

## Interview: Actress Katie Chang Sparkles in ‘The Bling Ring’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 19, 2013 - 4:18pm

- [A24](#) [2]
- [Emma Watson](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [Interview](#) [5]
- [Israel Broussard](#) [6]
- [Katie Chang](#) [7]
- [Leslie Mann](#) [8]
- [Paris Hilton](#) [9]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [10]
- [Sofia Coppola](#) [11]
- [Taissa Farmiga](#) [12]
- [The Bling Ring](#) [13]

CHICAGO – Actress Katie Chang is in the high school graduating Class of 2013. But in a sense, she has already graduated to the big time with her lead role in director Sofia Coppola’s new film, “The Bling Ring.” Chang portrays Rebecca, the leader of a gang of teenage burglars who rob the homes of celebrities, including Paris Hilton.

The young Ms. Chang has come into show business with not only Coppola credentials, but independent film credibility, as she also plays a supporting role in the upcoming “A Birder’s Guide to Everything.” The Chicago area native hails from the suburb of Winnetka, and has just graduated from New Trier Township High School.



L-R: Taissa Farmiga, Israel Broussard, Emma Watson, Katie Chang and Claire Julian are ‘The Bling Ring’

*Photo credit: A24*

The softer and unassuming Ms. Chang is a far cry from Rebecca, her brassy kleptomaniac character in “The Bling Ring.” HollywoodChicago.com recently interviewed her in anticipation of the film’s release nationally this Friday.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** How were you best able to understand the character of Rebecca, having grown up in the era of technology and overwrought celebrity worship. Which characteristics did you understand the most, and which ones were most foreign to you?

**Katie Chang:** What was most foreign to me was her complete obsession with celebrity culture, and her belief that it would make her life better, and also her lack of considering the consequences of her actions. But like me, at the end of the day, she’s just a simple teenage girl, who deals with as much self-consciousness and as much unhappiness as we all deal with – I am a teenage girl, so I understand that. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** I get the impression you are quite opposite to that character, did that the performance that much more challenging?

**Chang:** Opposite is a good way to put it. The things that she does, and her personality, are the type of characteristics I try to avoid. Everybody has a mean and selfish side to them, it was kind of fun to let go of the moral center and live on that side for a little bit.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** When you landed the role, obviously the reputation of Sofia Coppola preceded her. What preconceived notions did you have about her, and what did she do that was unexpected to you when you started the actual production?

**Chang:** Sofia was one of my favorite filmmakers even before I began doing the film. She’s strong, doesn’t care what people think about her films and she tells the stories she wants to tell, which is very inspiring. I was nervous to meet her, but once we got onto the set what surprised me was how calm she was. When you’re a director, controlling so many areas of the production, it seems to me so overwhelming. Yet she was so calm and collected. It could be that it’s her fourth feature film, but she was on top of everything.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** This was your first major motion picture. What was the best tip about the experience that you received from either someone behind the camera or someone in front of it?

**Chang:** On one of our first days, our Director of Photography Chris Blauvelt told me ‘you need to find the light or else you’re not going to be in the movie.’ [laughs] Apparently I was sitting as I normally would in a club scene, and we were just suppose to dance and have fun. I was sitting on the couch and drinking a pretend drink, not thinking about things like how I’m going to be seen in the film, and he noticed and told me to find the light. It was a good tip.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Having had a lesson in the ‘wealth topic’ at an early age in doing this film, and because you were raised in a fairly upper middle class Chicago suburb, what sense do you have about wealth, the accumulation of stuff and the perceived attitude of teenagers who just happened to lucky enough to be born into it?

**Chang:** In growing up on the North Shore, I’m not immune to rich kids. I grew up in a well-off family – in the sense that we were raised to appreciate everything we had, but we weren’t deprived in our needs. But I grew up a block from Sheridan Road, and I know those kids in the big houses. I’m sure I can be lumped in with them, but doing this movie I was able to see that there is a level of entitlement that people can get, once they realize their family is well off.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Would you be less likely to connect with people like that, because of your experience in this film?

