

00:00:00	April	Promo	<p>Hello, this is April Wolfe, host of <i>Switchblade Sisters</i>! I want to let you know two important things about this episode.</p> <p>One, Kelly Reichardt was recording with us back in February in the studio, so please do not stress out. We <u>are</u> social distancing. This is just a pre-recorded episode.</p> <p>And two, it is the beginning of the MaxFunDrive. So, Max Fun’s business model is “artist owned, audience supported”. That means, for you, that when you become a member, you are directly affecting our ability to continue the show, as well as Max Fun’s ability to plan for other, future shows.</p> <p>So, how to give: You can choose a monthly amount that’s comfortable for you. The majority of people give about five dollars a month, or ten dollars a month, and some upgrade to \$20, \$35, or even \$100 per month or more. It’s really all about what works for you. So, go to MaximumFun.org/join.</p> <p>And now for the show!</p>
00:00:51	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>
00:00:59	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 or represents their work. And today, I’m very excited to have writer-director Kelly Reichardt here. Hi!</p>
00:01:20	Kelly Reichardt	Guest	<p>Hi, April.</p> <p><i>[April wheezes laughter.]</i></p> <p>You got your Fassbender shirt on, I see. Cool.</p>
00:01:24	April	Host	<p>I do. I’m always representing. Deep, terrible, tragic German cinema.</p>
00:01:30	Kelly	Guest	<p>Okay, good.</p>
00:01:31	April	Host	<p>Um, for those of you who are less familiar with Kelly’s work, where have you been, but please let me give you an introduction.</p> <p>Kelly was born and raised in Miami, Florida, where she showed an early interest in photography. So she migrated north to Boston where she eventually earned her MFA at the School of Museum of Fine Arts.</p>
00:01:47	Kelly	Guest	<p>BA.</p>
00:01:48	April	Host	<p>Wh—BA!</p>

[Kelly affirms multiple times.]

Oh, my god. BA. You should just talk it up. *[Laughs.]*

00:01:51	Kelly	Guest	Right? Yeah.
00:01:52	April	Host	MFA, right? Around that time, she linked up with an east coast art crowd that included indie filmmaker Larry Fessenden, who then starred in and helped produce Kelly's feature directorial debut, 1995's <i>River of Grass</i> , set in her hometown, actually, Miami-Dade county.
00:02:10	Kelly	Guest	Larry's in New York. By now I'm in New York. Did you say that?
00:02:12	April	Host	Yeah, the east coast crowd, yeah.
00:02:14	Kelly	Guest	Okay. Yeah.
00:02:15	April	Host	Um, the film, if people remember, was an indie breakout, earning three independent spirit nominations and taking home the grand jury prize award from Sundance that year, and—
00:02:24	Kelly	Guest	I don't think so. Everyone says that, but—
00:02:25	April	Host	Really?
00:02:26	Kelly	Guest	That didn't happen.
00:02:28	April	Host	You're gonna say no?
00:02:29	Kelly	Guest	No, no, I'm gonna say no. I'm gonna say, uh, maybe Tamara Jenkins won the prize. I—
00:02:35	April	Host	We need to fact check it.
00:02:36	Kelly	Guest	I did not. I'll tell you that. But that comes up, so that's some mis—Wikipedia fake news. Fake news!
00:02:41	April	Host	A mis—a fake news.
00:02:42	Kelly	Guest	Fake news.
00:02:43	April	Host	There's so much that we should just say you <u>did</u> do. She also won a Guggenheim. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:02:45	Kelly	Guest	Right. I have a PhD—I did win a Guggenheim.
00:02:49	April	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> I know! It's later in the bio!
00:02:52	Kelly	Guest	Oh, okay. Go on. Onward. I mean, I'm pretty old, so this is gonna go on for a while.
00:02:56	April	Host	You're like, "Wait, how did—did I?"
00:02:57	Kelly	Guest	Okay. Alright. 1976, go on.
00:03:01	April	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> From there, Kelly made the feature, <i>Ode</i> , in 1999. Is that correct, Kelly?
00:03:05	Kelly	Guest	'98, but okay. I think so, yeah.

00:03:07 April Host Okay, it was released in '99?

00:03:08 Kelly Guest It wasn't released. It was a super8 movie.

00:03:10 April Host Yeah, okay. Alright. Uh, along with home shorts that she made around that time, too. And then uh, about 20—sorry, 2006 marked a very different direction for her career, when she found a co-conspirator in writer Jon Raymond. Was around 2006, that you first collaborated on *Old Joy*?

00:03:29 Kelly Guest *Old Joy* came out in 2006. We shot it in 2005. Yeah.

00:03:33 April Host Alright, followed by the heartbreaker, *Wendy and Lucy*, and the slow Western masterpiece, *Meek's Cutoff*.

00:03:38 Kelly Guest Masterpiece, yes. Go on.

00:03:40 April Host I thought you would like that.

00:03:41 Kelly Guest Yeah, that's good.

00:03:42 April Host In 2013, she directed the thriller, *Night Moves*, and then adapted Maile Meloy's short story collection for the sometimes hilarious, sometimes tragic, triptic feature, *Certain Women*.

This year, Kelly has re-teamed with Jon Raymond, adapting his novel, *The Half-Life*, for her film, *First Cow*. An ebullient and sweet meditation on friendship amid scarcity, set in the early American west, starring John Magaro and Orion Lee as two unlikely partners, scheming to steal milk from the territory's first cow for a daring baking business.

There's no possible way that I can list all the awards and accolades Kelly has received over the years—but there's the Guggenheim—but you should know it's a lot. She's also a teacher, the artist in residence at Bard College, and now she's here in Los Angeles for the show today.

00:04:24 Kelly Guest Hi.

00:04:25 April Host It's a lot.

