

# Transcript

00:00 You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 193.

00:08 Welcome to the My Simplified Life podcast, a place where you will learn that your past and even your present don't define your future. Regardless of what stage of life you're in, I want you to feel inspired and encouraged to pursue your dreams, simplify your life, and start taking action today. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, and I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you while taking you on my own journey.

00:36 This is my simplified life.

00:42 Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. Do you ever wonder, and I bet you don't, because I did not, when you're watching your favorite TV shows, what it takes and goes into writing the script for your favorite sitcoms? Well, lucky for you, today we get an inside look, because my guest is Patty Lin. She was a screenwriter for...

01:08 some really big shows like Freaks and Geeks, Breaking Bad, and you know that one show, Friends? Yeah, she worked on that too. She has written a memoir all about her experience in the television industry, and it's kind of cringe-worthy to be honest, because she was treated poorly, and that's an understatement. But Patty writing is so utterly phenomenal, I could not put her book down.

01:38 and I know that you are going to want to pick it up and read it for yourself. It is called End Credits, and it is out today with Zibi Books. And I am so excited to share with you my conversation with Patty because we laughed, we got deep into it, and she's giving us a behind the scenes look at what being a screenwriter is all about. Hi, Patty. Hi, Michelle. I'm so excited to talk to you. Me too. And see you again.

02:06 It's been, oh, it's been a good amount of months, right? We saw each other in February and it's now August. The book comes out next month. So before we dive in, can you take a moment to introduce yourself to everyone? Sure. My name is Patty Lin and I'm a writer. I live in Los Angeles. I used to write for television for about 10 years and then I quit.

02:34 to save my sanity. And then I wrote a book about it. And that book is called, End Credits, How I Broke Up With Hollywood. And by the time this airs, it will be your pub date. So congratulations and happy pub day. Thank you so much. How exciting. It's your first book, right? I mean, you've written TV shows, like big ones that we can talk about, but.

03:01 I think there's something different about it being a book and something you can hold and it's got your name all over it. What is that like the difference? Yeah, it is really different. I mean, there were times when I had TV shows air that where I was very proud of the final product and there was a great sense of accomplishment. But a lot of times that

03:29 that wasn't the case. You know, it was either something that, you know, had my name on it, but I didn't really feel any sense, any connection to it because it was, it was just like rewritten so many times or just didn't come out the way that I'd hoped. But with this book, you know, it's different because there's so much more, as an author, I had so much more creative control over the product.

03:57 I mean, it's still a collaboration. You still work with editors and you get feedback and it's not like you're writing in a vacuum, but I just felt that throughout the whole process, there was just a much greater sort of respect for my words. And I just feel like this book is just more...

04:27 It's more me than probably anything I've ever written, which also can be scary, right? Cause it's a memoir about my life. So it's really just kind of all out there.

04:42 Were there any like aha moments? Because I know for me, I'm one of those people where in the moment my mouth like shuts down and then an hour or two later, I'm like, crap, I should have said this as my rebuttal. Because there were moments in the book that, you know, where they confused you with like someone else's assistant because you were not a white woman. Like was it weird looking back at those things, you know, versus being in the moment?

05:12 and, oh, I wish I would have said this versus, oh, wow, I can't believe this happened to me so many times, you know, throughout my career. Michelle, that is the story of my life of coming up with the perfect rebuttal like three hours later or like three days later. I mean, that's just how it is, right? Yes, that happened all the time. And there were all sorts of things that...

05:41 I endured working in the entertainment business that I look back on now and I'm like, how did I put up with that? Why didn't I say anything? But the thing about the entertainment business is that there's a culture of sort of just kind of, there are people who have power and there are people who don't have power. And...

06:11 the people who don't have power, you are just sort of expected to accept everything that happens no matter how insane it is and no matter how hurtful it can be. So I just, you know, being steeped in that world for so long, my perspective, you know, was very skewed. And so for a lot of times, like things would happen.

