

[Sean Welsh] Okay. Hello, everybody, my name is Sean Welsh. I'm the programmer of Matchbox Cineclub, based in Glasgow, Scotland, and also one of the coordinators for Scalarama in Scotland. Today's event is a special spin-off from Scalarama Glasgow's regular monthly programme of roundtable events for independent exhibitors, leading into the annual September season of DIY film events. Anyone that's unfamiliar with Scalarama can find Scalarama Glasgow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These year-round events that we do are intended to bring film programmers together to share advice and resources, encourage collaboration and provide a way for new and emerging programmers to benefit from that advice, those resources and collaboration with their peers and established film programmers. Of course, there's a huge amount of uncertainty just now and that's affecting everyone's plans, including any Scalarama programme in September, and pretty much everything else people might have had lined up for 2020. On the other hand, taking things online means we have new opportunities too one of which is talking with people from much further afield. Which brings me to this event tonight and to our very special guest, Kier-La Janisse is a film writer and programmer with over 20 years' experience and a ridiculously impressive CV. She founded the CineMuerte horror festival in Vancouver, where it ran for six years, and has subsequently worked with Fantasia, Fantastic Fest, Australia's Monster Fest and many others worldwide, including Edinburgh's Dead by Dawn festival. Kier-La also founded Blue Sunshine a micro cinema in Montreal, was head programmer at the Alamo Drafthouse for four of its formative years, and serves on the advisory board of the American Genre Film Archive. In a parallel career as a writer, commentator and publisher, Kier-La has written two books including the landmark House of Psychotic Women, which I'm sure many of you will be familiar with, and contributed many more - to many more - and established the small press Spectacular Optical to edit and publish anthologies on subjects like kid-centric cult classics, pop culture Satanism in the 1980s and Christmas-themed horror and television. Kier-La has also produced documentaries like Eurocrime - this is the end of my props, by the way - and video content for the likes of Severin Films who will also release her upcoming directorial debut, Woodlands Dark and Days Bewitched: A History of Folk Horror. So this evening, I'll be chatting with Kier-La for a while and then opening up the floor to our guests on the Zoom call. We're also streaming live to Facebook and we will be keeping an eye on any questions posed there too. Thanks to Film Hub Scotland for their ongoing support and to Ai-Media who are - A-I-Media, we're never entirely sure how to say that properly - who are providing live subtitles tonight. So without further ado, all the way from a mystery and sunny location in Canada, please welcome Kier-La Janisse. How are you, Kier-La?

[Kier-La Janisse] Hi, good. Thanks.

[Sean Welsh] It's good to see you today. You don't seem like the kind of person who sits still for very long - how have you been coping recently? I actually love it. I know this... it's not a popular opinion, but I love being by myself and I love being anti social and so it's like I love going to film festivals and sort of getting all my social energy out at events like that, but I'm very much a hibernator who loves to be in my own cocoon

and so the fact that I can sort of go through this time without anyone bothering me about how anti social I am...

[She laughs] I actually like that, you know, so... So I'm finding it fairly productive and calming and stuff.

[Sean Welsh] That's great. So you are one of the people that are going to write their masterpiece.

[Kier-La Janisse] I hope so, we'll see. We'll see. But, uh, but I also realise I'm sort of in a privileged position because I didn't lose my job, like so many other people. You know, my day job is working for Severin Films, and we are still in production as usual. So I realise I'm also very lucky that I have that.

[Sean Welsh] Yeah, that's wonderful. And so I wanted to kind of talk about your secret origins, your career to date and particularly your career as a film programmer. Obviously, you have a number of hats, and I'm sure they have kind of... they're very connected in various ways rather than separate. But I wonder if you could just tell me, your secret origins for film. How did you get into film, your very first experiences of movies and the cinema? Well, my first experience is something I've written about, but it's seeing a movie, Horror Express, when I was a kid. We would have these Saturday afternoon creature features on television, and I remember watching it at my grandmother's house when I was quite young. It's my first... It's one of my first memories, but it's definitely my first film memory and I had nightmares about a character in that movie for like, a decade after that. But in terms of it... You know... And so I became interested in horror films very young, I was really interested in monsters especially. And my parents...especially... My parents were both like into different types of horror themselves. And my stepdad would cut out articles from the paper and he would, you know, wake me up late at night if there was, you know, a creature feature on you know, because they'd be on at midnight sometimes too. And so they really encouraged that interest, you know, like, they encouraged... Anything I did that I became kind of obsessive about, they really encouraged it. They didn't encourage it as, like, a job, though. You know, so, making the transition into, like, working in film, that was something that came a lot later, I started going to university for something else. And it wasn't until I started my first film festival, just as, like, a hobby, that I realised, like, "Oh, I can do this, this is something I can transition to." And I think that, because I had always thought that, you know, in order for you to work in film, you have to make films and I didn't really have that much of an interest in making films. I didn't know till I was older that there were all these other jobs related to film, like programming and film restoration and, you know, library sciences. And just like so many other jobs that you can do in film, where I feel like, if I had known that earlier, I probably would have gone to school for something like that, something like archival related to film. But, yeah, that's sort of where it started. It was just it was kind of a chance viewing of something on TV that blossomed into an interest that was then encouraged by parents, so...

[Sean Welsh] And I can sprinkle through some, like, vaguely stalkerish information that I've researched on you, from various interviews and things. Is it true that, as a child, you watched The Breakfast Club 56 times, for a bet?

[Kier-La Janisse] I did. It was, it was like a competition I had with a friend of mine in school where, I don't remember what grade I was in, like, maybe grade seven or something, and, yeah, we just, you know, she wanted us to have a bet to see who could watch their favourite teen movie, which I guess at that time, that was my favourite teen movie. And so she watched *The Outsiders*, however many times and I won by watching *The Breakfast Club* 50-something times. I like...

[She laughs] I like making bets with people about stupid things. So, yeah, so that was just one of those things.

[Sean Welsh] I just wonder how many times she watched *The Outsiders*?

[Kier-La Janisse] Well, I think it was close.

[Sean Welsh] Okay. So, you were studying something else at university. It was a PhD, I think you were working on, is that right? No?

[Kier-La Janisse] No, I was actually just doing my bachelor's degree, in Medieval Studies. I did read that somewhere, that somebody said I was a PhD student. I was like, "That's okay. I'll take it."

[Sean Welsh] So you're...and that's when you were kind of... I believe you were working in the video shop, and you began working on this zine as well. Is that right?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah.

[Sean Welsh] And that was the zine that eventually, you took over, and then eventually became *CineMuerte*, the zine, is that correct?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah. So, how it originally started was that there was... I worked in this video shop and there was a movie theatre across the street and a cafe next to that and all of the people who worked at these places hung out at the cafe. And they all wanted to start like a zine, like a neighbourhood zine or something. And I was the only person that was like, "No way. I'm not doing anything for that. Like, I don't..." Yeah, I was too lazy, whatever, and I didn't want to do it. And everybody was like, "Let's meet in a week "and we'll all have like an article that we wrote or something." And then it turned out, a week later, I was the only one that had actually done anything. And... I'm trying to think. So, the zine was called... Nobody had even thought of a name for it or anything. So I named it and it was called *Wombat Vengeance*, which was from *Rock 'n' Roll High School Forever*, the sequel to *Rock 'n' Roll High School*. It's like, at some point, there's like, they're forming a band, and they're trying to think of names for their band and somebody yells out, "Wombat Vengeance!" And for some reason, I thought that was really funny and so that became the name of my first zine, which is...was terrible because, really, it was just like everyone in the neighbourhood, no matter what they did, just throwing stuff in and it went in. There was no curating or anything like that. But because it seemed like I was paying for it, and I was the only one actually organising it, I was like, "Well, if I'm gonna do this work, "I'm just gonna have a horror zine." Why would I have this neighbourhood coffee zine, you know? So instead, I just switched my energies to starting a zine that was originally called *Cannibal Culture*... and, again, I mean, it's

just... I wish I had read more zines before I started that zine, because, in retrospect, it's really bad. Really bad...

[She laughs] Like...

[Sean Welsh] Does it still exist?

[Kier-La Janisse] What's that?

[Sean Welsh] Is it in your archive, do you still have copies?

[Kier-La Janisse] I don't have copies of all of them, no. I cringe when I look at it, so... Yeah, there was, like, an Italian issue, the second issue was, like, Italian horror, and every fact in it is wrong.

[She laughs] So this was, like, before the internet and it's, like, a lot of times what... You know, I was piecing together stuff I had read in various... In, you know... I, you know, I'd read Video Watchdog and European Trash Cinema and zines like that. But I just feel like I got I got so much information wrong. That it's embarrassing, but... And just obnoxious. You know, my tone of my writing was so, like, obnoxious and I hate it. Yeah. But it was like, that's kind of how it started. You know, it was like, finding my voice, I sort of had to go through that period. So...

[Sean Welsh] And, so, how did you get from, from the CineMuerte zine to what presumably was never called Wombat Vengeance Film Festival? Like, what was the steps to take you to that point?

[Kier-La Janisse] It was 'cause I was working in the video store and I had the zine and pretty much the only people that bought it were people that would come in the store. And there was this one...annoying kid, who came in one day and just started... He was, like, the kind of customer that every time he would come in, I would just go like, like, "Urgh," he just sucks all the energy out of the room. But, um... But he was really into horror films. And so he was constantly like, challenging me and, you know, but, so, he...he said, "Well, you know, the zine, whatever, it's great, "but it's, like, nobody can see the movies that that you write about in it," because in Canada, we have obligatory ratings like they do in the UK. So, in America, you can just put whatever movie on the shelf you want but in Canada, you can't. It has to go through a distributor, who then pays for it rated and has to get a rating that allows it to be on the shelf. And so, for so many films I would write about, they didn't have Canadian distribution so we couldn't have them at the store. And... But I would review them and so some...this kid was like, "How come you don't put on a film festival or something and play the films?" Like, "Why don't you do anything to like, get the film shown? And I was like, "What can I do? I don't know how to do anything like that." And so I went... I feel like I've told this story so many times, so I apologise to anybody hearing it again. But, um... But I went to... There was a local micro cinema called the Blinding Light Cinema that I loved, had amazing programming that sort of straddled the line between, like, experimental film programming, and like just weird cult film and stuff. And I went there with, like, a list of films, and I just told the owner, like, "If you play any of these films, "I can help you get an audience to come to them," type of thing. So I gave him the list, never heard from him, you know, months

go by. And then he contacted me, I think in, like, January of whatever year it was, 1999, and said, "Okay, so I'm doing the June calendar, "what dates do you want for your horror film festival?" And I was like, "I don't have a horror film festival." And he was like, "Oh, didn't you give me a list of films "that you were going to play in a horror film festival? And he's, like, "I thought you wanted to, like, "rent the theatre and put on this festival." And I was like, "Well, no. How much is it to rent the theatre?" And it was \$200 a night, which was, even then, cheap. And I had just gotten my student loan for school. And so I used it to put on the film festival. I was like, "Okay, I'll do that." You know, but, of course, the first year was, like, totally sketchy, because I didn't know anything about booking films. So half the films I played were, like, VHS tapes of like PAL transfers, you know, so they were like dark, crappy, with, like, Greek subtitles, or whatever on them. And then the other half of the films were actually cleared, because, fortuitously, in the months leading up to that first festival, I met these people named Chris Bavota and Ashley Fester, who had just moved to Vancouver from Montreal, where they had been involved, peripherally, with the Fantasia Film Festival. So they knew Mitch Davis, the lead programmer there, knew, you know, a lot of the people associated with that festival and had met film-makers and stuff too. And they connected me to Mitch and then, between Mitch and other people Mitch connected me to, I was able to actually get permission for, like, half the films I wanted to show and get proper copies of them. So, like, half of them, the first year, were literally bootleg VHS tapes, with Dutch or Greek subtitles, and, you know, but the other half of them... Like, I think I showed Nekromantik maybe the first year, and that we got on 16mm and stuff and did it properly. But, yeah, so that was it. And so it was, like, after that first festival, which broke even... you know, and it only broke even because I was playing half the films without permission. But, um... But then the second year, I moved to a bigger venue and started getting into 35mm and stuff. And that's when things started to get very expensive because I was shipping prints in from all over the world and I had no context of what was a normal amount of money to be paying for things, you know. And, so, I just had to kind of find out through trial and error what I could afford and what I couldn't, you know, because the FedEx bills would come in and I'd be, like, "Urgh", you know. But, yeah, so, it was like, I just did it. I didn't know... You know, I didn't, had never volunteered at a film festival or anything. I had no idea, like, the machinations of like how they work, so I just had to kind of do it and figure it out.

