

ANNUAL MOVIE AWARDS

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The #1 Lesbian Monthly

Girlfriends

EXCLUSIVE: D.E.B.S.'s SEXY NEMESIS

Unshaken, Unstirred:
Devon Aoki,
Sarah Foster,
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Good, and
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2005



WHO ARE THESE JANE BONDS?

Lesbian Action Flick 'D.E.B.S.' Cracks the Big Time

**PLUS: Zora Neale on Screen • Women Behind the Film Fests
Mary Gauthier's Sad Song • Queer 'Toons • Doing Dinah**



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D.E.B.S.'s COMING-OUT PARTY

Lucy is a *Spy*

with

Diamonds

Jordana Brewster dishes about being *D.E.B.S.*'s world-class badass.

by Candace Moore

Playing a super-villain would be daunting for some, but not for twenty-four-year-old, Panama City-born Jordana Brewster, who has lived on three continents since birth and already conquered the halls of Yale. In Angela Robinson's *D.E.B.S.*, she plays Lucy Diamond, a notoriously sneaky diamond thief whose exploits include blind-dating a Russian female assassin, nearly sinking Australia with a laser beam, and, of course, romancing good-girl lead D.E.B. Amy. Brewster lets her hair down and shows her confident side as she plays the bane of the film's all-female secret agent crew. On the phone we chat about her roles in action flicks, the pleasures of homework, and how far she went to play against type in *D.E.B.S.*

Girlfriends: First of all, *D.E.B.S.* was so cute! I'm particularly excited about this film because it'll be out there for adolescent girls who are possibly figuring out their sexualities, or have

Brewsters' character Lucy Diamond sizes up her target, Sara Foster's Amy.



never seen themselves as young heroines (or super-villains for that matter) before. It's positive and upbeat. *D.E.B.S.* is part of a new genre—the lesbian adolescent movie—that hasn't been able to thrive before because there was shame surrounding the idea. I hope you don't mind if I ask: you're straight, right?

Jordana Brewster: Yeah. [Homosexuality] was kind of a non-issue because we were just emphasizing the comedy aspect and the action. It wasn't like, "Oh, let's treat this in a different way or in a precious way," and that's why it turned out well. Because why deal with it any differently? *D.E.B.S.* is about two people really liking each other. So it wasn't like we discussed it. Know what I mean? And that made it so much better.

Girlfriends: I've interviewed director Angela Robinson before, and she's such a neat lady. What was it like to work with her?

Brewster: It was a thirty-day shoot, so it was really grueling in terms of the hours. She didn't lose it once! She's the most patient, voracious, happy person I know. In certain situations where everyone would be getting really stressed and pissy, she'd just laugh. She's such a freak of nature in that way—a delight to work with.

Girlfriends: Did you ever have any qualms about playing a lesbian character or about doing the love scenes?

Brewster: I had no qualms about playing a lesbian, especially since none of the scenes are gratuitous.

Girlfriends: Did any stunt catastrophes happen during the filming? Did you have to undergo any training in order

to do the more choreographed fight scenes, like the shoot-out in the restaurant?

Brewster: Stunts were very spontaneous and off-the-cuff. We didn't have a lot of time for practice, and luckily, no disasters occurred.

Girlfriends: You've been in other action movies: *The Fast and the Furious* and *The Faculty*. Are you looking for more action roles?

Brewster: Not really. I liked playing Lucy Diamond, though—she's kind of a badass. She's rough around the edges, but she has a heart of gold—that's how Angela described her at one of our first meetings, and that's what I really loved about this particular character. With action

"It wasn't like, 'Oh, let's treat this in a different way or in a precious way,' and that's why it turned out well. Because why deal with it any differently? *D.E.B.S.* is about two people really liking each other."

movies there is so much waiting around; there are so many special effects. Luckily with this project we didn't have that many special effects. I finally had a fun character with a little bit of dimension to her. I'm not just playing the girlfriend or the wife. I mean that's basically every actress' plight in Hollywood right now. So it's great that Angela gave six women amazing roles and each one is so well-defined.

Girlfriends: Any favorite funny moments?