06:39 Uh, you know, like somebody would get fired for like no good reason or, you know, something like that. And instead of like standing up and saying like, that's, that's unacceptable. You know, why is this happening? Like I would just take it. And so would, and so would everyone else, you know? So that just happened a lot. And I think that when you are in a position where you are, you don't have power, you know, and you want to keep your job.

07:09 Um, you, you end up just kind of being in that sort of group think, you know, mindset where everybody's just accepting what's happening. Does that make sense? Or is that specific enough? And it seems like with the writer, yeah, no, it totally does. No, it makes perfect sense. And it seems like right now with the writer's strike that everybody's decided like we've had enough, uh, you know, not necessarily in the, in the overall treatment, because there was so much more than.

07:38 simply how you're getting paid that happened to you. But now collectively, everyone's going, oh yeah, we're done with it. And I've read interviews where there are certain CEOs who are saying, get over it. Yeah, you made a billion dollars last year, you get over it. Oh my God. I was just reading about how the CEO of Warner Discovery made something like \$247 million in one year.

08:09 I mean, I can't even conceive of how much money that is. And yet, you know, there are writers working on really successful shows who are barely making enough to pay their rent. So it's just that differential is, it's so wrong. And that that's part of why the writers are on strike right now, but yes, there are a lot of other.

08:34 issues going on, cultural issues that I don't think a lot of people know about. But it's just like, I mean, I was just reading, I don't know if you've read or heard of Burn It Down. It's a book that's out right now, written by Maureen Ryan. And it's a nonfiction book. It's sort of an expose about Hollywood. And I was just reading. I mean, it's like every page that I'm reading of this book, I'm like, yep.

09:03 Yup, I've been there. I've seen that. I know what you're talking about. And one of the things that she says in the book is that when people are being mistreated in the entertainment business, anything short of physical, like sexual assault or physical abuse, like your boss threw an object at you, anything short of that, you're expected to just accept it and suck it up.

09:33 you know, oh, it's not that bad. You know, it's not as bad as Harvey Weinstein. You know what I mean? Like that's sort of the mindset. And it's just so wrong because there are so many other kinds of mistreatment that can happen that maybe aren't at that sort of level of abuse, but are still extremely damaging and unfair.

09:58 why do you think there's such a discrepancy? If you're looking at the corporate world and you're going to an office job, the kind of stuff, it's not gonna be tolerated in most cases, in some, yes, it's still there, but why is it still so prevalent in Hollywood?

10:17 I mean, I don't know. I mean, all I can say is that it's a business that I think people have a lot of fantasies about. It's just one of those things, from the outside it looks really glamorous and it's very, very exclusive. It's very hard to break into it. So when you actually do manage to get your foot in the door,

10:47 you know, and start, you know, start working as a TV writer or whatever, you know, whatever it is, an actor, you know, there's a sense of I worked so hard to get here. I'm so lucky, you know, that it's hard to walk away from it. And it's, and it's, it makes people much more susceptible to just kind of accepting mistreatment.

11:15 because it's a career that is so kind of coveted.

11:24 Which brings us to how you got started into it, because I was so ingrained in your book, it was camping with me, and I had to bring multiple chargers, and then it died, and I had to bring the solar charger out because I needed to know what happened at the end. And my husband

was like, are you on a deadline to read the book? Like, what's going on here? I'm like, no, I just have to know the end. I love that. I could not wait. I love hearing that.

11:53 Yeah, there's no better compliment than hearing somebody couldn't put your book down. Yeah, I devoured it. And it was all on one camping trip, multiple chargers. Yeah, I was ready to get in the car and just leave it on until the iPad recharged. Oh, thank you. But share your story of how you got started into it. I love the whole Letterman story.

12:23 Share it with everybody. Just we don't want to give away the book because I want everybody to go buy it, but I love the story of how you got it. Yeah, well, I didn't have any idea of how to get into show business. I grew up in the Midwest. My parents were Taiwanese immigrants. They did not, nobody in our family had a job that was...

12:50 you know, creative or like in the arts at all. I didn't even really know that people, that normal people could like work in entertainment until I, me and my friend, we went to get tickets to the Letterman show because we were really big fans of the show. And so we went to New York, we went to NBC, and we were trying to get tickets to the show. And I started talking to an NBC page.

