

# **Job Search Strategies with Tiffany Franklin podcast**

## **Episode 16 Transcript**

### **Chatting with Hollywood:**

### **How to Launch a Career in Entertainment & Media**

### **with Rich Hull & Chad Gervich**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:07] TF:** Welcome to Episode 16 of Job Search Strategies with Tiffany Franklin.

Have you ever dreamed of a career in Hollywood, whether that's as a producer, director, actor, writer, or content creator?

This is the episode for you.

Join me as I chat with Rich Hull and Chad Gervich who are so generous with their time, sharing incredible and detailed insights that outline the steps to launch a career in media and entertainment, as well as advice about remaining relevant in a business that is constantly shifting, and they know what they're talking about.

Rich and Chad are co-founders of the nonprofit Vanderbilt-in-Hollywood and have launched the careers of countless students over the past 15 years by placing them in internships at virtually every major film studio, television network, production company and talent agency in Hollywood. Here are brief highlights of the distinguished careers of Rich and Chad.

As a digital and traditional media company founder, operator and investor, Rich Hull has constantly led the innovation of new ways for delivering content and empowering diverse voices. Rich was the founder and CEO of the first solely Spanish language streaming service known as VIX after he merged it with the world's largest Latino social media company. He currently serves as President of VIX, which was recently acquired by US Hispanic Media Leader, Univision. Rich served as investor, board member and advisor for a portfolio of 30 media and tech companies and as operator and advisor on media deals, totaling over a billion dollars with major media players such as Disney, Universal and Microsoft.

In the first half of his career, Rich worked with most major studios as a film and TV financier and producer on over 25 projects that have generated hundreds of millions of dollars and ranged from young adult movies to award winning movies with a message.

Chad Gervich is a television writer, producer, bestselling author, and award-winning playwright. As an author, Chad has written two acclaimed industry textbooks, *Small Screen, Big Picture, A Writer's Guide to the TV Business*, which is used as a textbook in several film schools and training programs, and *How to Manage Your Agent: A Writer's Guide to Hollywood Representation*. Prior to producing, Chad spent five years as a development executive with the Littlefield Company, former NBC president, Warren Littlefield's production company, where he developed projects for NBC, ABC, Fox UPN, WB and Paramount.

Chad has taught and design writing and business courses for schools including UCLA, NYU, Emerson College, Columbia College, Chicago, Drexel University, and several other schools and companies throughout the world. I could spend an hour just talking about their achievements, but I want to dive into this interview. So, for Rich and Chad's full bios, go to my website, [tjfcareercoach.com/blog](http://tjfcareercoach.com/blog), where you will see the show notes for this episode, including a transcript you can download with timestamps and resources mentioned in our conversation.

While on [tjfcareercoach.com](http://tjfcareercoach.com), you can book an appointment with me to devise strategies for your career development. I have been a career coach for over 20 years, and helped over a thousand executive clients take their careers to the next level, in addition to my work, advising students during my time in Career Services at U Penn, Vanderbilt, Drexel, and in my private consulting business. I appreciate your time and hope you enjoy this episode as much as I did.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:03:52] TF:** So, I'm really excited today to have Rich Hull and Chad Gervich. We go way back, Chad and I were in the same class at Vanderbilt. Then I met Rich later while I was working at the Career Center. And when you both had Vanderbilt in Hollywood, in those early years, I got to meet you. So, welcome.

**[00:04:10] RH:** Thank you. Thanks for having us.

**[00:04:11] CG:** Thanks, Tiffany.

**[00:04:13] TF:** Appreciate your time. So, guys, please walk me through the highlights of your career journey.

**[00:04:18] RH:** Chad, would you like to go first?

**[00:04:21] CG:** Sure. I think there are three highlights that have been either pivotal or meaningful to me, and the first was meeting the guy who was my mentor and got me my first job. And after Vanderbilt, Tiffany, I went to grad school at UCLA to get my MFA in playwriting. And at the time, UCLA had a mentor program for graduating grad students. So, I applied and ended up getting as my mentor a man named Warren Littlefield, who at the time was president of all of NBC Entertainment and he was like the most amazing mentor you could get. And right around the time that I graduated, he stepped down from being president of NBC to start a production company called The Littlefield Company and he hired me as an assistant/junior executive at The Littlefield Company.