00:04:26 Kelly Guest That's a lot.

00:04:27 April Host Uh, Kelly, the movie that you chose to talk about today is, in the French, *Mise à Sac*, but in English, *Pillaged*.

00:04:35 Kelly Guest *Pillaged*.

00:04:36 April Host Most often known as *Pillaged*. Can you give us a little explanation on why this one came to your head, popped in your head, of like why you wanted to talk about it?

00:04:42 Kelly Guest It's not—I didn't want to talk about it because I know a lot about it, I um, I keep bringing it up because I'm hoping it'll resurface. I saw it maybe two years ago, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and uh, I didn't know what I was going to see, and I just, it's really stuck in my mind, and I just—I'm hoping I'm gonna get to see it again somewhere along the way.

Uh, but there's certain scenes and images that uh, that, uh... stick with me.

00:05:15 April Host Swimming around in there.

00:05:16 Kelly Guest Yeah! Yeah.

00:05:19 April Host I'm surprised it is a movie that you'd seen only recently, actually. Two years ago.

00:05:24 Kelly Guest It is! I didn't know about it, somehow.

00:05:26 April Host Yeah, I mean, I didn't know.

00:05:29 Kelly Guest Totally under my radar. Well, I think there's only, like, a single print of it floating around, and that's why it's been—because I've, um, been doing some series, and I keep asking for it, and no one seems to be able to get it. So, uh, The MOMA somehow, knew how to get it, but...

00:05:45 April Host It's very hard to find out any information about this movie, as people will know from the research that I've done. This'll be a very—a slightly different kind of episode, because I don't have as many quotes from the filmmakers involved, because this is almost, like, a buried film. And we'll talk a little bit about that, too, what happens when a movie is, like, ostensibly quite good, but then it gets buried.

Um, but, for those of you who haven't seen *Pillaged*, today's episode will give you some spoilers, but that shouldn't stop you from listening before you watch. As always, my motto that it's not what happens, but how it happens that make a movie worth watching. Still, if you would like to pause, and watch *Pillaged* first, this is your shot. There is a, uh, terrible looking copy available on YouTube for people to see. But, if you want to see it, that's how you can see it.

[Spooky music begins]

And now that you're back. Let me introduce *Pillaged*, with a short synopsis, as short as I can be, because it is a really complex, uh, story.

[Kelly agrees.]

Alright, so, written by Claude Sautet and, Oscar Dancigers, and Alain Cavalier, and adapted from the Richard Stark novel *The Score*, directed by Cavalier for release in 1967, *Pillaged* stars Michel Constantin as Georges, the French equivalent of Stark's stoic Parker character who graced so many of his novels.

The film opens with Georges taking a call on a public phone—ah, public phones—and getting an address. When a man follows him, Georges subdues him, and brings him to the address where they meet Georges' friend, Paulus, played by Philippe Moreau. Which, I think, more people will be—will remember from Philippe Moreau than from the other stars in this.

00:07:25 April Host Edgar, an affable but bumbling man who's actually called Georges there to discuss a heist plan. Georges doesn't take the guy seriously, for good reason. This guy Edgar wants to use 25 guys to pull off a heist of an entire mountain town where Edgar used to live and work. But Georges sees potential in the plot, and becomes their leader. Working with a few trusted criminals to recruit a smaller team of 12.

Then, we immediately get into the heist. So much of the movie is basically the heist. First, they cleverly subdue and restrain the local police, the fire brigade, and then the operators in the telephone exchange, ensuring nobody can call for help, or receive any. Then, they divide up into teams, and hit their marks. But they run into a snag in one spot, because Martens, the son of Edgar's old boss, is working late. This could ruin their plans, but eventually Martens leaves, and they successfully subdue the accountant in the building. Edgar then follows Martens back to his huge, white house beyond a large gate. And that's gonna come back, so remember the huge, white house.

Meanwhile, another team has to turn off the town's power temporarily to get into another cache of money. A small panic happens when the hospital calls the operator, and the criminal's realize someone might die if they don't get the power back on quickly. But the crisis is averted in the nick of time. Things seem to be going pretty well, considering. But then a guy named Michel Castagnier leaves his girlfriend's place late at night, and sees the masked marauders. So what does he do? He calls the police. But who comes to pick him up? The masked marauders, in the police car.

00:08:59 April Host Meanwhile, Maurice is flirting up Marie-Ange, the telephone operator, and he un.masks himself so they can make out. What most people do during a heist, is just like, get so sexy, right? After, she reveals that she recognized Edgar's voice, and that the young Martens had an affair with Edgar's wife, and when Martens left the wife, the wife then committed suicide. And Edgar has always held a grudge. Uh oh.

00:09:23 Kelly Guest Wait, go back, what's that part again? Just that, who had an affair with who?

00:09:29 April Host So, Edgar, the guy who used to work there, right?

[Kelly affirms insistently, and continues to do so while April talks.]

His wife had an affair with Martens, who's the guy who left that building and went into the white house. So he is essentially— that family owns the entire town.

00:09:43 Kelly Guest No, no, I got that. Yeah, okay-kay-kay.

00:09:45 April Host And so then the wife committed suicide, Edgar had always held a grudge.

[Kelly continues affirming while April talks.]

So, while the guy's continue their break in successfully, Edgar goes to the house, and—

00:09:54 Kelly Guest

Don't tell the end!

00:09:55 April Host

No, I have to!

00:09:56 Kelly Guest

No, no, don't tell the end!

00:09:57 April Host

Our whole—our whole thing is telling the end!

00:09:58 Kelly Guest

Oh, really? Don't tell the end!

00:10:01 April Host

[Laughs] It's okay! It's okay! Edgar finds an entrance into Marten's home and stops answering his walkie talkie.

[Kelly groans.]

