



WOMAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA

D.E.B.S. 20th Anniversary

D.E.B.S.

Director: Angela Robinson
Production Companies: Sony Screen Gems, Debutante Productions
Executive Producer: Larry Kennar
Producers: Andrea Sperling, Jasmine Kosovic
Assistant to Producer/Director: James Burkhammer
Co-producers: Stacy Codikow, Pat Scanlon
Line Producer: Mike Crawford
Associate Producers: Alexandra Kondracke, Douglas Salkin
Production Accountant: Sharon L. Craig
Assistant Production Accountant: Pamela Chizema
Production Co-ordinator: Chris Stinson
Assistant Production Co-ordinator: T. Scott Keiner
Unit Production Manager: Mike Crawford
Assistant Location Manager: Guy Morrison
Post-production Assistant: Travis William Blue
Production Assistants: Ted Campbell, Robert Stio
1st Assistant Director: Sholto Roeg
2nd Assistant Director: Hillary Schwartz
2nd 2nd Assistant Director: Susan Ransom
2nd Unit Assistant Director: Ted Campbell
Script Supervisor: Diana Valentine
Casting: Rick Montgomery
Extras Castings: Chad Darnell, Kim Ju
Screenplay: Angela Robinson
Director of Photography: M. David Mullen
Camera Operator: Michael Gfeller
2nd Assistant Camera: Stephen L. Whitcomb
Camera Assistants: Bennett Cerf, Wendy Finn, Thomas Lewis, Vanessa Morehouse, Theo Pingarelli, Jon Zarkos
Key Grip: Brad Heiner
Best Boy Grip: William Rick Young
Dolly Grips: Tab Fivecoat, Tony Perija
Grips: Andreas Burgess, John Pierre Hoffma, Stephan James
Gaffer: Skip McCraw
Best Boy Electric: Tim Hedgecock
Electricians: Emily Geagan, J.T. Gurzi, Gary Lowrance
Digital Artist: Mary Hawkins
Lead Rotoscoper: Amber Kusmenko
Visual Effects Supervisors: David Tecson, Mark Thompson
Digital Artist: Scott Winston
Special Effects Supervisor: Mike Tristano
Special Effects: Torrence Hall
Animator: Mary Hawkins
Editor: Angela Robinson
Production Designer: Chris Anthony Miller
Set Decorator: Laura Evans
Set Dresser: Greg Runnels
Storyboard Artist: David Cooney
Properties: William Davis
Assistant Props: Jeffrey Reyes
Costumes: Frank Helmer
Costumer: Jennifer Seery
On-set Dresser: Roger Dertinger
Key Hair Stylist: Marc Boyle
Make-up: Rosemary Lawrence
Music: Steven Stern
Additional Music Engineer: Mick Stern
Music Co-ordinators: Jenée Clark, Howard Paar
Music Editor: Wayne Scott Joness
Sound Mixer: Shawn Holden
Sound Utility: Klair Ethridge
Boom Operator: Victoria S. Cunningham
Supervising Sound Editors: Jesse Pomeroy, Paul Stanley
ADR Supervisor: Markus Innocenti
Stunt Co-ordinator: Lynn Salvatori

+ panel discussion and Zoom Q&A with director Angela Robinson

Amy is a top student at the D.E.B.S. academy for elite spies in training, but when tasked with taking down notorious supervillain Lucy Diamond, love soon gets in the way of espionage. An absolute masterclass in camp, Angela Robinson's cult sapphic spy comedy celebrates its 20th birthday this year. Join us for a fun-filled anniversary screening, bookended by a thematic discussion and a Q&A.

Event schedule:

20:00 – Event start and intro
20:10 – Thematic discussion about the queer villain
20:35 – Screening of *D.E.B.S.* begins
22:06 – Screening of *D.E.B.S.* ends; Q&A begins
22:35 – Event ends

The event's first panel will explore the nuances of queer and queer coded villains in film, dissecting the queer community's fascination with morally skewed characters as camp, and looking at how villainy can often be claimed as 'iconic' in LGBTQIA+ spaces. Hosted by event co-programmer Lilia Pavin-Franks (she/her) and featuring writer-curator Siavash Minoukadeh (he/they) and writer-curator Cici Peng (she/her).