So, that was my first job. And Warren and everybody at The Littlefield Company in my time there, kind of taught me everything I knew, everything I know about television. So, that was my entree into the business. And so that was really important. The Littlefield company, if for those of you who don't know is the company that now produces, they do Handmaid's Tale and Fargo and a bunch of fantastic shows. And then I think the second big highlight for me was, I've been at The Littlefield Company for a few years. I actually left and then went back to The Littlefield Company, and then in I guess it was 2005, 2006, ended up creating this comedy reality show called Foodie Call that ended up getting picked up to series. And it was The Littlefield Company's first foray into unscripted television.

So, I flopped over at that point from being an executive to being a producer on that show with Warren and the showrunners, who we had hired. I come out here to be a writer and a producer, and so that was my first real producing gig. I've been writing and producing ever since then. And then I think just the third highlight, just because it meant so much to me was last spring, I sold a show to 20th Century Fox and ABC and I sold lots of shows before. I shouldn't say lots of shows, but I sold shows before but this show was, it was a half hour family comedy for ABC, about – kind of in the vein of Blackish, or Fresh Off the Boat about a family, navigating life raising a transgender child. It was something that was just really personal and a little autobiographical. So, it was awesome to be able to sell that.

Unfortunately, ABC did not pick it up. The pandemic messed with us a little bit. But that was just a career highlight, I would say.

**[00:07:03] TF:** Well, that's incredible. And just talk about the power of mentors and I love you having material that is so relevant for everything going on.

**[00:07:13] CG:** Yes, I just wish you could see it on TV.

**[00:07:16] TF:** Hopefully down the road.

**[00:07:18] RH:** I'll play the part of Chad's publicist here. But one of the great things about Chad is that he is always on a show. I mean, I don't think I've known him at a time when he hasn't actually been on a show which in the world of Hollywood, that is the biggest calling card you've got. And he's been on everything. I mean, I can think of talk shows you're on, I can think of unscripted, I can think of scripted, you name it. It seems like you've been on everything, which is really a feather in your cap and that's cool.

**[00:07:45] CG:** Thank you. That is because I will basically take any job you give me. If you need somebody to clean your house, babysit your kids, take out your garbage or write your TV show. I will be there.

**[00:07:57] TF:** You're too modest. So, when did you two meet?

**[00:08:00] RH:** So, we met about, gosh, 17 or 18 years ago, I was like 10. Chad was a few years behind me at Vanderbilt and had gotten out of school, come to LA and started making his way as a working writer. And I'm not exactly sure how we got connected. But somehow through the Hollywood circles or the Vanderbilt circles in Hollywood, we got connected. As we started getting to know each other and chatting, it was super clear that there was no bridge between Vanderbilt and the entertainment business in Los Angeles. And if so, it would have cut a couple years off of both of our journeys. So, we ultimately set out to build that bridge starting now 15 years ago, with the Vanderbilt and Hollywood program, which just kind of started originally as just a summer internship program that kind of handpicked and placed just a few Vanderbilt students into the summer internships in the entertainment business. Today, we've been doing it, what is this Chad, our 15th year 16th year?

**[00:08:56] CG:** Yeah, I think so.

**[00:08:57] RH:** Something like that.

**[00:08:58] CG:** By the way, Rich, just trivia question. Do you remember where we had our first date?

**[00:09:03] RH:** I don't.

**[00:09:05] CG:** The first time we met, we had drinks at the W in Westwood.

**[00:09:11] RH:** I love that. I love that.

**[00:09:12] TF:** Good memory.

**[00:09:13] RH:** I'm embarrassed that you knew that and I didn't.

**[00:09:16] TF:** The original Vandy-in-Hollywood meeting. I remember when that press release first came out in '06, and I had read about like, "Wow, this is incredible."

**[00:09:24] RH:** I feel like we must have sketched something out on a cocktail napkin, Chad.

**[00:09:28] CG:** We probably did.

**[00:09:29] RH:** We'll have to dig that up.

**[00:09:30] CG:** If we can find it. We could probably sell it for a million dollars like Picasso's sketches on a napkin.