And Georges has to retrieve him, but finds him dumping gasoline all over the house, and tries to restrain him.

00:10:12 Kelly Guest

Why are you telling?

00:10:14 April Host

Because that's the whole point of the show! *[Laughs.]*

00:10:15 Kelly Guest

No, but, but, the end doesn't—it's not called "The End", your show.

00:10:20 April Host

[Laughs] My listeners expect it. So it's okay, they go in knowing that they're going to get spoiled.

00:10:27 Kelly Guest

[Exhaling a raspberry] But this is a good—it's really a good ending to come to, um.

00:10:33 April Host

I know, but we have to talk about the ending in the show—

00:10:35 Kelly Guest

No we don't! We talk about all the other things!

00:10:36 April Host

Yes, we do! Kelly, we have to! *[Laughs]* But Edgar—hold on, I swear, it's gonna be okay—Edgar—

[Kelly starts singing "la, la, la" over April's words.]

Edgar succeeds in igniting the house. Georges escapes, but Edgar gets shot in the back. Everyone meets up and splits ways. The police give chase. Edgar dies in the car. Some of the men are captured while Georges and a few others must leave the money behind and hop a bus back to Lyon. They see from the window their partners being led to police cars. It could have been perfect, if not for Edgar.

00:11:08 Kelly Guest

What a shame. What a shame.

[Both laugh.]

Oh...

00:11:15 April Host

So, it's a twisty story. There's a lot of moving parts. There's a lot of people.

00:11:20 Kelly Guest Yeah, it has a lot, but it um—I mean, you have it as a total classic setup. Like, bunch of criminals get out of jail and meet up to do a heist, just one more, and then they're never gonna do it again.

00:11:32 April Host Yes. It's quite simple in that.

00:11:34 Kelly Guest Yeah. Um, but it's so beautifully shot. It's a shame to watch it on YouTube, because the print they showed was just gorgeous, and um—

00:11:42 April Host Yeah, you can see like—if you look it up, you can see some of the restored images, just stills. And then if you look at that, you're like, “Oh my god, I can see that there's so much color and life and depth to it that you can't see from this kind of VHS copy that was recorded from French television.”

00:11:59 Kelly Guest It's really a filmmaker's dream that you could, A) hear the ending first on a podcast and then go watch the 35 millimeter film on YouTube. It's all—yeah.

00:12:08 April Host It's truly how it was supposed to end up. I mean, I really think that if anyone were to adapt this story again, I was like, “Oh, I guess it would be Kelly.” *[Laughs.]*

00:12:18 Kelly Guest Yeah. Um, it doesn't—the thing is it's so good it doesn't need adapting. Like, I don't know how you'd really make it better. Like, the kid would be, what, have to be out on the street on a cell phone? Yeah, it would just like—you know? Um, technology has ruined everything.

00:12:31 April Host But adapting it as, I think, a very different—um, it's a different skill. You have adapted a lot of things.

00:12:40 Kelly Guest I mean, not from other movies.

00:12:41 April Host No, but you've adapted—I mean like, I would say adapting the book, probably. And I think that it takes a different skill to commit a book to screen. And I'm curious, too, because I know *First Cow* is only one small part of *The Half-Life*. It's not the entire novel, you know.

00:13:00 Kelly Guest No, it's um, the novel goes—goes back and forth between 1980 and the 1800s, and we just sort of have an early prologue in a contemporary setting, um, to sort of situate the location of our—the film takes place around it, uh, the trapping for.

We have a Chief Factor, played by Toby Jones, who would be the man in the white house, right? And he um, is kind of modeled after John McLaughlin, who worked for the Hudson Bay company, and came from England and went up to Vancouver and what down to what is now Oregon to trap beaver and sell beaver and all this, uh, the beaver trade.

And so anyway, it all takes place along the Columbia river in, in this little area that was known as the lower Columbia district for a while. And uh, home of the um, Multnomah tribes, especially the Chinook lived there. And so, yeah, our film takes place in 1820, and there is the big man in town who sort of has all the power. And then uh,

the—our protagonists are trying to get a toehold into some kind of normal life, and the only um, resources they have kind of have to involve a theft. So, there's a heist. It is a heist film.

- 00:14:33 April Host It is. I mean, and I think if—
- 00:14:35 Kelly Guest Not gonna tell the ending.
- 00:14:36 April Host No. I'm not gonna tell the ending. I'm not gonna spoil your movie. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:14:40 Kelly Guest Thanks. By the way, you can see it on YouTube.
- 00:14:44 April Host *[Laughs uproariously.]* There's um—I think that if I put those—this movie and yours in a kind of parallel state, that there's um, not just the fact that there is like, the man in the white house, you know, metaphorically, or that there's a kind of heist, but there's also um, a sweetness to both. And they're very populated by many men, and—
- 00:15:10 Kelly Guest There's a lot of, um sexy French ladies in *Pillaged*.
- 00:15:15 April Host There's definitely a few sexy, um, splashed in. And in fact, the telephone operator is played by Irène Tunc, who is Alain Cavalier's wife at the time.

[Kelly exclaims, "Oh!"]

And she's kind of magnetic, I would say, on the screen. And I like that kind of the t—well, one of many things that I think that both your movie and this movie are doing is that there's kind of breathing room through kind of the um, the actual plot of what's going on, that there are side moments that have this bit of levity, you know?

And that they—they aren't necessarily always focused on what's going to happen with the oily cakes or what's gonna happen with the heist, but there's enough kind of subplot elsewhere to give breathing room to the whole story. Is that like, a conscious thing for you, that you think about? Where you're like, "Oh, here's a place where I need to put this character in, because we need a moment."