[Sean Welsh] Right, and all your own money on the line, and you were also taking care of... you're taking care of programming, venue booking, print trafficking, marketing, guest services, like, literally everything apart from.. Presumably you had more help as years went on?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, I had friends that... I would say, for most of the year, I would be doing it myself and then, for about a week, or maybe two weeks before the festival, other friends of mine would sort of come on and be volunteers where they would sign up to be, like, drivers, you know, kind of baby-sitting the guests or whatever, or, um, or dropping off programmes or whatever, you know, so it'd be like, you know, in the last two weeks, there would be people that would, like, come in and

help a lot to make it actually happen, because I can't be in a million places at once. There's no way I could have done it totally by myself, you know?

[Sean Welsh] Sure.

[Kier-La Janisse] And then also the venues that I was at, the people who worked at those venues were really helpful also, so...

[Sean Welsh] Yeah, I mean, it's quite... Have you found it's quite an atypical way to come up, and a way to run a film festival? Because... To wear all those hats and essentially do all yourself?

[Kier-La Janisse] It is now, especially because it seems like people can go to school for film programming. Like, they didn't have that when I was younger. Like now you can go to school for film programming, you can go to school for curating. And people sort of... There's a more clearly defined pathway now where people have like internships, you know, they volunteer, then they become an intern, and then... you know, and I feel like that's how a lot of people come up through it. But I also feel like when people do it that way... they are often disappointed. They're like, "Oh, I went through all this work, "and I didn't get this magical film programming job at the end of it," you know? And, you know, so I always tell people, it's like, because if somebody is going to hire you as a programmer, it's not just about your taste. It's about your network. It's about, like, the fact that you know what's at stake if that film doesn't perform well. You know, and that comes from being in that position of losing money and having to be in a half-empty theatre with a guest there, you know, like going through those kinds of excruciating experiences are what help make you a better programmer, because it's such a balancing act, you know, but it's, like, everybody who just has good taste in movies thinks, like, "Oh, I could be a fun programmer, because I have great taste." But that's only, like, part of the job, you know. And so I do feel that a lot of times, having your own money on the line is a total game changer, in terms of your perspective on what you're doing.

[Sean Welsh] So it's really important.

[Kier-La Janisse] It's like people just expect to get a job as a film programmer and use someone else's money to play with. And it's, like, why would anybody do that? Why would somebody just give you a budget, out of nowhere, you know? So, yeah, so I do feel like it was kind of atypical, but I feel like a lot of the people that I have become long term friends with in the film programming community and stuff are people who started out that way also.

[Sean Welsh] Just basically determined to do it no matter what, and like, you know, making something happen, that wouldn't happen otherwise.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah. And, I mean, even if it's things like, you know, you start screening movies in a bar, you know, where there's like noise infiltration and light infiltration and crappy presentation or whatever, but it's like people who just start off doing things like that, even, it's...it helps you get a sense of it, you know, it's, to me, that's better than going the normal route of like, being a volunteer and an assistant or

whatever, you know, just, like, do it yourself and like forge your own path and figure out how it works.

[Sean Welsh] And I guess we kind of skipped a step, because you were, I believe, hosting horror events in your... in your basement. Before the festival itself. Is that right?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah.

[Sean Welsh] And just and you were cutting together programmes from VHS,

[Kier-La Janisse] They were sort of like mix tapes, I guess. But they were actually very similar to, like, when the Alamo Drafthouse started doing their programme of 100 Best Kills, you know, where they'd just have, like, a montage of, like, all these death scenes and I think theirs are, like, edited together more tightly, you know, than mine were. Some of my clips would be quite long, but I was also making them VCR to VCR, you know, like, I didn't have any editing... You know, I had two VCRs and you'd have to like, keep redoing it because you didn't get it to start at the right time or whatever. And I don't even remember how to do that now, but I used to do everything that way, just, like, VCR to VCR. But, um... So I would take all these, like, death scenes from different movies and it would be, like, two hours long or something or an hour and a half and just invite people over. So it originally started where it was just my friends coming over and then I would eventually... I just made posters, and I just put them up and, like, any weird stranger could, like, come into my apartment, and I had, like, a basement apartment and people would just be crammed into it. My TV wasn't even that big, you know, but it was, like... But that's where...that's, I guess, what CineMuerte kind of grew out of, was doing... You know, I was always into finding ways to share the things I was interested in with other people. So...

[Sean Welsh] And you always had that drive to do it, you couldn't do something, like, casually, and just watch it in your house, you had to kind of...

[Kier-La Janisse] I always wonder why I can't do that. You know, I'm always, like, "Why can't I just be a consumer?" Like, "Why can't I just like, watch the movies?"

[She laughs] Why do I have to, like, put on an event for other people, and then have stress for the whole year and then have debt and, like, all these things. And, you know, but I think, for a lot of film programmers, especially lifers, you know, it's a compulsion. It's like, you're just compelled to do this and it's... you know, even when I try to quit, I'm like, "Okay, that's it. I'm not film programming any more." And then I'll just think up some idea and, you know, I'll end up doing it again.

[Sean Welsh] And you'll have to do it. When you were doing CineMuerte and you were in the thick of it and wearing all those hats, was it difficult for you to give up any of those hats? And would you have ideally just done everything yourself? Like, I guess I can kind of relate to that level of obsession with making sure everything's right and making sure everything's taken care of. Was it ever tricky for you to kind of step away and let someone else get involved?

[Kier-La Janisse] Not necessarily. I think I've always been a fairly good delegator. But I think that whenever I delegate things to people, they often feel like I'm just throwing them into the deep end, like, I don't give them any help or instructions. Like, "You're in charge of ticketing." And they're, like, "How does that work? "What are ticket types?" or whatever, and I'm, like, "I don't know, figure it out." And so I've always been relatively okay with delegating. The biggest lesson for me, I think, was about programming. Because, when I first started programming the festival, you know, my dream was for me to just pick every movie, to be, like, in charge of a movie theatre where I pick every movie, you know, and then after sort of doing the festival and also then going and doing Alamo Drafthouse and stuff, I realised that having other voices in there is not only good for the programming, but it's also good for, like, the marketing and everything else when it's, like, not you pushing your taste constantly, like you really do need those, like, other voices and those people who are going to be just as passionate about the stuff they programmed, and then they harass the press about their stuff so that the press isn't constantly being hit by the same person every day, you know. And so that part, that part took me a bit longer, you know, because I thought, like, it just had to be about me and my taste, you know, and it's like, "If I'm paying for the festival, "it's gonna be all movies that I pick," you know, and...and then I started realising that, you know, you find the right people to... You know, that it's actually really amazing to bring in other people to help programme stuff. So that was the part that was actually hardest for me to delegate.

[Sean Welsh] And you must have had quite a learning curve with like, with the kind of esoteric aspects of festival, you know, promotion, like dealing with the press and marketing and all that stuff. Was that... That was challenging as well, when you first started?

[Kier-La Janisse] Well, I don't think I even... I had barely any press, for, like, all of CineMuerte. And part of it was I realised I was incredibly antagonistic towards...

[She laughs] ..towards the press, because I just thought, if you are a journalist, it's your job, like, you have to cover this festival.

[Sean Welsh] That's right!

[Kier-La Janisse] And, so, if they weren't covering it, I was like, "What's wrong with you? Why aren't you doing your job?" And then it wasn't until I got to... So they just hated me, like, the local press in Vancouver. But then when I got to work in Austin, at the Drafthouse, and they would have these, like, meetings with the press where they would, like, you know, just kind of, like, get the press really excited about stuff and they would take them for drinks and it was just more about, like, getting them on your side, you know, so that they get excited about the stuff you're into. And it was this totally different approach. I was like, "Wow, I've never thought of, like, giving a gift to a journalist." I just gave them shit. You know? Because I thought they owed me the press, you know, and that they weren't doing their job if they didn't do it, so, all through CineMuerte, I would say, I failed at the press aspects of it. I failed at getting grant money for the same reasons. I didn't, uh... I was antagonistic towards the funders also because I just thought, like, "You should be giving me money because I'm doing this." And I think if I'd even read one successful grant, I would have

understood why I was not getting grants. You know, like just looking at the wording and how I was writing... I was writing my grants, like, "My festival is so great that you should be giving me money," you know? And the, you know, the grants that I later learned how to write were more about, like, especially when you're dealing with like arts funders, it's like downplaying the commercial viability of your project, because they want to hear about the... how many independent artists you're supporting and all this stuff. They don't care how commercial it is. They don't care if you're... if you have famous people coming, you know, it's more about... Yeah, it's just they prioritise different things and I didn't know that and so I was also very antagonistic towards the funders. So, yeah, it's like I learned... But going from doing CineMuerte to working at Alamo Drafthouse was like night and day, in terms of like learning stuff from people who actually knew what they were doing, you know.

[Sean Welsh] Right.

[Kier-La Janisse] I can't remember what the question was, or if I answered the question.

[Sean Welsh] It's fine. We've got so many questions. So I guess we kind of missed another step there, just because I know that some people will be very interested, like, how did you get from... You started your own film festival, ran it for five or six years? And then you started with, working with Alamo Drafthouse which is an entirely different country. It's not the same Alamo Drafthouse it is now, because you were kind of part of their formative years. So how did you make that transition into that job?

[Kier-La Janisse] So I had been doing CineMuerte and when it was... So I started going to film festivals regularly. I would go to Fantasia every year, I would go to Sitges, sometimes, you know, I'd go to Dead by Dawn in Edinburgh and it was one year at Sitges... Actually, how it happened earlier was that, at the festival, Tim and Carrie League from the Alamo just showed up one year. So they flew up to Vancouver and came to the festival. Because we had a mutual friend in Anthony Timpson, who's a programmer in New Zealand, and programmer and print collector and film-maker. I mean, he's another guy that's like a powerhouse, does everything. And, uh... And so Anthony had said, like, "Oh, you should go and check out "this festival up in Vancouver that's just kind of emerging, "it's really cool," or whatever. And so they just came up as customers. I didn't know them or anything. And...they, you know, they told me they were, like, "Wow, we're so impressed that you're just, like, running around "and just doing everything yourself and stuff," you know. And then I think that, later that year, I was at the Sitges Film Festival. They had a spaghetti western retrospective that was, like, massive that I wanted to go there for. And, so, you know, me and Anthony Timpson and Tim League were there and we were all drinking and Tim was, like, "You should come work at the Alamo Drafthouse." And I was like, "What would I do?" And he was just, like, "I don't know, we'll give you a job, you know, slinging popcorn or whatever," he was like, "It's just," you know, "we can always use people "that have, like, that kind of energy, where they're really... "they really love that environment," and whatever. So I was just like, "No, I'm gonna open my own cinema," you know, "So, I don't want that job." And so I

opened my own cinema, it failed within three months, it was, like, the biggest disaster ever. And that's another thing, learning the difference between festival programming and theatrical programming - totally different. You know, when you have to, like, keep that going all year. You know, like, a festival, you can blow all your money and you can be broke and it doesn't matter because you don't have to, like, do it again for a year, you have the whole year to, like, pay it off or whatever. But when you're doing a theatre, it's, like, you don't have that reprieve or that break. Like, if you have to keep... It's, like, the debts just keep piling and piling and piling, you know. So it's totally different. You have to programme it different. Can't be spending, like, a shitload of money on shipping and prints from everywhere and stuff.