After the screening, *D.E.B.S.* director Angela Robinson will be in conversation via Zoom with event co-programmer Grace Barber-Plentie (she/her).

D.E.B.S.

Never underestimate a girl with a gun and perfect hair...

Every year, high school students across the country sharpen their pencils and prepare for college. Unbeknownst to these students however, the US government has hidden a diagnostic test within the examination to measure one's aptitude for lying, cheating and killing. If a young woman scores high enough on this covert portion of the test, she is recruited to join an underground academy, known only as D.E.B.S. that grooms young girls to become secret agents. After graduation, these girls will go to work protecting their country against the world's most dangerous criminals – and they'll keep their lipstick perfectly applied while they do it.

Discipline. Energy. Beauty. Strength. A killer fashion sense. Do you have what it takes to join the D.E.B.S.?

In this girl-power adventure comedy, the four young women of the Academy's 'A' squad have learned stealth surveillance, firearms training and martial arts – they are almost finished with their D.E.B.S. spy training. Amy is a straight-A student and the only girl ever to earn a perfect score on the secret test. Max is a fierce leader – the take-no-prisoners, leave-no-stone-unturned captain of the squad.

The only girl in her squad not to have earned the requisite pre-graduation stripes, Janet is timid, proper and never-been-kissed. Lastly, Dominique – with her devil-may-care attitude, nicotine addiction and inability to keep boys out of

Stunts: Dale Gibson, Willie Leong
Utility Stunts: Cliff McLaughlin
Sara Foster Stunt Double: Nicole Casanda
Meagan Good Stunt Double: Dartenea Bryant
Jessica Cauffiel Stunt Double: Terri Cadiante
Jordana Brewster Stunt Double: Gail Monlan
Jill Ritchie Stunt Double: Jill Stokesberry
Geoff Stults Stunt Double: Mark Vanslow
Devon Aoki Stunt Double: Boni Yanagisawa

Cast:

Sara Foster (*Amy*)
Jordana Brewster (*Lucy Diamond*)
Meagan Good (*Max*)
Devon Aoki (*Dominique*)
Jill Ritchie (*Janet*)
Geoff Stults (*Bobby*)
Jimmi Simpson (*Scud*)
Jessica Cauffiel (*Ninotchka*)
Michael Duncan (*Mr Phipps*)
USA 2004
91 mins
Digital

Event total runtime: 155 mins

Woman with a Movie Camera is generously supported by Jane Stanton



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her bedroom after curfew – makes up the final member of this super sleuth squad. Under the tutelage of tough-as-nails headmistress Mrs. Peatree and Academy President Phipps, these uniquely individual girls have been carefully selected and trained to be strong, lethal and incredibly adept with an eyebrow pencil. Now they must combine all their skills to save the world from vexing vixen Lucy Diamond, the most deadly criminal the world has ever known – and the sexiest woman to ever take hostages and wield an Uzi.

Though *D.E.B.S.* is an action-packed adventure comedy, the making of the film was more like a Cinderella story. It all began when writer/director Angela Robinson sketched a few comic book drawings of an idea she had for an all-girl crew of high school secret agents. *D.E.B.S.* With colourful characters, a sexy uber-villain, and a Technicolor premise, Robinson felt her story seemed perfectly suited to a comic book or cartoon. Although she flirted with turning the project into a web animation, it never materialised. Fresh from film school, Robinson received a grant from an organisation called 'Power Up' to produce a ten-minute short, and she decided to move her drawings from paper to the big screen; bringing to life the film version of *D.E.B.S.*

Shot on a small budget – but with high hopes – Robinson and her producers, Andrea Sperling and Jasmine Kosovic, shot the *D.E.B.S.* short film in the summer of 2002. Once completed, they submitted and were accepted into the 2003 Sundance Film Festival. To their excitement, it was met with a great deal of praise and a lot of laughter. Everyone enjoyed the high-concept idea of girls equally at home with martial arts and make-up, and the short created a great deal of buzz.