- 00:16:12 Kelly Guest Yeah, the novel doesn't have a cow, so instead of like, extracting a bunch of stuff from the novel, we took the characters from the novels and the themes from the novel and created a smaller sort of uh, like we have the cow, and uh, all that follows there. In the novel, they go—King-Lu and Cookie—extract oil from the beaver glands and take it to China, and it spans 40 years. So anyway—
- 00:16:43 April Host That might not be—yeah.
- 00:16:45 Kelly Guest So instead of um, having uh, extracting all that, we um, you know, we have this simpler, more minimalistic mechanisms that lets us remain local and deal with a shorter span of time, so that we can—so that I can um, you know, get in there and you know, extend and create what inside that—the outlines of that formal um, setting that uh, John set up.

I mean, when I get it, like sort of so much of it—uh, when I get the script, uh, like, and after we do a lot of brainstorming, but John does

the first draft, and a lot of the, I would say a lot of depth that's in the story and the characters is coming from him. And then um, I—you know, I—like the—talking about the heist, there's a scene for example where King-Lu, and—they get busted for their crime, and there's gonna be um, we're at the Chief Factor's house, who is sort of a—he's played by Toby Jones—and the Chief Factor is kind of—think of him like the CEO of Firestone that goes to, you know, Africa to exploit the natural resources. So he's not a landowner, per se, he's just like a CEO.

[April affirms.]

So he, um—anyway, we're at his house, and uh, a chase is gonna ensue. But so then you look at that moment, and in the writing it all works, but in the filmmaking, you're just like, "Okay, wait, I gotta slow this down, and you know, I need to draw this out and build some tension, and I'm gonna need some kind of like, parallel scenario going on." So I've got to like, I've got to get inside the Chief Factor's house and then I can be outside in the backyard. So then it's just like, well, there'll be a servant, and we need a cat, and—

[April laughs.]

—uh, there'll be a bunk house, and this Ewan McGregor character is just, in these earlier scenes, could live there, and there'll be this kid, Thomas. And so anyway, just start building out all these people, which is really a way to just slow this scene down, so that tension can build, and there can be these—the captain will spend the night. So then, those characters then have to like, go back and work them into the whole fabric of the movie of um, so that they don't just like, arrive kind of when you need them.

So I guess that's like, the kind of uh, fun thing of being able to build on a uh, you know, tried and true element of a heist. And you have these elements like time and parallel action, and these things that you always find in all these scenes, but then you get to make them with your own characters in your own situation that you've set up, and um, but you're kind of using the tools that have been around forever. Like, you know, the classic like, "the guard is going back to check on, in the uh—" thinking of like, *[inaudible]* or something like, "the guard is gonna go check the alarm one more time."

00:20:06	April	Host	Yeah, this is when they do like, the sweep. This is like, the rounds.
00:20:09	Kelly	Guest	Yeah, right, exactly.
00:20:10	Music	Transition	"Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.
00:20:11	April	Host	We need to take a break. When we come back, we're gonna get um, a little further into some of these characters, and the fact that there's no backstory for most of them, and how that works in a film. And uh, a few other things with regard to the plot, and how to represent a mass of men and try to keep their characters straight. Uh, we'll be right back.

[Music fades.]

00:20:34	April	Promo	Hi, it's April! We're back to talk about the MaxFunDrive, and we've got a special treat for you. I brought my producer, Casey O'Brien in, who you know, you get little snippets of here and there, but now you get a little feature of him. And we're gonna talk about MaxFunDrive!
			Um, so Casey, how are you doing?
00:20:51	Casey O'Brien	Promo	I'm doing okay. Um, uh, I recently inherited a priceless Fabergé egg.
00:20:58	April	Promo	<i>[Emphatically]</i> Ooh.
00:20:59	Casey	Promo	And um,, that has caused a rift between my family and I. Particularly my ex-wife, um, my ex-wife's nephew, my step-brother, uh, the caretaker at Nana's house, and Drea Clark of the <i>Who Shot Ya?</i> podcast.
00:21:11	April	Promo	Oh, my.
00:21:12	Casey	Promo	I frankly fear for my life, but that's not why I'm here today, April!
00:21:16	April	Promo	Great, okay.
00:21:17	Casey	Promo	'Cause I'm here—I'm here to talk about the MaxFunDrive. Um, which is just a really fun time for our network and our shows, because we really get an opportunity to talk to people who listen to our show, and contribute to our community. Uh, yeah, it's just awesome. We've gotten so much great feedback from listeners. Um, here—
00:21:40	April	Promo	Like what, like what?
00:21:41	Casey	Promo	I'm gonna read you a quote from one of our listeners. <i>[April affirms.]</i> Uh, "Just getting my regular podcasts in my feed has been a welcome distraction from all the craziness. Thank you so much for all you guys do." And that's from Marisa in Magnolia, Arkansas. Isn't that nice?
00:21:55	April	Promo	Oh, in Arkansas? I love that.
00:21:57	Casey	Promo	Arkansas!
00:21:58	April	Promo	I love Arkansas.
00:21:59	Casey	Promo	Me too! I've been there, it's a lovely place!
00:22:01	April	Promo	It's so—yeah. Hot Springs was one of my favorite, all of the areas around it, wonderful place.
00:22:06	Casey	Promo	Very cool. Um, well yeah, I just wanted to, you know, hop in here, tell you about the Fabergé egg situation, and also to you know, tell our listeners that you know, this is a very difficult time, and strange time for people. And so that's why this year, instead of doing kind of an intense two-week MaxFunDrive, we're just kind of doing a more chilled out four-week one, so that you know, people don't feel as much pressure to contribute financially if they can't do it.

00:22:39 April Promo Yeah. And you know, we're trying to give some extra special love, too, with a few fun things that—that we'd love to give to people. And one of those things is a Chicken Zoom background.

