



**Robin Bernheim 00:00**

Hi, this is Robin Bernheim. Try this for a deep dark secret. You're listening to 80s TV Ladies podcast

**80s TV Ladies Theme Song 00:09.** 🎵

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!

**Sharon Johnson 00:26**

Hello everyone! I'm Sharon Johnson and this is 80s TV Ladies,

**Susan Lambert Hatem 00:30**

And I'm Susan Lambert Hatem. 80s TV Ladies is our podcast where we get to talk about female driven television shows from the 1980s. We have a very special behind the scenes Interview Episode today. We continue our look at Remington Steele.

**Sharon Johnson 00:47**

Remington Steele ran from 1982 to 1987 on NBC. It stars Stephanie Zimbalist, Pierce Brosnan and Doris Roberts. Stephanie Zimbalist plays a private investigator, Laura Holt, who worked hard, apprenticed and then opened her own Detective Agency. But no one would hire her because she was a woman.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 01:09**

So she makes up a male boss named Remington Steele, and suddenly her agency is successful. So successful that big clients really want to meet the great detective Remington Steele. During one particularly challenging case, a mysterious charming con man assumes Remington Steele's identity and together they solve the case and sparks fly. So they form a partnership where she does all the work and he takes the bows.

**Sharon Johnson 01:33**

So today we are going to talk with a writer and Executive Story Editor from Remington Steele, Robin Bernheim. Robin is a veteran of the entertainment industry and an award-winning writer and producer. Most recently, she is the Writer and Executive Producer of the Netflix mega hit franchise, Princess Switch, starring Vanessa Hudgens. She co-created the Mystery 101 Franchise for Hallmark Movies and Mysteries as well.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 02:01**

Robin has worked on over 20 Television series, most notably Quantum Leap, Star Trek Voyager and Star Trek Next Generation, Earth Final Conflict, Tech War, and of course, the one and only Remington Steele.

**Sharon Johnson 02:16**

That is really an incredible resume.



## Episode108: Steele Writing with Robin Bernheim

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 02:18

Yep. And again, I'm going to try really hard today to not nerd out completely on her. That'll be my main goal.

### **Sharon Johnson** 02:25

I think nerding out is perfectly fine. In this case. Robin is credited on nine episodes of Remington Steele, including the Episode entitled Steele in the Chips, which was also co-written by Stephanie Zimbalist, and guest starred Geena Davis, and Jean Smart. She also wrote Coffee, Tea and Steele, and Suburban Steele.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 02:49

So, I'd like to welcome to 80s TV Ladies, the writer and producer Robin Bernheim. Welcome, Robin, thank you for joining us.

### **Robin Bernheim** 02:57

Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here.

### **Sharon Johnson** 03:00

So excited to have you here with us today.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 03:02

I'm very excited. I'm nerding out a little bit. You know what, I think we should just jump right in. We don't have a lot of time. How did you start in Television? Like what made you interested in television?

### **Robin Bernheim** 03:14

Oh, you know, going back so many years. I was an English and Communications major at Stanford. And I always wrote. I always wrote as a kid. I mean, I would volunteer to just write stuff at school. And I was yearbook editor and stuff like that. So I guess it was always in my blood, and I love drama. And I thought I was going to do something in regards to Theater. But my parents specifically my father said, no, no, you have to get a graduate degree. So I picked an MBA because it was the shortest graduate degree...

### **Sharon Johnson** 03:54

Chuckles

### **Robin Bernheim** 03:55

... that I could get. And, you know, it wasn't something that really suited me. But I worked in Silicon Valley, which ironically, now I say, had I stayed in Silicon Valley, I probably would have made more money there by now. But I worked in Silicon Valley. I wasn't happy. And I was on a plane ride. I managed Atari's Computer Camps if you can believe it. And I was coming back from the East Coast and it was the first 767 Transcontinental Flight. And we had to make an emergency landing because the pilot got a message that the engine was on fire.



**Sharon Johnson** 04:34

Wow.

**Robin Bernheim** 04:34

And as we landed, which is a very surreal experience. I mean, it's very hard to believe when you're in it, that you're going to die. But as we came down and the runway was dotted with firetruck, ambulance, fire truck, ambulance (chuckling). After we landed, I said to myself, I'm not doing what I want to do with my life and what I want to do with my life is write. And so I quit. I quit ah, probably three days after that happened, and sat down to write. And I was very fortunate that my best friend at the time, Stephanie Zimbalist... who's still, you know, one of my best friends.... She was acting, and she had just taken, Finally, the this role on Remington Steele. There had been an actor strike, so she hadn't worked in a while. But she'll tell you all this. She had turned it down. She'll tell you. But she finally took it. And so she was on this series. And she said, why don't you write for this series. So we decided to write together. So she flew up to San Jose, where I was living. And we wrote a spec script, which we gave to Michael Gleason. (hehehe) And it was so naive. We wrote a script where she she had a doppelganger, so she plays both parts. Which is, if you think about it, the stupidest thing we could have done, because it was the Star rating for herself two roles. So Michael said, you know, I don't care who would have written this, I wouldn't produce it. But there's talents on the page. And so I'll give you two ladies an assignment. Which he did. And the thought at the time was, well, it was just, this is the two girls and they're gonna go off and do what they do on their summer vacation. And we went off and we wrote it. And, you know, that was an experience in and of itself, writing together with the the Star of a show, I've never done that since. But it's a good experience to have had. And we turned it in. The original draft was like 20 pages too long. And Stephanie was back shooting by that point in time. So I had to take like 20 pages out of our precious work of art. So I di., We turned it in. And we went from not having a place on The Board where they put what they're shooting first, what they're shooting second to, I believe they shot it third. So they went from having a crisis of they didn't have a script to, Oh my god! It looks like the little ladies actually wrote something that was coherent. Hmmm. we can actually shoot this. So that's how I got started. And then the trick for me was having to prove myself as a writer separate from Stephanie. And I had written other stuff, you know, just 'spec-ed' other stuff. So finally I got an Agent. And was off to the races. So I, I was very lucky! I was really at a dark point, not knowing what to do in my life, which is hard when you're in your 20s you know, your mid early to mid 20s. It's a really tough time. So I, I got a chance to do what I absolutely love to do and still love to do.