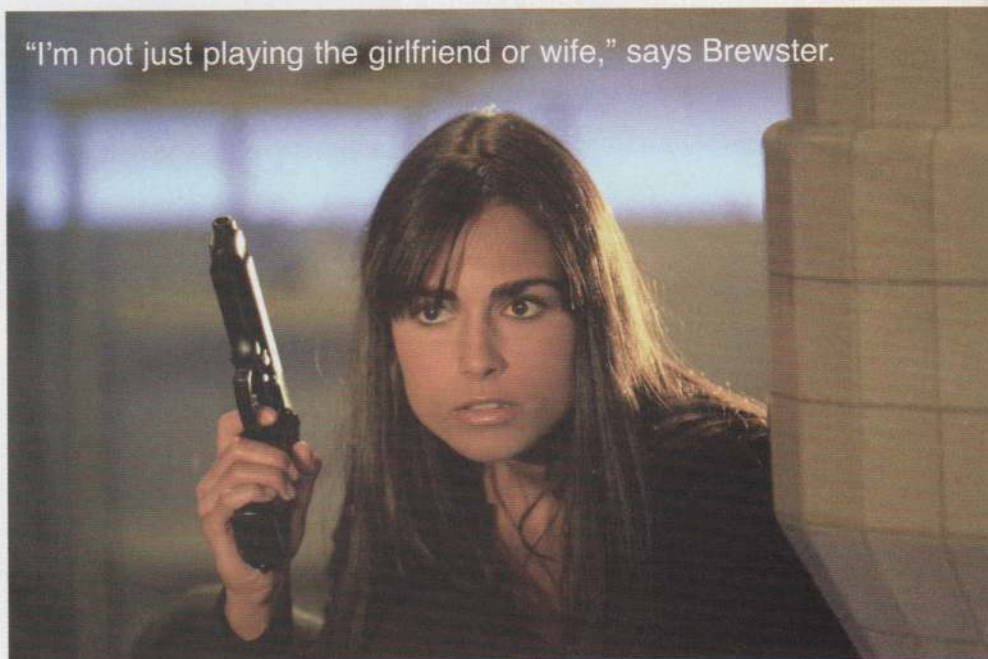
Brewster: The funniest section was when I was "climbing" the wall with makeshift suction cups or when I was pretending a T Mobile Sidekick was a super-technological spy device.

Girlfriends: So tell me about some of your other recent roles.

Brewster: Well, I was actually at school. I just finished at Yale this December.

Girlfriends: What did you major in?

Brewster: English. I really loved school. I miss the structure, because being an actor, while you're not working, it's kind of hellish. There's so much time on your hands. I like homework. I'm kind of a dork in that way. But it's fun to work [on films] too. I finished *D.E.B.S.*, I graduated, and then I went off and did a small movie called *Nearing Grace* with Greg Smith from *Everwood*; that was shot in Portland. Now I'm working on *Annapolis* for Disney. Disney also



great, really funny, and I showed it to my sister, and she thought it was hilarious too. I'm gratified by watching Angela be able to take a short and make it into the feature film that she wanted to make. All of the accolades she got at Sundance were really deserved.

Girlfriends: Your character Lucy in the film was really different than the character in the short.

Brewster: Yeah, I think the short could push the envelope a little more in some ways.

an essay about a book I've read, but I can't make up stuff by myself, like a script.

Girlfriends: What are some movies you admire?

Brewster: *Deerhunter*—kind of a weird film to really like. As a kid I loved *The Neverending Story*. I just saw *Closer*, which I liked. My favorite film though this year was *Stage Beauty*. I thought that was amazing.

Girlfriends: What was your favorite teen movie?

Brewster: I loved *Clueless*. I love silly movies too; they're so much fun to watch. *A Night at the Roxbury*, *Zoolander*. *Mean Girls* ... I think Lindsay Lohan is great.

Girlfriends: You're twenty-four, right? How long have you been working as an actress?

Brewster: I've been working for nine years. I got on a soap opera when I was fifteen.

Girlfriends: Wow. Where'd you grow up?

Brewster: I grew up in London, then Brazil for four years, and then New York for the last fourteen years, and then I just moved to L.A. this January.

Girlfriends: Someone told me you were married to Marky Mark. Is that insane?

Brewster: Yeah, it's insane. I'm not. I'm single. That was a long time ago.

"I'd love to have a bunch of people understand it and like it, and to have a cult following for the film. That's what I feel is going to happen."

hired Angela to do *Herbie the Love Bug*, which is kind of coincidental. *Annapolis* is about the naval academy, and I'm an officer.

Girlfriends: So do you get to be a badass in that film as well?