**[00:09:35] TF:** it's in the attic somewhere.

**[00:09:39] RH:** Somewhere, somewhere.

**[00:09:39] CG:** To tag along with what Rich was saying, one of the reasons we connected and started talking about Vandy-in-Hollywood was because we had both realized once we were out here was Hollywood, I'm going to say Hollywood, but I think this is probably true of the entire world. Navigating your way through this industry is all about connections and relationships. It's entirely connections and relationships. One of the things that had definitely frustrated me when I was at Vanderbilt was, I knew I wanted to work in the entertainment industry. And while Vandy is in Nashville, here I was on a campus, literally less than one mile from one of the largest entertainment hubs in the country. And I knew that less than a mile from me, there were A-list agencies and production companies shooting music videos and other type of content. And there was no bridge not only from Vanderbilt to Hollywood in Los Angeles, but no bridge from Vandy to the big entertainment industry there was in Nashville.

So, once Rich and I were both out here, even though we didn't know each other right away, when we finally met and started talking about this, I think we kind of shared a frustration and I say frustration without – we both love Vanderbilt very much. But I think we both shared our frustration of, "Oh my god, this is an industry based on relationships and

there was no way to get those while at school, and can we build that bridge backwards and give students this resource that we never had.”

**[00:11:06] RH:** And I think if I remember, Chad, you'd stay far more connected to the university than I had. You would even start going back and speaking at classes and had maintained some of your relationships with professors, and you'd already made some inroads into what ultimately became the Vanderbilt-in-Hollywood program. But now today, we place about 30 students every summer and we do that at pretty much every major Hollywood talent agency, production company, network studio, you name it.

And after 15 years of this, there's now hundreds of former Vanderbilt-in-Hollywood interns that are out here, most of them get their first job through that internship. Likewise, there are hundreds more alums who never went through the Vanderbilt-in-Hollywood summer internship program that just support the program. When the students come out every summer, we provide them with an alumni mentor, which we always joke and say is, in case you get thrown in jail, then you've got somebody to call. But there's a lot more benefit to it than that. We send them off to movie premieres and screenings and studio tours. And we do a Q&A with industry speakers every Wednesday night. Usually in my office during a pandemic, it's all virtual, and buy them pizza, because what better way to get college students to show up to anything than to feed them.

In the early days, when we started that the speakers were never better Vanderbilt alums. Now they're all Vanderbilt alums. And then a couple years ago, we added a scholarship to that and have awarded multiple scholarships every year that enabled people who couldn't really afford the high cost of living in LA to come out and do it. So, it's really become a really cool program. And I'd say, in hindsight, it did become the bridge that we ultimately, we set out to build it, like anything else, it went through a bunch of twists and turns to get there. But I think it is the program that both Chad and I wish had existed when we were there for sure.

**[00:12:58] CG:** One thing that I think makes the Vandy-in-Hollywood program really special, in Hollywood, you are almost never ever going to get a job because you're the most talented person or have the most qualified resume. You might need those things, but what's going to get you the job, or at least get you in the door or put your application or resume at the top of the staff is that you know the person doing the hiring, have a personal relationship with them. Or you have a personal relationship with somebody who has a personal relationship with the person doing the hiring.

What I think makes the Vandy-in-Hollywood program really special is that when students apply to the program, Rich and myself, we've got a whole team of other alumni, we really peruse those applications. But more importantly, we jump on Zoom and spend a lot of time interviewing each student individually. So, when Rich and I then calls a friend or one of our

other alumni helpers on the team, calls a friend at CAA or at NBC or IMAX or Imagine or wherever and says, “Oh my god, I know you have an internship opening. We have the kid, you have to hire.” It means something to them. You're not just sending a kid in cold without knowing for them. You're vouching for them and you believe in that vouch. And I work with a bunch of other universities out here who have summer internship programs, and they don't do that level of vetting. I've worked with several programs out, when a kid applies to the summer program, if they apply, they pretty much get in.

**[00:14:35] TF:** That's fantastic the way that you help prepare them for the interviews, so they know how to approach them and it's not that they're approaching them cold.

**[00:14:43] RH:** It's not just preparing them for the interview itself, but it's also helping them to figure out what they want to do in the business. One thing that people don't realize about Hollywood is everybody knows that there's a writer, director, producer, and there's a guy in front of the camera, but then you don't always realize that there's every conceivable job under the sun that goes on behind that in order to make that work. So, there's a marketing job. There are distribution jobs, there are accounting jobs, there's finance and strategy, you name it, there's every kind of different job.