[Sean Welsh] Yeah.

[Kier-La Janisse] But, so, yeah, so I did that festival, or that theatre, it failed, and so then I called Tim back and I was like, "Okay, I want that job now." And he was like, "What job?" He had totally forgotten he had offered me this job. And he was, like, "Oh, it's fine." You know, "Come on down, "we'll find something for you to do." And, so, it was literally, like, I just wanted to sort of get away from Vancouver and kind of lick my wounds a bit and stuff because I'd been so devastated by the failure of this theatre. And so I just thought I'd go down there and just work behind the counter or be a server or sweep up or whatever. I didn't expect to get, like, an important job or anything like that. Just an average movie theatre job. And then it turned out that the week I arrived... was calendar time. So Alamo Drafthouse, the original Alamo, on 409 Colorado Street in Austin, was a single screen venue, it ran on a calendar, so they didn't play first run movies. They played repertory and second run. And, uh, so...it was calendar time, which meant everything had to get locked by a certain time because they had to go to print with the calendar and there was a million holes in the calendar. Like, Tim always did it himself. And he was like, "Okay, well, since you have experience doing this, "you've booked films, you know, you've worked with studios and stuff, "for this week, just help me finish the calendar, "and then, next week, we'll train you on using..." making the popcorn or whatever, you know. But then that week of, like, getting the calendar booked, and I even managed to repair a relationship that had soured between him and Paul Ginsburg, who was in charge of... he was the VP of Repertory at Universal. And he was at a point where he was, like, "I am never renting a movie to Alamo Drafthouse again," because they were not, you know, they weren't submitting the right paperwork or getting their box office reports in fast enough or whatever. And he was super annoyed and he's like, didn't want to book them anything. And I managed to, like, repair that relationship in like the first day that worked. And, um... And, uh... But then Tim was just, like, "Oh, that was so easy." He's, like, "I've never had someone help me do the programme before." "That was like so much better." I don't know if you can see... Could you see that bird that went by?

[Sean Welsh] No, wow.

[Kier-La Janisse] It was a bald eagle.

[She laughs]

[Sean Welsh] What?!

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah.

[Sean Welsh] Literally a bald eagle. Wow.

[Kier-La Janisse] I see them every day, yeah.

[Sean Welsh] Ah, okay.

[Kier-La Janisse] Anyway... Um... What was I saying? So, yeah, so he just thought that that... He was, like, "Wow, that was so useful," having another programmer who could book films and stuff. He's like, "I'm just gonna keep you doing that. Is that okay?" And I was like, "Yes, that's okay." And so then I became the first, uh... sort of regular, full-time programmer there. There were people who... Lars Nilsen had been programming the Weird Wednesday series, but he was not actually an employee of Alamo Drafthouse. He worked other jobs and then he just sort of did that on a volunteer basis, programming this weekly series. And then Henri Mazza was a server... and he had sort of programming... He had, like specific ideas, specific shows he would pitch and Tim would let him do and Henri is now... He ended up becoming, like, the brand manager, or...some major, major executive, at Alamo Drafthouse, but when I started, he was a waiter. So, um... But that's how much mobility there was there too, you know, like there was, it was like, you know, if you had good ideas and you were dynamic, or... I mean, you could go from being, like, a chef to being an executive in, like, a year.

[She laughs] You know? I think it's different now because I think they recruit people in different ways now, that are more, like, corporate and stuff, but... But, uh, yeah, so I ended up just doing that and being a programmer and so then I worked side by side with Tim. I worked in his kitchen, because, at that time, there was no office for the Alamo Drafthouse, it was still just in his kitchen and I lived on the next street over, so I would just walk to his house every morning and then we'd just work in the kitchen all day. So...

[Sean Welsh] And that's how you kind of cut your teeth in the cut and thrust of, like, cinema programming.

[Kier-La Janisse] He was kind of my mentor, I guess. Him and Anthony Timpson were really my mentors.

[Sean Welsh] I was gonna say, did you have like, you know, even, maybe not before CineMuerte, but like during it, did you have any hero programmers? Or, like, you know, before they took you under their wing, were there people that you looked up to as, you know, leading lights, kind of what you could aspire to?

[Kier-La Janisse] I'm trying to think, because I had such a... It was such a new world to me, the whole idea of film programming, I don't think I knew that many film programmers, but I knew of Jack Stephenson, who was based in Denmark, I think. Uh... I think he lives in Copenhagen. And I don't know if he lived there then but he, you know, he was like an American who sort of fell in love with Scandinavian cinema and stuff and he was a film programmer I knew of, for sure. And so, um... Because

he would travel around with, you know, 16mm prints and stuff and show these rare films. And he sort of crossed... And he also wrote books, you know, so it was, like, I knew of him from his books that he wrote also, which talked about his... He wrote a book called Land of 1,000 Balconies that I think was out when I was doing my festival. And that was really influential to me. I'm trying to think of other film... I just don't even know if I knew what a film programmer was, you know, until I became one. But I think I think Jack Stevenson was, like, the only guy I really knew of, that did that.

[Sean Welsh] So this whole way, you're just kind of finding your own way and like picking up what you can but just kind of powering forward. What I was gonna ask you, maybe this is a more abstract question, but what do you look for in a film? Maybe even just for you personally, what does a film have to deliver before you say, "This is for me"? Like, how many minutes into film you're like, "This is my film"?

[Kier-La Janisse] It's funny, because, like, it's making me think of this story where like I had to, like... I don't know, it was like five years ago or something, at some point. I didn't work at the Alamo any more. But Drafthouse Films, when Drafthouse Films was still operating, they needed, like, an extra pair of eyes, like, just at the Cannes Film Festival, just scouting films, and, like, taking meetings with people they didn't have time to meet with or whatever. And I remember we were meeting with this sales agent. And she was trying to show me all these films they had and I was like, "No, like, that's not for us," you know, and she was like, "Well, what kind of films do you like?" you know, and I said, "Well, you know, "I tend to, when I read film descriptions, I never read the actual description. "I just sort of scan it for certain keywords, "things that are, like, things I know that appeal to me." And she's like, "Oh," like, "what are some of the keywords?" I was like... "Teenage prostitute... "amputee..." you know, listing all these things and she was like horrified and then I later went back and told the Drafthouse people and they were like, "You're not allowed to take meetings any more."

[They laugh]

[Sean Welsh] Okay!

[Kier-La Janisse] But I think, like, in general, like, I really... like, I definitely like grim movies. It's rare that I like a funny movie.

[She laughs] I don't know if I... Like, I don't think I'm a humourless person, but I definitely don't respond to most comedy that's designed as comedy and supposed to make me laugh. You know, like, a lot of it, I just have no response to. So, I like really depressing movies. It's really, really, really bleak and grim, I like it. Like, I love, like, The Golden Glove, you know, like, just total squalor, you know? And I love depressing movies, sad movies. I don't know, it's weird, because it's like, you know, with horror, it's...the frightening aspects or terrifying aspects of the movies usually are not the things I even respond to, you know, like with horror it's often... grief or something like that, that I'm responding to. But I also, you know... I'm very interested in, like, music film, you know, so like music documentaries, but also narrative music films. So there was a festival that I don't know if it was like... I think I already was

working at the Draffhouse maybe when it started. Or maybe it was kind of in the tail end of working at CineMuerte that I heard of it. Was that...called Mods & Rockers, it was a festival, an annual festival at the Egyptian... the American Cinematheque, in LA, called Mods & Rockers. And it was all, like, '60s and '70s music films. And so some of them were documentaries and some of them would be, like, you know, The Dave Clark Five movie or whatever, where it's, like, directed by John Boorman and it's, like, the band in a narrative story. That festival, I would just salivate over their programme every year. Another thing I remember, other programmers that I didn't know of, before I worked at Draffhouse, was the Werepad in San Francisco. The Werepad was a micro cinema run by Scott Moffett, some film collectors, Scott Moffett, Jacques Boyreau, I think Vicki Vaden, who is a... she's like mostly DJ and stuff, and another guy whose name I can't remember. So they ran and lived in this micro cinema space, which is common. I think, a lot of micro cinemas, people live there too. And, uh... And it ran for many years. It had, like, a pretty long life for micro cinema. And then it later transitioned into a place called The Vortex Room.

[Sean Welsh] Oh! Yeah, I know that. I know of that. I know that one.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, so Scott Moffett from the Werepad, like, him and Jacques Boyreau kind of split. Jacques moved to Portland and Scott stayed in San Francisco, so Scott moved to a different location and renamed the place The Vortex Room. But it was just great because it was, uh...you know, they had amazing repertory programming and double bills and...but they also were very into, like, cocktails and stuff, you know, cocktail culture. And so the whole vibe of the room was very important, you know, the atmosphere, the social atmosphere. And so that was pretty influential on me also, in the early years.

[Sean Welsh] And is that...was that a direct inspiration for Blue Sunshine? The Werepad. Or was that before...

[Kier-La Janisse] I would say... It was...it was close. I'm trying to think if there were other micro cinemas that were more of an inspiration but I think the Werepad... I mean, we did not achieve what the Werepad did. We were not around as long, our vibe was not as cool as theirs. But, um... Uh... But, yeah, that that was that was definitely one of our big influences.

[Sean Welsh] Because you had the... Blue Sunshine, if we haven't explained already, was the micro cinema you had in Montreal, and you guys actually lived in rooms behind the screen. That was the kind of set-up, wasn't it?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, and most people didn't know we lived there. You know, it was sort of... you know, it was the third floor of an office building. And, you know, so, it was an office building, so it had, like, pretty low ceilings for cinema. Sightlines were shit. But we... Yeah, we had, like, this... the screen, which was an automatic kind of, like, roll down, you know, it was, like, "Bzzz", the screen would come down. And then we had made masking for the sides, like, just black velvet curtains, right, that we could adjust so that we could adjust the masking. And then we had skirting to put on the bottom of it, right, because the screen itself would stop halfway through the room, it wouldn't go down to the floor, it would stop halfway through the room, so

then we had black skirting Velcro that we would just go... like, attach the skirt to the bottom of the screen and then it would look totally closed off, you know. And, so, behind that curtain, we had our office, where we worked at our computers and then beyond the office was our two bedrooms, my partner and I - my business partner - and, um... And, yeah, most people who came in, they just thought that, where the screen was, that that was the front of the room. They didn't know that there was, like, these other rooms behind it. And it was kind of a... It was an interesting apartment, because people, like, a lot of people who came in there were like, "I've been here before," you know, like some other business had been there that, you know, they'd gone there for and at some point in the '80s, it had been the apartment of the band Men Without Hats. Who sang that song, The Safety Dance?

[They laugh] So it was their apartment. So those are the two most famous things I think that have happened at that apartment, is Men Without Hats and us.

[Sean Welsh] Did you feel their spirit and your leader?

[Kier-La Janisse] I think so.

[Sean Welsh] So, yeah, I wanted to ask you... I have 5,000 questions, incidentally. So I'll skip through some. I wanted to ask you about audiences and what you think about audiences. Do you have an imagined audience when you programme films? Is it important to you to imagine them or are you reactive like that, to the audience you're playing to?

