



Episode 107 | Deep Dark Secrets: Welcome to Remington Steele!

Susan Lambert Hatem 00:00.



with theme song playing in background....

Try this for a deep dark secret. The great detective show Remington Steele. We don't know if it's feminist. We're gonna find out. Detective Laura Holt always loved excitement. So she studied and apprenticed and put her name on an office. But absolutely nobody knocked down her door. A female private investigator in 1982 Seems so feminine. So she invents a superior, a decidedly masculine superior. Suddenly there are cases around the block. It was working like a charm, plenty of stories for her own TV show. Until the day he walked in with his blue eyes and mysterious past. And before she knew it, he assumes Remington Steele's identity. Now she does the work and he takes the bows. And often many of the storylines that should be hers become his. It becomes a more traditional show, but as long as people watch, she can play some gender role reversal and give women one of the most powerful female icons of the television 80s. I'm Susan Lambert Hatem Welcome to 80s TV Ladies.

Sharon Johnson 01:02

And I'm Sharon Johnson. We are kicking off a new female driven TV show exploration, a show that premiered in 1982. Today, we are diving into one of the most beloved mystery and detective shows of all time. Remington Steele.

Susan Lambert Hatem 01:19

I can't wait.

Sharon Johnson 01:20

Neither can I. First we'll be talking about the pilot and a general overview of the show. And we've got some deep dark secrets according to Susan.

Susan Lambert Hatem 01:28

Well, deep dark secret sounded better than some really interesting tidbits you may not know about Remington Steele.

Sharon Johnson 01:29

We're gonna give you our first impressions. Tell you about the Stars and Guest Stars on the show and let you know about a few really cool special guests that will be coming up on this podcast in later episodes.

Susan Lambert Hatem 01:49

This podcast?

Sharon Johnson 01:49

This podcast!

Susan Lambert Hatem 01:50

Our very own podcast is gonna have special episodes?!



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Sharon Johnson 01:52

Yes! I know right?!

Susan Lambert Hatem 01:54

Oh my god, you guys are gonna lose your mind.

Susan Lambert Hatem 01:56

Okay. All right. So let's take ourselves back to October 1982. When we were youngsters. EPCOT had just opened at Disney World. Cats opened on Broadway. The Chicago Tylenol murders had happened and President Ronald Reagan had declared a war on drugs.

Sharon Johnson 01:56

Giggles

Sharon Johnson 02:12

It was the year of the Falkland War. Top TV shows were 60 Minutes, Dallas, M*A*S*H, Magnum PI, Dynasty... which I didn't watch because I'm a Dallas fan. Just saying...

Susan Lambert Hatem 02:25

You had to be, it was Dallas or Dynasty...

Sharon Johnson 02:27

It really was...

Susan Lambert Hatem 02:27

It was like football.

Sharon Johnson 02:28

Exactly. Three's Company, Simon and Simon, The Love Boat, the A-Team, were all big shows back then.

Susan Lambert Hatem 02:35

All right. I was a big fan of the A-Team at the time, and Simon and Simon. Definitely Magnum PI, I wanted a Ferrari. Did a little bit of Three's Company, that I wasn't technically allowed to watch it, according to my mother. But then came this new show, Remington Steele. What do you, do you remember it from then, Sharon? And what, what'd you watch? Did you watch it? And what do you think?

Sharon Johnson 02:59

I do remember it from then. I remember it being one of my favorite shows. I have to say I don't have any real specific memories of watching it at that time. Other than just knowing how much I loved it, and how much I look forward to it. And just how darn cute Laura Holt and Remington Steele were together.

Susan Lambert Hatem 03:20



They were adorable. I also remember it. I also watched it. I love that style. I love the action comedy. And this was a, you know sort of mystery action comedy. I love movies. So it sort of satisfied that and I love those Stars too. They were pretty amazing. They were, they were pretty groundbreaking when they came out. You were like, who are these people? These are fabulous people I want to know and be.

Sharon Johnson 03:47

It really ticked off a lot of boxes for me some, um some of which you've mentioned. The mystery aspect of it. I love mysteries. I love a good show. I love a whodunit. I always like to try to see if I can figure it out. I love action. I love comedy. And somehow this show managed to find a way to blend all of those things into one show. It was almost like a miracle of television.

Susan Lambert Hatem 04:09

I do also remember the Score and the tone of the show. Because it was it, even though it was pretty goofy sometimes, it had a really interesting warm and serious tone. And the look of the piece. And then that that friggin amazing... The music for the Pilot and the second Episode was by Henry Mancini and and he scored two themes for the show, the Remington Theme and the Laura theme. And they're really just startlingly great.

Sharon Johnson 04:37

Yeah, they're it's it's really one of the best TV Theme Songs of all time. I think it's, and it fits the show so well, in so many ways.

Susan Lambert Hatem 04:48

Yeah. And I think it was nice. I feel like it was, it felt, at least to me a little more sophisticated and interesting than Hart to Hart. Which somehow didn't feel... I never really connected with Hart to Hart. Although I watched episodes of it.

Sharon Johnson 05:01

I don't think I ever watched Hart to Hart.

Susan Lambert Hatem 05:04

Well, we're gonna have to explore that show. Even though I think it technically started in the 70s. It did run through the 80s. All of the shows, we're currently looking at, Remington Steele, Scarecrow and Mrs. King, and Moonlighting, were kind of chasing that show. The success of that show was very big, very successful. But it felt more like, for me, it felt more like the adult show. It felt more like for my mom. Whereas Remington Steele, definitely felt more modern to me. Now, it feels charming and antiquated a little bit, but holds up really well. So let's talk about how we feel about it, now that we've revisited it.

Sharon Johnson 05:42

I really, I think it holds up maybe a little bit better than you do. Mainly because, it is a, it is an episodic show. Yes, we have the thread of the... Will they? Or won't they? But even that I think they've hand, they handled in this show much better than it's been handled in most shows that have tried to extend that out over a long period of time. So I give the writers a lot of credit for that. And I think that, in some ways, the idea that a woman would have to invent a male boss, because people weren't taking her seriously in doing this work that she was so good at. Sadly, there's still some some things in our world



as it exists today, where that would also be the case. So that aspect of the show, I think, still holds up and sadly, is still kind of a thing in in many industries. So I was surprised, frankly, at how well I thought it held up for me in doing a re-wa, as I'm doing the re-watch of the show.

Susan Lambert Hatem 06:40

And again, don't get me wrong. I really enjoyed, you know, I'm really enjoying going through this, uh, the entire, the entire Five Seasons. And in some ways, again, I do think certain episodes hold up better than certain episodes of Scarecrow and Mrs. King. Certainly in terms of a little bit more sophistication in the discussions of the relationship and of the power dynamics in that relationship. I'm surprised. I was, there were a couple episodes, I was really surprised where she was... they're articulating what is going on for them in a way that... even though... then other times they're sort of... it's hard to track the relationship. Because like, well, why don't? It seems like they still like each other. Why are they being mad at each other? (guffaw)

Susan Lambert Hatem 07:27

For the, for the purpose of this episode. At the same time, I do think they were both pretty clear on what they wanted. And so it sort of makes you buy it. And and and pretty clear on their fears from that relationship... of why they're you know, both of them are having trouble sort of committing to it. But for different reasons.

Sharon Johnson 07:27

Right. (Laughs)

Sharon Johnson 07:47

That was one of things that really surprised me in doing the re-watch because I couldn't think of another show since, that handle that as well as this show did. As frankly as this show did, almost 40 years ago. It really surprised. And I think for me, maybe that's one of the things that permeates over the show. This idea that these are two grown up people, they've, you know, very maturely discussed their relationship and the fact that they're both very attracted to each other. But for various reasons, mostly because Laura is a little, more than a little concerned about what she doesn't know about him, and what he's keeping from her and expresses her reservations about that. And I couldn't think of another show that handled a possible romantic relationship so maturely, so calmly, so straightforwardly, and it really amazed me!

Susan Lambert Hatem 08:45

We'll certainly at the time, and again, Cheers was around this time too, also dealing with sort of male / female dynamics and a, Will they? Won't they? But you were definitely watching two people who couldn't really talk about why they would or wouldn't. We just knew it as an audience. It was just in the ethos somehow of those other relationships. So yeah, I do think, and what I was saying is, I think this this show, very clearly and directly references The Thin Man and 30s Romantic Comedies, as well as Hart to Hart. It sort of comments on on Hart to Hart. I think it's, one of its precursors is The Avengers. That sort of, it's sexy and fun to, to to be detectives and chase things down. The shows that it inspired, obviously are Moonlighting, which came directly from it. Literally Glenn Gordon Caron, the super, who was the supervising producer for the first half of the First Season, went on to create Moonlighting, the sexier, bantery, crazier version of of that. And Castle, I think has is real nod to this show, kind of almost



any male/female partner exploration, at the very least they they like probably watched at least one or two episodes of Remington before they made their show. The reviews are pretty positive when it came out. One, one in particular was like, 'a modern man, a modern woman and a marvelous entertainment.' Which I think for some reason, it really made me laugh. But let's let's sort of what's interesting is sort of there was a saga sell on this, right? It was she wants to be a detective. She wants to, you know, have her own business. And she opens up that business and basically can't get hired. So she makes up a fake Remington Steele, she makes up a guy, her boss, and then starts getting jobs. And then a guy steps in and starts playing that role. And he shows up in the middle of a case, and they decide to start working together. Very funny concept for a show. Right?!