So, one of the things I think we help students do through those online interviews is to kind of help them narrow down the universe of options of what's really available to them, what part of the business do they really want to be in. Because there's nothing more frustrating than when a student shows up and says, “Hey, I'm really smart, and you can throw me into anything, and I'll just figure it out”, which is a great trait to have, but it doesn't give us anything to go on. And that gives me nobody to call. But if they say, “Hey, I want to be a TV writer, on a half hour comedy, on broadcast TV”, that gives me something. It may turn out that they're wrong and that's okay, because Hollywood is the model for reinventing yourself constantly. So, you can be wrong and pivot to a different part of the business, a different career in the business or whatever. But at least you've kind of put a stake in the ground and you have a starting point for people. It gives them something to grab onto. And I think we help them sort through that.

Because particularly being geographically removed from the entertainment business in Hollywood at Vanderbilt, some of the students didn't grow up, knowing that they wanted to be in the entertainment business, like Chad did. I was not one of those kids. I grew up in Texas, my parents' friends were bankers and doctors and lawyers, and there wasn't an entertainment guy in the bunch. So, I was never really exposed to it. And I grew up at a school that in high school, I went to an all guys prep school to prioritize athletics and that was my whole life. At Vanderbilt, I spent a little time drinking beer and not anytime at the theater.

So, I happen to only figure that out just by happenstance after I graduated, which is actually probably a nice segue back to your original question that you asked at the beginning, which I'm sorry, we got onto a tangent about finding Hollywood. Obviously, Chad and I are passionate about it.

**[00:16:51] TF:** We were going to talk about it anyway.

**[00:16:54] RH:** Yeah, and I mean, look, it's sort of become our mistress, maybe second wife, or how you want to – we spent a lot of time doing it, and a lot of time looking at each other. But for me, when I got out of college, the thing I knew for sure is that I didn't want to get a job. And I felt that if I went back to Texas, my dad was going to make me get a job, or worse yet, send me to law school and both options were not appealing. So, I went on an archeological expedition in Alaska. It was the weirdest thing I could think of. And I lived in a tent for the summer thinking I would be Indiana Jones and kind of was. I found the oldest spearhead ever found in North America at the time, it might still be a record today.

But then the first show hit the ground. And I was like, “Huh, this Texan is out of here.” So, I got in my car, and I zigzag the country and I met some people who were also from Texas, they were in Yellowstone National Park, they were doing a theater show. I told him my story and I said, “Look, if you give me a free place to live, I'll be your gopher. I'll make your coffee. I'll tote your props, you name it.” And they said, “Yep, that's a good trade, we'll do that.” And then about three weeks into the run of the show, one of the lead actors hurt his back about 20 minutes before curtain. And they said, “Okay, kid, here's your big break, if you don't play as part, the show didn't go on.” And I did it and was awful, but was immediately bit by the entertainment bug. And suddenly, this light bulb went off in my head, which suddenly explained all the reasons why I didn't want to go to graduate school or get a job. It was that journey of kind of taking some time off, clearing your head, being exposed to new possibilities, that kind of gave me the chance to find my way pretty quickly after that to the entertainment business in Hollywood. And I started as an unpaid intern for a producer. At a time when it was a little easier to do that. These days, it's much more helpful to be a student and do your internship because a lot of the laws have changed and stuff around that.

But I did that for a while and was kind of promoted up the ranks, and after a year or so kind of realized that I could do this on my own. I went out and started raising money to make independent movies and finding scripts. The first film I made went to Sundance, which opened a lot of doors at the time. And that allowed me to make some more independent movies, and then that got me into studio movies. One of the first studio movies I made was the high school movie, *She's All That* and it did –

**[00:19:05] TF:** I love that.



**[00:19:07] RH:** It did well enough but everyone in the business said, “Okay, cool. This is what you're going to do for the rest of your life. You're going to make teenage movies, which is great, it pays the bills, it's a good problem to have.” And then about 10 years ago, I was teaching a film finance class at UCLA, Chad's alma mater. All I was getting questions about was digital. People are starting to watch Netflix on their phones and figure out what that all meant. And I realized that I better figure that out. As I did that, I learned about it, I started advising some studios because they were trying to figure out what that meant as well. Ultimately, I became a guy that kind of knew very traditional film and TV on one side, digital media on the other side, and then the finance of how you pay for all that. And at the time, I was kind of getting a little bored with the movie business. But I felt like I was making the same movie, the same high school movie over and over again. I got really interested in the digital space and LA was becoming a digital media town because of its proximity to the studios and I started making some investments sitting on some boards.