00:22:52 Casey Promo Yes. We're working on that right now. A Zoom background with one of the best—one of our favorite characters of the *Switchblade Sisters* podcast, Chicken.

[April affirms.]

She's been making a lot of appearances lately.

00:23:04 April Promo Yeah. She's wonderful. She's very floofy and um, uh, yeah.

[Casey laughs.]

I think you guys are really gonna love the background.

00:23:11 Casey Promo On top of the Chicken background, which is—I mean, we should be charging hundreds.

00:23:16 April Promo Yeah, premium Chicken content. On top of that?

00:23:18 Casey Promo Yes. On top of that, we have all these great gifts at the different levels. Um, the uh, the five dollar monthly membership, that's just five bucks a month, you get all of the bonus content from all of the Maximum Fun shows. Um, which ours was, this year, was another one of our great *Murder She Wrote* epsisodes.

[April affirms with "mm-hm."]

Um, the ten dollar monthly membership, you can get our pin and membership card. Our pin is really great.

00:23:49 April Promo I'm very excited about this pin. I'm very happy to support it.

00:23:52 Casey Promo Can you describe it to people, April?

00:23:54 April Promo It is like, um, lush kind of bright red—blood red vampire lips with uh, I think the vampire teeth coming down, and then it says, uh, "Do you even watch horror, bro?"

[Both laugh.]

00:24:07 Casey Promo Yeah, and the "bro" is in the mouth, which I love. It's really—I think it's our best pin.

00:24:12 April Promo Oh, yeah.

00:24:13 Casey Promo And it's really awesome.

00:24:15 April Promo And we designed it ourselves!

00:24:16 Casey Promo Yes we did. Um, yeah. It really is great. And then the \$20 monthly membership is a game pack. This is really cool. It's got these Max Fun inspired playing cards. There is a *Switchblade Sisters* playing card. I believe one of the playing card has a switchblade in their hand. Um, so those are really cool, and it comes with a pack of six

blue Max Fun dice in their own velvety dice bag.

00:24:40 April Promo

Nice!

00:24:41 Casey Promo

So if you're a gamer, that's really cool. At the \$35 dollar monthly membership, you can get—you get all of that, and a Rocket Camp mug. Um, yeah, but you know, those—you can go higher, you can go lower, but you know, five dollars, ten dollars, that's—those are—those help so much.

Something else that's fun that's happening that you guys should put on your calendars is that we will be doing a live watch-a-long of *The Apple* with the *Who Shot Ya?* folks on July 25th at 2pm. Check it out.

Well, April, you're gonna be there?

00:25:15 April Promo

Mm-hm. Yes. *The Apple's* one of my favorite movies and it's one of the movies where Alonso and I are in absolute agreement about. *[Laughs.]*

00:25:24 Casey Promo

Yes. I don't think Ify's seen it, so that's gonna be really fun. It's not too long. It'll be a great time. So check that out, July 25th at 2pm. We'll have more info—2pm pacific. We'll have more info about that later.

Alright, April. I'm gonna go tend to this horrible Fabergé egg situation with my family that has totally disrupted and split apart my life in a very damaging way. So, I'm just gonna go take care of that right now—

[Door creaking sound effect plays.]

Wait! What are you doing here?

[Sound of high heels clicking across the floor.]

Hey, I told you I didn't want to see you again.

00:25:55 April Promo

Casey, is everything okay? Casey?

00:25:57 Casey Promo

Yeah, everything's okay, April. Just, I just have to handle a delicate situ—

Hey, I told you—no!

[April interjects, repeating "Casey?"]

Put that down! Put that—

[There is a wet thud. Casey grunts and screams.]

00:26:06 April Promo

Oh. Casey? ... Oh, my god, Casey has been stabbed!

[Ascending violin musical cue plays, conveying shock and dismay.]

Well, I guess tune in next time to see if he lives or not. And alright,

back to the show!

- 00:26:20 Music Transition “Switchblade Comb” by Mobius VanChocStraw.
- 00:26:27 April Host Welcome back to *Switchblade Sisters*. I’m April Wolfe, and I’m joined today by Kelly Reichardt, and we’re talking about *Pillaged*.
- Okay, so um, one thing that I thought was very well done, interesting, and a perfect technique is the fact that we are dropped right into the story. He picks up the phone, makes the call, and someone’s following him, and then he’s in this room and we don’t necessarily know any of these people’s backstories. But we know they’re attempting a quite insane scheme of a heist, and we don’t get the backstory of what brought these people to this place necessarily. It’s revealed in scene with little mannerisms and things, and each of them kind of getting a line of dialogue or just a piece of action that reveals character. But most often, we get nothing. You know, it’s just the work. It’s doing the work. And I find that really interesting, and very methodical.
- 00:27:15 Kelly Guest Everyone has a specialty.
- 00:27:16 April Host Yeah, exactly. You know, like Kerini is the safecracker, and he’s the guy who’s gotta use uh, his uh, his know-hows to break through some of these incredibly complex safes. Um, and then I find that probably freeing in some way, as a filmmaker, not revealing backstory, just dropping your characters into something and saying, “Going from here.” And I know that, to some extent, your films have done this, too, um.
- 00:27:47 Kelly Guest Yeah, they’re just um, I mean you must know enough—you know enough about—is his name Edgar? That he has a bone to pick with the, uh—but um, yeah, uh, our films are just sort of—I always think of them sort of like you just drop in on these people and you catch them where they are, and you spend this amount of time with them that’s usually like, a week or two, and then um, off they go. And so you’re just catching a—you’re kind of more learning who they are, uh, by just watching how they do chores or whatever they do, you know?
- [Both laugh.]
- 00:28:27 April Host Well, I mean, I think that’s like, a huge element of your film and this film that I find fascinating, too, is that so much of this movie is about the work. About these guys doing the work. And if I’m watching *First Cow* or anything else that you’ve made, there is a certain amount of kind of a methodology of someone just doing the work of living daily.
- For you, when you’re making films, do you find that—do you ever use people doing work as like, a cheat or a shortcut to be like, “Well, I need tension here.” [Laughs.]
- 00:29:01 Kelly Guest Well, it’s not a cheat. I mean, um, it’s just um, it’s just—uh, I’m trying to think, well yeah, in *Night Moves*, you know, they have to uh, you know, set the uh, you know, the clock on the bom, and put the, uh, put the need—the cables together, whatever it was.