[Kier-La Janisse] I used to have like expectations in terms of...my ideal audience, and I would get really angry when they weren't, like, my ideal audience, you know, like... You know, like, I felt like people didn't get things... I mean, especially in the early years of CineMuerte, people would complain about the movies. I mean, they would complain... about Deep Red not being a horror movie... They would complain... I played Possession, the first year of my festival. Everyone hated it. They, I mean, really, the fact that you can go on Facebook and see as many Possession memes as, like, Star Wars memes, to me is insane, because, like, people hated that movie. Like, it's, like, people now, they don't realise, like... It's like, where is all this love for Possession coming from? Because everyone hated that movie from the time it came out until like ten years ago or whatever. So that, it's been really weird to see stuff like that, you know, people completely turning around their opinions. And Jean Rollin as a film-maker. Another thing where people just suddenly got very into him and people hated his movies when he was alive. And, uh... Um... But... So I would, I would, you know, I would get very frustrated with the audience, because I felt like they weren't... they weren't getting my programming, you know? And...over time... I just stopped being that mad about it.

[She laughs] I think part of it was, like I said, bringing in other programmers, you know, working with other programmers, because sharing... It can be very depressing to be programming by yourself and have people not get into your programming. It can really make you, like, question your self worth and every... You know, horrible. But at least when you have, like, other people who are kind of committed as much as you are and are sharing that energy, you kind of lift each other up and you feel it's

less personal, you know, when the audience isn't responding to the stuff you programme, you know. And then there was things like, at Blue Sunshine, we played... We had themed nights, kind of, so it was like every Thursday night... We were open four days a week. Wednesday, we had Miskatonic Institute classes. So, that was like a horror school I started. So, we had those classes every Wednesday. And then, Thursday, we played music movies. Friday was, like, cult and horror movies. And it was 99% of time on 16mm, so it was almost always on film. And then Saturdays tended to be experimental and animation, but we would...that would sometimes be pre-empted by, like, an opportunity to have a special guest that was coming in from out of town or something, like, they would often get that slot. But the Friday night cult and horror nights and stuff, we just found that, uh... ..people were really in love with the idea of 16mm, you know, it was like they just wanted to come and see anything on film and we realised that we could satisfy the film people with small gauge, with 16mm, you know, they didn't need... Because we didn't have a big enough space for 35mm, to have all the proper ventilation and everything like that. And so our film had to be small gauge and we found that all the, like, film purists and stuff were fine with that, so all the, like, kinds of people that now buy all the Severin releases and buy all the Vinegar Syndrome releases and Arrow releases and stuff like that, like, all those types of people would come religiously on Friday night. So our Friday night was, like, always, really well... And also, by that time, it was, like, people had totally come around to certain directors and stuff and certain types of horror films that they didn't like, like a decade earlier, you know, like, even British horror. I mean, like, I remember a time when people just thought British horror was boring.

[She laughs] You know, like, like, even... God, I just remember, like, people, even five years ago, in the States, complaining about how boring Blood on Satan's Claw is, you know?

[They laugh] And now, it's like, everybody's, like, "That movie is an essential film." You know, it's a canonical film. But... Yeah, so, it's interesting to see, like, how... But I think, like, a lot of those DVD labels, it, uh... it validates a lot of those films, right? It's like, once that stamp is on it, of Severin, or Vinegar Syndrome, or Arrow or whatever, it's like people... already feel like it has this endorsement, and so they're willing to, you know, to go there.

[Sean Welsh] Yeah, "It's canonical, now."

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah. But when... You know, but when you're just an independent programmer, programming stuff like that and it doesn't have that kind of endorsement - it's like a movie that's still not out on DVD or something and nobody's heard of it - you still face that resistance, I think, from a lot of the audiences, where they are... they're, like, "Well, I don't know, I've never heard of this," whereas I'm the opposite. As a film goer, I'm way more likely to go to something if I haven't heard of it.

[Sean Welsh] Sure.

[Kier-La Janisse] Than something I've heard of.

[Sean Welsh] You talk about, like, Jean Rollin and, like, you know, Possession and things like... and their kind of critical re-appreciation or resurgence like, in slightly abstract terms, but you must be able to take some kind of credit for that stuff. You know, like, the fact that you were programming Possession, and, you know, Blood on Satan's Claw, then and now these are way more, like, acceptable or canonical films.

[Kier-La Janisse] I don't know if credit is the right word because I don't know if it's, like, because of me programming those movies that they became popular now. Vindication. I feel vindicated, for sure, because of it. But I think there were, you know, there were other programmers I knew who were playing stuff like that. But they're kind of scattered around the world. You know, so there'd be, like, five programmers that I knew that were playing that type of stuff, but they'd be like in New Zealand and you know, somewhere in the UK and just, like, spread all over. You know, whereas now, those films are so much more known and much more common and exist in formats that, you know, are accessible to most cinemas and stuff. So, you know, I think DCP has actually changed that a lot too. I think DCP being such a portable format that's, like, so much cheaper to ship around... And a lot of times they don't even ship them any more. Now they just download them.

[Sean Welsh] Yeah.

[Kier-La Janisse] But that, I think, made a lot of programmers become a lot more... like, take more risks. So, I feel as though... You know, ironically, we're in, like, this COVID time where everything has shut down, but I would say the last, like, four years or so... I mean, certainly since AGFA started doing, like...really pushing theatrical. I think that, you know, we've seen... we've seen movies get screened, in places where we're just, like... You couldn't even imagine, like, a major...city being able to drum up an audience for this weirdo movie and now they're playing it, like, in... Some small cinema in Iowa is, like, booking, you know, Robowar or whatever. I don't know, like...

[She laughs] ..like, weird, Italian, '80s action movies and stuff. It's, yeah, it's just weird. I think, like, the programming landscape changed a lot by DCP and, like, it not being so expensive to take that chance.

[Sean Welsh] Sure.

[Kier-La Janisse] I don't know how I got there from where were at.

[Sean Welsh] Well, I mean, that's an interesting point, especially in the COVID context. Like, we can obviously see Weird Weekend programming and Terror Tuesday programming here now. Whereas we'd have to wait until we could maybe screen one of those films. And so that's really interesting, but I wonder how you feel about that, in terms of the difference between sharing a film with an audience and being there with them to experience it in the room. I mean, in terms of, you know, the comparison between evangelising for a film and actually being able to show it to a physical audience.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, well, I mean, it makes... It's, like, if you're in a room showing a movie, like Toys Are Not For Children to people or something, and you feel the

audience responding to that movie, nothing beats it, you know? It's like the same as, like, musicians talking about, like, performing and being on stage and how they get high from the energy of the audience. You know, it's very similar for film programmers, if you have a programme that is working, and it's, like, you can see the response the audience has. And obviously, with streaming and everything, it's like, it's cool that, like, you can have these viewing parties online and, you know, people can kind of comment so there's still a way for it to feel social and participatory and stuff. But...but I do hope that it doesn't become like where people are just, like, "Oh, we'll just keep doing it like this," like, after COVID is over, because, you know, "It works well enough and it's easy." I really hope that things go back to, you know, people going to cinemas and sharing that experience because, yeah, it's just a totally different vibe, like, being in the room with all that energy. Yeah. I mean, it's the same as going to see a band versus watching it on TV. It's, like, sure, you probably get a better view of the band, watching it on TV, but it's a totally different feeling, going to see them...

[Sean Welsh] Of course.

[Kier-La Janisse] ..At a show, you know.

[Sean Welsh] I was gonna ask, like, you've always, like, I mean... maybe "overdeliver" is the right word for your, for your events. I mean, you've given away gifts and, like, prizes, and like, you know, just extra stuff for screenings. And that's important for you as well, I think?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah. Although it's much more normal now. I think, like, it's so... All the sorts of bells and whistles, like attached to screenings became really important once... I mean, that's part of, like, why the Alamo Drafthouse succeeded when people were saying, like, "Oh, theatres are dying," you know, everywhere, is because they did that for every movie. I mean, when we would have programming meetings... I mean, yes, I would do it for CineMuerte, like, I thought of doing that kind of thing just because I always have these, like, just dumb ideas. Like when I did CineMuerte, like Cannibal Holocausticles. I made these things called Cannibal Holocausticles that were made out of resin and it was, like, the woman impaled on the stick. And it was, like, it didn't do anything. It was just, like, a little statue. And it wasn't... I think I wanted it to actually be a popsicle at first, which is why it was called the Cannibal Holocausticle, but we couldn't figure out how to make the mould for a popsicle or something like that. And so we just ended up making them as little statues. And then giving out... We played Blue Sunshine with Jeff Lieberman there and had, like, little baggies that were, like... supposedly had, like, two tabs of acid in it or whatever. And Jeff Lieberman autographed them all and stuff. And, yeah, I love doing stuff like that, but when I worked with the Alamo Drafthouse, we would have our programming meetings every Wednesday, and everybody would be just throwing those ideas out. So it was, like, first of all, having ideas for, like, "What movies should we play?" But then, once we had kind of decided what the movies would be, then the meetings would be like, "Okay, what stupid things are we going to do "to, like, tie into this movie to make it more exciting?" because that was ultimately why people came to the Drafthouse to see movies, as opposed to just renting them or going to see

second run films at another theatre, you know. And we had alcohol, which, at that time, no other theatre in town had. So when they first started, you know, it was hard for them to get studios to take them seriously and book films to them. But then I think after only a couple of years, the studios started to see, from the box office numbers, that when they released a first run movie in Austin, they found that the movie did better in second run because people would wait to go see it at the Alamo Drafthouse, because they could have a beer with the movie. And so, once they saw that happening, then they started, like, offering those movies to the Drafthouse first.

[Sean Welsh] Sure.

[Kier-La Janisse] But it took a while. They had to sort of earn the trust because they were like these two kids, Tim and Carrie, just starting a movie theatre in... You know, people just thought it was, like, an impossible idea and that it was never going to work, you know. And they didn't have any real, like, movie connections. Like, you know, they didn't have, like, a big network or anything, so they also were sort of just starting... without knowing what they were doing, totally.

[Sean Welsh] So, kindred spirits.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah.

[Sean Welsh] So there was a couple of key screenings that I wanted to ask you about that you...that you... Yeah, again, over-delivered or came through in stunning style. The first one was there was a situation, I think it was with CineMuerte, where you were delivered a print that was not subtitled.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yes.

[Sean Welsh] What film was that?

[Kier-La Janisse] Black Belly of the Tarantula.

[Sean Welsh] And what did you do about it?

[Kier-La Janisse] Um... We...

[She laughs] So what did I do? We had the print and... And, obviously, you know, when you're doing a festival, this has to be planned... You know, they don't send you the print way, way in advance, you know, so you're often having to deal with these problems at the last minute. But so I had a VHS of the movie, like, a bootleg VHS of the movie, and it wasn't good enough to show instead of the print or anything like that, but it was... I'm trying to think if it was dubbed or subtitled. It might have been dubbed. But so we had a little TV that we set up at the back of the cinema with, like, headphones, and we rented a PA system, so we had, like, these two additional speakers put at the front of the room, attached to microphones. And we were like, "Okay, we are going to like watch the movie on the TV... "and do the voices live." So we have to like somehow sync this VHS to the print... which turned out was running at a completely different speed. And so Anthony Timpson was on the remote control, constantly rewinding and fast forwarding the movie to try to get it, like, in sync with the print. And then, uh... Udo Kier was the guest at the festival that year and he wanted to do Giancarlo Giannini's voice in the movie, so, it was like... So he was

there. It was, like, Udo and me... doing all the women's voices, I think. And then my friend Kelly Salerno, who was, like, a local actor in Vancouver. And so the three of us doing the voices and then Anthony Timpson on the floor, with the remote...

[She laughs] ..and it was ridiculous because it was, like, we had the headphones on, the movie's moving at a different speed and we're looking at the TV here, but the screen is, like, here, so we're constantly, like... like, going like this, like, trying to see where we are in the movie to make sure we're saying the line at the right time. It was ridiculous. And... But the people who were there, it was, like, a Giallo night. I'm trying to think of what else played. I think, like, maybe One on Top of the Other, and... I don't remember what, but I think it was like a Giallo triple bill that night. And, uh, yeah, so it was insane. But people loved it. You know, anybody who missed it was... Because, at that time also, whenever I would do Giallo films, almost no-one came. No-one understood what that genre was, they didn't get into those films because there wasn't enough... Like, they didn't think they were, like, horror enough.