Sharon Johnson 10:48

Very!

Susan Lambert Hatem 10:48

Very funny concept for a show. And yet, you know, we're going to find out in the research I've done that, that it didn't really, it took a long time to sell that show.

Sharon Johnson 10:57

A surprisingly long time.

Susan Lambert Hatem 10:58

Yeah. So the thing that is timeless about this show that makes it successful then, and I think makes it hold up now are the Stars of the show. Stephanie Zimbalist and Pierce Brosnan are spectacularly well cast, they are fantastic together, they are fun to watch. And they have that same kind of special tone that fits the show. Where they are both sophisticated and funny and confident.

Sharon Johnson 11:23

Yeah, I couldn't agree more. It's the power of the performance. It's the chemistry between all of the actors on the show that really make it all sing. I mean, it's the last piece of the puzzle of all the things that come together to make this, or any show, successful or anything good. But without those two, those two performers, those two performances, there is no Remington Steele.

Susan Lambert Hatem 11:45

And it's so interesting. I mean, Michael Gleason co-creator of the show, talks about that. And one of the comments he made about Pierce in the Pilot, in this in the early episodes was, 'He's so skilled at having a good time with his character'. And I thought that was such a great way to talk about an actor really embracing what they're doing. And that's the confidence of it is having a good time with the character that you're playing. And their ease of being comfortable together. Like, again, off the bat seems pretty spectacular. And again, I think is, is, you know, one of the things we love about television is how quickly you can create those relationships. And when they work, you're like... In! The honest is in! Alright! See ya in five seasons.

Sharon Johnson 12:29

Plus this is a show that touched on sometimes one genre a little bit more hard, harder than the other in an episode or across episodes. But the performers had to be able to do comedy. They had to be able to



do drama. They had to do action. They did so much running in the show, it was astonishing. And to be able to do all of it well, and again, all of it in, in every episode. And that's so remarkable. It's so remarkable what they, what they were able to bring to the show.

Susan Lambert Hatem 12:55

And that's what holds up. The the, in talking about Stephanie Zimbalist, they were saying that she really got the show. Right?! She, she very early on was like, 'Oh, this, this is a show that has three feet is three feet off the ground. So then we would play it is with both feet on the ground. And so they both take it very seriously, even though there's so much humor in the in the piece. And gets to be more. Like I think they loosen up a little bit in later episodes than from the the early episodes. As of course you would do, once you kind of find the direction of the show. And people really engaged with the humor of the show, for sure.

Sharon Johnson 13:01

And I'm sure that the writers put, began to put more and more things in to the writing, as they saw they had performers that can handle it. That I'm sure made a big difference too. So I give them all credit.

Susan Lambert Hatem 13:39

For sure! And we're going to also do a little bit of dive into some of our favorite episodes real quick from from, like an early thing. Well, we'll dive into more later. But I want to kind of just off the top, kind of talk about like your favorite episodes. My favorite Episode so far.

Sharon Johnson 13:53

Well, I think you have to start with the Pilot. They got it so right as we've just been discussing, on so many levels. And without a Pilot that good, to set up everything that comes after it, sometimes it's hard to come back from that. But the Pilot for this show, I mean, you could have practically except for the element of Remington Steele embodied by this mystery man, this Episode could fit just about anywhere in the Series. It's really well written. It's really a tight mystery. It's got all kinds of good fun stuff going on. And it's really terrific.

Susan Lambert Hatem 14:46

Yeah. It starts off with a, both a good case and this like fabulous introduction for both her as a character, and then this this complete turn that is now going to change her life and her Detective Agency and the course of what comes next. So it's it's one of those really, pieces that does work well. The the, so it starts off and she's got a Case. And the Case is to protect, be the security for these very special diamonds that are from South Africa and travel the world being special diamonds, and a car creator. A special car manufacturer is revealing his first amazing car and needs the diamonds as being the unique, you know sort of press, to go with his unique car. And so they're having to protect the diamonds. And it turns out that Pierce Brosnan's character is after the diamonds because he is a con man and a thief. And so when he shows up to try to get the diamonds, he's all, he basically shows up in the guise of an inspector from South Africa, who is tracking down the diamonds and trying to protect them and then takes on... So he's first comes on and introduces himself as Ben Pearson, an inspector from South Africa. And she, they're clearly attracted to each other at that point. And then later, he pretends to be Remington Steele in order to get out of a sticky situation. And then later, she finds out that he's pretending to be Remington Steele, and turns out, nobody could be Remington Steele,



because Remington Steele doesn't exist. And she's been using him as this facade. So it is sort of liars, talking to liars in some ways, and they're both sort of conning each other. Which I think gives equal weight to both of them. And so it's a very, it's very sort of, sort of very exciting to watch all those sort of revelations play out. But like you said, the case itself is very interesting. And apparently based on DeLorean.

Sharon Johnson 16:58

I hadn't thought of that. But that makes perfect sense. Yeah...

Susan Lambert Hatem 17:01

That's what they said. They wrote it. They base it on DeLorean who made the DeLorean and was very famously sort of this renegade in the car world. And then they said about a year later, he was arrested for all of his, you know, backdoor dealings. So they probably couldn't have written that Pilot a year later, which is very interesting. But the Pilot is, it really is, if you're looking for kind of really great solid Pilots. It's pretty much one of them. It is got a lot of pieces that do work for it. It's got a very interesting cast. It's beautifully directed, I think, for the time. So the Co-creator of the show, this is the interesting thing... So we haven't talked about how the show... This show was created by Robert Butler and Michael Gleason. It was originally conceived of by Robert Butler. And we're going to talk a little bit about that in my, in my deep, dark secrets.

Sharon Johnson 17:48

Oooo...

Susan Lambert Hatem 17:48

But ultimately he's... Robert Butler was a huge director. He directed the Pilots of many brilliant TV Shows, including Star Trek and Remington Steele, and later went on to direct the Pilot of Moonlighting. So, but he was the co-creator of the show and paired with Michael Gleason, also another very accomplished television Creator, Writer, and Producer. And, again, together they seem to really create quite a spectacular and unique, for the time, show. My other favorite, some of my other favorite episodes was... They get, they bring in Stephanie Zimbalist's dad, Efrem Zimbalist Jr, who was a Star in, like a huge Star as well. And so, he becomes a recurring character. Daniel Chalmers, who's this con man. Who was sort of also the mentor for Pierce Brosnan's character. Who, by the way, has no name. He does not know his real name, he presents with five passports with five different names, all after Humphrey Bogart characters. So this guy is a real mystery when he shows up, and a real con man, and very slick and very charming. And so there's lots of reasons for her not to trust him.

Sharon Johnson 19:00

Right, right.

Susan Lambert Hatem 19:02

But he helps her out in a pinch. And so she's like, 'Okay, well come be this guy.' (guffaw) You do buy that conceit a little bit. It has to be a TV show. I guess we have to do that.

Sharon Johnson 19:12



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Well, you do. I mean, you do buy that, because in some ways he didn't give her much choice. But at the same time, I think she also saw where if she could control him, it could be to her advantage. She could control what he did, and where, you know, how he, how he presented himself, it would be to her advantage,

Susan Lambert Hatem 19:27

For sure, because she wants her Detective Agency to be successful. And so I think she's chasing the success of being a top Detective Agency, and has kind of run the invisible guy as far as she can run. And so having an actual person is going to mean that, I think to her that she'll get more jobs and bigger jobs, and more high profile jobs. And that's clearly what she's also chasing. She's ambitious and he fits that ambition at the right time. And so that's why she says yes. So she, they do make sense of it. And so I think it does sort of, they both need each other a little bit. It's a little unclear why he doesn't just move on. But it has to do with her.

Sharon Johnson 19:27

Oh Yea...

Susan Lambert Hatem 19:29

He is entranced by her. And he's entranced by the opportunity to, I think, step into the role of a better person.

Sharon Johnson 20:24

Yeah, I mean I think, what I've always taken away from the show is, he was never what could be considered a, for lack of a better word, a bad guy, a villain. He was a, he was someone who had been doing things to get by, and found he had a good facility for going around the world and doing these sorts of things. And, and he lands in this situation, where he gets to pretend to be... use all of his skills in this role of this super detective, and begins to find that it really kind of suits him. He's kind of enjoying it...

Susan Lambert Hatem 20:58

It's kind of ultimate con.

Susan Lambert Hatem 20:59

It's the ultimate con. Like it's, it's a, it's a con that he can slip into very easily because he has all those skills. But also, I think he just likes it. He's clearly, even though he's this like big thief, and con man and can throw a punch, he also seems to sort of have the heart of the artist. And I think the love of sort of this 1930s comedy. They're really, they really are, they're making direct references in the Pilot to The Thin Man and The Thin Man movies. And that's a husband and wife team that are basically detectives and chasing down crime. But also like wearing their tuxedos and drinking alot, and being quippy and funny. Again, very Hart to Hart-ish. This is more down to earth. They're a little scrappier. But the comedy, and the nod to the 30s is so clear in this Pilot, and so fun again, for movie lovers. In the first two Episodes they make four actual literal references to movies. And that continues through the series. It's one of the really fun things about the production that also was fairly unique for the time is, to recogn, like, so here's some notable production issues that I noticed. They use, obviously, the word steele, S T E E L E, in the Episode Title names for every episode. That was, that wasn't particularly definitely new,



unique at the time, but it was somewhat special. And I remember that, again, from childhood, older childhood, that, and they make movie references in almost every Episode. So as I said, the very first movie reference in this show is to Casablanca. And so that tells you what kind of show it's, it's nodding to. Right?!