13:19 Um, and he, I ended up dating him for 10 years. That's a whole other story. That's also in the book. Um, read the book and you'll find out. Yeah. But he, but he was really the first person that I realized, oh, okay. You know, the normal people can get into this business. You know, he didn't, he also had no Hollywood connections or any, any of that. Um, and I asked him, like, how, how do you get.

13:47 like an internship at the Letterman show, because I knew that they hired college interns. And he just said, like, write a letter to the producer and they'll bring you in for an interview. And I'm like, really? That's it? And he's like, yeah. And so that's what I did. And I got the job. It was an unpaid internship, but I was thrilled to be there.

14:14 and to be working on this show that I loved and that I had idolized. And so that was my first job in the TV business. And then I went on after that to, after I graduated from college, I worked there like as a full-time employee in the accounting department, and then eventually started writing scripts on the side and got an agent and moved to LA.

14:44 to pursue that. And then you wrote for some big shows. You can name drop them. Why don't you name drop them? It's less embarrassing. Oh, well, let's see. There was Freaks and Geeks, there was Breaking Bad, there's Friends. I'm sure that the listeners have heard of at least one of them because even my children, seven and eight, have heard of them. Yeah, yeah. They're watching the adult comedy. And you were in one of the Friends episode.

15:14 Oh yeah, that's true. Yeah. I was an extra.

15:21 I love the part that you wrote about how David Schwimmer knew your name, spoke to you using your name, and you were like, that's amazing because in this industry, people don't use your name or they don't acknowledge you in that way or aren't polite. I feel like that's not even

just in the industry specific, that's like in life in general. To me, that put Schwimmer up a level in my mind because...

15:48 he did speak to you in such a nice way, you know, versus that other person you referenced earlier, who would use a different elevator than the rest of the staff or, you know, flew in a different plane than the staff. I was like, really? Yeah. I mean, the fact that I was so excited that David Schwimmer knew my name is indicative of just kind of how things

16:17 work in that business, you know, just that people are so, you know, excited about celebrities just being like regular people, you know, that it's like, I, you know, because I have to say like most people, you know, that I worked with knew my name and they they would use my name. But like when it comes to like a big star like David Schwimmer, you're like, oh my God, like he's, you know, the the Friends actors like generally didn't know our names.

16:47 you know, or if they did, they would never talk to us, you know, and call us by our names. But Schwimmer did. And so I always remembered that. I always remembered that he, you know, was professional. And, you know, and I appreciated that.

17:06 And I think a lot who haven't met celebrities, I met a lot in my previous career and was always surprised at the interaction you'd have with them where one would be a big actor but is so shy behind the scenes and doesn't really make eye contact. And it's not because he was rude, that was just his actual personality that you would not know because that's not the actor, that they're the characters he plays in his movies. But they are everyday, regular people.

17:34 And some have an ego that's more inflated than others who were like, yeah, here's my bag. Take it. That's your job. Versus others who are like, no, no, no, I will handle my bags. You know, you go talk to my wife. I've had both, you know, instances happen. And so it's definitely you remember those as everyday people of what those interactions were like and who is kind and a nice, decent human being and who just sucks.

18:02 I loved reading about how Judd Apatow was a kind and generous person, thought of you even later on after you were done on the project that you were. You obviously made an impression. You're very talented. You can tell that from reading your book and obviously the shows that you were on. And yet I also feel like that talent, it's not that it wasn't recognized, but there were certain people that you worked with that they wanted.

18:30 to be recognized more so than allowing you who had the talent to be recognized because then it puts you on a higher pedestal. Yeah, I mean, there are a lot of big egos in that business. And I would say that a lot of times that big ego goes hand in hand with an incredible sense of insecurity. And so, a lot of folks with...

18:59 you know, with the power, you know, they're just so busy trying to protect that power, you know, and those are the ones who aren't as generous. You know, somebody like Judd Apatow, you know, he doesn't have, he's, you know, he was very generous, you know, from the very beginning and really celebrated everyone's creativity and everyone's talent. And he knew.