**Sharon Johnson** 08:05

Were you a fan of television in general before sitting down with with Stephanie to write the script?

**Robin Bernheim** 08:13

Well, you know, our generation grew up with television. I mean, it was in everybody's living room. You know, by the time, I'm not that old. I might be old, but I'm not That old. So it wasn't before television. So we all had TVs. We all had our favorite shows. So certainly grew up with television. My feeling was because I grew up in Los Angeles, and my family wasn't in Show Business was that it wasn't open to me, you know. That it wasn't something that I could do. I was the kid on the outside of the glass with my nose pressed against the window. And I had grown up going to sets with my friends because they either had moms or dads who were in The Business. One of my best friends was Elizabeth Stack,



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whose father was Robert Stack of The Untouchables of America's Most Wanted. So I'd spent a lot of time over it their glorious, you know, Bel Air Mansion. So, so as as our family would joke, I was the poor little rich kid because we lived in a gorgeous home in Westwood. But I was the poor kid because we didn't have a tennis court and we didn't have a swimming pool. So I didn't think that this was something that would be open to me, but turns out it was! I was very lucky again, I was very blessed.

### **Sharon Johnson** 09:36

No, that's great! Yeah, I mean, I know that that certainly most people watch television but I knew people... because I'm I'm basically about the same age as you are... Who didn't watch television growing up or weren't interested. So I, it's always interesting to me to meet them because I'm such a Television Fan.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 09:37

Yeah, that wasn't us.

### **Sharon Johnson** 09:41

Laughs. That was definitely not me.

### **Sharon Johnson** 09:42

Well, I had restrictions. I mean, we couldn't do, we couldn't watch TV until we finished our homework. And we couldn't watch TV, well, there was a limit on Saturday morning for the Cartoons and stuff like that. So there were certainly limits. But we wanted to watch. My brother and I Wanted to watch.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 10:17

Yes, I've talked about it before, but I wasn't allowed to watch Three's Company because my mom thought the concept was too...

### **Robin Bernheim** 10:25

risky? laughs

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 10:26

... risqué. Yeah, so we did of course, secretly watch Three's Company, because, whoo, we broke that rule pretty quick.

### **Sharon Johnson** 10:33

There's nothing like telling a kid that you can't do something to make you desperately need, want to do it. So.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 10:38

Particularly when it's on a TV show every week (guffaw)

### **Sharon Johnson** 10:42

Exactly.



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**Robin Bernheim** 10:43

The forbidden fruit.

**Robin Bernheim** 10:44

I know.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 10:44

The forbidden fruit of Three's Company. (laughs)

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 10:48

How sad. I wish she'd, not wanted me to watch something a little more, you know, truly risqué.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 10:54

All right. So you and Stephanie, how did you guys become friends?

**Sharon Johnson** 10:54

Exactly.

**Robin Bernheim** 10:58

We went to school together. A snobby Private School in Los Angeles called Marlborough. All Girl School, kind of school where you had to, you could only wear three pieces of jewelry. You had to kneel on the ground to make sure that your skirt touched the ground, because if it didn't, it was too short. You had to stand in front of the the window in the library to let the light through, so that they could see if you're wearing a Full Slip as opposed to a Half Slip. Because if it's only a Half Slip, Ya got sent home. (laughs)

**Sharon Johnson** 11:31

Wow.

**Robin Bernheim** 11:32

So, now Marlborough is different now. They're prob, probably if anybody went to Marlborough, hears this, they're going to be horrified. But those were the days where it was that. And Stephanie and I didn't like Marlborough. And we changed to Buckley. Big difference! I mean, but it was. I mean, in that day, incrementally, and it was co-ed. So Stephanie, and I originally met at Marlborough, and her best friend, and her, my best friend and her best friend were Elizabeth Stack. But we didn't know each other. Elizabeth being Bob's daughter. Because she knew Elizabeth from Camp and I knew Elizabeth from another, you know, Grammar School. So we got you know, I got to Marlborough and didn't like Stephanie, because she was my best friend's friend. And I didn't like that. And we didn't, uh I, we didn't speak much like the first year. And then we became friends. This is so funny. If you asked her the same question. We became friends because Elizabeth was much more interested in boys at that time, earlier than we were. (laughs) So she was always, you know, doing something with boys. And we., so we had a lot of time on our hands. So we became really good friends. And we've stayed friends, you know. Gosh, I don't even want to say how long we've been friends. But it's a long, long time.



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### **Sharon Johnson** 12:56

So when the two of you first sat down to write that first script for Remington Steele, did you have to do any any research yourself to understand what, you know, structure? And, and format and all that kind of thing? For, for writing a television script before you got started?

### **Robin Bernheim** 13:14

Well, Stephanie had been acting for years. I mean she started I think at at, I believe her first role was when she was 19. And so there had been scripts around. Now, we did not have a comp, you know computers just came about. No internet, but computers to type on had just come about when we started writing. But before that, you know, you didn't, you couldn't just look up the name of the show and get scripts. But because she had been an actress for several years, I had read a lot of scripts. And I was reading her scripts for Remington and occasionally giving her thoughts and notes on those. So we had the template, which was great.

### **Sharon Johnson** 13:57

Oh, that's terrific.