Sharon Johnson 20:59

Yeah!

Sharon Johnson 22:49

Yeah.

Susan Lambert Hatem 22:49

Then Thin Man, there's a direct reference. North by North, to North by Northwest and to Tea and Sympathy. That's what's in the first two episodes. Where they're literally quoting lines, showing like images on television from The Thin Man, or literally setting up a scene that is the exact same scene and commenting on it. He says, 'Oh, I'm going to set up as a dinner party. And then I'll accuse the bad guy of it, in the middle of the dinner party, to catch him. Which is a direct reference to The Thin Man. And he's, he's quite a character. So he's a character who is sort of in love with movies, and using those as a way to be a detective.

Sharon Johnson 23:32

Yeah, because I would imagine on some level, the grew, obviously he grew up watching all those movies, being a fan of all those movies and thinking, 'Wow, isn't that great? What a great way to live. I'd like to be, you know, one of the characters in these movies.' And that's kind of what Remington Steele became for him. And as a, as a classic movie fan, I always loved that. It made me so happy when they would mention whatever movie that was woven into the plot for that week's episode. I just thought that was so great. I don't know, off the top of my head if any other show has been able to do that as successfully as they have, or done it as overtly as they obviously did on the show. And I just loved it. There's another aspect of the show that I thought really elevated it.

Susan Lambert Hatem 24:24

And it was one that is definitely from Michael Gleason. He talks about it and it was because he was a big film nerd. Basically, it sounded like the Studio didn't love it. Or the Network didn't love it, but but the fans did. And if he and if they didn't do a reference in an episode they heard from fans about it.

Sharon Johnson 24:44

Oh, I'm sure.

Susan Lambert Hatem 24:46

And it is one of the things that I think a lot of fans love, and it and it's one of those things that makes you want to watch those movies. I, you know, they mentioned Tea and Sympathy. I've never seen it and I was like Oh! Like I want to go watch that now. I've seen the others but uh, that are referenced there, but they're throughout the series. And so you feel like, Oh! I want, I have some homework to do after watching this because I want to go find that reference. But I also think it was an interesting thing. It was starting to be the consciousness of people recognizing that they were, in real life, using movies and



television to learn, to sort of decide how to behave. There was a cousin in-law of mine, who was a Vietnam Vet. And I was talking to him. He was a sniper, very, a very successful sniper. And I was talking to him about what he would, you know he went, he at 18, to Vietnam. And I was like, how did you do that? And, you know, was jumping out of planes and being this like sniper where he was killing people. And he's like, I would just imagine myself in a movie.

Susan Lambert Hatem 26:11

And I thought that was a real, like, I'm like, Oh! I think that everybody kind of does that. That's how you get through things. You're like, well, here's how I'm going to do something that I don't know how to do. It was just, it stayed it stayed with me. And so there's something weirdly serious about that. But it you know, it's one of those reas, is one of those reasons, I think we do love all these stories and movies and television and are so profound in our pop culture is it's, it's, it's how are we going to behave? How are we going to be? And so it, it was vital at the time to... I don't know, I've gotten off on a whole other tangent, of what we were gonna talk about. (guffaw) Very serious, oooo Susan. Oh, my God, the Santa Anas are coming. Anyway, but back to the show. I love the movie references. The fans love the movie references clearly. It gave a lot of color and flavor to that character that made, that was extra charming. And then she starts doing it. It's one of the things that she learns from him is... Wait, this movie, she's she's willing to take something from him and that's, that's his way to aproach the Detective Agency. And then she's like, well, here's how we do it in real life. And so I do love that he's fairly incompetent at being a detective. And, and she's obviously very good at it. So it's a little bit of the reverse of Scarecrow and Mrs. King. I will say that both Pierce Brosnan and Stephanie Zimbalist, as actors, did do a lot of their own stunts. And it is a very, pretty, pretty stunty show more, less car chases and more fistfights and racing after, chasing people down. And, and in particular, Stephanie Zimbalist is pretty amazing. One of the best runners in high heels that I've seen. You're like, wait, she's really doing that yet, like, there are times you can really see her running in the high heels, and they make a reference to it. And I think in one of your favorite episodes and mine, but really yours.

Sharon Johnson 26:11

Wow.

Sharon Johnson 28:12

And I don't know that I've ever seen an actress in a TV show or movie for that matter, that did so many, not just so much running, but climbing over walls and jumping off of things and into things and over things. And it's really amazing!

Susan Lambert Hatem 28:29

Hanging on to cars. You're like, again, I'm a little worried about the actors from the 80s. I don't think they should have been doing all this. I don't think they could do them now. I think insurance companies would be like, No! You're not taking the Star of the show and having them be dragged by a car. It's it's pretty insane that they are doing a lot of their own stunts. Apparently in in, Pierce Brosnan contracted Bell's Palsy after an episode in which he was sort of, did a fistfight in the LA River. And and the LA River notoriously, which is basically a big cement trough for those that don't know the LA River, with a little bit of water running in it ,very shallow water but also usually pretty toxic water. So they had to kind of stop production because their lead actor got ill because of stunt that he did.



Sharon Johnson 29:22

See! And, and you think that you know, being an actor is pretty simple, pretty easy. No no, not on this show. You're running, your jumpin', your you know, getting injured and all kinds of stuff on this show. You just never know.

Susan Lambert Hatem 29:34

I blame James Gardner. He famously did a lot of his stunts from, for Rockford Files, and later talked about how much he paid for it with his back and other problems. And I think they were young, and they were both clearly very capable. Stephanie Zimbalist just really had, you know, is this like crazy quadruple threat. Like actress, dancer, singer, writer, and just is clearly capable of doing it all. Both as an actress, but also then that character is, it sort of transforms to that character where she's like, I can do everything. I want to do it. And, and obviously, that was just really impactful. That was, there were a lot of male characters like that. There were not a lot of female characters like that on television, even with Hart to Hart, it's them as a as a team. Right?! It's her as a wife, doing it. Even Scarecrow and Mrs. King, it's, it's her... She's not going, I'm gonna go be a spy on my own. This is a woman that is, I am a detective, and I'm going to be it on my own, if that's what I have to do to get the jobs I want and the credit I want.

Sharon Johnson 30:55

Yeah. And she built this Agency! She, I think probably had taken it as far as she could have without a presence of Remington Steele, because I would imagine more and more of her clients, as in the Pilot Episode are like, 'What do you mean, I can't meet him. Where is he? What's he doing?'

Susan Lambert Hatem 31:10

They use the excuse, like well Mr. Steele likes to act in a consulting capacity in most of these cases. And you're like, why isn't he supposed to be? But she's pulled it off, right, pulled it off. And she has to sidekicks has been helping her pull it off. Her Secretary... and I'm blanking on the name, we're going to look it up right now while I'm talking... and, and then her Detective Assistant plays by James Beard. And he's like the other inspector, that they sort of came up together. We learn in later episodes, that they were sort of trained together and worked at the same agencies together. And then she went off and started this agency, and he works for her. Which again, is a throwback to the Honey West, a TV show where she was a detective and had a male assistant. And he clearly is second to her. And so they're, they're in on it. And I think that is, so they only last one Season, though.

Sharon Johnson 32:05

Right.

Susan Lambert Hatem 32:06

And I think that's one of the reasons is because they're in on the charade. As Remington Steele would say in the First Season.

Sharon Johnson 32:15



Well you know, I never like to see, you know, actors lose a gig, because they're hard to come by. But the producers brilliantly cast, Doris Roberts, as Mildred Krebs come Season Two. And she just brought so much to that role into the show in a way that the other actors maybe just weren't allowed to, or maybe their actor, their characters didn't allow for. It was brilliant, the three of them together, were just such a great team.

Susan Lambert Hatem 32:43

Well, we're gonna get into Season... you're jumping ahead to Season Two...

Sharon Johnson 32:46

I know, I can't help myself.

Susan Lambert Hatem 32:47

I just want to stay on James Reed for a minute. He played Michael Murphy...

Sharon Johnson 32:51

Murphy Michael?

Susan Lambert Hatem 32:52

Murphy Michael's, sorry, Murphy Michaels. Not Michael Murphy.

Sharon Johnson 32:56

Two first names. What are you gonna do...

Susan Lambert Hatem 32:57

...Anyway. James Reed, very strong actor at the time. Very, you know, in a lot of stuff. And basically could have, like, run his own show at the time and could have been on his own show. But but by the end of the First Season, it's clear that it's become the, you know, Remington and Laura show, and the Pierce and Stephanie show. And so he actually goes to the showrunners, at the end of Season One is like, 'I don't have anything to do, you really need to let me go.' And so that makes them rethink. So they decide to let go of both Bernice and Murphy. And replace those two characters with one character. And that, like sort of combine them into one, secretary slash second investigator. And we're gonna talk about that in Deep Dark Secrets.

