins with such a deep, deep guttural sad cry of a baby, so it sets a tone of just, excruciating, excruciating beauty throughout. I hope you guys check it out.

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.

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

[Music fades.]

00:45:27	Clip	Clip	Norah: So let's light this shit up.
00:45:29	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:45:31	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:45:32	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:45:33	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.