[Both laugh.]

And um, you know—

- | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|--|
| 00:29:26 | April | Host | We're all done. I don't know. |
| 00:29:27 | Kelly | Guest | —all those things. Yeah, then movie's over. Um, they have to do all those things, and then they have to like, paddle back to shore, and you know, you're all in the like—so the clock element, of course. That's a classic, you know, tells you, the viewer, how much time. And then you know, they're all ready. You're like, "Oh, finally, they're in the boat and they're gonna get away."

But then, whoops, a guy gets a flat tire up uh, you know, above, and he's gotta ch—now we have to wait for him to change his tire. And he's just having a lackadaisical conversation with his girlfriend. Like, that's the classic, like someone else is <u>not</u> in a hurry, and you're in a hurry, and the person that's not in a hurry is holding—is holding you up. Um, that's uh, oh that's been used over and over again. |
| 00:30:15 | April | Host | For this movie in particular, for um, for <i>Pillaged</i> , I think it's interesting to think about what heist movies were doing at the time, in 1967, and how <i>Pillaged</i> did it differently. Because it wasn't widely acclaimed and loved, necessarily, it wasn't even really released in the U.S., even though United artists in the U.S. had funded it.

Um, but, at that time, you have a kind of a happier, more fun take on a heist, because you had, in that decade, <i>Thomas Crown Affair</i> , <i>Top Copy</i> , <i>Seven Thieves</i> , <i>Ocean's Eleven</i> came out at that time. <i>Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round</i> , <i>Once a Thief</i> , <i>The Great Train Robbery</i> , there was still the kind of exuberance of the 1960s. And they hadn't kind of broken way into the 1970s, because the films of the 1970s have much more in common, I would think, with this film from '67. The heist films, that is. Like <i>Taking of Pelham 123</i> , for instance.

Very kind of similar tone, and grittiness, and almost a voyeuristic sense of what was going on. I think it's worth talking about the fact that when there are films that are of a specific genre that are running counter to the kind of greater thought of what that genre should be at that time. They don't necessarily always get the love, and I think that you're working off—and in western genres, you're working in—you've done thrillers, you've done, you know, like, salt/dramas— |
| 00:31:54 | Kelly | Guest | What year did we say <i>Pillaged</i> is? '67? |
| 00:31:56 | April | Host | '67. Yeah. |
| 00:31:58 | Kelly | Guest | So, you know, right around the time you're not supposed to feel like your little home town is safe anymore, you know. |
| 00:32:06 | April | Host | Do you feel like you—I mean, well, that's what I'm saying. |
| 00:32:09 | Kelly | Guest | I have a big thought. |
| 00:32:11 | April | Host | That's what I'm saying in terms of, you know, trying to adhere to a |

specific type of genre for time period. Do you ever feel like you are out of time?

- 00:32:20 Kelly Guest I didn't feel like um, with this, uh, with *First Cow* I didn't really feel the restraints of any kind of genre, even though it, like, takes place in the west in its early days. Um, I didn't—and it is, you know, like I am definitely playing around with the heist thing for ten minutes of the film, or whatever. Um, it—I don't know why, for whatever reason, I guess, just, it all felt particular enough, the world we were building, to just um, be able to set shots and scenes in whatever service it was to this exact story, and these two characters.
- Maybe because the relationship is like, the main thing, between the two characters. I didn't really—yeah, I didn't really have like, some shadow hanging over me, of—besides the scene I was just describing earlier of just using some of those tools, all of a sudden. To have a film that's not following those rules to all of a sudden say, "Well, here's some, you know, little moment that we're gonna, like, you know."
- 00:33:41 April Host Shoehorn in.
- 00:33:42 Kelly Guest Like, I could do this if I wanted to be doing this, I know how to do this.
- [Both laugh.]*
- But, you know, just to—moments you're doing it, but then you, um, you know, but then you like, fall into some old tai-chi cabin outside, you know, in the woods.
- 00:34:02 April Host As you do!
- 00:34:04 Kelly Guest Right, yeah, as one might. But, you know, so it's not—yeah, so it's nice, it was very freeing, as far as how to make it, uh, without—to make a period piece, and not—when I made *Meek's Cutoff* I was just, like, so aware of like, um, just that I was, you know, dealing with, whether I was breaking away from it or not, just like, detailing with the genre, you know, it's a western. Just did not feel that way to me.
- 00:34:35 April Host Well um, you're also doing—same as *Meek's Cutoff* you're doing a 4:3 aspect ratio on it, so it's got kind of a square-ish, um, look to it. So it cuts off any kind of larger sense of the world, sometimes. And, I'm wondering, you know, keeping it small, maybe probably helps with that.
- In terms of *Pillaged*, too, we were talking about the cinematography. This is a mountain town, and there were ostensibly mountains surrounding the entire village, but we're not getting these grand, sweeping shots, we're getting very precise, kind of, roaming eye POV things that are really kind of grounded in they're only covering what they need to cover of the city, or of the places that they're in.
- 00:35:21 Kelly Guest Yeah, uh, you know that Fleischer film *Violent Saturday*? Is it *Violent Saturday* or *Violent Sunday*? *Violent Saturday*. Where it's a—

00:35:28 April Host "Violent Weekend."