Sharon Johnson 33:48

Excellent.

Susan Lambert Hatem 33:49

All right. We're gonna take a little break.

Sharon Johnson 33:51

Sounds like a plan.

_____ commercial break _____

Susan Lambert Hatem 33:58

And we're back.



Sharon Johnson 33:59

Why don't we just dive into it?

Susan Lambert Hatem 34:01

Let's do Deep, Dark Secrets right now. Nobody's stopping us. We can do it.

Sharon Johnson 34:05

Yeah. And so continuing on with that, they originally were planning to bring in an actress to be the Receptionist, Secretary, Assistant, whatever you want to call it, that might potentially be a rival for Remington's affections. And Doris Roberts came in and auditioned and they went, 'We think we're going to go another way with this.' She's just too good...

Susan Lambert Hatem 34:28

Yeah, it completely changed. It completely changed the direction of that character and I think the show and made it stronger, I completely agree with you. And I'm also very excited to say it made it more female driven.

Susan Lambert Hatem 34:40

And I think it, it does really change the show, in a great way. Because now you have two female characters who have something to do, who are working together. Who, again, I'm not sure that it ever really passes the Bechdel Test much at all, even the very basic, you know, two women having a conversation that's not about a man. Because most of the time, when it's the two women having a conversation, it's mostly about Remington Steele.

Sharon Johnson 34:40

No!

Sharon Johnson 34:40

Yeah.

Susan Lambert Hatem 34:40

First Season of the show, there are two leads and two sort of, you know, second uh leads. And it's uh, 50/50. Which again, pretty good for a TV show in the 80s. 50/50 male-female ratio. But when you get to Season Two, it's Stephanie, Pierce Brosnan and Doris Roberts. So it makes it 60% Female lead cast... 66%. And I'm pretty excited about that, because it does not happen very often.

Sharon Johnson 35:37

Sometimes it's about the case, though. Whether it be Mildred giving Laura information that she's gleaned, or or Laura giving Doris an assignment to go take care of something, or do something to solve the case ...

Susan Lambert Hatem 35:52



Alright I stand corrected. You're right.

Sharon Johnson 35:53

No, it's OK. But having said that, on the other side of that, though, you do have Mildred coming in and thinking, of course that Remington Steele is Remington Steele. Deferring to him, despite the fact that Laura keeps saying to her, you need to talk to me about that, or I can handle that or you don't need to, remember... I'm, you know, because Mildred doesn't know! It's a big secret...

Susan Lambert Hatem 36:20

...Mildred thinks he is Remington Steele, and that Remington Steele is the Head of the Agency.

Susan Lambert Hatem 36:24

She does not know in that, in in Season Two that, in fact, it is Laura that is the boss. They keep sort of saying, 'Oh, you should include her.' And then ultimately, in further seasons, she does become, to know that secret and, and becomes part of the full team. And I think giving that evolution to her character is is a great way to go. And I also think that there's something really wonderful about Doris Roberts. They give her a little bit of um, a little bit of romantic moments. They give her a lot to do. She's very funny. Oh my god. She's really funny and also warm, and also kind of holds her own with them. I think in later seasons, they start to not use her as much as they should. And, and it becomes challenging. Because it's not as much fun. It's, it's really wonderful when the three of them are going and the introduction of her character at the beginning of Season Two is really great. It is, it is both really great and clearly, it's a two-parter, and it's clearly... and they go on location in Mexico. And it is clearly also a little bit of an audition for James Bond.

Sharon Johnson 36:24

Exactly.

Sharon Johnson 37:37

And one of the things I love about, one of the, it's a small thing, but Mildred kind of has her own, I don't want to call it a theme song, but a musical cue that basically denotes the Mildred of at all.

Susan Lambert Hatem 37:52

Yes.

Sharon Johnson 37:52

And every now and then after the first couple episodes when she's introduced, we get to hear it occasionally when she's about to go back into that mode as part of a case or something. And I just love that so much!

Susan Lambert Hatem 38:02

Yes, I love that she gets her own theme song. I don't think it's written by Henry Mancini.

Sharon Johnson 38:05

No. (laughing)



Susan Lambert Hatem 38:06

But the music continues to be good. He does not continue to do all the music for the show. But the music continues to be pretty strong. And they do have those lovely moments of characters. You know, Doris Roberts, of course was again, a well known actress at the time. This basically made her in to a star even bigger than she was. She went on to win three Emmys for playing the Mother-In-Law. Marie Barone on Everybody Loves Raymond and continued to be a big star.

Sharon Johnson 38:37

And she was Nominated once for Remington Steele as well. I believe hers is the only Emmy nomination sadly, for the show.

Susan Lambert Hatem 38:45

That's crazy! That's just crazy to me.

Sharon Johnson 38:46

I know. There's so many things wrong with that, (laughing) as far as I'm concerned.

Susan Lambert Hatem 38:49

Like think the cinematography, that Pilot is beautiful. It's beautiful. It's very dark, like which is like in tone. It's like, it's got a very um, kind of low key palette. It's got a very Noir, there's a lot of nods to Noir as well. All right, but so that's our, that's our first Deep Dark Secret is that they were not looking for Doris Roberts for the character in Season Two, for Mildred Krebs. Deep Dark Secret Number Two, and we talked, we almost, we almost gave this one away. It was first conceived, this this idea was first conceived in 1969 by the TV Director, Robert Butler. He pitched it at the time to Grant Tinker, who was not like super run running NBC Grant Tinker, but was the beginning of, and even pre Mary Tyler Moore, Grant Tinker or MTM Productions Grant Tinker. And he was like, 'I think. I, I think it's too early.

Sharon Johnson 39:45

Grant Tinker was the one that said 'yeah, it's too soon for this.'

Susan Lambert Hatem 39:48

That's again, I'm reading through a lot of old articles and that's my...

Sharon Johnson 39:53

... Story!

Susan Lambert Hatem 39:54

And that's my story.

Sharon Johnson 39:55

Laughing



Susan Lambert Hatem 39:55

Gona stick to it for now until we hear otherwise. Number two. It was originally pitched without the actual Remington Steele showing up. It was pitched as a female Private Eye who makes up a man so she can do her job. It was only when they went back to pitch it to Grant Tinker, again...

Sharon Johnson 39:56

Years later.

Susan Lambert Hatem 40:05

... to NBC years later in in the late 70s, early 80s, that basically they said, 'we'll go work with Michael Gleason on developing it a little bit more and figuring out what it really is. And Michael Gleason came up that, with the idea that wouldn't it be great if she, if he showed up the the, you know, fake man, and made her crazy? They came up with that. They're like, Oh, this is it. This is amazing. Because again, you know you got a lot of twists and turns in that. You're like, Oh! That sounds like a TV Show. NBC uh, passed? So they went and pitched it .NBC passed. They're like, Oops, okay. But then very shortly, Grant, Tinker became head of NBC. And then he's like, yeah, no, I think we're gonna say yes, now.

Sharon Johnson 41:01

It helps to be the boss. (laughing)

Susan Lambert Hatem 41:05

Deep, Dark Secret Number Three. The original pilot that was ordered by NBC actually ended up being Episode Two of the Series. NBC wanted to make sure that what they had was more than just a concept. They wanted the creators to imagine a Pilot where the characters were already working together six months in. So that they could like go, oh, yeah, this can be a case by case. But then once they picked up the show, they realized it was a little bit confusing. And they wanted a Premise Pilot to show how they met. Because they knew that people, um audiences, I think their Test Audiences were like, I don't know what's happening.

Sharon Johnson 41:39

Smart. I mean, makes a lot of sense. I think this is the kind of show that dropping the audience in the middle of it would have, as you said, been too confusing. And people would not have been quite sure what the heck they were watching. So.

Susan Lambert Hatem 41:52

And I think they were trying to make sure it's like, that it did work as a, as a case by case show. Which was what they wanted. Right?! They just wanted case by case. They wanted people to tune in everywhere. And that's what what was working. That was Simon and Simon that was Magnum, PI.

Sharon Johnson 42:04

Right!

Susan Lambert Hatem 42:04

That was Hart to Hart. It's like you didn't have to really know that those characters were going to evolve. Magnum PI didn't evolve as a character. Simon & Simon didn't evolve as characters in their relationship



to each other. They had drama, and they had stories and things that happened to them. But their relationship didn't change and their relationship to themselves didn't change. Same with you know, Angela Lansbury. Like, *Murder She Wrote*. She's always Ange, she's always whoever that character that Angela Lansbury's played...

Susan Lambert Hatem 42:34

That basically feels like Angela Lansbury. (guffaw) So I think, again, television was a little bit worried about the, we're going to have people change over the course of a show. And, you know, and basically what television is now which is, you know, ever evolving. And if you miss an Episode you, a character may not be there when you get back.