### **Robin Bernheim** 13:58

Didn't have the software, you know, the software sort of didn't exist. These were the days where you would type it and you would turn it in, a hard copy. And then they would send it to a typing service. Barbara's I think it was called And Barbara's ladies would retype the whole script to the proper format. And, and if you made a mistake, it was a huge mistake! She had to pull it, you know the sheet out and retype. But like I said, I was really lucky in that my first script, the script Stephanie and I wrote, was actually on a computer, but it wasn't the software. It was on some antiquated word processor. So yeah, it was a different world then now.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 14:42

That is, I, I totally learned to type on a typewriter in a type-writing class in high school.

### **Sharon Johnson** 14:48

Same

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 14:49

And again, I'm glad I did because it made me very fast when computers came. But it was, it's so weird to think about how many things we typed. Just the other day, we're talking about Faxing and how much I Faxed in my early like, working in an office, you know, life. But I was going to ask you about that, about the the idea that you guys came up with. What's so funny is, I was just sort of going over, looking at the episodes again this morning of Remington Steele and I was like, Oh. It's funny! They hit a lot of the detective mystery tropes, detective show mystery tropes in the show, but they never did the Double Episode.

### **Robin Bernheim** 15:29

There's one. I think it's, ask Stephanie but, it's the the there's a Runner Episode. There's one about a race. And I think there's...



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### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 15:38

Oh, right. Yes, you're right. I'm sorry. Yeah. But But it was funny that you guys were like, we're gonna do the Double Episode. Because there's like, we just, we just covered Scarecrow and Mrs. King, and there's two double episodes. There's one where Martha Smith is doubles. And one where Kate Jackson is doubled. And it just, it's, it was I don't know, they're kind of adorable. Right?!

### **Robin Bernheim** 15:59

Well, isn't it ironic? I, you know, my, my latest and most successful thing I've ever done, in my opinion, has been the Princess Switch Franchise for Netflix. Three movies, and what is it about? It's about she finds a Double. And I didn't realize it, you know, until after like, maybe around the second movie, and I went, Oh my God. Isn't that ironic? Because that's where I started. So you know, in some some weird, wonderful way, it's sort of come full circle. And I'm well, she was Triple in the last movie that I wrote. But it's so funny that that, that that trope came back into my life that way.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 16:41

That is very funny, because I'm very excited to talk about Princess Switch and the the whole series and how popular they are. They're on Netflix. We'll circle back around to that because I have some questions. But let's get going with Remington Steele.

### **Sharon Johnson** 16:55

I have to say, though, that the Episode that the two of you wrote is one of my favorites.

### **Robin Bernheim** 16:59

Oh, thank you.

### **Sharon Johnson** 16:59

I I laughed so hard in that thing. It was just brilliant. And the cast was incredible.

### **Sharon Johnson** 17:08

To look back on it, just absolutely incredible!

### **Robin Bernheim** 17:08

I know!

### **Robin Bernheim** 17:12

I know. And it's it's funny because it was the least favorite Episode at the net, at the network. NBC...

### **Sharon Johnson** 17:18

Really?!

### **Robin Bernheim** 17:19

They did not like it. Remember, we shot it third. It's coming back clear now. Yeah, it was third we shot it third. It was aired, like, I don't know 18th? 19th? Because they thought it was too silly. And we had





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written a pie fight in that in that school cafeteria. No, it was too silly. And I forget what we substituted in. And then the week before our Episode airs, over on Moonlighting, they have a pie fight! (laughs)

**Sharon Johnson** 17:51

Laughs

**Robin Bernheim** 17:51

It's so funny when that happens. It's like 'Hello!' You know, because as a writer, you think, Oh. It's your fault. Maybe you really are too silly. And then you see it done just the way you envisioned it, somewhere else. And you go no, I, I was right. But no, I the network thought it was, it was too silly. But we did have one of the best casts. We had Geena Davis, played the love interest with Pierce in that one. Jean Smart was in that. Camille, I forget Camille's last name, but she's just an excellent actress. We just, it was, it was wonderful! And Geena's character was added um because we had to make sure, because if you think about it, one Star is writing the Episode. And this is a two-hander series, you know. There's a male protagonist. So we bent over backwards to make sure Michael Gleason who you know, created and ran the show, bent over backwards to make sure that Pierce had something to do. And Pierce's something to do in that Episode was Geena Davis.

**Sharon Johnson** 18:30

Laughs.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 18:45

(Hahahahaha) That is hilarious.

**Robin Bernheim** 19:07

And that was a, that's not a bad thing.

**Sharon Johnson** 19:09

Not at all.

**Robin Bernheim** 19:11

That worked out that worked out. Okay. And I'm just delighted to hear you like it! Because like I said, I remember it from being the one that was like, you know, Oh, this is, the tone isn't right. It's too silly. And yet, that's what Moonlighting was doing. And they were a little more cutting edge than we were, so it wasn't, it wasn't necessarily appreciated at the time.

**Sharon Johnson** 19:33

Well, the show did have a lot of comedic moments. I mean, that was built into the DNA of the show, at least for me. And that was one of the things I always really enjoyed about it. Love the mysteries. Love the, the nods to old films, which I also really appreciated. But it just melded all of those things together so brilliantly to me, so I always appreciated it. This viewer always appreciated it. So.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 19:54

Well, I was gonna say that, it really, it, it totally got, and it got silly.





**Robin Bernheim** 19:58

Yes, they're silly and there's Silly. There's, you know, the stakes of our Episode, to be very honest, was a cookie that had no calories. And then in the end, somebody ate it. (guffaw)

**Sharon Johnson** 20:10

(Hehehehe) Well, as a viewer in thinking about a cookie with no calories, those are very high stakes to me! I would love to see somebody make something like that. (laughs).

**Robin Bernheim** 20:20

I know, the irony is, it would be worth, you know, a, a major Fortune.

**Sharon Johnson** 20:26

Indeed.