Because I grew up in Texas, Hispanic media has always been a part of my world. I looked around, it was kind of an empty space. There are only two television players in the entertainment business for the Hispanic market in the US, one being Univision. And I thought that they had missed kind of the mobile revolution. So, I thought I could start a streaming service that would be cooler and hipper and more interesting, and that's what I set out to do. And so, I built up a large content library, launched a streaming service, thought it should be a subscription service, turned out that it should have been a free service. So, I quickly evolved into that and grew it to be the largest Latin streaming player that you can get for free in the world now. It's called VIX.

We also have the largest social media footprint for the Latin market. We have about 100 million Facebook followers alone to put that in perspective. So, it's a really big megaphone that allows us to talk to people and bring them over to our streaming service. We've got 20,000 hours of films and TV shows from all over the US and Latin America and pretty much every major studio.

Then earlier this year, we were acquired by Univision. So, the irony is the company I set out to disrupt, now, everything I said I would never be which is an executive at a large media company like Univision.

**[00:21:21] TF:** Full circle.

**[00:21:22] RH:** Yeah, it's a strange circle. But the reality of it is, it's the right place. It really is the right place for our streaming service. And we had multiple other offers of people that thought they wanted to buy as well and we picked these guys because we believe them and we felt like our streaming service coupled with their kind of linear television network and some of their legacy assets we're super interesting. We're in the process of buying a company called Televisa in Mexico, which is, essentially think of it, maybe like the NBC of Mexico, and once put together that will make

us the largest Spanish language media company in the world. So, it's been an interesting journey and I guess that's the short version of a very long story.

**[00:22:03] TF:** Well, that is incredible. So, how do you guys keep yourselves at the forefront of these shifts? Because one of the themes, I think, for both of you guys is looking what you think is next, so that you are driving the change rather than reacting to it. Have that been a purposeful thing or just something that you've always gravitated towards?

**[00:22:23] CG:** To be honest, I don't feel like I do drive change. Now, I know lots of things are changing out there technologically and I feel like Rich, especially, is one of these people who is very good at being at the forefront of that and seeing what's coming and kind of leading the charge.

As a writer, I feel like what's always in my head is not how can I drive change, but I'm always just looking to tell what is the most truest, most honest, most personal story I can tell. Now, I do think one thing that I have been really good at, which has allowed me to work not only constantly and steadily, but in lots of different genres and mediums, sitcoms, talk shows, comedy game shows, variety shows is two things. One, I'm good at knowing what I do well, knowing what my voices and what I have to say. But maybe more importantly, and for this question, knowing what I have to say, and then knowing how to adapt it to different types of shows or formats, or genres.

So, I tend to do a lot of like family comedy stuff, or comedy that looks at relationships, or marriages or kids. I've done that in sitcoms, in game shows, in talk shows, and reality shows. And as new genres and new formats come up, I think what I have been adept at is adapting myself to new ways of telling stories, which I think is a skill that you need in order to survive in Hollywood today, but is maybe a little bit different than what Rich does, which is really leading the charge of technological change.

**[00:23:59] RH:** Well, I would say that I'm probably a storyteller in a different way. I've always said to that, putting in my time in the entertainment business gives me very few marketable skills in the real world. If I go in for a job interview at IBM, does anybody care that I can get Tom Cruise's agent on the phone? Probably not. Right? There's no value in that. But I do think it gives me the ability to learn how to tell a story from being around people like Chad, and even going and trying to sell a show with someone like Chad. It's all about storytelling. You walk into a room, you tell a three-act structure story and people say, "Oh, that's a good story, we should buy that."

I've always sort of felt that one of my skill sets is being able to talk to creative people on one side and business people on the other side and sort of translate between the two. So, I think because of that, it's kept me a little bit on the leading edge of what's happening in the entertainment business. Even in the early days of my career, when I started making

teenage movies, nobody was making teenage movies. That genre had been dead for 20 years since sort of the days of John Hughes making movies like some kind of Wonderful and Pretty in Pink and 16 Candles. And as often happens in Hollywood, then that kind of got burned out because if one volcano movie is good, 17 are better, and then pretty soon you kind of overdo it and you need a break.