Sharon Johnson 42:35

Right. (laughing)

Sharon Johnson 42:35

Laughing

Susan Lambert Hatem 42:50

So, so yeah, so the original Pilot became Episode Two. They made a new Pilot. They kind of tweaked some of Episode Two to make it work, so that it was there. My other Deep Dark Secret is that Stephanie Zimbalist was the Star of the show. It wasn't Pierce Brosnan. She was Number One on the Call Sheet. She's first credited. She turned it down twice, apparently, because Stephanie Zimbalist was a star. She was a Television Star. She was a TV movie star. She came from an entertainment dynasty. Her grandfather was Efrem Zimbalist Sr., a renowned violinist, married to a renowned Opera singer, Alma Gluck. And then of course, Efrem Zimbalist, Jr, renowned Star, big Star. I knew Efrem Zimbalist, Jr's name. I didn't know, I didn't know Efrem Zimbalist, Sr, as a kid. So I knew, I watched the show for her. I watched the show because I was like, Oh! Stephanie Zimbalist, I think she'd just been on... Well, I remember her from Centennial. She starred in the big TVs Mini Series, Centennial, which was some giant... that's all you, they did in the 70s was giant Mini Series.

Sharon Johnson 44:19

They did alot of giant Mini Series, yes.

Susan Lambert Hatem 44:21

Historical Mini Series.

Sharon Johnson 44:23

Most of them were really great. But that's another story for another Pilot for another day, I suppose.

Susan Lambert Hatem 44:28

And Pierce Brosnan had done also a Mini Series. That's what made him kind of a known actor entity. It was called *Mansions of Ireland*. No, it was called *Mansions of ...something*.

Sharon Johnson 44:41

The Manions of America?



Susan Lambert Hatem 44:43

Manions of America! Thank you. I read it and I think mansions, but it's the Manions. It was about an Irish family immigrating to America and he was basically the Star of that.

Sharon Johnson 44:52

Despite the fact that I saw a lot of 70s and maybe early 80s Mini Series, I don't think I ever saw that one. But it's something to add to my, my to do list. But you know, I'm glad you mentioned that because if you look at the the cover art on the DVDs or whatever little shot you see on whatever streaming service perhaps you're watching this on, you would think that he was Number one on the Call Sheet. Of course the show's named after his character, so it's hard not to think about that. And he did go on and play James Bond, but it was not him. It was her. And she was always the first actor listed in the credits throughout the entire show as well, I believe, so.

Susan Lambert Hatem 45:37

There was a bit of a big kerfuffle when the DVD Season One was first released in 2005. Because only he was on the front of the DVD cover. Only his name was on the front of the DVD cover. And they had to later go back and put a sticker... They had to add a sticker! Also starring Stephanie Zimbalist. (guffaw)

Sharon Johnson 46:01

Laughs.

Susan Lambert Hatem 46:02

Which again, is the Show! Right!?

Sharon Johnson 46:05

Right.

Susan Lambert Hatem 46:05

Like it's the Show! You've got to be kidding me! The second became the first. And the woman was forgotten. So he takes all the boughs for sure,

Sharon Johnson 46:18

Which so mirrors the show! (laughing)

Susan Lambert Hatem 46:21

It so mirrors show.

Sharon Johnson 46:23

Life imitating art. To a large extent.

Susan Lambert Hatem 46:26



It's so crazy. She wasn't interviewed for the Season One DVDs! They did go back and correct it because people were pretty outraged, as they should be in 2005! Come on people. I will say there are great, great interviews and great commentaries on the DVD. The DVDs, the DVD releases are pretty, pretty great. But it's really the interviews and the commentaries and special features, which is one of the things I think we miss on the streaming.

Sharon Johnson 46:54

I do too! Some, on some streamers, you can get commentary, but I don't know how prevalent that is. I mean, since I've been watching the, re-watching the shows on DVDs, I've been able to watch some of the extras and commentary. But I don't know how, I don't know how prevalent that is, when it comes to streaming on on most TV shows in particular. Maybe movies? It's different? I'm not sure. So.

Susan Lambert Hatem 47:23

It was so helpful. I mean, one of the things is you can find stuff now if you go looking for it. But it was so amazing in the time of DVDs and in, when I was in grad school, film school. And, and the Laser Discs, the Criterion Collection of movies, all the special features. You were able to have a little film school in those incredibly valuable information and and information that I'm afraid will go away.

Sharon Johnson 47:49

Yeah.

Susan Lambert Hatem 47:50

Right?! If it's not in streaming. What is interesting is, you know, the show is now streaming on Amazon, I was kind of struck by the description of the show on Amazon. Shall I read it to you? Private Investigator Laura Holt has a problem. No one appears interested in hiring a female Private Eye. Her solution she invents a boss named Remington Steele, changes her agency name to Remington Steele Detective Agency, and suddenly she has more cases than she can handle. And that's it. They're selling her. They're selling a female driven show.

Sharon Johnson 48:28

Fascinating!

Susan Lambert Hatem 48:29

Which I thought was pretty fascinating.

Sharon Johnson 48:30

Wow!

Susan Lambert Hatem 48:31

Because Amazon is all about algorithms and what will sell and make people watch based on what they're looking at. And I think right now a female driven show, they decided that was the best way to do. They may be thinking, well people already know that Pierce Brosnan was also on that show. (laughing) And there's certainly an image of the two of them on the show. But I thought it was very fascinating, given that they're selling the show as basically a female driven show. They're not even mentioning that this guy shows up and starts to be Remington Steele.



Sharon Johnson 49:01

That's really fascinating. That's fascinating, huh!

Susan Lambert Hatem 49:05

That wasn't even one of my Deep Dark Secrets.

Sharon Johnson 49:08

Yeah. But it's an important thing to know I think. In that the search algorithms for streaming sites of any kind do use, you know, what, if you're searching for Female Detective. Well, it sounds like it's going to show you Remington Steele. As opposed to not showing you Remington Steele, because that's not how they categorize it within Amazon. And it shows you the power of that...

Susan Lambert Hatem 49:34

Yeah.

Sharon Johnson 49:34

... of that categorization. Oh, that's so interesting!

Susan Lambert Hatem 49:36

And maybe what people are looking for now, as opposed to 1980. One of my other little interesting tidbits, not really a secret, is the actual big ratings success. I thought this was a success from early on, and it was a successful show. But it's, it's big ratings came in Season Three. So in Season Two, it was actually considered a success. They gave it a bigger budget going into Season Two. Also a little bit unusual, and and moved it from Friday night to Tuesday night after the A-Team, one of their most successful shows.

Sharon Johnson 50:12

Nice.

Susan Lambert Hatem 50:13

They got more money, more eyeballs, and they were starting to climb in the ratings. But Season Three was the biggest ratings of the show. Which of course meant that, here's my other thing. This is a show that was cancelled, and then reverse canceled.

Sharon Johnson 50:29

Laughs

Susan Lambert Hatem 50:30

After Season Four, they canceled the show. It was like a top 20 show! And they cancelled it because they just didn't have room in their schedules. NBC had become apparently very successful in those interim years, and suddenly apparently didn't have room in the schedule for the show. I don't know if that's the true story. Maybe we'll get that throughout next podcast episodes. But then Pierce Brosnan was offered James Bond, or they was in the docks to do the next James Bond to do Living Daylights.



Sharon Johnson 50:59

And I read also over that summer, the ratings went up because...

Susan Lambert Hatem 51:03

... because of re-runs...

Sharon Johnson 51:04

Because of reruns and because of the news that the Star of Remington Steele was now being considered to play James Bond. So people went Oh! I should go check out this show! And watch the re-runs over the summer. So NBC went, huh! And so next thing you know, Remington Steele is coming back.

Susan Lambert Hatem 51:24

NBC's Warm, Warren Littlefield reversed the cancellation and decides to call them back for a final Season. Season Five turns out to be only six Made for TV Films. Apparently everybody was miserable. Pierce Brosnan did a famous People Magazine cover story.

Sharon Johnson 51:42

Yes, I believe that the title of the article on People Magazine, with him on the Cover is, "Take this job and shove It!"

Susan Lambert Hatem 51:52

And he's looking unhappy.

Sharon Johnson 51:54

Uh ha!

Susan Lambert Hatem 51:54

It may be one of the only People Magazine Covers where you have a giant Star frowning.

Sharon Johnson 51:59

Laughs

Susan Lambert Hatem 52:00

He's frowning!

Sharon Johnson 52:01

It's hard to imagine something like that, making it on the cover of a magazine today. But it's it's really kind of astounding. The subtitle or the subtext is 'Trapped on Remington Steele, Pierce Brosnan sounds off on his battle to be the new James Bond.' Wow!

Susan Lambert Hatem 52:20

I mean, that's pretty huge. I honestly don't remember that. I was in film school that time. So there was a lot I was missing. But Stephanie Zimbalist also was unable to do a film that she had been cast in. She



had been cast to play officer Ann Lewis in Robocop. And she had to turn it down to go back for Season Five. And in a later interview, she was like, 'Well, I didn't complain, I wasn't bitter.' Which does bring us a little bit to, there's there was there was rumor of the troubles on set. And again, I think when you have these shows, there's always rumors of the troubles on set. You have two young actors, they're in their early to mid 20s. They're doing this show. They both become Stars, but one of them becomes kind of a Superstar. And it's the second on the Call Sheet that's come out, that's kind of like a Superstar. So I think it, it is sort of famous that there was rumor that there was trouble between the two Stars on set. In a 1983 interview with Stephanie Zimbalist when they were already shooting Season Two, here's what she said, 'she was troubled by how they were writing her character. She's, in Season One. She said, in some episodes, there's been a tendency to lapse into a traditional TV stereotype with the man calling the shots and the woman doing a lot of screaming. The only thing I'm troubled by is when they go away from the show's premise. I'm troubled when they forget that she's in charge. When they changed the relationship, they changed my character. That is why I took the show a strong Laura Holt.' So I think it's interesting that she knew she was in a female driven TV show. And I think it's interesting that that attitude, which seems like a pretty reasonable attitude, for the Star of a show, is also the same attitude that caused trouble, in some ways, potentially, for Kate Jackson, on Scarecrow and Mrs. King. And by trouble, I'm doing that in quotes, because I don't know how much trouble there was. They have sent in later interviews, they, they actually speak very fondly of each other. And and yet also acknowledged that they were both young and that they were both struggling with, I think what that success of the show meant for them. And the challenge is, I think it's very challenging to be the lead actor on a show that has become very successful. I think it comes with a lot of pressure. And there's a lot of people going well, you have to make sure that you're in charge.