[She laughs] I mean, it's crazy to think of now, but they were just like, "This is just, like, a drama," or something, you know. And so... But anybody who missed it was just sort of, like, "Oh, man, I can't believe I missed out on Udo Kier "doing, like, live voice to Black Belly of the Tarantula." But, yeah, that was pretty cool. And it came in handy because that happened again...

[They laugh] ..A couple times down the road, and we were like, "Well, we've done it before, we can do it again." So I had I had to do the same thing a couple years later, when I played the movie Airport, and Airport arrived, like, the print, in Italian.

[Sean Welsh] Oh, wow.

[Kier-La Janisse] And that was, like, a two and a half hour movie and back then there was no... You know, you could order a script of the movie, but it would take, like, two weeks to get it in the mail. You know, and I only had a few days. There was, like... It wasn't like now, where you can just download the PDF or whatever. You had to, like, get the thing mailed to you. And so I watched, like, a VHS of Airport and, like, hand-wrote all the dialogue in the movie and then typed it out. Which took me, like, God, like, 30 hours or something. And then I, you know, got the PA, got the people to do the different voices and there was more of us doing the voices than there were people in the theatre watching the movie.

[They laugh]

[Sean Welsh] That's devotion for you!

[Kier-La Janisse] What?

[Sean Welsh] That's devotion for you.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah.

[Sean Welsh] Dedication to the cause. That's amazing. So, like, yeah, the other one I wanted to ask you about - and obviously, please feel free if you've got any more horror stories, or success stories - but there was one that stood out, which is when you screened Until the Light Takes Us in Winnipeg.

[Kier-La Janisse] Oh, yeah. Mm-hm.

[Sean Welsh] And you had a unique set-up for that special event, which, I guess the film came first, before the idea for the set-up, is that right?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, well, the film was out and I really wanted to play it. And they didn't want to give it to me, because... So this was after I had left the Alamo Drafthouse. I'd gone back to Canada. I worked for a year at the Winnipeg Film Group, programming, and then I quit that job and I just started doing independent events. So I started... I already had this website called Big Smash because I had done this, like, short...uh, music... I'd done this music festival in Vancouver for, like, one year called Big Smash. And it was, like, music documentaries and stuff like that. And that was a total failure. I mean, all the movies were amazing, but it was a failure financially. But I already had the website built. So I was just, like, "Well, I'm just gonna change..." "I'm just gonna start some totally different thing and call it Big Smash, "and I can use the website." And so I just started doing independent events. And so I would do them probably, like, once a month, sometimes twice a month, in Winnipeg. And so the movie *Until The Light Takes Us*, black metal documentary, was coming out and I had been following it as it was in production and I was like, talking to the film-makers, and I was just like, "I want this movie. I want to play this movie," but I was just, like, an individual person, you know, it's, like, for any distributor to just be, like, "Why would I give you the movie? "Like, I want to get it in a movie theatre," you know, like, "Why am I going to give it to some no-name, individual person? But... So, I kept promising that I was going to do something special. I was like, "If you give me this movie, "I'm going to do something no-one will do for it, "anywhere in the world, I will be the only one to do this." And they were like, "Well, what is your idea? And I was, like, "I want to pro... "I want to project it on a screen made out of snow, in the middle of winter, "and have everybody outside, freezing their asses off, "watching it on this screen made of snow." And so eventually they gave me the movie. And so I had to set about making the snow screen, which is... you know, we have a lot of snow in Winnipeg, so coming up with snow wasn't a problem, but there's other things you just don't think about, where if you were to just take snow from the ground, it's going to have, like, leaves and dirt and, like, all kinds of stuff in it. So it turned out that there was a guy who was, like, in charge of the Film Commission in Winnipeg that I had worked with, as a teenager, at some job, at some costume shop I used to work at as a teenager and he was now, like, the head of the Film Commission. So he was the person who would, like, arrange for filming permits in Winnipeg and stuff. So I contacted him and he said, "You know, I can get you fresh snow delivered." And I was, like, "Great." So what he did was, he was, like, "The snowploughs go around every morning "and they get all the brand-new snow off the road. "So what we can do is we can get it delivered "to the place where you need it." I was, like, "Great." So I had... But I also had to have a place that was, like, enclosed, because the thing is you have to have... The screen has to like set, right? It has to harden when you build it, so you have to leave it kind of, like, for a week for it to be hard enough. But the problem is, if you just have it in a park or whatever, some kids are going to come and kick it over. So you have to have it, like, protected somehow. So I found, like, a pub that had, like, an outdoor courtyard. And so I was,

like, "Okay, so we're going to do the screening in there," because then it's protected, because no-one could get in that courtyard.

[Sean Welsh] And just to clarify, you didn't know how to build a screen made of snow before you started.

[Kier-La Janisse] No.

[Sean Welsh] No.

[They laugh] No, I promised this without having any idea how I was gonna do it, logistically. There's also other issues related to the weather like, you know, having a expensive video projector outside in the freezing cold.

[Sean Welsh] Yeah.

[Kier-La Janisse] And how long is that going to work before everything freezes up and the power stops working and all that. So those things were considerations too. So... So, yeah, So I had... We had this pub, we had the snow delivered there. And then this... Two people kind of worked on the snow screen. So the main person who built it was this guy named Ricardo Alms, who had done... He was like, production designer on a bunch of Guy Maddin's movies. So he basically built the snow screen and he built, like, a wooden frame first and then took all this fresh snow and dumped it into the frame and, like, packed it in. And then, at the end of the week, he came and he took the frame off, like, the boards, like, just unattached everything and then the snow screen was there. And then this other woman Andrea, that I knew came and carved... She was a sculptor and so she came and carved the name of the movie into the top of the snow screen.

[Sean Welsh] Wow.

[Kier-La Janisse] So it was... And then people came in snow suits - and corpse paint.

[She laughs] And like sat outside in the winter in Winnipeg, watching this movie and we had to have the projector wrapped in, like, thermal blankets. And we had all the cords going through this, like, special thermally protected piping and stuff, you know, so, uh, yeah, it was... The whole time, like, I was just waiting for... And actually we did lose power. We lost power. Like, in the first five minutes of the movie, everything went... And, uh... But we got it back up and running and it ran for the whole rest of the movie.

[Sean Welsh] Wow.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, but that was a pretty... Yeah, that was like a... That was a big one.

[Sean Welsh] That's extremely cool.

[Kier-La Janisse] One of my proud moments.

[Sean Welsh] Yeah. And take it you made lots of money on that?

[Kier-La Janisse] I did not make loads of money on that. Um, luckily I didn't pay that much either, though, you know. Like, I think I paid a flat fee for the thing and a lot of people that worked on the screen and everything like, just did it all volunteer. I think I... I may have paid Ricardo Alms like 200 bucks or something, something like that to, like, make the screen. And then... But the other... The other one that I really liked that I put on was I played Deep End, the movie Deep End, in a pool with the audience and a pool.

[Sean Welsh] Right, wow.

[Kier-La Janisse] And that was complicated too, because you know, logistically, you're like, you have all this electrical equipment...

[Sean Welsh] So it's like a pool with water in it?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah!

[Sean Welsh] Right, okay.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, so everybody's in the pool in the water, like, floating, watching Deep End. And, you know, but it was like in an indoor pool because we had to be able to control the... You know... Actually, I think the reason we had to do an indoor pool was because we had to get a private pool because the city wouldn't let us use any of the public outdoor pools for liability reasons. And so we had to go to a private pool in, like, a hotel that was willing to take the liability risk, but we had all this electronic gear, like, all around the pool and all the people in the pool watching it and my friend was, like, "How come you're not going in the pool?" I was like, "There's no way I'm going in a pool with all that electrical..."

[They laugh] I was just waiting for everybody to get electrocuted the whole time. But luckily, that didn't happen.

[Sean Welsh] Yeah, I'm glad that didn't happen. Okay, so it's probably about time that we open up to some other people to ask some questions, so, if everyone else that's sitting on the call just now, if you want to like switch on your video, maybe stay muted for the minute, if you're all still there. I'll kind of watch out for you popping up. And if you want to stick your hand up if you have a question ready, and I'll just jump...jump to you. So who wants to be first? Sam May. Switch on your audio and ask a question.

[Sam May] Yeah, sure. So I have a question more about your, like, interest in Folk Horror. Like, I know you're making a documentary on Folk Horror. And I was just wondering what's your thoughts about the more modern, like, iterations of Folk Horror, so, like, stuff like Ben Wheatley films or The Witch. Like, do you still have that sort of same interest in that level of Folk Horror?

[Kier-La Janisse] Oh, no, definitely, definitely. I mean, like... And the thing to clarify with the movie is that, a lot of the people in the movie who I interview, they are more the experts in Folk Horror than me. You know, it's kind of like I knew it was like a topic that bore exploring and so I, you know... So just to let you know, they're way more Folk Horror experts than me. But, absolutely, the last ten years of Folk Horror

is... I mean, that's kind of like the epilogue of the movie is this whole resurgence in Folk Horror and then looking at things that happened politically that are very similar to things that happened in the early 1970s, when the first wave of Folk Horror kind of became popular, but the movie also goes, like, a lot into international Folk Horror too, you know, so it's like it started off, when I started making it, it was just going to be a bonus feature for Severin, to go with Blood on Satan's Claw. And then when I started putting it together, and I handed it in, it was like two hours long. My rough cut was two hours long, longer than Blood on Satan's Claw. And so then they were just, like, "Oh, well, instead of cutting it shorter, why don't you just, like, keep going, "like, interview more people and try to make it into a feature instead?" And, you know, so then, once we started talking to people, it was you know, originally very focused on British folklore because it was connected to Blood On Satan's Claw. But then when we opened it up internationally, it became really interesting because, like, the way that people look at Folk Horror and how they define it is so different in cultures, especially where... they were not colonial cultures, you know, so it's, like, if you have... It's, like, a lot of the Folk Horror to, like, British people, Americans, Australians... people who came and, like, colonised a place, you know, have a very specific type of Folk Horror and then when you get into... like...the, like, the Pacific Rim and stuff like that, you just have a totally diff... Like, they look at Folk Horror as much more... It's different 'cause it's, like, a lot of those older beliefs are not considered older beliefs to them, they're considered current beliefs, you know. So it's, like, the whole idea of British Folk Horror where there's this older culture that's constantly in conflict with the modern, you know, that doesn't exist in the same way in Folk Horror coming from a lot of different countries, because for a lot of other countries, it's, like, those religions and those spiritual practises are still current and still, you know, the dominant belief systems and stuff. And, uh... So, yeah, so we started looking... So, I mean, it's like, massive. Right now, it's five hours long.

[She laughs] So it's, like, I have to somehow get it to a normal length. But it's... Yeah, there's so much interesting stuff in it. But all of that, all of the new stuff is definitely covered. So... But it focuses more on like, specific ideas. So it goes through specific ideas and then brings in specific films as they sort of illustrate those ideas. So it's not, like, covering every single film, you know. So there's definitely going to be, like, films that are just not mentioned, because there's another film that illustrates that point better or whatever. So, yeah, it doesn't go through, like... Because there's so many films. I mean, we have over 200 films in it that people talk about. So it's, like, you can't just go through, like, film by film by film, breaking each one down, you know, so we sort of had to pick like, specific ideas on specific themes, and then bring in the films as they kind of relate to those ideas.

[Sam May] Cool.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah.

[Sean Welsh] Okay. Great. Prano, do you have a question?

[Prano Bailey-Bond] I was just wondering how you found the transition from programmer to film-maker and if you see that kind of moving into the narrative space as well as documentary?