**Robin Bernheim** 20:26

But it sounded silly. And if you look, just the whole style of it was, was and the music in it. The way it was scored. They leaned into the humor, which was a smart thing to do. Rather than not. I wrote another Episode that was considered silly for the Franchise. I wrote an Episode for Star Trek Voyager, where someone is selling false applications, false memberships to the Federation, and impersonating Janeway. There's a you know, an impersonation of of Kate Mulgrew. And that was pretty silly, too. But um, I guess I like to bend the, you know, the boundaries, a little bit on humor. I like to to push that. But I think that was a great fun Episode, you know, as well. I, again, I'm not sure that the people who, you know ran the show, who took the show as seriously, more seriously than I did, you know. I'm not sure it was their favorite Episode. But I think there's a place you know, in these shows for that. They're, that make us laugh at the concept.

**Sharon Johnson** 21:35

Well, it's not outside the the the Star Trek Universe, if you will, to Not have a certain level of silliness in an episode or two. I mean, you can, from The Trouble with Tribbles in the original Star Trek, to various episodes in, in Enterprise. And and I'm a Star Trek fan, probably can tell. And so on. I mean, they always have episodes, so anyway. But yeah, they then that's, again, one of the things about, whether it be Star Trek or Remington Steele that they run the gamut. And they do it all so well. And that's what's so remarkable. I think about Remington Steele. So.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 22:13

And those episodes tend to be fan favorites, quite honestly. I mean...

**Robin Bernheim** 22:17

There you go!



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### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 22:18

Because they're adorable! A big part of the show is that it's adorable. And part of being adorable is being a little bit silly, a little bit lighter. And that was, I don't know, I love that Episode too. And you ended up writing you you worked on like several episodes of Remington Steele.

### **Robin Bernheim** 22:36

I did after we did that one. Michael Gleason had faith that I could write. I mean, I did the meetings. Part of writing is also how you are in the room when you brainstorm ideas. And so he had, he had gotten a sense of who I was. And so then they gave me episodes to do. And then I got a job on MacGyver and Remington was officially cancelled. And then came that very strange thing that happened where they came back for Five. And I had just quit MacGyver, which one does not do. One does not quit when I look at it now, when you're a new writer, you don't quit a show when you have a staff job. But I did. Because I was unhappy. And there were a lot of unhappy people on that show. And so I quit. And the day I quit, I come home and the phone rings and it's Gleason saying would you like to come back? We got picked up for Five. Do you want to be on staff? It's one of those moments you know in your life that take your breath away because I had no way of knowing when I quit the other job that I was gonna get any other work.

### **Sharon Johnson** 23:54

Well, especially not on Remington Steele at that point because it had been canceled. So.

### **Robin Bernheim** 23:58

Yeah. It had been canceled. And I wasn't the only one on MacGyver that got that call. A lot of the crew had gone over to MacGyver. So Kevin Inch, one of the producers on Remington who had come up the ranks, he got that call too.(laughs) He said, Okay, I'm going! Finally I understand the Line Producer at MacGyver called over to MTM and said 'stop stealing our people.' (Laughing) Because, you know, it wasn't such a happy shop at that point in time and everybody was defecting back over to Remington. So, that's that's probably a very long answer to your question, but um.

### **Sharon Johnson** 24:39

That's a great answer. Absolutely.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 24:41

I know. I like that. I love hearing all this stuff that that isn't really known.

### **Robin Bernheim** 24:46

No, no it, but that's how I got on staff, and it was all due to Michael Gleason. My God, what a wonderful man! What a brilliant man. He was a sort of father figure to us all. And our mentor, and I don't know who else you've spoken to on the show, but I don't know anyone who feels differently. He was, we adored him. And the last thing that I, I the last movie in the Netflix Series, The Princess Switch, the last movie I wrote, is such a nod to him. I only wish he were here to see it. You know it, it was romance and a caper and it's straight out of the Michael Gleason playbook. So I have so much to be grateful and thankful for, to that man. I just, I really, I owe him my start. Stephanie certainly opened the door. But it was Michael, who, you know, professionally mentored me, I was really lucky.



**Susan Lambert Hatem 25:44**

That is amazing. And everything that we hear about him is great, that he's great. And he had eight kids?

**Robin Bernheim 25:51**

Gosh, you know, I lost track. You know, there were a couple of marriages there. So some of them were his step kids.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 25:57**

Okay. All right.

**Robin Bernheim 25:58**

So, but there were a lot. Definitely there were a lot of kids and I'm trying to think if any of them really went into The Business and I, isn't that funny. I don't think any of them did.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 26:10**

I don't think any of our kids, we I have two step sons and a younger boy. And they're like, no! (guffaw) We're always like, but it's so much fun. Like, (laughs) I think they they, you know, I think they also see that it's a lot of work.

**Robin Bernheim 26:28**

It's lot of work...

**Susan Lambert Hatem 26:29**

And you have to love it. You have to want that. That life.

**Robin Bernheim 26:34**

Well. And I'm, again I, I'm gona quote Stephanie's father, which he'll prob, , she'll probably do. But her father said early on... Efreim Zimbalist, Jr, obviously incredible famous actor, lovely, lovely man... He said, Show Business is 99% rejection. And if you can deal with that, you can go into Show Business. If you can't. Pick another job. (ha) So, you know, it's fun for us, because we're lucky enough to have gotten the breaks and have a modicum of talent to be able to, you know, step up when we have to. We're lucky. But for so many people, it's so hard to make a life in this business.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 27:17**

Well, and I'm going to add because I want to talk to you about it, but also being a female in this business. Even now, you hear about it. But in 1982 and the 80s. I'm curious about that experience. I mean, there weren't a lot of you.