00:35:29 Kelly Guest It's a heist. It's a bank robbery movie, but it's all—man, it's really beautifully shot. And it's all wide shots, there's like, hardly anything besides wide shots in it, which is kind of amazing for a movie that centers on this bank robbery, and tough—like, the moral of the film is so twisted.

But, um, it's uh, it's in a mountain town, and you're constantly, like, surrounded by these mountains where you feel really, just so locked in by them, it just becomes super, kind of, oppressive. It's a really great looking movie, which I just thought of when you were talking about that.

But, the um, the academy frame is very nice for, you know, height and stuff, so it's an intimate frame, but you do get more foreground and height, so you—like in *First Cow*, with the trees in the north west and all, it's nice getting the—and it kind of helps serve a couple scenes, you know, where some characters are up high, and some are down below, you know it just—yeah.

But in the cottages and in the hutches of the film, it makes for such a nice, intimate—it's a more intimate frame, it's a more closed frame than an open, you know, "Here's the vast wilderness," kind of thing.

00:37:07 April Host Yeah. I mean, the vast wilderness, that's cheap. Everyone's seen some wilderness, it's beautiful. Of course. Um, one thing I thought was very interesting about this movie was the fact that it really, really takes time to not be violent. And to not even enforce that there might be violence, like a threat of it.

00:37:27 Kelly Guest Well, there's the, um. I mean people are being handcuffed and put away.

00:37:34 April Host It's so gentle, though. Like, the way that they do it is just, like. Everything's fine, they don't even flash guns most of the time, it's just like once in a while. And there's um, the one guy who's the expert, for instance. There's a scene in the early bit where they're all sitting around the table, all these twelve men. And they're just like, asking a few questions about like, "How is this gonna go?" And it's actually a very short scene.

But, what that reveals is the fact that there's this guy, Kerini, the safe expert, and he refuses to carry a gun, he refuses to take part in even holding a prop gun, because he finds violence so abhorrent. That part of the movie actually kind of takes on Kerini's attitude, in some ways, where it's like, "This is the absolute, we don't want this, there is no violence." And I thought that that was a really interesting thing to take over.

Because actually, when they submitted it to the U.S. to get a rating on it, it was given a rating of G, originally, because they had dubbed out any swear words that they'd had, but the entire content was actually G.

00:38:41 Kelly Guest Can't show it here. Not enough violence. Yeah.

[April laughs.]

00:38:43 April Host Exactly!

00:38:44 Kelly Guest Not accepted.

00:38:46 April Host It's gotta be at least, you know, a few more shootings.

00:38:50 Kelly Guest Yeah. No guns. In G, no guns. It's like, no. No gun.

00:38:57 April Host But I think that that's an interesting thing too, because the Stark novel wasn't necessarily—was actually fairly violent. I think that the character of Parker actually kills, for instance, the first—the guy who follows him.

00:39:10 Kelly Guest You're gonna give away the ending of the book too, aren't you?

00:39:12 April Host No, I'm not, don't do—

[April laughs.]

But like, there's a murder that takes place, in like, the early scenes.

00:39:19 Kelly Guest I'm gonna tell people how this interview is gonna end before we get there.

00:39:25 April Host Do it! But I think that speaking about violence and what it serves in a film is worthwhile, and the violence in this film is not the focus, because the focus is on the work, always on the work. And I think that it sets itself apart, also, from some other heist movies as well, because of that.

00:39:48 Kelly Guest Yeah, it's interesting how violence can now almost, like—it almost ends tension, because then you're like, in the violence, you don't have to, like, anticipate it anymore. And some films, it's just like such an orgy of violence, that it's almost like, yeah, you just um, you can just—it's not the anticipating of something sinister that's gonna happen, it's just like, "Here's this." And you've seen that, you know, before.

So yeah, I think not having violence is a way to keep some tension going.

00:40:32 April Host Because people expect it, now.

00:40:34 Kelly Guest Yeah. It's like a warm bath at this point.

00:40:37 April Host A warm bath of nonviolence and peace.

00:40:40 Kelly Guest No, it's a warm bath of violence now.

[April laughs.]

Just because, like, seemingly people are so accustomed to it. It's so, like, yeah.

00:40:51 April Host I feel like with your film, there very easily could have been more violence there, if a different filmmaker had tried to do something with that. It's the American west, right?

00:41:06 Kelly Guest *[Quietly, flatly]* If a different filmmaker was gonna make a movie about two guys stealing milk.

[There is a beat of silence. April is quietly suppressing laughter.]

It's really the zeitgeist.

00:41:16 April Host They've got guns! 'Cause you gotta spice it up for Hollywood, right?

00:41:20 Kelly Guest I gotta—yeah.

00:41:21 April Host I wanted to get into the politics of this movie. Because I think that they are not on the surface, necessarily. There is a scene, it's a very quick shot, when they're going by the factory. So they're driving up to the factory, and there's graffiti. And the graffiti reads, "Here ends freedom."

And, at this time at France, it was the end of the Algerian war, and it was a very difficult time for a lot of people, because there was a lot of veterans that were returning, and there was a lot of economic downturn, and so people were very very distinctly feeling desperate for money, and for a kind of future, and a livelihood.

And so, despite the fact that this movie doesn't seem political on the surface, there are points where Alain Cavalier, who was very politically active, would kind of poke in with the real world, and what was going on in France at that time. And, if you look for them, they're there, they're not overt. He was never overt with any of those things.

But I think that's an interesting technique as a filmmaker, you know? I mean, like, you are leaving your mark, you're trying to set the context of a time and a place, and it makes more sense if these guys are very interested in getting this heist. They actually feel desperate. You know, there's a general pervasive sense of desperation going throughout the land.