**Chang:** Whenever I meet some one, I try now to look at their clothing and such, just connect with their personality. But yeah, this film does send a message that you should be wary of these types of personalities. You can write this film off as just a stupid movie about silly girls, but it’s important for people to allow themselves to stretch their mind around it, it’s made for an intelligent audience.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What is the best advice someone ever gave you about acting and what is an example of a performance when you best used that advice?

**Chang:** Carol, my acting coach and manager, has told me that at the end of the day, you can’t fake any emotion that you have, you can’t fake a scenario. Whatever you’re doing in a scene, you have to bring something from your own life into it, because that’s the only way you’re going to make the connection with your character. You can’t write off that connection.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** When you study acting, the stage and the numerous great roles that are available to you, is there a goal of yours to play a certain classical or modern theatrical character, and why would you want to play that one in particular?

**Chang:** One cool thing about going to the high school that I did, is that in our English classes we’d read one or two plays a year. And what we always talked about was archetypes, or typecast characters. In knowing that, especially during auditions, I can bring these archetypes into the characters that I’m trying out for – for example, Rebecca is the ‘villain,’ a complex one like Voldemort – there’s a Harry Potter reference for you. [laughs] I really can’t name one specific character, my hope is for a variety of roles, in a variety of media.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** When you broke through with this role and your upcoming ‘A Birder’s Guide to Everything,’ did you get any outside advice about how to negotiate the various circumstances of the Los Angeles show business jungle?

**Chang:** Everybody who is representing me, they all live in New York City, and they are supportive of me going there. If you live in Los Angeles and you’re not working, it can become a toxic environment. Everybody is in the business, and everybody is trying to do the same thing. If you live in New York, you can still be close to the industry but you can have a life outside the industry. That is what everyone reminds me of, to have a life outside the industry.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Have you experienced the ‘tinsel’ in Tinseltown, AKA Hollywood?

**Chang:** Yes, for sure in doing this film, because of its glamor. The press covering it is all glitzy and glam, and I’ve met with some really cool people. But it’s all about perspective, and I had my parents there with me, which was really helpful.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Did you have a notion of ‘designer labels’ before you did this film?

**Chang:** When I was thirteen years old, I went through a phase when I wanted to be a fashion designer, and I was obsessed then with labels. But that lasted about six months. Now I shop at The Gap. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What is different about your upcoming feature, ‘A Birder’s Guide to Everything,’ as opposed to ‘The Bling Ring’ experience?



Katie Chang in Chicago, June 17th, 2013  
Photo credit: Patrick McDonad for HollywoodChicago.com

**Chang:** It's a polar opposite character, she is a very good girl. She has a good head on her shoulders, very stubborn, and won't let anyone tell her what to do. She is a love interest, and it's a sweet movie, about a group of kids going on a road trip to find an extinct duck, that they think has resurfaced. The road trip is like a symbol for their journey together.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** The girls and boys in 'The Bling Ring' have a very detached, almost adult-like attitude within themselves. What circumstance about being an adult are you most looking forward to, and least looking forward to, as you head to college?

**Chang:** Definitely the least will be having to control my own finances. My father is the smartest person I ever met, and I can't do math, but he's a math whiz. What I am most looking forward to is the freedom to make my own decisions, because when you grow up your parents are involved in your life and keep giving you direction so you don't make too many mistakes. That will be the scary part of making my own decisions, the mistakes I have to learn from, because once you're out in the world and controlling your life for the first time, it's all part of what you're doing.

*"The Bling Ring" opens everywhere on June 21st. Featuring Katie Chang, Emma Watson, Israel Broussard, Taissa Farmiga and Leslie Mann. Written by Sofia Coppola and Nancy Jo Sales. Directed by Sofia Coppola. Rated "R".*



[14]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [15]  
Senior Staff Writer  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[pat@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com) [14]

© 2013 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

**Source URL (retrieved on Apr 25 2024 - 10:42am):**

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/22508/interview-actress-katie-chang-sparkles-in-the-bling-ring>

#### Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/a24>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/emma-watson>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/interview.html>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/israel-broussard>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/katie-chang>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/leslie-mann>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/paris-hilton>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/sofia-coppola>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/taissa-farmiga>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-bling-ring>
- [14] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>

[15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>