Sharon Johnson 54:58

Yeah, um, and you know, at the end of the day, they're all, they're all human, they're human beings and they've, they've got all kinds of things coming at them in all different ways. And, you know, it's it's even under the best of circumstances people aren't always at their best for reasons that have nothing to do with whatever relationship working or otherwise you're, you have with... We're all people basically. We're all flawed people who have lives in and outside of, of whatever our work is that can sometimes infiltrate. Not saying it did, but you know, you everybody brings things to work that, you know, don't necessarily belong there.

Susan Lambert Hatem 55:37

In you, and when you have to be that intimate with somebody else...

Sharon Johnson 55:39

Yeah...

Susan Lambert Hatem 55:40

...and you have to play in this way where you are intimate and you are being sort of vulnerable. I think it's very challenging.

Sharon Johnson 55:47

And they work long hours. They're on set 14-16 hours a day.



Susan Lambert Hatem 55:54

Doing their own stunts.

Sharon Johnson 55:55

Yeah, exactly! Doing their own running, doing their own jumping. And, and trying to remember what they're supposed to say at what time I mean, it's not. It may look easy, but it's not! It's not, for any of them.

Susan Lambert Hatem 56:08

And I think Stephanie Zimbalist had a lot, a lot to say in in her character. I mean, think they both did, but I think particularly, you know. So this is one of my other little tidbits. Laura Holt's famous Fedora, which again, is a pretty iconic from the 80s, female driven character, image. It was Stephanie Zimbalist idea. And according to Michael Gleason, she wanted to use it as a nod to The Thin Man and to 1930s comedies. She totally got, that's what the show was, was trying to do. It's one of the things that she loved about it, was the the mystery and the comedy. I think, you know, the writing was pretty strong. So she really liked that. But she really kind of picked that Fedora for herself. The director, Robert Butler loved it and ended up, he was like, 'I ended up using a lot of Fedora's in that, in that Pilot.' And you can see it, in the Pilot. He put the Fedoras on the Bad Guys that are kind of chasing Pierce Brosnan, and then had to re-shoot some of those scenes so that they, because he's like there was, there was too many hats. (guffaw)

Sharon Johnson 56:11

Laughs

Susan Lambert Hatem 56:11

And so you can see in one scene where they're, the Bad Guys are sort of right next to Pierce Brosnan and flanking him and talking to him. They do not have Fedoras on, and in the scene immediately previous to and immediately following that, following that scene, they do. So they had re-shot that scene in order to not have too many hats, literally on scene, on screen.

Sharon Johnson 57:36

And, and she looked great in a Fedora. Not all of us do. I have to admit, I'm not a hat person. My head in my hat, doesn't doesn't like hats. So I admire people who can wear a hat, well.

Susan Lambert Hatem 57:47

I always wanted to wear a cowboy hat and I can't pull it off. I could pull off a baseball cap for a while. And so I still sometimes wear a baseball cap, but I would love to...I have a Fedora. I have a, it's still in my closet. It was my Grandfather's Fedora.

Sharon Johnson 58:03

Oh Wow!

Susan Lambert Hatem 58:03

But I can't wear it. Because I look like an idiot.



Sharon Johnson 58:06

Yeah, it does take a certain something to be able to pull it off. And she certainly could, so.

Susan Lambert Hatem 58:10

She certainly could. And they're, a little nod to the costumes.

Sharon Johnson 58:15

MmHm!

Susan Lambert Hatem 58:15

Holy crap! They both look pretty great.

Sharon Johnson 58:17

Yep.

Susan Lambert Hatem 58:17

In Season One, and throughout, it gets a little like, you know, there's definitely some 80s moments. There's just like a brown leather jacket...

Sharon Johnson 58:24

Giggles

Susan Lambert Hatem 58:24

...that you're like, hmmm I don't know. Not that! But, but his suits are pretty spectacular,

Sharon Johnson 58:32

Yeah.

Susan Lambert Hatem 58:33

And my Directing and Acting teacher, Nina Foch, who taught at USC, talked about how well Pierce Brosnan worked a suit. He's like, he's one of the best actors for working suits and props. And I went back and looked at those episodes at the time and watched that show to watch him work his suit. He's always sort of pulling up the cuffs or you know, he's, he's always busy. He's, he's very inventive as an actor in in the Remington Steele. If you're an, if you're an actor or an actress and you want to want somebody, kind of figuring out how and when to be busy. That's a good character. That's a good actor to watch.

Sharon Johnson 59:20

And he does, he's not distracting with it. I mean, it's not pulling your your eye. It's just, yeah, it's it's really kind of amazing.

Susan Lambert Hatem 59:29

It's pretty amazing. She's so amazing in that again, just she looks great in everything.



Sharon Johnson 59:34

Yep.

Susan Lambert Hatem 59:35

She's pretty spec, she she, they put her in some glamorous stuff, and it's pretty, it's pretty amazing. And stuff you're like, wow, that necklace is sumpt'm. But, but she pulls it off! And and is also just very confident and taking charge of so many scenes in those early episodes. It's really spectacular to watch even now.

Sharon Johnson 1:00:00

Yeah.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:00:02

All right, I'm gonna get to our last little fact, factoid. Pierce Brosnan had never done comedy before. About midway through the First Season he apparently went to Michael Gleason, was like, 'how am I doing? I've never done comedy before.' (ha ha) And Michael Gleason was like, 'Great, don't change a thing.'

Sharon Johnson 1:00:21

I find that just so astonishing. He's so funny in the show. The things he does, and you can hear on at least one of the commentaries, where they're talking about the little bit of business that he came up with! And he was constantly coming up with little things to do to make the scene... I mean, he's he's just such a natural comedian and I, I know that he was in Mrs. Doubtfire. But he was such a, um...

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:00:51

Straight Man kind of in that.

Sharon Johnson 1:00:52

Yeah, supporting character. I really wish he had, had had a chance to do something just real flat out comedy at some point. And if he has, I would love to, maybe I should go back and look through his IMDB page, because maybe I missed it, because I'm drawin' a blank.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:01:04

And now, I know. I want to go over, we're gonna have to go back and see. I will say, again, I think the comedy, The physical comedy gets a little dialed up in Season 2,3, and 4. And he does get to do, he gets pretty, quite wacky. So there's one, one of the episodes that I like, and I think it's in Season Four. And we'll go into this deeper later is, Louie Anderson is in. And he and Louie Anderson are basically doing, you know, you know, a comedy duo team, Detective Team on their own. (giggle)

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:01:34

I think he's forgotten that he works with Laura Holt (guffaw). Because they're basically doing Abbott and Costello or something. Like there's a lot of like, Wait! They're having too good a time. Anyway, so those are all my little secrets. Most of them aren't secrets. They can be found everywhere. I thought it was, one of my other little fun things is that there's a special vanity card at the end for MTM. MTM



Enterprises was created by Mary Tyler Moore and her then husband Grant Tinker to produce The Mary Tyler Moore Show. Not unlike Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, creating Desilu Productions, to do I Love Lucy. Both Desilu and MTM Enterprises go on to produce, be the production company for kind of amazing amount of successful shows. You know, sidebar, Lucille Ball ultimately bought out Desi Arnaz from Desilu, and ran the company on her own. She was the first woman to run a Major Studio. Again something that she doesn't get a lot of credit for. Desilu produced 20 to 30 shows including The Untouchables, Mannix, Mission Impossible, and Star Trek... little show called Star Trek. In addition to I Love Lucy. But MTM Enterprises, created by Mary Tyler Moore and Grant Tinker went on to produce Rhoda, Bob Newhart, The Newhart Show, Tony Randall Show, Lou Grant, White Shadow, WKRP in Cincinnati, Hill Street Blues and St Elsewhere, which we were talking about earlier, having just a spectacular cast. Anyway, I thought it was really interesting because the little vanity card at the end they often changed for their shows. Their vanity card was basically a spoof of the MGM Leo the Lion Logo. And this was a little Mimsy, the Orange Tabby kitten, who was placed inside the MTM Logo, and adorably meowing instead of the lion roar. For Remington Steele the logo had the little Mimsy had a Sherlock Holmes cap and a pipe. And it drops out of the little cat's mouth when it meows.