00:42:39 Kelly Guest I can't speak to—

[She repeats "yeah" many times in rapid succession.]

00:42:40 April Host No—but you can talk about political messages!

00:42:44 Kelly Guest Well I'm not into—yeah, I think it's like, probably bad filmmaking to have a political message. Which doesn't mean like, you know, whatever, I mean everything's political, but uh, it doesn't mean—

00:42:58 April Host There's subtext.

00:42:59 Kelly Guest Yeah, or just that people, you know, just the small politics of life, or um, of—I mean, I think it's interesting you can have those sort of, you know, like *First Cow* looking at the first seeds of capitalism, you know, versus the natural world, I guess. And to see if those two things can coexist, and, um. But that's like a big thing, and I don't know, I think it's good to focus on the—when you're making something, just on the nitty-gritty of, like, the wants and needs and the immediate things of the characters you're telling a story about.

Otherwise, uh, you know, you don't wanna make, like, any kind of straight-shot to anything, because everything's complicated, and has so many layers to it, and uh, so,—

- 00:43:59 April Host Do you ever get lost in the context? Have you ever gotten lost where you're like, "Okay, I need people to understand this about this particular story."
- 00:44:05 Kelly Guest No. I mean, no. I mean I—there's like a scene in *First Cow* that was really tricky, because it's like a scene in the Chief Factor's house, and there's a servant who's from the islands, and there's the Chief Factor who has all the power, and this captain who's there, and then there's our Chinese protagonist, and our Jewish protagonist who's the cook, and then uh, Gary Farmer plays the prominent man, you know, from the head of the Chinook tribe, and uh, and Lily Gladstone plays the Chinook wife of the Chief Factor, and I'm like, "Oh my god, all these people in one room."
- And there's definitely a pecking order, having to do—*[She stammers.]*
- You know, you gotta figure out where the power lies in the room, and sort of beat-to-beat, and how to get that across, and a fear of it being misunderstood, or a fear of it not coming across, not in a message way, but just in explaining what the scene was, where everyone is on the—and how the power dynamics are playing for each person in the scene.
- 00:45:24 April Host But do you have like, an epiphany where you're like, "Oh, I don't have to be this complex. Or I do have to be this complex, and here's the solution."
- 00:45:30 Kelly Guest Well that scene was just like, everyone coming together, and so that's kind of what it's about, just figuring out how to get all that across without it, you know, coming out of everyone's mouths in the dialogue, of like, what it is. But, it was, for me, I was like, "Okay, this is..."
- You know, it was complicated to figure out, you know.
- 00:45:58 April Host You could have done what Alain Cavalier did, and don't explain any of it.
- [She starts laughing through her words.]*
- Just put these people in a room and never explain.
- 00:46:05 Kelly Guest Right, but they're not—but it's different because they're all white dudes in a room, you know?
- [April affirms.]*
- Right? So it's like, that's—that changes it, a bit.
- 00:46:15 April Host Yeah, it does. Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:48:18 Kelly Guest Like, there can be the dumb guy, and the smarter guy, and the tougher guy, um, and the guy who's just a pro, and is super calm and cool about it, or whatever. It can be, like, those differences. But yeah. It's like a little bit different.

00:46:35 April Host Do you ever feel the urge to boil your characters down in certain scenes like that to simpler archetypes?

00:46:44 Kelly Guest No, I mean, they uh, they're all sort of imperfect people, with um, you know, their ambitions and their faults, and they're hopeful, you know? I mean, some of them we get to spend more time with than others, so we know them better, or less, or better.

But um, I mean, I thought uh, Toby Jones did such a great job of making his character. I mean, his character could have been more one-dimensional if he wasn't such a—he's so good with nuance, so um, it was like, not—I wasn't in danger of that, but uh, yeah. It was—I mean, it could all go wrong, easily.

00:47:35 April Host Well, that's a great place to wrap up.

00:47:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Both, in unison:** It could all go wrong easily.

00:47:39 Kelly Guest Yes. I said that's where we'll end.

00:47:44 April Host Fini. Um, there are four of Kelly's films that are available to watch on the Criterion channel, as well as a master class that we did together, uh, two years ago I think?

[Kelly audibly reminisces.]

So you can catch up with her earlier work before you catch her new film *First Cow*. Anything else, any other places people can find you, are you hiding—you know, just skulking around waiting for fans to rush you?

00:48:16 Kelly Guest Uh. No. Not this semester, not now. Not right this minute. That's not happening.

[April laughs.]

That is an institute of learning, not fandom. Uh, thanks for having me.

00:48:28 Music Transition "Switchblade Comb" by Mobius VanChocStraw.

00:48:32 Thank you so much. And thank you so much for listening to and supporting our show. Um, I just can't thank you all enough, all people who have gone out of their way to support us, and become a Max Fun member, you are truly the reason that we're able to continue doing the show. I just can't—I can't come up with other words that say thank you.

Um, so, uh, again, if you wanna join, all you have to do is go to MaximumFun.org/join and you can kind of choose the membership that works best for you, we appreciate all of it.

And um, I also wanted to give a shoutout on this episode to a

couple of books from a company called Seventh Row. It's an outlet that does amazing film criticism, and film writing. And uh, one of their books is called *Roads to Nowhere; Kelly Reichardt's Broken American Dreams*. It's an ebook that you can read that kind of goes through a lot of her process, even more in depth than we could just in this episode. But it's a really great companion piece, and you should check it out.

They also have one called *Beyond Empowertainment, Feminist Horror and the Struggle for Female Agency*, which of course you know I love. So, maybe take a gander at those after you go to MaximumFun.org/join.

Our producer is Casey O'Brien who has been canonically stabbed in this episode, our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and this is a production of Maximum Fun.

[Music ends.]

00:50:03	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:50:05	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:50:06	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:50:07	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.