[Kier-La Janisse] It's weird, because I still don't consider myself a film-maker. I mean, I haven't... Um... I think, like, I got involved with like, any sort of film-making I do, which is mostly just working for Severin doing extras and stuff, most of that is mostly because of my network, like, because I have access to people because of my programming background. So, there'll be, like, film-makers that he'll want to interview - he being David Gregory who owns Severin - film-makers that he'll want to get for bonus features and it's, like, I just happen to be well positioned to set that up or sort of produce those bonus features, because I know a lot of people from all these years of film programming, but I don't necessarily, like, want to be a... Even making the folk horror movie, I wish I could just be the producer of it. I became the director of it by accident, because basically I was the editor of it and the producer, which is, like, for how we do bonus features, we don't normally credit a director. It's normally just like...the producer, and then whoever edits it is kind of the director, I guess, you know. And so when it came time, you know, when we decided that we were making a feature out of the Folk Horror movie... And we had to list a director somewhere, we were just like, "Well, who's the director?" And David was, like, "You're the director." And I was like, "I don't want to be a... like, "I don't think I... I don't have the skills "that I would consider, you know, important for director." I'm much more of, like, a producer-y person where it's, like, I can think of, like, pieces or even think of, like, people that would work well together and put them together, but I didn't necessarily want to be the director. So... And I still feel like somebody could probably direct this movie way better than me...

[She laughs] But you know, but I'm learning. By the end of that process, who knows? That may change. But I still feel like I'm... I don't think I'm gonna, like, transition into, like, film-making.

[Sean Welsh] Okedoke. Who has a question next? Anna. Sorry, Anna, you're hidden on my screen. Anna, do you want to go?

[Anna Bogutskaya] Yeah. Hiya. I was actually wondering, something I've been thinking about pretty much since the moment I started programming myself as well. How do you keep a record or an archive of all of your programming endeavours? Because, when you think about it, kind of programming is so ephemeral, you know, you do it and you put all of this time and effort into it, all the blood, sweat and tears and money. And that connection with the audience when it happens, and even when it doesn't, and those beautiful disasters that can happen are great, but how do you archive that so that other people can learn or even attribute and give credit to, you know, the resurgence of a particular film-maker or screening something for the first time or even, you know, that screening that you described before?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, it's weird, because archiving and documenting my events has always been my weak point. You know, it's, like, other people have better collections of, like, my old programmes and stuff than I do. Yeah, it's... And even for on internet, even like once, you know, the internet became a thing and websites became a thing, it's been hard enough to keep those archives because of websites getting old. Like, I had this website that was, like, the Big Smash website. And when I did all of my kind of independent ones, for a certain period of time, they would all be

on there. And then recently, like, just, like, a month ago, I, you know, my host, web host, got in touch with me and was, like, "We're upgrading all of our stuff," or whatever, "and that website is too old." Like, it can't exist any more. Like, "You have to get everything off of it if you want to keep it" type of thing. And so I had to sort of go through and it was, like, I had to manually take stuff off of it, but that was, like, "Where do I put it?" Where does it now live online? You know, so... Uh... So I had to, um... like, move it to my Spectacular Optical website, which is, like, a totally different business. It's, like, my publishing website. But just so that it still exists there, if anyone Googles something, it's there, right, so I just added these events manually to that website. Because, even that, like websites getting old and going, defunct... And even, like, when you programme for other theatres, like the Cinefamily in LA, it's, like, a perfect example of, like, you know, they just took down their Vimeo. So like, all the, all the independent editors who had, like, volunteered and made these amazing trailers for their programmes, including the one for my House of Psychotic Women series, you know, like, all that stuff is just gone, you know. And so it's, like, when... It's the same with journalists, you know, like when you're writing and then, all of a sudden, that newspaper folds or whatever, and then all their archives are just gone. And it's like, you don't have a record of your pieces and stuff. So it's like, yeah, trying to just maintain...trying to be vigilant about, like, maintaining archives of your own stuff, and then having, like, camera people filming events, like, even my Miskatonic classes, we rarely have people film them, you know, because... But it's also we can't afford it, you know, because it's like paying someone like £100 or £200 or whatever to show up and record this class. It's, like, we don't even make enough money at the class to pay that, you know, so... So, archiving often becomes the first thing to...to, you know, to not be prioritised. So, yeah. So, I just, I don't have any good advice for it, because I'm terrible at it. And I feel like it's a struggle for me also, like, I feel like so much of my history just doesn't exist anywhere. Other than in my brain and my storytelling, you know? Like, it's like, there's no record of all these things that I've done unless I tell people about it myself. So. Yeah.

[She laughs]

[Sean Welsh] I have a tangential question to that, which Anna touched upon and I think you've talked about it a wee bit before in terms of where you've worked before and who you've worked with, like, the ethics of the film programmer. Like, you know, how you kind of, you know, make sure that you pay tribute to somebody that's inspired you. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that?

[Kier-La Janisse] Well, this is something that sticks in my craw quite a bit, actually, because... And I'm glad you talked about there being a programmers ethic, because when I talk about it, people think I'm being pretentious or something. And I'm like, "No, there's, like... There are ethics to this behaviour." You know, we're all, like, working in the same field and programmers often don't make a lot of money and their ideas are their currency, you know? And so it's like, if another programmer does this...has this idea to do something and you're like, "Oh, man..." "...that's such a cool idea. I would love to do that at my cinema." Then you contact that person. You say that you want to do something like that at your cinema, see how you can collaborate or whatever. You don't just, like, copy it, you know, and not acknowledge where you

got the idea. And that has happened with like... I started this thing in... 2003, I guess, called the Saturday Morning All-You-Can-Eat Cereal Cartoon Party. And, as far as I know, still, I am the originator of this. Like, I was the first person to do it in a theatre. I was inspired by another friend of mine who, like, did a similar kind of thing at his house for his birthday, where he had like, you know, he just showed cartoons for the whole morning and had a table with, like, a bunch of cereal on it and it was like 10 people that came over for his birthday and did this and I got the idea from that and then brought it to, like, an actual theatrical environment for the first time. And... But I went a bit further, because I added commercials in between everything, all the cartoons, I added, like station identifications before everything, public service announcements. Like, I tried to create the whole, like, package. And then there would be, like, a buffet of, you know, sometimes 60 different kinds of sugar cereal. I know in the UK you guys don't have that many. You guys have, like, six kinds of sugar cereal or something.

[Sean Welsh] Yeah.

[Kier-La Janisse] Something sad like that.

[She laughs]

[Sean Welsh] Weetabix is pretty much as exotic as it gets.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, but... But, yeah, so in America, there's a lot of sugar cereal. And so when you do them, especially in America, there's like tonnes of cereals you can get. And so I started doing this and then when I got started working at the Alamo Drafthouse, I brought it there, started doing it there. And then people, other programmers started copying it and they didn't think they were copying me. They thought they were copying the Alamo Drafthouse, but they didn't credit the Alamo Drafthouse, either, you know, so it was like programmers now all over the world do this. And I even... I've even had programmers who've, like booked the show from me, you know, paid me the minimal amount of money I charge for it, which is like nothing, and then sort of glean the format from it from booking at one time, and then they never contact me again and they just start copying it. You know, so it's like, they can't even claim ignorance as to where it came from, because they booked it from you the first time. And that kind of thing just drives me nuts. I was, like, "Does it not...? Like... I was, like, "What..." you know, it just seemed like, when I first started programming, I felt like nobody would do that to another programmer, where they like... They would always, like, credit... They'd be, like, excited to credit other programmers, and, like, talk about these other great programmers, you know, and it just seems like now people just, you know, they just see an idea at any theatre and they just take it and copy it. And obviously, some people get inspired and so they do things that are kind of similar, but not totally the same, but some of them are, like, blatantly, like, just completely ripping off something that, you know, you originated and I just think... Yeah, it's, like, you should just contact those people... and just say, like, "I would really love to do this," like, "Is there a way that I can do this? "I'm gonna credit you for the idea," or anything like that and just see. Most of the times, the programmers will just be so stoked that you acknowledged them. You know, it's not like they're gonna want money for it usually or anything. It's like, often they're just,

like, "Wow, some acknowledgement. That's great." And, so, yeah, I just wish that people did that. More. I mean, I find, even with writing, you know... I mean, I feel like there are women who... write article versions of my House of Psychotic Women book, like all the time, and they never mention the book at all. And it's like, you know I'm, like, a starving author. I don't make a lot of money. I make a really low percentage. Selling a book every once in a while would be great. Like, if you got that idea from reading my book, maybe just mention it in the article, and then...

[She chuckles] ..it would help me a lot. But... So, I find that weird, you know, and it's... Yeah. I don't know what to say. You look like an asshole when you say it to people, when you got to someone and say, like, you know, "Can I get credit for that thing?" or whatever. You look like the asshole. So it's like you're put in this weird position.

[Sean Welsh] I guess all you can do is lead by example, in a way. I'm not sure there's a good answer for it. So, I have some follow-up questions to that, but I want to make sure everyone gets a chance to ask a question. So who would like to go next? Becky? Becky, are you ready to ask question?

[Becky Darke] I am. Yeah, sorry. I was just finding my unmute button.

[Sean Welsh] All right, sorry!

[Becky Darke] Kier-La, hi. You talked so excitedly about DVD releases from companies like Arrow and Vinegar Syndrome and I wondered if you had, like, a dream title or titles that you'd love to see to get that treatment, so the kind of the transfer and the essays and the kind of alternative cover art and all that kind of thing?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah. No, I have a few. And a lot of them have been held up for, like, music rights reasons, stuff like that. Like Melody. I think Melody may have come out in the UK now, actually. Like, just recently. The one with Jack Wilde and... ..and, like, Mark Lester, from Oliver. It's, like, the two kids from Oliver. And it's, like, this puppy love movie that was absolutely the inspiration for Moonrise Kingdom. And it was interesting, that because that... I mean, that is a movie I love. It's about these two, like, 11-year-olds or whatever, who meet at school and decide that they're going to run away and get married. And it's, like, the most adorable movie and it's all, like... the soundtrack is Odessa-era Bee Gees. So, it's, like, you know... So, it's, like, 1969-era, like Bee Gees music, so it's like kind of Baroque pop songs. And it's just, like, the most adorable movie. It's written by Alan Parker. And I think that, you know, like, it may... It was a huge hit in Japan, so it was definitely you could get it there, but I think it may have just come out in the UK in the last year or so, but it's, like, never come out in America. And those things still matter, because we still have... Even though people have multi-region players, you know, we do still have territories for distribution and so it having never been released in America still has value. Another one is The Touchables, which is a movie written by Donald Cammell and directed by Robert Freeman, who was like, um... He was like a, uh... Like, he was, like, a Beatles photographer, and he's mostly known as a photographer. I think he only made a couple of movies, but he made this movie called The Touchables that is, it's

like these four women who live in a geodesic dome by a lake so it's just, like, this clear dome, with, like, a bed in the middle of it and they, like, kidnap this rock star, this, like, male rock star to make him into like their sex slave. And there's all this, like, weird, like, crime story happening in the background but it also has the tone of, like, these late '60s zany movies where, like, the humour is very absurd and there's like great music and it just hits a lot of my, like, pleasure centres, this movie, and that's never been released. I'd love to see that get a release. Little Darlings is another one. I know none of these are horror movies. So, it's, like, people are...

[She laughs] This is... You know, but it's... My taste is kind of all over but... Little Darlings is a movie, it's like a summer camp movie, with Kristy McNichol and Tatum O'Neal from, like, 1980, that was a absolutely hugely influential movie to me and that has never come out due to music rights issues also. But I... You know, but there's certain things that have come up that were like my dream movies. Like Toys Are Not For Children, I mentioned earlier, I was so... I was, like, destroyed that I didn't get to participate in that release. Arrow released it and it seemed like they invited, like, every critic to work on that release except me. And I'm, like, a long-time fan of that. But I think that, uh... Yeah, I don't know. I'm trying to think of like what else? There's a million, but whenever people ask me for things like that, I just can never remember anything. So... But, yeah, Melody, The Touchables, Little Darlings. Yeah.