So, I think I've always been somebody that's kind of always tried to get out there and figure out what's coming down the pike and kind of reading audiences and figuring out what was next. And I've also been super intrigued, I think with kind of two pillars in my career. One is sort of empowering diverse voices, finding people that don't necessarily always have the opportunity to tell their story and figuring out a way to let them tell their story. And then the other is innovating new ways to deliver content.

So, what I'm doing today is obviously sort of the collision of those two, but it does keep me right at the forefront of what's happening in streaming and that's what I like about it. It's the Wild Wild West. I mean, I'm somebody that gets bored easily. When I first started in the business, I would quit almost almost every other day. A lot of that was because I wasn't having fun. I was getting bored. I still quit, but it's down from like five times a week down to like once a week. And then I figure something out, and it keeps me going another day. But I continue to try to innovate those new ways around the streaming business and we're doing that today.

I'd say though, but for other people, the great thing that streaming has done is, it's kind of dropped all the barriers to entry for people. If you believe that actors act, and writers write, directors direct, and that's what defines them. Now they can do that and their work can be seen in a way that it wasn't available to them 20 years ago, right? You can write something, direct it, act in it, put it on YouTube, figure out a way to turn it into a viral hit through savvy marketing and PR and suddenly you've got an audience now, and pretty soon Hollywood's going to be knocking down your door. And none of that existed. Literally. Not that long ago.

**[00:26:47] TF:** Yeah, I can only think of like Goodwill Hunting or something.

**[00:26:51] RH:** Yeah.

**[00:26:53] TF:** So, in your Entrepreneur interview last fall, you said the future of streaming will sit at the collision of advertising, international and content. So, how is that impacting your strategy as you go forward?

**[00:27:04] RH:** Well, I'd say that VIX and by extension, our parent company, Univision, we sit squarely at that intersection. We're not only the most downloaded Spanish language app in the US, we're the most downloaded

entertainment app throughout all of Latin America. And on any given week, we're trading places with Netflix for the number one and two slot. So, I think it allows us to be pretty innovative right at that collision. I also think brands are starting to figure out how to marry advertising and content in a streaming environment.

Traditionally, it's been basically Netflix, and maybe Amazon, and to a certain extent, Hulu. Most of those are more heavily subscription based than advertising based. Suddenly, brands are now starting to figure out how to come in. We have brands that come in and they sponsor a channel. We did something this year called Our Latin Voices Channel where we went and we found a whole bunch of undiscovered, young, cool Latin filmmakers. And we programmed their films into a channel that was sponsored by our partners at Target. And that became a way to get Target involved in sort of the multicultural space, the streaming space, the advertising space, like it all collided right there. I think that's seems to be where the markets headed right now.

**[00:28:20] TF:** That's great. Where did you find those filmmakers?

**[00:28:24] RH:** It's from 25 years of running around Hollywood and knowing where a lot a lot of bodies are buried, I guess. Some through the major agencies, the talent agencies that we have good relationships with. Some through filmmakers, some through other relationships. When the pandemic first hit, we had a movie called *Windows in the World*, which came to us through a woman I had known 10 years ago when she was running the Home Entertainment division at Warner Brothers. And she since left and become a producer's rep and had gotten involved in this movie with Edward James Olmos, which was super interesting. It was a scripted film that it looked at the undocumented immigrants that were in the World Trade Center when 9/11 happened, and nobody ever counted whether they survived or not. And Edward James Olmos plays one of those guys that never showed up on a list because they were never on a list in the first place. They were not supposed to be working there.

So, it was a super powerful movie/ They were planning on having a theatrical release. And then the pandemic hit and the theaters closed, and we were able to do the world release on streaming instead and we turned it into a big event. We brought in Edward James Olmos had kind of all these really cool Q&A events and ran a bunch of great press around it. We really turned it into something special. So, the answer is they can come from anywhere. That's the great thing about Hollywood is that, as Chad pointed out earlier in this conversation, it's who you know, business. And so, if you know a lot of people, that's a pretty good recipe for success. I think a lot of times you realize that the currency you have both in Hollywood and in real life are the relationships you've got. And that allows you to do things like trade information. Information is super important, but all that comes through your relationships.