**Robin Bernheim 27:36**

No. I like to think of myself as a Pioneer without the Bonnet. But (laughs) I do think of it. When I, when I look back on it, I go, Oh my God! How different. I don't think there was another woman in the room, in the writer's room with me. You know we, ships passed in the night. There'd be a woman on staff, but



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then she'd be gone. And then I'd be on staff. That happened a couple of times, but I didn't work with a woman until like after the year 2000. (laughing) So, yeah.

**Sharon Johnson** 28:09

Wow!

**Robin Bernheim** 28:10

It was 20 years of, I was the only woman in the room. So um, I think on a positive side, it made me feel very special. Um I guess you could call it positive, but certainly challenging. It was the famous expression, I'm sure you've heard it. Ginger Rogers. We did everything that the guys did, only we did it backwards and in heels. So there was um, you really had to prove yourself, and you really had to be, you had to be able to deliver the goods. And I, it is just such a tremendous compliment I feel, that I got that opportunity to prove that not only I could do it, but that women in general could do this job. So I'd say yes, it made me feel special. But it also, you know, there were times that were comical. There are times that were really unhappy. (guffaw) Yeah, I mean, Michael and Brad Kern once said to me on those last five episodes of Remington, we were at his house doing a meeting and they were just, they were just philosophizing and said, 'Well, you know, what kind of ambition do you have? And I said, you know, I want to work up the ladder. And what they advised me was that probably, you know, I could make it up to Supervising Producer but women didn't Run shows. And they didn't mean it badly, which you know, I stress. You have to look at that in terms of the times.

**Sharon Johnson** 28:17

Right. Yeah.

**Robin Bernheim** 28:52

Yeah. They were just giving me advice that, that just sort of didn't happen. And it didn't at that time. So there were limits that were placed. Certainly there was that Glass Ceiling, absolutely was. Um (guffaw) There, Star Trek was especially, I look at it as humorous. Again, I felt honored to be the woman in the room. But there were some funny times. Well, there were times where the, all the guys would disappear, because they'd all go to lunch together. And I wouldn't be there. It was me and seven guys. So it was like, I always said Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

**Sharon Johnson** 30:35

Laughing heartily.

**Robin Bernheim** 30:37

And then they'd make some really rude raunchy stuff that you get reported for now. And then Brannon Braga, who ran the show, who's just such a Mega Talent, he would turn to me and he goes, 'Sorry, Robin.' And I said, That's okay. It goes in my memoirs. So this is as close as I get to memoirs, I don't remember what the joke was, or I kinda do, and I'm not going to repeat it.

**Sharon Johnson** 31:00

Laughs



**Robin Bernheim 31:01**

But (hahaha) um, it was that that's the funny part.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 31:06**

We're going to have to take a break. We'll be right back with more 80s TV Ladies.

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commercial break

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**Susan Lambert Hatem 31:16**

And we're back. Back to it. Let's go.

**Robin Bernheim 31:19**

The parts that aren't so funny are when you're left out of meetings, when you don't get paid as much, when you don't get considered for a job. But I hate to say that I can tell you incidents that happened just this last year that you just wouldn't believe. Like getting my parking space moved from the first slot to down the row. Which who cares. Right?! Who cares?! Except, why would someone do that? And when I sent a memo to the, to the All Male Producing Staff. Like, was there a reason that you moved my parking space? Nobody had the balls to tell me they just moved my space back. What is that?!

**Sharon Johnson 32:03**

Laughs

**Susan Lambert Hatem 32:03**

Oh my God.

**Robin Bernheim 32:04**

In 2020. What is, what nonsense is that?! So don't fool yourself that it's over, Ladies. (laughs) Don't fool yourself it's over. It, yeah, it's, it it still happens. There was also a meeting that I wasn't told about that they moved.(guffaw) And I went to where it was supposed to be and nobody's there. And of course, they apologized profusely that they didn't tell me. But it was one of those production meetings. So it was, it was all men. Every other Man got the call to go to that meeting, that it was, the location was changed. Except me! So maybe I'm just that paranoid woman.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 32:43**

No!

**Robin Bernheim 32:43**

It's like, for God's sake! Can't you even be subtle about it? But yeah, these were the days where Carol Mendelsohn you know, who was one of the creators of CSI, she worked at Cannell. And they would hold meetings in the Men's Room. Did, I don't know if you know that...

**Sharon Johnson 32:43**

Laughs



**Robin Bernheim** 32:47

So that she wouldn't be in the meeting.

**Sharon Johnson** 33:04

Oh, wow!

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 33:04

Well, and listen to I'm a huge Cannell Show fan, but not not, not a lot of ladies represented. (chuckles)  
In any of those shows.

**Robin Bernheim** 33:14

I worked on Renegade, which was a cattle show for one Season, I think. But no, there, there wasn't a lot of representation. So So again, circling back to your question to which I gave you a very long answer. You feel special, and you're glad to be there, because you're representing. And it's pretty good. But yeah, there are, there are some times where, where it was hard. Michael Gleason would take me aside, hold my arm, and he'd say, Listen to me Cookie, which he didn't call the boys that. It was Cookie or Lovebugs. Stephanie'll tell you that too. But it was done, you don't take offense to that, because that's his Generation. He'd say, 'You're just as talented as they are. And don't you ever forget it!' And uh, now...

**Sharon Johnson** 34:01

That's awesome.

**Robin Bernheim** 34:02

I, yeah, it's sort of embarrassing and all. But I, and I didn't want to accept that as being true, you know. But thank God for that kind of encouragement that kept me in the game when other, when men got opportunities that I didn't get! You know, so.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 34:19

That's huge. That makes me very happy that you had that, that mentorship. And yet I know what you mean, because, you know, Melissa and I both went to film school and both kind of started, and so that you were hoping for that um, kind mentor. (guffaw) And um and yet there were, you were still a little Sweetheart and Cookie and yeah. But But you were happy to have someone believe in you...