Brewster: I am. But I'm basically the only woman in the film, so I'm a little softer, surrounded by all of the testosterone.

Girlfriends: Did you see the short of *D.E.B.S.* before you saw the script?

Brewster: I saw it before auditioning. I didn't want to watch it again because I didn't want to have a preconceived idea of the characters. I thought it was

Girlfriends: Angela told me that she wrote the full-length script and had it ready for when she screened the short in case of any interest, and I think that's phenomenal to be so on top of your shit.

Brewster: Oh, she is. And those are the people that do well. I mean that's why you're so happy at the end of the day, because you take nothing for granted, you know. She does work her ass off, and you've got to love her for that.

Girlfriends: Are you the type of person to work your ass off?

Brewster: Yeah, I'm Type A. But I couldn't be creative in that way [like Angela]. I'm more literal. I can write

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Lucy is a Spy with Diamonds

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Girlfriends: What do you seek in a romantic partner?

Brewster: I look for confidence in a partner. Someone who is very sure of himself. I think Lucy, on the other hand, is secure enough for two people—she likes to take control.

Girlfriends: Although I know it's hard to see something you've worked on like this objectively, how do you suppose this film will be received?

Brewster: I think it will have a big underground following, and that's kind of what I hope. I want the people who watch it to really love it as opposed to it doing really well nationwide. I'd love to have a bunch of people understand it and like it, and to have a cult following for the film. That's what I feel is going to happen.

Girlfriends: *D.E.B.S.* reminded me a little of the recent independent *Saved!* Directors seem to be remaking the eighties underdog genre in a timely, socially aware way that's still feel-good.

Brewster: There are so many scripts out there talking about drugs and adolescence and how bloody dramatic it is to grow up, and it's just so draining at the end of it all. This is lighter. That's why people go to movies: escapism. I think Angela provides that. I think she really wants to provide that, which is nice. She unabashedly says, "I want to make feel-good movies. I don't want to apologize for it."

Girlfriends: You just want to sit in your car and blast your stereo after seeing this movie. Tell me about that scene where you're lip-synching to an Erasure song.

Brewster: I was friggin' petrified. The Erasure scene. I had to listen to that song



over and over again. So I memorized the lyrics, and Angela's like, "Do it, come on!" and I was like, "Oh my god, I'm not that uninhibited. I can't do it!" Luckily [costar] Jimmi Simpson was there, and he was really gracious. It was fun, but I had stage fright.

Girlfriends: Really! I would not see that in you at all. You seemed so strong in the film.

Brewster: Well, thank you. It's one thing to have a script, though, and memorize your lines and be really prepared, but when it's like, "Dance now!" you're like, "Oh my god, I'm totally on the line and what if I look like an idiot and what if I can't dance." That's what was going through my head, but I finally thought, "I'm gonna do it!"

Girlfriends: Well *D.E.B.S.* is, to a large degree, about silliness and passion. It combines all of the devices of every spy movie you've ever seen but in these really simple, funny ways. Like the moment where you, as Lucy, are crawling up the wall with those little suction cups. Were you immediately attracted to the sarcasm?

Brewster: It was the sarcasm!

Girlfriends: What did you first think when you picked up the script?

Brewster: Well, I first read for Amy. I thought I really wanted to be Amy because I understood the good girl thing a little more, and I related to her. Then when Angela suggested Lucy last minute, I was like, "I don't think I can pull it off; she's just too witty and badass," and Angela said, "No, no, no, trust me!" Angela knew exactly what she wanted, which was really comforting. So I just put myself in her hands and went with it.

Girlfriends: You were scared of being the villain?

Brewster: I was really scared of being the villain. [laughs] She's so confident and slightly cocky, and that's not something that's me. I think as an actor it was liberating to play that, but I hadn't done it before. As a teenager, you generally play the roles where you're younger and a little more insecure and docile. I thought this was a very clever, challenging project. I was lucky that I got it. ■

The Women Behind the Film Fests

Continued from page 44

Lesbians need to start coming out and start buying tickets. You need to be a demographic that is financially reasonable for us to program lesbian content. Features are pretty pricey. It's fiscally ridiculous to show them without people in the seats."