The true Cinderella moment came when *D.E.B.S.* caught the attention of Screen Gems president Clint Culpepper, who wanted to create a full-length version of the short film. 'Fortunately,' says Robinson, 'I had already completed a script that elaborated on the premise of the short.' Adds producer Kosovic, 'After Angela wrote and directed the short, she was so inspired and so psyched she wrote the feature script in no time; it just flowed.' They began shooting the feature only a few short months later.

It was exhilarating for the filmmakers to fully realise their *D.E.B.S.* dream. Of the finished feature, Kosovic says, 'It's just bigger and funnier. You really get more into each character. The script is richer; everything's just amped up. It's like the difference between a short story and a novel.'

Writer/director Angela Robinson received her BA from Brown University and then studied film at the New York University Graduate Film Program. While at NYU, she made several short films and assisted director Spike Lee. Robinson most recently was a staff writer for the Showtime series, *The L Word*. Her short film *D.E.B.S.* was accepted into the Sundance Film Festival last year, for which she is now making her first feature film.

Production notes

Cici Peng is a film journalist, film programmer, film producer based in London. She has written for the *FT*, *TANK*, *LW Lies*, *Dazed & Confused*, *i-D*, *Variety* and led and edited an editorial project for *gal-dem*. She is the lead mentor of the Queer East Critics Project. She has programmed screenings and events at the BFI, ICA, the Barbican among others. She is a preselector for New York Film Festival's Currents shorts.

Siavash Minoukadeh is a curator and writer working across film and contemporary art with a focus on notions of belonging, and queer aesthetics & histories. His recent work includes *Queer Cinema from the Eastern Bloc* co-curated with Fedor Tot, a programme first presented at Cinema Rediscovered 2024 which will be touring across the UK and O.T.O, a night of music, performance and moving image exploring the artistic potential of the music video, presented at Fold by LUX. They have written for platforms including *Art Monthly*, *Where's the Frame?* and *Devonshire Collective*. He is currently Associate Programmer at Open City Documentary Festival and Marketing Lead and a preselector for Fringe! Queer Film and Arts Festival.

Lilia Pavin-Franks is an event producer, programmer and writer who has worked across multiple film festivals and organisations like the BFI London Film Festival and BFI Flare, BAFTA and Rianne Pictures' Women X. She is particularly keen on platforming LGBTQ+ and female-led stories, and has an interest in how tales of identity intersect with genre. Lilia currently works as an Event Coordinator at BFI Southbank and is the co-programmer of this event.

Angela Robinson is a pioneering director of film and TV. In 2005, with Disney's *Herbie: Fully Loaded*, she became only the third Black woman ever to direct a feature film produced by a major film studio after Darnell Martin with *I Like It Like That* for Columbia Pictures in 1994 and Euzhan Palcy with *A Dry White Season* for MGM in 1989. She also directed the cult hit *D.E.B.S.*, about an elite, diverse squad of teenage crime fighters, and *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women*. Outfest Fusion LGBTQ People of Color Film Festival awarded Robinson with the Fusion Achievement Award in 2013 for her contribution to LGBTQ+ media visibility. Her TV work has included *The L Word*, *True Blood*, *Hung* and *How to Get Away With Murder*. At Warner Bros., Robinson is currently working as writer and executive producer with Max to develop a series based on *Madame X*.

Grace Barber-Plentie (she/her) is a film programmer for BFI London Film Festival and BFI Flare LGBTQIA+ Film Festival. Her passion in film programming is cinema of the Black diaspora, particularly films by Black women and Caribbean cinema.