**Melissa Roth** 34:43

And kissable, unfortunately.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 34:44

Yeah. Oh.

**Robin Bernheim** 34:46

I did a show that was on for a very short time called Crazy Like a Fox. I was very lucky. I got great bosses. You know, and again, these were men who had to believe that women deserved a chance. Right?! Because back then there weren't too many. And it was George Schenck, Frank Cardea. John



## Episode108: Steele Writing with Robin Bernheim

Baskin, Richard (Roger) Shulman, they created the show. When you think of the star power, it was Jack, Jack Warden and Jon Rubinstein. And we would go across the Lot to watch Dailies in the afternoon. And I remember it was hilarious. We went into a different building. And there's these four guys, and they would all stop to hold the door so that I could go through first. (chuckles) Because that's what you did. At that time. (laughs) So, uh yeah, me and the four Executive Producers... It all stopped so that I could go through the door first. It was, it was very, you know, chivalrous in the day.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 35:41

That is so amazing. So did you ever uh, Robert Butler was probably gone from the show by the time that you came on.

**Robin Bernheim** 35:47

Yeah.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 35:48

Did you have any directors that you loved working with on the show? That you were like, Oh, these guys or gals... It was. It was, again, you guys had a few female writers. And then there were a few female directors on Remington Steele. But I don't know if they were directing when you were on the show.

**Robin Bernheim** 36:04

They did. I mean, I was around the show because of Stephanie. So I was sort of around for the whole thing. But I don't know, they didn't necessarily Direct my Episodes that I remember. Oh, it's going back a long time. You know, who I really liked... He started directing on Remington... was Chris Hibler. Who's not with us anymore. It's just so hard to believe some of this. But yeah, Chris was like an AD and they promoted him. And you know, so it was wonderful to see somebody get their, their start. And then he was over on Quantum Leap. He directed the Bigamy Episode that I wrote. And so he was a favorite. Kevin Inch, who again came up from Production and Directed. So he was a favorite. Trying to think, you know I, I'm influenced by who Stephanie liked. So I, I know who her favorites were. And I'm trying to think were they my favorites. Virgil Vogel was was, you know, one of the Journeyman Directors. He was older, and he just knew his way around a set. I remember she liked him a lot. But it's hard for me to go back quite that far. I suppose if you had a list of their names, I'd remember. Thomas Carter directed. He was like, you know, you talk about representation. There were, there were like no Black Directors at the time at all.

**Melissa Roth** 37:36

Thomas Carter from The White Shadow. Right? Thomas Carter.

**Robin Bernheim** 37:39

Yeah. Yeah, he directed. I'm pretty sure he directed.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 37:44

And Ernie Pintoff? Melissa just said Ernie Pintoff.





**Melissa Roth 37:47**

Ernie Pintoff was uh, with USC. So, and I noticed his name on a couple of these.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 37:52**

He's on a couple of the episodes.

**Robin Bernheim 37:54**

Yeah, I don't remember him. Yeah, I don't. And I, you know what? The shows from that time, they run together in my mind. So like when I thought of Chris Hibler. I thought of Quantum. But then I thought, Oh yeah, but I knew him from Remington. So yeah, I don't, there weren't, there was another woman and I can't remember her name. Besides Gabrielle Beaumont, but literally, I think there were two, two or three.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 38:20**

I think there were three because we did, we covered that in our last episode. And I, I could pull up the script and tell you because I wrote down their names. Because they were director, female directors for the, I don't know. However many directors there were and then three, no nine writers. I'll pull it up in a second. But I do, while we're on it. Let's talk. Let's just jump over. Oh, no, we should stay on Remington. Should we stay on Remington?

**Sharon Johnson 38:48**

Yeah, for a bit longer. Yeah...

**Susan Lambert Hatem 38:48**

... Let's stay on Remington. Okay. Because what I, what I love is, is and I know they run together, and I know it's been a while, but do you have any memorable like, Oh my God, I still remember this moment. I still remember that moment.

**Robin Bernheim 39:01**

Yes. Well, I think because again, a lot... I know the show from from before it, it, when it was just an idea because of being friends with Stephanie. But I think the moment that she and I both remember really well, as a you know, moment for us together was... I you know, was moving down from Silicon Valley to LA, so I was living at Stephanie's house in North Hollywood. And in the Second Season? Or Third Season? I forget. It was when Lee Zlotoff came on the show. They decided that Laura living in this little house wasn't really what they wanted to do. They wanted a slick, you know, penthouse sort of apartment thing. So story wise what they decided to do was blow up the house. The house was modeled after the house that I was living in with Stephanie at the time, waiting to find my own apartment. So how many people get to go to the Back Lot and watch a model of their house being blown up? But we did. So, so that was pretty amazing.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 40:08**

That's one of my favorite episodes too. So like that, because it's it's so emotional. And yet it's it's, it seems very quintessential Remington Steele. It's gotten almost everything you want out of a Remington



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Steele Episode but their, but their relationship is very strong in that Episode and very sweet. And she's she's got such an emotional journey...

**Robin Bernheim** 40:29

Yes

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 40:29

... too in that, in that anyway. But that's fantastic!

**Sharon Johnson** 40:32

Do you have any recollection of why they chose to model the exterior of Laura's house to Stephanie's house?

**Robin Bernheim** 40:40

I think Michael saw a lot of Laura Holt in Stephanie. He really tailored that character to Stephanie. So not only the house, but the fact that she drives a Volkswagen Rabbit. Which again, she'll tell you all of this, but you know, I like to think that the fact that Laura Holt went to Stanford was because I went to Stanford, Stephanie was accepted to Stanford, chose to go to Juilliard instead. But the tote bag she carries, it says Stanford University. That was my tote bag.

**Sharon Johnson** 41:14

Oh!

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 41:14

Wow.