Even at festivals like Frameline and Outfest, which have solid grant funding and other forms of support to balance out weak ticket sales, programmers witness this same phenomenon. "I think it's a combination of things," says Schaffer. "I think that lesbians don't go to the movies as much as gay men, so there aren't as many lesbian movies being funded. Lesbian films haven't done the same box office as gay male films do, so they don't get funded by studios or by independent funders. Women's films make 68 cents to the dollar or something like that. They don't make as much money, and we, as women, don't make as much so we don't have the same access to money. I wish I wasn't saying that in almost 2005, but it's still true."

Despite the obstacles lesbian programmers, filmmakers, and moviegoers face, there are still enough independent films being made in the U.S. and worldwide to support a myriad of festivals throughout the country. Nearly every state offers at least one gay and lesbian film festival. "The number of film festivals keeps growing," says Coombes. "I'm sure there's one every day of the year."

And because of the relatively recent advent of cable television channels, which are catering more extensively to the queer market, lesbian filmmakers and their fans have much to look forward to. "The market for filmmakers is excellent because there are so many people looking for GLBT films. Lesbian filmmakers are in a good position if they have product to sell," says Coombes. "Seven years ago there wasn't a Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival," she says. "Today the festival is the largest gay cultural event in South Florida. It's hard to imagine South Beach without its annual queer festival." ■

Stage Names

by Stefani Barber and Laurie Koh

Secret Asian Man (a.k.a. copy chief Laurie Koh): Hey, Boo Boo. What should we write about?

Agent Boo Boo (a.k.a. assistant editor Stefani Barber): M'nutz.

Secret Asian Man: Seriously. Heather has entrusted us to update our readers on all that went on behind the scenes during our special film issue. What should we write about?

Agent Boo Boo: Hmmm. Let's ask Home Skillet in circulation.

And thus we realized that *Girlfriends'* staff has a severe nicknaming habit. We could interpret this as a very gay lack of professional boundaries, but more likely it is emblematic of the way we, like all

queers, like to toss around, create, and reinvent words for the way we live our lives. In fact, *Girlfriends* will debut its spanking new redesign in April with the new tagline, "The Word in Lesbian Lifestyle." Stay tuned: we promise the word will be good.

As for this issue...

Several *Girlfriends* staffers who caught *D.E.B.S.* at last summer's LGBT film festivals thought it was the most kickass new dyke flick to blaze across the big screen in decades. The sexy

thriller marks the first time a major studio (Sony) will release a lesbian-directed, girl-meets-girl action film. We go behind the scenes with the film's writer and director, Angela Robinson, as well as with smokin' leading lady Jordana Brewster. On the flip side, read why film reviewer Judith Halberstam would rather watch old *Charlie's Angels*.

Speaking of cinematic treats, *Girlfriends* once again gives dykedom's highest props to filmmakers who made an impact in 2004 with our if-we-ran-the-world Oscar awards, otherwise known as the Sapphies. We weren't surprised that *Monster* swept top honors (eligible this year because its late 2003 release made it impossible for our judges to screen the film in time for last year's awards), but our distinguished panel of judges came up with unexpected results in other categories. Also in this issue, Naomi Graychase takes a closer look at the women who make LGBT film festivals happen. And be sure to welcome our guest music reviewer, Jenny Egan of *Bust* magazine, who takes her tough pen to new albums by Mary Gauthier, Kinnie Starr, and Ani DiFranco.

We hope you have enjoyed this little window into our current issue, and we'll see you next time around in the new *Girlfriends*.

Stefani Barber, Assistant Editor
Laurie Koh, Copy Chief

S Barber
L Koh



JUSTINA CROSS

Editors Koh and Barber, acting out on the eve of our local drag king contest.

Girlfriends

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415-648-4705 (fax)
staff@girlfriendsmag.com

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call 415-648-9464
sales@girlfriendsmag.com

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Heather Findlay
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Stefani Barber
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Laurie Koh
COPY CHIEF

Kylie Johnston,
Karina Kinik,
Erin O'Briant
PROOFREADERS

Beth Brown,
Patrick Califia,
Jenny Egan,
Jessica Lanyadoo,
Candace Moore,
Ann Rostow,
Michelle Tea
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Susan Fox Rogers,
Naomi Graychase,
Tara Lake,
Lydia Marcus,
Erin O'Briant,
Marissa Pareles,
Monica Trasandes
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Linda Hsu
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Michelle Blioux
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Kirsten Hammer, Robyn Head,
Jennifer Kalis, Barbara Pollack
CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS

Erin Findlay
PUBLISHER

Ralph Hyman
ADVERTISING SALES DIRECTOR

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