19:25 you know, instinctually knew that if he nurtured that talent, that it was going to make for a better show, you know? So, yeah, I mean, I was very lucky to have worked with him. You know, there were others that weren't other other bosses that I had that weren't as generous or, you know, for whatever reason, you know, I'm not going to try to get too much into their heads.

19:55 But yeah, I would say that like, just, I would say most of the time, somebody who is very egotistical and, you know, doesn't, isn't generous with their, with the writers that they work with, they're generally the ones who are the least secure in their own talent.

20:25 Yeah. Let's talk about to your parents and what their hopes and aspirations for you were versus what you went off and did. And I felt for you every time, you know, whether it was like, are you getting married yet? And change jobs yet? Yeah. Yeah. You know, but at the end, I felt like your mom, I cried at the end I did with your mom.

20:55 I'm going to cry again. Damn it. It was just so sweet because they are proud of you and the person that you've become. There was such a happy ending at the end of you figured out what you were meant to do. You found the love of your life. Your parents are proud of you. All of that. So how did you keep plugging away being in such a hard industry and struggling?

21:24 you know, just in your work, but then to not have the feeling of like your parents accept you and accept your career, they accepted you, but to accept and embrace what you're doing for a living. Yeah. Um, it was tough, you know, I mean, my parents, they were like, like a lot of, you know, Asian immigrants, they wanted me to be a doctor, you know, they, they wanted me and my brother to, to, to be doctors. And

21:51 that was very, they were very quickly disabused of that notion when neither of us was inclined to, neither of us was good at science or math. I mean, we just weren't. And I, from the very beginning, I was always very creative and I liked to draw and I liked to paint and I liked to do creative writing and I would be in plays and I would sing and all of these things were,

22:22 they were fine as like sort of hobbies as a child, but then when it came time to pursue a career, I just knew that they would never, they weren't gonna accept me, like saying, hey, I'm gonna go be a painter now. And so when I did decide to go into, the entertainment business,

22:46 They were very confused by that. They didn't understand that this was like a viable career that normal people could do. And I just sort of felt like I had to keep proving myself over and over and over to them. But even with like the successes that I had in my career, it was not the sort of steady job that they had hoped for me. Because...

23:14 TV writing is, it's essentially a gig. It's like a freelance kind of situation, unless you're lucky enough to get to land on a show that goes for many years and you're lucky enough to have your contract renewed over and over. Most writers don't have that. Most writers have to find a new job every year or every couple of years or whatever. And my parents just found that to be...

23:40 so bizarre and upsetting. They just didn't see that as, it's not the kind of financial security that they wanted for me. I understand that. I think it was hard for me at the time because I really

just wanted them to be supportive of what I was doing and excited about what I was doing. So it was very hard for me to accept.

24:09 they loved me and that they just wanted me to be happy. It's just that for them, you know, happiness was very much equated with financial security and they just didn't see that in my career, you know, and to be to be honest, like, through much of my career, I wasn't happy, you know, because I was finding out that that TV writing wasn't what I had hoped it would be.

24:33 you know, and I was overworked and I was burnt out and I was, you know, went through a lot of bad experiences. And so I think they could, even though I didn't share all of those details with them, I think they could tell that it wasn't making me happy. So, um, so yeah, I mean, it was a long road with them. Like I, I did a lot of therapy, you know, I think that was probably the biggest thing that helped in my relationship with them was that I went to therapy and I started really working on

25:03 the issues that I had with, you know, needing, being so desperate for their approval, you know, and trying to get that approval by achieving a lot of things, you know, that just wasn't working for me. And it wasn't until I really learned, I mean, it's gonna sound cheesy, but it wasn't until I learned how to like myself and to accept myself without all of the external achievements and accolades and all that.

25:33 That's when my relationship with my parents started to change. And we got to a place where I really felt like they accepted me and loved me for who I was, regardless of any sort of professional success that I had.