**Robin Bernheim** 41:15

I love telling that story. So you know, I feel a real affinity. But there were so many funny little things. I mean, I know stuff because of her. Like she loved those hats. Those hats were her trademark and her idea. And it would drive the DP, the Director of Photography, crazy! Because there's a shadow under that hat. (Chuckles) You know, trying to light her under that hat. So the hats! It was the Battle of the Hats.

**Sharon Johnson** 41:42

As someone who, who does not have what I call a hat head, I've always recommended the way she wears a hat. She just looks so spectacular in them.

**Robin Bernheim** 41:51

Yes, yes! And there's always battles over her hair, you know. Because she didn't want it to be about the hair.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 41:57

We have been, we have been talking about women and their hair in the 80s, uh every Episode, so please keep going over the Battles of the Hair!



**Robin Bernheim 42:06**

Well the hair, the hair! Stephanie just likes to slam it back in a ponytail, you know. To this day, she just doesn't like to fuss with her hair. And so they always wanted to make it wavy and curly and all of that. And she had no patience for it. She just wanted it back and off of her face. So The Hair! And then it was, she got a cut one year I think she came back in in June and it was shorter. And you know, that was sort of a time where there were some grumbles because it was all about... what we were, we were like a few years after Farrah Fawcett probably, you know. So there, there were times where, you know, Stephanie and Pierce were mad at each other. And they did a kissing scene. And Michael saw the Dailies and he went, we're re-shooting that scene! You know! So I remember that. You know, they're just, I guess it's just so much a part of my life. I can't even think of what people know or don't know from what they they, they've seen on the screen. I remember sitting on the set with Geena Davis, who was just Geena Davis. She lived in an apartment in Hollywood somewhere and just talking to her. And my mom was on the set. I think of that first Episode, she's just sitting chatting with Doris Roberts. So I have those kind of nice memories. And then in the Writer's Room, Stephanie and I when we wrote that Episode, that first Episode, we just got the giggles one day. We just couldn't stop laughing. And I'm sure they just thought we were two immature teenagers who brought out the worst in each other. But they you know, Michael had faith and you know, kept going with us.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 43:51**

Well, you were both very young. You were both in your mid 20s.

**Robin Bernheim 43:55**

Mid 20s. Yeah.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 43:57**

That's insane.

**Robin Bernheim 43:57**

Yeah.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 43:58**

And and her, I you know, Stephanie's ability on screen to take a scene and just own it, is so spectacular given how young she is. She has such a sophistication to her persona, that it was so impressive. And I, that was one of the things I remember. Being like, Oh, wow! Like, that's a, that's a woman of her own self, which you just didn't see a lot on television in the 80s. And that's so iconic, that character. So iconic, from the hit, from the hat to the hair, but mostly to the character of that Character. It was very clear who Laura Holt was and what she wanted.

**Robin Bernheim 44:47**

And you know, being a writer, you have to credit the writers because if it ain't on the page, it ain't on the stage. So it was Michael's construct of making this a woman who was so capable, but trapped in a society that wouldn't honor the fact that she had the brains. So he he created that character and that Writing Staff that was, you know, male with the exception of... if you counted them and there's nine of



## Episode108: Steele Writing with Robin Bernheim

us, nine women... who could write to that. And then she, Stephanie has that sort of, in my opinion, what a lot of great actresses have. She has the strength of, say, Katharine Hepburn if you're going to use, you know, iconic types. But she also has the vulnerability of Audrey Hepburn. So she has, you know, these these very classic, iconic traits that she draws from. And she takes her work really seriously! She, she studies, studies every script, breaks them down, she's never unprepared. So she worked very hard to bring that to life.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 46:03

So I want to go back real quick to the times when when Stephanie and Pierce Brosnan weren't getting along. There's stories of them not getting along. There's stories of them getting along. They speak very highly of each other right now. So what was going on?

### **Sound Effect** 46:17

needle scratching accross a record album

### **Sharon Johnson** 46:18

Hold up guys. Hold up for a second!

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 46:20

What! Wait, but...

### **Sharon Johnson** 46:21

It's been almost an hour already. I know time flies when you're listening to Robin Bernheim.

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 46:25

And us! Okay, well poop. This interview actually goes on for a little while longer folks, like another hour. So that means we are sadly out of time today. Like a good Mystery Show, we have to leave you here, hanging off a cliff.

### **Sharon Johnson** 46:41

So Dear Listeners, you're going to have to wait until next time to hear Robin's thoughts on things like... Were Stephanie and Pierce are able to get along? Do they get along now? And what did Doris Roberts have to say?

### **Susan Lambert Hatem** 46:53

Tune in to our next Episode, same Bat Time, same Bat Channel to hear all the answers to the great mystery of Co-Stars getting along on the set of Remington Steele. Plus, we'll talk with Robin about Star Trek TV Shows, a Quantum Leap story or two. With a bit of Scott Bacula love even. And of course, Steele more discussion of Remington Steele is ahead. Maybe also we'll give you a little bit on The Princess Switch Franchise and Vanessa Hudgens.

### **Sharon Johnson** 47:22

So Dear Listeners, we're sorry to make you wait for it. But now you get to enjoy the deliciousness of what it was like in the 80s to have to wait a week or two. Or have to wait through a Holiday Break...



**Susan Lambert Hatem 47:32**

Or the entire Summer...

**Sharon Johnson 47:34**

in order to find out what happens next on your favorite show.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 47:37**

Or if you're listening to this Podcast much later as you binge through our Season, well, you don't have to wait at all. Just hit that forward button. But for those listening in real time, we want to wish you a very happy and safe Halloween. We hope you get your ghost and ghoulies on! Since it 'tis the Season, we're going to leave you with a couple of notable female driven 1980s TV Halloween Episodes you might want to check out.