[Becky Darke] That's great, thank you.

[Sean Welsh] Okay. Natasha? Do you have a question. Oh, no, sorry. It was Heather had your hand up, I think. Heather, if you... Yeah.

[Heather Bradshaw] Yeah. So, you touched on this a little bit already, but I just wanted to ask a bit more about your early experiences of film exhibition. More specifically, like, whether you had any advice for someone like me, on where's best to start, as someone who's about to hopefully soon start putting on their own film events?

[Kier-La Janisse] Well, I mean, I think the... the main thing is, the hard part is always the venue, you know, like having a venue where you can have control over the kind of atmosphere that you want, you know, that you want to set up. So, it's, like, having a venue where you can control the sound infiltration, you know, like, if it's a bar, which is where, like, a lot of people start, you do you have, like, the idea of people just coming in the door and making noise and talking during the movie and then... You know, so if there's a way to not have that and then also, like... Yeah, presentation has always been really important to me. And I feel like you can have no money and still have decent presentation, you know, like you can have... Like, when we had our little cinema, Blue Sunshine, the fact that we had masking and it was home-made masking that we had to move with our hands. You know, it wasn't automated or anything like that, but it made a massive difference. And we actually won an award in the local paper for, like, best presentation in Montreal. And that was compared to, like, the Cinémathèque québécoise, which is, like, this multi-million-dollar institution that gets money from the government and it's supposed to be, like, one of the main film presentation places in the country, and we won over them. And it was just, like, the newspaper people was like, "They just try harder." "They try

harder," you know, it's like, "They don't have any money, "they don't have all this fancy equipment that the Cinémathèque has, "but it's clear they're trying to do really good presentation "and it's important to them." And so I feel like that made a difference, you know, the fact that we weren't just hanging up a sheet, like, a wrinkled sheet or something like that, and projecting the movies. We were, like, trying to make it as good as we could with whatever resources we had. And... I don't know. I mean, I guess, like, just some of the... It's also a very different climate now compared to when I did it, you know, so I feel like the...especially if you're doing, like, genre programming, the press is so much more interested in stuff like that now. You know, I feel like you might have a much easier time getting press for those types of things than I did when I was starting out. But...yeah, the other thing I would say is don't let it break your heart... when people don't appreciate what you're doing. Like, if your friends don't come to your screenings, you know, if you put on screenings, and you're like, "None of my friends even came," you can't take it personally. Because the thing is, it's like putting on movies is your dream. It's not their dream. Right? Like, they don't owe you to go to your screenings, you know. Nobody does, nobody owes you that. So you have to just like... It's your dream to do this and if other people choose to spend their money on other things and not come to it, it's like, just don't let it break you. You know, that's, I think, one of the most important things. It took me a really long time to, like, not take it personally, when people, especially my friends, did not come to... ever, ever come to my screening. You know? So...

[Heather Bradshaw] That's great. Thank you.

[Sean Welsh] Okay, I'm sorry for the false start, Natasha, do you have a question?

[Nathasha O Kappler] Hold on, let me just unmute myself. Yeah, so I've known a couple of young female film critics who have been deeply affected by depictions of abuse and mental illness in an exploitative, and insincere light. And while they felt compelled to address the mishandling of these issues in films, they often felt hesitant to express their anger out of fear that their criticisms would not be taken seriously by a wider audience. And I was wondering, did you feel any trepidation when writing about your own personal history in *House of Psychotic Women*?

[Kier-La Janisse] You mean writing... I mean, I definitely felt trepidation. I feel more trepidation now. I feel more regret kind of now about, like, how personal I got with *House of Psychotic Women*. But it was...to me, it was the only way to do it. Because I feel as though, if I was going to say... because I also knew that my opinions would not necessarily always be popular and they don't always make logistical sense, they don't always make moral sense to people, you know, like, why I would respond to certain types of imagery or anything. And so the only way... I could defend my choices... ..was to just get personal about it, you know, and, um... and just say, like, "Well, I can relate to the things that this character is going through," or, "I can relate to the way that they're behaving, because I've done those kinds of things," you know, or because I know other women who have done those kinds of things and women who respond to trauma in different ways, women who respond to trauma in ways that... ..you know, I mean, it's like, it's the kind of conversation we're having all the time now, when we're talking about people who, like, for example, bring up rape

allegations 20 years after the fact or whatever, and people are like, "Well, she didn't bring it up before, "so clearly it didn't bother her then." And it's like, no, that's not how trauma works. It's, like, trauma can get you at any time, you know, and it can get you in all kinds of weird ways. You know, like, just the idea that in... And it was one of the things I think I talked about in my book, like, especially in, like, the rape-revenge chapter and stuff like that, like some of the weird behaviour that comes after that would seem to indicate that they're actually having an opposite emotional response to something than they are, right? It's, like, to...for women to get very sexually promiscuous after having an assault like that, which is something that's fairly common. That would, you know, a lot of people will look at that and be like, "Well, clearly, she was fine," you know, "because she's, you know, going out and sleeping with people." And it's like, no, that's actually a trauma response, you know, so it's like, people respond to things in totally different ways, and things sneak up on people and so I felt as though... It's very hard to generalise about a lot of those things, because those things are just personal to people, you know. So I felt like the only way I could write that book was to be personal. And be like, "Well, this is my perspective." Like, I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm not a psychologist, I don't have like, some kind of background to be analysing women all over the world, you know, so it's more like, I'm looking at these movies. And I'm looking at myself and seeing how and where these things correlate, you know? And, so, yeah. So, that... I mean, but I had trepidation when it... when I first sent it to my publisher, because I just assumed, and I was mentally preparing myself for everyone hating the book. I was positive that people were just going to make fun of me.

[She laughs] I was positive that was going to be the response. And when that didn't happen, when people actually liked the book, I was shocked. Like, I couldn't believe it, because I was... Just, to me... I just... Yeah. I mean, like, I had been made fun of at my own festival. You know, somebody wrote me a letter once about my CineMuerte festival, saying, like, "Oh, you gonna pick some more movies we can cry at "at the festival this year, we can all have a good cry?" Because they knew that I tended to gravitate towards, like, really depressing and sad movies more than movies that had the traditional horror stings and stuff like that. And so I was like, "Well, that person, wherever that person's coming from, "that person is going to hate this book," "because this book is all about, like, crying and everything," you know. But then also I had a bad situation recently where... I mean, I've had some... I've had almost all good responses and constructive responses to it. I have had a couple of bad things where, you know, I had one... like, a guy, a stranger, harassing me for about six months, like, threatening me and stuff, because of it. And that stopped rather suddenly. And I'm not totally sure why. But, um... And then also I had, basically a, like, a relationship where the person had completely fabricated a personality to fit things, like, in the book, and it was, like, totally... like a creepy manipulative thing. Yeah, so I have had people now use it in negative ways against me. And so that makes you sort of scared to do that kind of thing again, you know. But I am glad that there are a lot of people who've responded to it and thought that it helped them figure out how they relate to movies, kind of in similar ways, you know, like how the movies they choose, and the kind of phases they go through in movie watching are like, "Oh, yeah, that is actually reflective of, like, "what I was going

through at that time, "why I was gravitating towards that kind of imagery or whatever." I don't know if that answers your question or not.

[Nathasha O Kappler] No, it definitely does. Actually, if I may follow up on that, I was wondering, there's quite a few films in recent years such as *Unsane*, *Invisible Man*, *Swallow*, feature women fighting against systematic abuse and gaslighting. And therefore these films have been inextricably tied to the Me Too movement, in their critical reception. I was wondering, what do you make of this? Are there limitations to how we discuss these narratives when we label them as part of a topical movement?

[Kier-La Janisse] I definitely think so. And, I mean, I definitely think so, because... ..it makes people sick of things. You know, like when things are... Like, I mean, just for comparison, when I did the book *Satanic Panic*, which was about the Satanic hysteria of the 1980s. You know, a lot of that began with cases or allegations of child sexual abuse, in day-care centres and things. And the thing is, there was a kid that this case was kick-started on that had been sexually abused by someone. Someone somewhere, right? And so it was, like, the day-care was brought in. It was, like, the people running the day-care were then accused of, like, having Satanic rituals that they're trying to put all the kids in, they get the kids to confess to certain things, through using weird coercive methods. And then by the end of the decade, they start thinking, like, "All this is such bullshit, all this Satanic stuff is such bullshit." And people were, like, so sick of it that they just threw it out. Everybody was acquitted. They were just like, "Ugh," you know, "We've spent ten years dealing with this case, and now we're sick of it." And the problem is that kid was still sexually molested. And nobody knows who did it. Because everything got so, like, hysterical and so blown out of proportion and so focused on buzzwords and everything like that, that the real core of what had started that case, by the end of it, has been completely overlooked, you know. And I feel like that kind of thing when people, like, just lump everything in with Me Too, it sort of creates that, uh... You know, people hit a certain... When it comes to, like, movements and terms that are, you know, terms of categorisation and things like that, like, people get saturated and exhausted by them, and then they stop engaging with them, you know, they stop engaging with them in a really important or meaningful way. And I already... I mean, I felt, like, the first... After six months of the Me Too movement, it was already getting like that, where people were just, like, using it as a dismissive term, you know. So... Yeah, so, I think it's, like, if people just say, like, "Oh, it's a movie for the Me Too movement," or something like that - which I may have actually said, in the first, like, six months of it. I think I had to say a quote for a movie and I think I did use a phrase like that, but I think that when people say that at this point... ..it's just easy. It's, like, an easy thing for them to say. They're not really, like, engaging with it.

[Nathasha O Kappler] Yeah, I agree.

[Sean Welsh] Okay, I want to say Elinor from Berlin Final Girls Film Festival - they screened *Swallow* earlier in the year, actually - she's on Facebook, she said, "We didn't just like the book," *House of Psychotic Women*, "We loved it!!!" And there's three exclamation marks on that comment. Just so you know.

[Kier-La Janisse] I've still not seen *Swallow*, actually, by the way, so I'm like dying to see it, but I haven't seen it yet.

[Sean Welsh] We actually managed to see it in Berlin. It was... We didn't see all of it, though. I should return to it. Anyway. Deborah, do you have a question?

[Deborah Haywood] Hello, can you hear me?

[Sean Welsh] Yes.

[Kier-la Janisse] I like your pictures.

[Deborah Haywood] Yeah, no, I want to know what you'd like your legacy to be and also, if you were going to write a book now, which films do you think you'd draw on if you were doing an another similar kind of memoir? And also, while I'm at it, have you ever had a supernatural experience?

[Natasha chuckles]

[Kier-La Janisse] Okay. First... What was the first question again? What would I like my legacy to be. Um... I would like my legacy to be that... ..I never did anything halfway, you know? That I always went the extra mile with everything I did. And I just like, didn't fuck around. You know, it's like, if I'm gonna do something I'm like, all in you know.

[Deborah Haywood] Yeah, where do you get your courage from? 'Cause you always, like, go in, like, fearless. I don't know if it's courage as much as like... stupidity or, like, ignorance about limitations. You know, like, I definitely feel like there are... Once I, once I've worked in a field or something for a long time, I'll be much more wary of, like, the kinds of problems that can come up and I'll have baggage from having done other festivals, where I'll be able to be like, "No, I don't want to ever have Crispin Glover as a guest, "because he's insane," you know, or whatever. So it's like, I've learned things along the way. And so I've definitely become, like... I'm not just like fearless about anything. Some things, it's just more, like, "Okay, that's too exasperating. "I don't want to ever do that again." But in general, when I sort of plough ahead on things, often it's because I don't know enough of the obstacles yet to deter me. So it's not until I'm there that I'm like, "Oh, this is why people don't do this all the time," you know? So I think it's more just like ignorance of the actual problems that are gonna come up, you know?