25:52 You mentioned earlier how once you get in to Hollywood, to being a writer, that it's very hard to get out because you feel like you've worked so hard to get there. And I think that when it comes to any career, making that move, that switch, it's also hard. So what was that decision like for you of, I'm done, we're going to call it quits, telling the agent, lose my number, in a nice way?

26:20 but to say, I'm gonna go venture out and do something else because my life deserves more happiness going down the road. What was that like? It was a very long process. I worked as a TV writer for 10 years, and for at least five of those years, I really wanted to quit. But I just couldn't work up the nerve until I had...

26:49 gotten to the point where I was just like, I can't do this anymore. And people ask me a lot, like, what was the last straw? But it was honestly more, it wasn't one thing, it was like death by a thousand cuts. I think one thing that really helped was when I started to feel like I wasn't happy doing this job and that I was so burnt out.

27:19 I took a sabbatical and it was something that nobody did. No TV writers did this. Most TV writers, they're desperate to find work. And so you don't voluntarily take yourself out of the game for a period of time. But I knew that I had to do that because I was just losing my mind. So I took a year off in the middle of my career.

27:48 And it was very hard to do because I just had all these voices in my head that were saying, like, you can't do this. You're not allowed. You're not allowed to relax. I had this very sort of like my parents' voice in my head. They were very hardworking, practical people. And so I would hear that in my head all the time of like, you're so lazy.

28:18 Why normal people don't do this. Um, but it was the best thing I ever did. It really was. And that was really the, I would say like the beginning of that road for me of getting out of the rat race, you know, where I could, where I saw that my identity wasn't all about my job, you know, and that I.

28:43 that I had all of these other interests and to have the time to pursue those other interests, and to just enjoy my life. That was a revelation. And as soon as I got a taste of that, it was hard to forget it. So even though I went back to work after my sabbatical, it was like, I would be at these jobs where I was just working around the clock. And I would just remember the time when I had

29:12 the time and the space to like read a book or, you know, or just enjoy a meal or, you know, just normal everyday things. And I would just, just get this like pain in my heart, you know, of like, this is, I'm missing out on my life because I'm spending all of my time working. And I think that's something that a lot of people can probably relate to, you know, like even if they're not working in, in the entertainment industry, it's like,

29:41 our society is so obsessed with work. And it's like you're not allowed to have a life or an identity that doesn't include that. You know what I mean? Yeah, I completely feel that. I felt it yesterday when I took the day off and I was like, I should be working. No, I'm going to enjoy the aquarium instead. Yeah, it's tough. And so what brought you to writing a memoir and what are you doing today?

30:08 Well, the memoir started, I didn't intend to write a memoir. I didn't intend to write a book. I was honestly just like when I quit TV, I was so burnt out. And the thing that was so sad to me was that I had always loved creative writing, since I was in third grade. And...

30:34 It was just this lifelong passion. And then by the time I was done writing for TV, I hated writing. Like I never wanted to write again because that's what the business did to that passion. And so I really needed to decide whether I was going to just walk away from writing completely and just do something else with my life or if I was gonna try to get back some of that love that I had for writing. And...

31:03 and I decided that I was gonna at least try, you know? So I just started writing about my experiences in the TV business because it was the thing that was kind of most on my mind at the time and it was a way of my just kind of therapeutically processing all the stuff that I had been through, you know? And again, like I, it just sounds so cheesy, but like it was really a form of healing.

31:33 to write about that stuff. And so that's how it started. I just started writing about, you know, like I started, I think I started writing about the first TV writing job that I'd had. And then I just



moved on to the next one and then I moved on to the next one and I kept going. And then finally, I think about six chapters in, I had to admit to myself that it was a book. I was like, I think this is a book.

32:03 Oops. Yeah, oops.

32:10 And then what are you doing? Are you working on something else? What else are you doing now for those who are like, okay, you quit screenwriting, now what? Well, I've done a lot of different things, little projects, and I don't say little. I mean, I'm belittling my own interests. I've done a lot of different projects and stuff. So the book took, from the time I started writing,

32:39 The first chapter, until it was really done and I was submitting it to agents, it was 10 years. 10 years had passed. So that's a long time. And I wasn't spending all of that time, like every single day working on the book. There would be long stretches of time where I wouldn't even look at my book and I would just be making costumes for Burning Man or like...