Sharon Johnson 1:01:34

So cute.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:03:54

And it's pretty cute and very funny. It's a nice little button. I was recognizing how cheap that was. So that was my little shout out to Mimsy. All right, we're gonna take a little break, and then we're going to come back and find out, But is it feminist? I think it's just, But is it? And then we'll find out if it's feminist...

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:04:04

...or more.

Sharon Johnson 1:04:12

Sounds like a plan.

_____ commercial break _____

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:04:19

And we're back. Alright, we're ready to do, But is it? Remington Steele? But is it feminist?

Sharon Johnson 1:04:25

Yes, it is!

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:04:26

Sharon says yes. And why?

Sharon Johnson 1:04:29

You know, the first show we covered was Scarecrow and Mrs. King about a woman who had spent a number of years raising her family and got divorced and inadvertently found herself becoming a spy.



Episode 107 | Deep Dark Secrets: Welcome to Remington Steele!

This show is about a woman who decided she had a profession she wanted to follow, did all the work and found that she wasn't able to be as successful as she would like without somebody thinking that there was a man who basically was in charge. But she did not let that stop her and made up Remington Steele, which allowed her Agency to move forward. So as someone who believes that being a feminist basically is following your own path, whatever that may be, in your professional or your personal life. This was her choice. She made it happen. So I think yeah, it is definitely feminist.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:05:27

All right. All right.

Sharon Johnson 1:05:28

And what do you think?

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:05:30

Well, I think it's both feminist and not feminist. Again...

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:05:37

Weh weh weh...

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:05:37

...not unlike. No, no, and Melissa's gonna...

Melissa Roth 1:05:39

Laughs

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:05:39

All right Melissa, come on in. Because we know what she, we've been talking about.

Melissa Roth 1:05:42

Still lauging...

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:05:42

No, you gotta get in here. Melissa Roth, get in here. Jump on in! I'll wrap it up later. Go!

Melissa Roth 1:05:50

Blow back to the 70s. That's all I can say is that, you know, it's like, okay, we'll give her some time. But she can't really be on her own. It's got to be with the man. You know?

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:06:02

Yeah.

Melissa Roth 1:06:03

I uh.



Susan Lambert Hatem 1:06:04

So for you, it is a No.

Melissa Roth 1:06:06

I love them. I mean, you know, I was a big fan. I've been enjoying watching the re-runs. They're adorable! Capital A adorable. They work really well together, like you said, but I just don't see it as a feminist icon to hold up.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:06:22

There you go. All right, but here's what I'm gonna say. She is a feminist.

Sharon Johnson 1:06:26

Yes.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:06:27

She is a feminist.

Melissa Roth 1:06:28

Yes, you didn't ask me that. (laughing)

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:06:31

Yes, I know. But here's the thing. If there is a strong feminist character in a show, who is a Lead of the Show, the show could still be not feminist, but it still has an element of feminism. Okay. However, this is the controversy actually. It became so even before our podcast.

Sharon Johnson 1:06:52

Ooo. Interesting! It seemed so cut and dry to me.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:06:55

It seems, and that's what I'm saying, because I think it, it does. The original concept of the show, I am going to say is feminist. But the more interesting show that became of, basically bringing in a man to become the fake man. The challenge as in, and it it really shows up in Season One. It gets better in Season Two. Stephanie Zimbalist, I totally believe is right. They change the show. The concept, they're still thinking is a feminist show. But as soon as Pierce Brosnan shows up, and maybe because it's Pierce Brosnan, but mostly because it's the man now actually being a real man in a position of power, even if he doesn't deserve it. Even if he doesn't earn it. It's literally about she does all the work. And he takes the bows.

Sharon Johnson 1:07:41

Granted. Yeah.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:07:42

It's literally written into the Saga Sell of the show. Which is, I do all the work and he takes the bows. And that is one of the challenges of feminism, is just being able to do all the work doesn't mean that it's feminism.



Melissa Roth 1:07:57

Well I mean, you know, there are a lot of ways to define feminism.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:08:01

Yes,

Melissa Roth 1:08:01

I find that the show is built more into the patriarchy, than a feminist breakdown. You know? That it lines up with, with gender roles that we're all familiar with.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:08:14

Yes.

Sharon Johnson 1:08:14

No question. But I think for me as a young woman, when the show came out, and seeing this woman on the show basically saying, I don't care that you... if these are the parameters in which I need to work in order to do what I want, because I'm really good at it. And I really like it. Okay! And then this guy comes along, and he's taking all the credit, not particularly happy about it. But this is another way for me to expand my business. And, and, and I need to do this, then that's what I'm going to do. It's somebody who's basically making choices for herself, instead of just saying, Nah! All right. I'll go do something else. No, she's good at this. She knows she is! She shows she's good at this throughout the show. And he can't operate without her. Whatever, you know, whatever bows he's taking amongst the public, between them, they know. They know that she's the one that's in charge. There's no question that she's the one that's doing. Yes, she's doing all the work. And I think for me watching it at that age, it said, it said, it spoke to me. It said something to me about making a choice for myself and whatever endeavor it may be. And to see a woman in charge. She's in charge!

Melissa Roth 1:09:36

Absolutely. That was, it was very inspiring.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:09:39

And so and that is true. In interviews, both Michael Gleason and Stephanie Zimbalist have talked about how many women have come forth to say how iconic, how important and how vital it was to see Laura Holt's character. That they, for the first time saw somebody they could aspire to. It was a single woman making choices for herself. And again, if we look at Hart to Hart, if we look at Scarecrow and Mrs. King, she's already identified with, as being married or unmarried or divorced or in in the role of connection to a man. This is a woman that basically because there's not a man in her life, and she does not want a man in her life, necessarily. She just basically puts up an interesting poster, basically. And then continues to do the work. So it's, and that's why I think it's complex. That's why I will say, it is both. It is both feminist and not feminist. And in fact, I'm not the only one that said that. So there's, they talk about the fact that the this journalist, and we're going to get into her and one of our other episodes because, she wrote famously about how much the show meant to her, and then felt bad about that, because she also was, but I I'm still not sure the show is feminism. Is it feminist? Or is it show chauvinism? And the creators have talked about that. And here's why I will say it is not feminist. Because as lovely as they



are, and from everything I hear Michael Gleason, Robert Butler... lovely people, fabulous men. But they weren't making a feminist show. And a feminist show doesn't need to be an issue show or whatever. It needs to be a female driven show.

Melissa Roth 1:11:31

Like Cagney & Lacey.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:11:32

Like Cagney & Lacey, well which we're, we're gonna find out when we get there. I think on this, it looks like a feminist show. I think it's a feminist show. We're gonna find out. But what's funny is, it's not clear in this exploration. There are arguments both ways. This, for them, they were like, 'I don't really know. ...does this, you know, come down on either gender?' You know, they were like, "'t's just a clever lady operating in a field, not usually for women. And he's a lovable con man.' And then there's a beat in this interview. And he says, when she's scheming, she's really cute, isn't she? And he did, he means it as a compliment. It is a compliment. But it is also demeaning.

Sharon Johnson 1:12:15

Well, there's no question, but that the people who made the shows behind the scenes, may or may not have any intent to make a feminist show. I don't care about that, but I care about is, what did they make? And what reaction did I have to it? And we've mostly, we've only talked about the professional side of Laura Holt. But one of the other things about this show that I think made it very feminist is, he or she is a single woman. She makes no bones about the fact that she's not necessarily interested in getting married, never says anything about whether or not she wants to have kids doesn't seem to be on a radar. Certainly not at this point. As I said earlier, she and Steele had several conversations about the nature of their relationship. And she was very clear about what she wanted, and what she didn't want in a relationship with him. Because she didn't trust him or know. Exactly, you know, she didn't feel like she had enough information about him. You don't really get to see women basically standing up and saying, here's what I want. Here's what I don't want. Whether they intended it or not. That's what we got. That's what I got.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:13:26

And so I think you're right. It the, what the artist intends isn't always what the audience is going to receive. And I do think that they were a little surprised about it, and you can hear it in the commentary. I literally, here's another quote from the commentary. 'We had no idea it was about identity. She created him. But as soon as he shows up, she disappears. It's so interesting.' They suddenly found it interesting, this element of the show that felt built into the show for me as a person. (guffaw) In watching the show, that they're like, 'Hmm, it's kind of about identity, isn't it?' And you're like, because they just, because it because again, this was a time when you had to churn entertainment for television, and you just had to come up with a great idea and run with it. And it was a lot about the mystery and it was a lot about thing. So I give them credit for doing things they didn't even know they were doing. And I think that is casting. And I think it does come down to, they cast the right person in that role to make sure, to fight for that role, and make sure it remains. Because it does, it starts to veer off in that First Season. It 's, he is driving the bus. There's literally in in the Pilot... and it's really really adorable moment in the Pilot... where literally they're chasing the Bad Guy and they jump on a little golf cart because those are everywhere apparently in the 80s. This little maintenance golf cart.



Sharon Johnson 1:14:47

Laughs

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:14:47

And and he he just gets into it first and she jumps on the back and then literally reaches over him to like drive the car with him. And that, it's really adorable that that basically, she's from the back seat of this little, you know, golf cart, driving the car. And that is what, to me like the, what the show was about is, she's still in the backseat. And she's trying to drive the car, and he's trying to drive the car. And so it's it's a, it's sort of about both. The network was not making a feminist show.