[Deborah Haywood] Yeah.

[Kier-La Janisse] And then the second question was... What was the second question? What films do you think you'd draw upon now if you were going to do a memoir right now? I mean, like if I had not written *House of Psychotic Women* and I was just writing my memoir for the first time now?

[Deborah Haywood] Yeah, in the present.

[Kier-La sighs]

[Kier-La Janisse] I don't know. I hate men a lot more than I did when I wrote the last book!

[They laugh] I feel like it would definitely be... you know, more... I feel like, in the last book, I was like very critical of women and very, like kind of suspicious of women and very, like, obviously struggling with, like, trusting women and...

[Deborah Haywood] Yeah, yeah.

[Kier-La Janisse] And I feel now, I mean, it's because of that book, actually, my relationships with women have completely changed, you know, where I just feel like all these women have been so supportive of me and have a lot of the same issues and once those issues were kind of aired, then the trust issues kind of melted away, you know, once it was like, "Oh, we're all going through this," you know? But I think now, like, I feel like it would be an angrier book now. Like, I was talking to Natasha about that situation with this guy.

[Deborah Haywood] What film do you think would represent that? Um... God, it would probably be like '90s erotic thrillers or something, you know, where it's, like, a stranger in my house or whatever, you know, just like...

[Deborah Haywood] Been there!

[They laugh] I mean, like, actually, like, so much true crime TV is, like, all that stuff of... or like Dirty John, you know, like that podcast, Dirty John.

[Deborah Haywood] Yeah.

[Kier-La Janisse] Where it's like, "Oh, this is actually not the person that I thought."

[Deborah Haywood] Terrifying.

[Kier-La Janisse] Like, they targeted you.

[Deborah Haywood] Mmm. Mmm.

[Kier-La Janisse] They targeted you, like, knowing things about you.

[Deborah Haywood] Yeah. That's scary.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, so that kind of... This person was not a dangerous person, it was, like... It was just... But it was... Yeah, he wasn't a dangerous person, but it was more just like playing a game until he was sick of it. And then it was just kind of like... But it wasn't a normal... It wasn't a normal situation. I don't really want to get into it...

[Deborah Haywood] No! Horrible.

[Kier-La Janisse] It was something like my book had created this clear pathway to me.

[Deborah Haywood] Mm. It's like somebody had read your personal diary and then used it to get to, you know, press a few buttons or whatever.

[Kier-La Janisse] But that's the thing, like when you write a memoir like that, it's weird, because when you go into a relationship especially if the person has read that

book. They go into the relationship already halfway there. Like they already have... They already... You know, all those conversations you have in the beginning, where you're like, "Where did you grow up?" or "What did you..." You know, all that, like... They already know all that stuff, but you don't know anything about that them.

[Deborah Haywood] So they've fast-forwarded.

[Kier-La Janisse] It adds a really creepy dynamic that I didn't ever experience until I wrote this book, right? So where the other party, where this person is totally new to you, you know nothing about them, you've never heard of them before, and they just know all this stuff about you. It's creepy. And then the third question. Have I ever had a supernatural experience? Not really. I mean I've definitely had things where... I feel like someone is touching me or some pressure or some... Like, I can feel someone move behind me, like... or whatever but I've never had anything where I've, like, seen anything or had anything, uh... Yeah, I've never, like, seen a ghost or anything like that. I mean, I definitely... Like, I believe in all that stuff. So, like...

[Deborah Haywood] Yeah.

[Kier-La laughs]

[Kier-La Janisse] But it hasn't happened yet.

[Deborah Haywood] Okay. That's a shame. Well...it might be, it might not be, but... Thank you.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah.

[Sean Welsh] Okay, so we actually, we're getting quite close to the end. If anyone has a follow-up question, like, please give us a shout, but I wanted to double back just really quickly and ask you about... We kind of touched upon it before, in terms of the films that you were frustrated not to be involved in the release. But can you maybe tell us how you feel about secret handshake movies, and gatekeeping and this idea that some people have that they own a film you know, and it's for them?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, I mean, I think that... It's... Yeah, it's weird because it's, like, if somebody has devoted their... And I don't think I have a film like this, so I don't think I am one of those people necessarily, but I think there's definitely people who've, like, devoted so much of their work to like one movie or one film-maker that...they, you know, form obstacles to other people... engaging with that artist's work, you know, from a critical perspective, you know, so it's, like, they, they... You know, but at the same time... So it's like, yes, I get it, people can be territorial, and sometimes it's stupid. But I also think that sometimes DVD producers are lazy, and they don't go to the right person. Like, they don't look for the person who has devoted their life to that movie. And then, yes, that person gets annoyed when someone gets that job. And they were just... It's an assignment to them, you know? Because... Yeah, I mean, I have, like, a spreadsheet for Severin Films. I have a spreadsheet that I started that's just called "Experts"...

[She laughs] ..where it's like any time I come across expertise of any topic. It can be something minuscule, you know, but it'll be like, whatever, Appalachian films or

disembodied hands, you know, or witches or whatever. And it's like people who've, like, written books about this stuff, who've, like, written, like multiple ac... Where you can see their academic record, where they've, like, been writing about this topic forever, you know? And it's like, well, I want to have diversity in the people that we approach to do the extras and so it's... And I do want to find the people who it's like, if people have devoted their life to, you know... like, Godspell, you know, like, this guy, Lee Gambin, I know, who's, like, a film programmer and a writer in Australia. It will be a crime if he does not get to do something on the Godspell release when that movie ever comes out, you know, because that guy is obsessed with that movie. And he's a writer and he's, you know, he's involved with all these things, so he's not just a random fan. He's, like, also a critic and stuff. But it's the kind of thing where it's like, I just think, like, all you got to do is, like, look up online. You can Google things and people's articles will come up that they... You know, you'll be able to see people's track records with certain movies and certain film-makers, and so, yeah, I do think sometimes that you should be going to those people. But I also think that once that person has been on, like, five different releases and interviewed in every article or whatever, that at that point, you're just getting regurgitation. You know, like, and you do need fresh voices to come in and talk about those movies, you know?

[Sean Welsh] Sure. And just a quick follow up, is there any film that's so personal to you that you can be able to share it with an audience, of any kind?

[Kier-La Janisse] Actually, I found that when I showed *Born Innocent* to an audience, I, like, broke down crying. And I was like, embarrassed, because I couldn't stop crying.

[She laughs] And I felt like that movie is really personal to me because it's, like, set in a juvenile detention centre but it is so similar to the one that I was in that it's, like, hard to watch.

[Sean Welsh] Okay. Does anyone else have a question they want to ask, just under the wire, I have questions. So many questions. We could go for another couple hours, but I want to make sure if you guys... I think someone on Facebook had asked if you had any surprises when you were working on the, on your upcoming documentary, any revelations to do with the genre that came up or have come up?

[Kier-La Janisse] I mean, the biggest revelation that sort of like opened it up so much was that, you know, as I said, it started being about British Folk Horror, and that was going to be the focus, but it wasn't just going to be the focus because we were trying to keep it focused to that. It's just because so much of the literature, like the writing about folk horror and the culture around folk horror, like it's so visibly British, a lot of it, you know, and...and so when I was like, "Well, we should have a little thing on, like, American," and you know, blah, blah, blah, all the other countries and, like, how it relates to that, and I kept thinking of it, you know, I went into it thinking that I was going to be looking at, like, how these other types of Folk Horror called back to the British type of Folk Horror or whatever, right? And people would talk about... I think even people I interviewed early on would be, like, "Well, we don't really have "a tradition of Folk Horror in America," so, you know... And then, once I started looking into... I started doing interviews and asking questions related more to American Folk

Horror, and people having to think about it and be like, "Hmm", you know, and they'd be like, "Oh, well, I guess this movie might be Folk Horror," whatever, and then, all of a sudden, it was just like, bam, there was so much American Folk Horror and not only was there so much of it, but because America is so big and because of the way that people colonised and settled America and the migratory patterns of how people moved throughout the United States, there were totally different branches of Folk Horror all over the country, depending where you were. And that there was so much about... That one of the main things that comes up again and again, that's different from the British Folk Horror, is that, you know, in British Folk Horror, often, you know, not always, but often the conflict is between the old pagan past and, you know, the modern, I guess, semi-Christian belief system or whatever. And the idea that this older civilisation is still there, and it's bubbling up, you know. And in American Folk Horror, it wasn't really pagans that were this problem. It was weird Christians. So it was like it was Christians and other Christians that were considered heretical Christians, or unorthodox Christians, or, you know... And a lot of that was, like, the ways that people moved out across the country and the different aspects of Christianity that formed, you know, and then that started connecting so much to Americans' fascination with cults. And the fact that so many villains in American Horror look like Amish people, you know, like, not... Well, I can't say "so many villains", but I mean, like, but the Amish people definitely get a bad rap in horror because their attire will be used as, like, a signifier of something sinister, you know.

[Sean Welsh] Sure.

[Kier-La Janisse] And it's because there's like conflation happening between... It's like, fear of, like, Christian groups that live in the country and like, "What are they doing out there?" you know, or these small communities, so that was one thing that was like really different from the British Folk Horror, was all the different branches of Christianity and the little sub-sects and stuff like that and how those would be the things that people would be kind of afraid of. And then you had, like, in the south, like, the American South, the impact of like the Haitian Revolution and like dealing with like hoodoo and Voodoo and all the slaves' story. I mean, there was... I was like, "Oh, my God, there's so much," like, "This is like its own movie," you know. So that was probably, like, the biggest surprise.

[Sean Welsh] Okay, so I think that really is all we have time for. We have about a minute or so left. I'll do like a very quick lightning round. What are you working on at the minute besides the documentary? Do you know when we can expect that, by the way?

[Kier-La Janisse] Well, I'm hoping to have it finished editing and I'm hoping it'll be ready for September.

[Sean Welsh] Okay.

[Kier-La Janisse] That's my hope. Yeah.

[Sean Welsh] And you still have the Cockfighter monograph cooking.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, still working on that. I have, like, a bunch of stuff, all of which I'm kind of hoping will be done by September. So the Cockfighter book is one that I've been working on for many years. And that one is very personal to me. So I think that's part of why it's been taking a while, because it really needs to be perfect. And I also have a book that I've been editing for the Alamo Drafthouse about the history of their Weird Wednesday series and the American Genre Film Archive. And that one is almost done. So it's going to print soon. And I have a book I've been editing, co-editing, on the films of Robert Downey Sr. And so that is in, you know, in the middle stages of editing right now. And another book, I've just started writing, co-authoring with another woman I know named Amy Searles, and it's, uh, about depictions of horror fandom in film and television. So like horror fan characters in movies. And, yeah, I've done a couple. I've also done a couple of, like, audio reading things which I had never done before. It was like I sort of got asked to do these things by two different people. And so there's like a cassette coming out and a... a record, I guess, of me doing, like, spoken word with, like, a composer, reading like a classic story. I can't say what they are, though, because there haven't been announced or anything yet. But, yeah, just, like, a bunch of stuff to keep me busy.

[Sean Welsh] Great. Okay, well, and the best place to find that is on the publisher website. Right?

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, I mean, that's the one that's probably the most mine, you know. Like, so, Miskatonic is, I mean, it's my same address, I think, is listed on both of them anyway, but it's, like... But, yeah, the Miskatonic one, it's like the updates that go there are specifically about the classes and that's it, whereas like, everything else tends to go on the Spectacular Optical website.

[Sean Welsh] Okay, and that's where people can find it. Okay, well, thanks, everyone, for joining us and a huge thanks to Kier-La Janisse for staying with us for a couple hours to chat about film programming. It's been an absolute honour and a pleasure.

[Kier-La Janisse] Yeah, nice to see everybody too.

[Sean Welsh] And, so, we'll leave you just now, but hopefully speak again soon.

[Kier-La Janisse] Okay! Thanks.