33:08 I would take on some household project, like decluttering the entire house or things like that. And part of the reason that I left TV was because I wanted the time and the space to be able to do those things, to be able to follow whatever inspiration came to me, whether that was inspiration to write something or whether it was inspiration to clean my closet.

33:37 Um, just, just anything that I felt like doing or so. Yeah. So I learned how to sew and I started making a lot of, you know, clothes and different projects and stuff. So all of these things, you know, were, are things that I have done since I quit television, um, and writing is just one little part of that, you know, it's not, it's not my whole existence, but I always say that.

34:05 If you don't have a life, you are not going to have anything to write about. You know, like it's, I think that that's one thing that I really learned from working in TV was just like, cause we were constantly pumping out scripts. You know, you were like, it was like a, like an assembly line, you know, or a factory where you just like, you're just constantly expected to produce material. And it was.

34:34 it's just not sustainable, you know, because writers need time to live a little before they can write about it, you know? So I think that that's really important. I spend a lot of time not writing. And I think at this point in my life, I'm pretty sure that I'll always wanna write, but I don't consider that to be, you know, like...

35:04 I don't want to spend eight hours a day every day doing it. Definitely not. I love that. And that's probably going to be the quote that we'll use for the graphics of, you have to have a life in order to write. And it made me think about how, when you were writing on Freaks and Geeks, how you all took real life examples from your high school experiences to write the show. And that stuck out to me because just as I'm talking to-

35:30 authors of novels and how they're taking parts of their life and incorporating it into the book. Obviously, so are screenwriters, but most of us don't recognize that. Well, I think the best shows are the ones where the writers are taking from their personal experience. I mean,

certainly there are shows where that doesn't happen at all, but I think the best ones, the ones that really resonate with me anyway.

35:59 are the ones that where the writers clearly had some personal stuff that they're working out, you know, like in in the show. That's always my favorite type of TV to watch. I love it. You're just a joy. I'm going to go find every episode that you've written for every show because I now want to watch all of those. Well, everybody needs to go find end credits. Oh, I was going to say I was going to.

36:28 I'm going to say I'm going to give you a list of the ones that are worth watching so that you don't waste your time. Perfect. So I can still have a life. I appreciate that. I'm going to say I'm going to give you a list of the ones that are worth watching so that you don't waste your time.

36:42 Where can everyone find you and purchase end credits? Well, you can go to my website. It's [pattylin.com](http://pattylin.com). That's spelled P-A-T-T-Y-L-I-N. And you'll see like my, by the time this airs, I'll have all of my book tour events listed there. You can pre-order the book. Well, I mean, this is gonna air, I guess on pub day. So at that point, the book will be in stores.

37:12 Anywhere books are sold. Yes. And you can follow me on Instagram at virtualpattylin. And I post about not just writing, but my sewing, all of my creative endeavors I like to share with people. Thank you so much, Patty. This has been so much fun. Thank you. Thank you for having me on. It's been great talking to you.

37:37 I adored talking to Patty. She is just one of the sweetest people. Her book is fantastic. End credits is out today. And I am going to be lucky enough to get to spend more time with Patty in solving. Next month, as we are at one of the Zibby retreats, you should check her out. Check the Zibby retreats out. Check out Zibby books. Check out all the things. And we will be cheering a glass of wine to her book coming out.

38:05 but also to the courage and the strength that it took her to switch and leave her career that she'd worked so very hard to get into. I know this is something that is on a lot of people's minds because it was on mine as well. I struggled through leaving a career of 20 years, and yet now that I've done it, I can't imagine looking back and not doing it.

38:30 So I encourage you to really take the reins. You're in control of what you want your life and your career to look like. And yes, it's scary and it gives you all of those knots in your stomach, but do it. Make the change that you want that's gonna make you happy, that's going to allow you to enjoy life because that is what is so important.