Sharon Johnson 1:15:26

Of course, they weren't.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:15:28

Gleason also talks about how the Network was always excited and looking for the quote, unquote, Itchy Scene.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:15:34

And I couldn't figure out what they were talking about, until I realized they were talking about they wanted her to be sexually forward and sexually frustrated, because she wanted to have sex with him, but she couldn't. That's what the Network got excited about. And it does make you a little crazy because your like, Okay! Just because... feminism is not writing a sexually forward woman. That's what feminism was in the 80s. In some ways, still is. It's giving a male...

Sharon Johnson 1:15:34

Laughs

Melissa Roth 1:16:00

... In some ways?! (guffaw)

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:16:00

... trait to a character.

Melissa Roth 1:16:02

Your being very kind.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:16:03

It was about her also being this cute little thing... That look! She's going to be a detective! She's plucky! (laughs)

Sharon Johnson 1:16:03

Laughs

Melissa Roth 1:16:12



She's very plucky. And you know, it may be because that I'm re-watching, Season Three and Four. I'm not see, I do not have Season One and Two.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:16:18

You started in the deep end.

Melissa Roth 1:16:19

Yeah, I started in the deep end.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:16:21

And again, their relationship kind of takes over the show in a lot of ways. It's still Case of the Week, but what we care about is the relationship. As an audience member, I think it's fun to watch the mysteries. And every once in awhile, you have one that's really great. But it's it's just so interesting to hear the Creators talk about their own show, and recognize that maybe they didn't even know what they were creating.

Sharon Johnson 1:16:43

I have to say, That doesn't surprise me in the least, that they had no idea.

Melissa Roth 1:16:45

Yeah, me neither. (laughs)

Sharon Johnson 1:16:48

I, they just wanted to make a good show and it, in whatever they needed to do. Or what direction they needed to go to make it good. That that was their, that was their prime directive. Um, and if it happened it turned out to be feminists. Great! If it didn't, that's fine, too. They just wanted to make what they thought was a good show, make the Network happy, keep the trains running, so to speak. So, does not surprise me in the least. And again, at the end of the day. I don't care. (laughs)

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:17:15

You don't care because, what it speaks to you is is most important. And again, that Laura Holt character was an icon of feminism and still is, and still speaks to people, particularly people that were growing up in the 80s. Women that were growing up in the 80s trying to figure out, how do I want to be in the world? It gave another model for that. And is an incredibly important character.

Melissa Roth 1:17:41

Just like Mary Tyler Moore.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:17:43

Just like Mary Tyler Moore. Exactly.

Melissa Roth 1:17:45

Yep.



Susan Lambert Hatem 1:17:45

And so it's interesting. So by the numbers... Should we do some numbers?

Sharon Johnson 1:17:49

Sure!

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:17:49

All right. Because I like to look at the numbers, because then we really know. So for Five Seasons Remington Steele, out of 43 writers listed, how many female writers do we think there will be? Sharon?

Sharon Johnson 1:18:00

Hmm. Well not that many.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:18:01

Not that many. Melissa, you want to take a guess?

Melissa Roth 1:18:03

I have no idea.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:18:04

Okay, I count nine female writers for the show. Robin Bernheim, who co-wrote an Episode with Stephanie Zimbalist in Season Three, comes on to Season Four actually. And, and is on the show. So she ends up writing more than anyone else on the show. Susan Baskin, wrote on the show, more than one Episode and talks about it. That was like her first big television writing job and has gone... both of them have had really incredible careers. Everybody else is one Episode or maybe like two Story By's. But again, this was still, this was the beginning of the transition from I think, in this show, they did have staff. Right?!. Robin Bernheim came on to the show as a writer, but most of the Episodes were created by Freelance writers who would come in and Pitch a Show. And they would inevitably for these shows be, kind of the Mystery Writers and the Detective Writers. And again, very male driven show kinds of writing. (laughs) I didn't say that right.

Sharon Johnson 1:19:13

Laughs

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:19:14

I'm trying to speak so carefully. Out of 24 directors on Scarecrow and Mrs. King, we only had one female director Miss Kate Jackson herself. She directed two Episodes on Scarecrow and Mrs. King. The rest of the directors were male. On Remington Steele, there were 24 directors listed. And there were three female directors listed. I'm gonna give them a little nod for that, though there were no female producers listed. One of the directors is a renowned director who's gone on and directed all sorts of things, and Gabrielle Beaumont, she's British. And we were going to try to see if we can chase her down and get her on the show. We'll see. I have no idea. It would be great because she she's she looks amazing. There's one female editor out of the 11 editors, Susan B. Broughty. And there were three second unit directors that were women. Again, I think that's actually a pretty good ratio. But I don't



know. Because we haven't, I just started this little game that I'm going to play on all the shows we look at.

Sharon Johnson 1:20:13

Let's call it a good. (laughs)

Sharon Johnson 1:20:13

I don't have any numbers, but for the time, I would say that that's probably pretty good. Or at least good. Let's get, let's call it a good.

Sharon Johnson 1:20:21

Laughs

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:20:23

Sharon, do you want to tell us about our special guests that we're going to have coming up on some of our next shows?

Sharon Johnson 1:20:28

I am beyond thrilled to say that we are going to be speaking with Robin Bernheim, who Susan just mentioned was Stephanie Zimbalist writing partner for an Episode of Season Three, and then came back on staff in Season Four. She and Stephanie are childhood friends, had known each other for a long time, and came up with this idea for the script that they worked on between Season Two and Season Three, I believe it was. And that Episode is actually one of my favorite. So, so looking forward to that. And as it happens, we are also going to be speaking with Stephanie Zimbalist herself!

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:21:07

I'm so excited.

Sharon Johnson 1:21:08

Beyond excited! Beyond excited. I I, it's... I'm speechless, I really am. (laughs)

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:21:17

We're gonna have to figure out how to speak when we, when we get to that...

Sharon Johnson 1:21:20

... Indeed! It's probably going to be a good thing that it's going to be over Zoom. That she's not going to be in the room because I don't know what I would do. I probably would just sit in the corner and just you know, have a crazy grin on my face looking like a sick, like like a psycho. So, this is probably a good thing.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:21:38

I am super excited. You know, if you had said to 1984 Susan, you will be talking with Stephanie Zimbalist in 2022, I would have been like, What are you talking about?

Sharon Johnson 1:21:47



I would have said the same thing if you told me that last year! So... I mean (laughs)

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:21:51

...There you go! True that!

Sharon Johnson 1:21:52

Laughs

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:21:54

That's absolutely true for me. too! How'd we get here?

Sharon Johnson 1:21:58

Just gonna have to learn how, to try to compose myself and try to come across as being a rational reasonable human being when we're talking to her...

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:22:04

We're gonna pretend.

Sharon Johnson 1:22:05

Yes!

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:22:05

We'll just make it up.

Sharon Johnson 1:22:06

Exactly.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:22:07

We'll invent rational human beings to to be in front of us like Remington Steele.

Sharon Johnson 1:22:14

Exactly. I will become my own, have my own Remington Steele facade that looks and walks and talks like a rational human being. While behind the scenes, I'm just losing it. So.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:22:24

Well. And we have a lot of time to talk about Remington Steele. We're gonna get into some of the other Seasons. We're gonna get into the Guest Stars in some of our next Episodes. We're gonna get into Stunts and Clothing. We're really excited for what's coming next. We're gonna get into Hats and Hair.

Sharon Johnson 1:22:40

Absolutely! Laughs...

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:22:40

Stephanie Zimbalist and Pierce Brosnan's hair.



Episode 107 | Deep Dark Secrets: Welcome to Remington Steele!

Melissa Roth 1:22:43

They both had some pretty beautiful hair going on.

Sharon Johnson 1:22:46

Oh. Amazing hair.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:22:47

They're pretty beautiful.

Sharon Johnson 1:22:48

Oh, yeah. Well, just starts and ends there. Doesn't it?

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:22:51

Yes. But so, you know, tune in. Stay tuned! Send us your questions. And I think we got to head into our wrap up. It's time to wrap it up. We want to hear from you. What do you think of Remington Steele? Is it feminist? Is it chauvinistic? Is it both?

Sharon Johnson 1:23:07

Let us know on the website, 80sTVLadies.com. And on social media @80sTVLadies.

Susan Lambert Hatem 1:23:15

We hope you will be joining us for the next Episode where we will be interviewing Writer, Producer Robin Bernheim

Sharon Johnson 1:23:21

We are so looking forward to it. Please send us your questions as we continue our dive into Steele. Remington Steele.

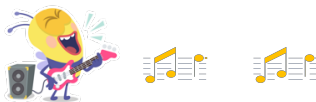
Susan Lambert Hatem 1:23:28

I like that. We hope 80sTV Ladies brings you joy and laughter and lots of fabulous new and old shows to watch. All of which we hope leads us forward to being amazing ladies of the 21st century.

Sharon Johnson 1:23:41

See you next time!

Out Music



Theme Song:



Episode 107 | Deep Dark Secrets: Welcome to Remington Steele!

80s TV Ladies. I'm so sexy and so pretty.
80s TV Ladies. I'm steppin out into the city.
80s TV Ladies. I been treated kind of sh#*ty.
Working hard for the money in a man's world.
80s TV Ladies!