**Sharon Johnson 48:02**

First of all, The Facts of Life has a Halloween Episode called appropriately enough The Halloween Show. It aired in October 1983. And it's Season Five, Episode Six and has a nice nod to Sweeney Todd,

**Susan Lambert Hatem 48:16**

(singing) The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

**Sharon Johnson 48:18**

Laughs

**Susan Lambert Hatem 48:18**

You got to sing it.

**Sharon Johnson 48:20**

See Mrs. Garrett had a gourmet market and the meat supply for her market was interrupted by a butcher strike. So Natalie, Tutti, Joe and Blair began to suspect Mrs. Garrett may have killed an old man in order to create her own Bratwurst Sausages. Yikes!

**Susan Lambert Hatem 48:40**

That's very creepy.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 48:41**

It's a very creepy episode. All right. And then of course we have Roseanne Season Two Episode Seven. The Episode is entitled, Boo! This Episode kicked off what would become an annual tradition for the Roseanne Show with creating a Halloween Episode every year. The Goodmans turn their house into a haunted Tunnel of Terror, as Roseanne and Dan compete to see who can prank and scare each other the most. It's really quite amazing.



**Sharon Johnson** 48:41

Laughs

**Sharon Johnson** 49:11

Sounds like a lot of fun. Next is a Laverne and Shirley Episode called Ghost Story from 1983. Laverne and Shirley was a Happy Days spin-off that ran for Eight Seasons from 1976 to 1983. By the time this Episode aired, the Show had moved the friends to Burbank, and then Cindy Williams who played Shirley had left the show. So it was really just the Laverne Show. Cindy Williams was upset when the Studio demanded that she work while pregnant, including and up to, on her due date. She would later sue the Studio for discrimination and an unrealistic contract. But that's another story for another Episode. In the Ghost Story Episode. Laverne's apartment seems to be haunted. She and her friends Carmine and Rhonda hold a Seance and Laverne is inhabited by a ghost who was denied his Gold Medal at the 1932 Olympics. Yes, it's weird. Wacky, for sure. But Penny Marshall does some fun physical comedy playing herself possessed by a ghost.

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 50:14

That's fantastic. You guys, check out those 80s TV Ladies driven Halloween Episodes for a little spooky time this week. And you can find most of them on YouTube. Now it's time for our Audio-ography. Where to watch the show? Where to watch Remington Steele? Here's the challenge. It is for sale on Amazon or Apple Streaming. However, only Season One and Two are available on both platforms. And so the only way that I can find right now to watch all Five Seasons is on DVD. You can get the DVDs on Amazon, on eBay, or around or you know, random weird DVD sale places. But I highly recommend the DVDs because they are, have a lot of behind the scenes and it's the only way to watch Seasons Three, Four and Five. You can still, if you have Netflix DVD service, here's the funny part. You can still, and seriously get only Season One and Season Three as a DVD rental from Netflix. (guffaw) Don't know why they have Season One and Two streaming. But Season One and Three on DV, actual DVD. So there you go. That's uh, that you're gona have to work hard to watch all of Remington Steele right now. I don't know why.

**Sharon Johnson** 51:33

There are a number of websites that you can also visit to learn more about Remington Steele. We recommend fan sites like [SteeleInLove.com](http://SteeleInLove.com) and [RemingtonSteele.TV-website.com](http://RemingtonSteele.TV-website.com).

**Susan Lambert Hatem** 51:47

I know they seemed hard to find, but those were, those are the best ones that I liked. There's also of course the Facebook Fan site for Remington Steele, [facebook.com/remington-steele-investigations](https://facebook.com/remington-steele-investigations). But if you search Facebook for 'Remington Steele Investigations', you'll find the page. It's page run by Matthew Stratus. And it's really quite up to date. Find out more about us on the website [80sTVLadies.com](http://80sTVLadies.com). That's 80STVLADIES.com to find out more. And of course we're on all the social medias at [80sTVLadies](http://80sTVLadies).

**Sharon Johnson** 52:23

Let us know if you're liking this podcast. Giving us a shout out on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc really helps a lot!



**Susan Lambert Hatem 52:30**

Now in my other life, my company 134 West also produces Theater. We have a show coming up in Los Angeles. Our friends from New York City's Whitehorse Theatre, along with 134 West are presenting the West Coast Premiere of Broken Story, a new play by Cyndy Marion. It opens Saturday November 5th, and runs through November 27th, in North Hollywood. This play is inspired by the story of Robert Durst, and his murder of writer Susan Berman. But it's set before we know how that all ends. And it's a really unique and intricate look at True Crime obsession. I'm super excited to be part of bringing this play to Los Angeles, finally! it's one of those shows that was supposed to be produced in the, in the Fall of 2020. So I'm glad we are able to bring it out this year. It's got a truly wonderful cast. If you want to check it out. Please go to <https://www.whitehorsetheater.com> for more info. That's white horse theater, t h e a t e r . c o m . The link to showtimes and tickets will be on our 80s TV Ladies website as well. Check it out. Thank you so much for listening to 80s TV Ladies!

**Sharon Johnson 53:43**

Tell us what you think. Is Remington Steele a feminist show? Send us your thoughts and questions about Stephanie, Pierce and the Show! Go to our website [80sTVLadies.com](http://80sTVLadies.com) to sign up for our mailing list and send us your thoughts.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 53:57**

Or follow and subscribe on your favorite Podcast Player so you don't miss any Episodes, including our next Episode where we will continue our interview with the fantastic TV Writer and Producer, Robin Bernheim.

**Sharon Johnson 53:57**

We hope 80s TV Ladies brings you joy and laughter and lots of fabulous new and old shows to watch, all of which will lead us forward toward being amazing ladies of the 21st century.

**Susan Lambert Hatem 54:22**

Happy Halloween!

**80s TV Ladies Theme Song 54:23**



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!