I mean, I can't tell you how many scripts I've sold in my career because I happen to be at lunch and I walked by someone and they said, "Oh, Rich, how's it going?" "I'm at studio X and I really need a movie about bugs." And then you're like, "Oh, I got a big script, you get it over Zoom. It sells." Like it's that network of relationships where you trade information, that's your currency. That's what's so important about a job hunt, either in Hollywood or outside of Hollywood.

**[00:30:27] TF:** Well, that's a great segue to my next question, because when I was supporting the Vandy-in-Hollywood program for a few years on the Vanderbilt Career Center side, you guys would always come in and give these incredible talks to students. And I think that's one of the things that whether you're a student, or you've been in the career field for a while, people sometimes struggle with the networking. I remember, Chad, we were in the same class. I remember you as a freshman, and you were one of those people that seemed to know everyone even then. So, what are tips that you guys can give for how people can network, especially if it doesn't seem to come as naturally to them and forge those connections?

**[00:31:04] CG:** One thing that happens in the world of Hollywood, and this may not happen everywhere else, but there may be a takeaway in here is that the lines between your professional and your social life are often very blurred. In other words, when I was an executive at The Littlefield Company, part my job was to find new talent. So, every night I was going to comedy clubs, or to movie screenings, or to new plays, and I used to love that because I love going out to see live performances. Another part of my job was making sure I knew all the young executives and young agents and even assistants out there and other production companies, network studios and agencies. So oftentimes, if there was an assistant that I talked to on the phone a lot, or a young executive, I dealt with a lot, I'd say, "Hey, I'm going to see a comedy show tonight, you want to grab dinner, and then we'll check out the improv together?" And they'd say, "Sure." And so, that is a business evening out but it's also really fun. That's the stuff that I live for.

So, the people you're working with every day, just kind of become your friends and your friends become the people that you're working with every day. And so, the lines between what is a social outing and a professional outing become very blurred, and pretty soon networking is just your networking, but it's really just the act of making new friends all the time. But I do think there are – like I always tell people, when people say, "Well, how should I network?" I do think there are tools. One is I always tell people never underestimate the value of taking somebody to lunch, just taking somebody to lunch. And that means you buy, that means you pay, is a great way to get to know somebody and to treat them to something nice, especially if it's assistant or somebody at a lower level.

I'm going to back up for just a second. I think a big mistake that people make often when they're networking, is trying to network too high up on the food chain. People often think I got to network, I have to know the biggest, most powerful people I possibly can. And I think that's a huge mistake. The people at the top of the food chain, they're not interested in

meeting the people the bottom of the food chain. The people at the top of the food chain, or the people who are – they're trying to network as well. But they're trying to network with Tom Cruise and Steven Spielberg and Aaron Sorkin and whoever. The people you want to network with are the people at your own level, or just below your level, or maybe like a half step above your level.

So, first of all, to me, that takes a lot of the pressure off of networking, knowing that you're not trying to get a lunch with the president of universal, you're just trying to go to drinks or coffee with the assistant who you talk to every day. And when you're networking, and when you're building relationships with people at that level, taking an assistant to lunch is not only easy, but it's a great thing to do for that assistant. Nobody ever takes them to lunch. So, when you say “Hey, I'd love to take you to lunch to just hear your story.” People love that.

**[00:34:01] TF:** Giving them a voice.

**[00:34:04] CG:** Giving them a voice. People like to be heard. Another piece of networking advice that I always give is, I think networking is very much like dating. And what I mean by that is if you go on a first date with somebody, you don't go on that first date with them and immediately say, “Oh my god, I really like you. We get married. Can we have kids?” Like that would be insane, right? You're going on that first date, to learn about that person and form a real human connection. And most importantly, just to listen to that person and learn about who they are and find the places where you connect. And if you form a connection with that person, then maybe you have a second date, and then maybe you have a third date, and then maybe even the fourth date.

Networking is the same thing. You're not going on that first date to say, “Will you hire me? Will you read my script? Will you make my movie?” You're going on that first “date”, to form a connection and if it goes well, hopefully you'll have a second networking date and a third networking date and then eventually, six months or a year or six years down the road, that person is going to make your movie or that person is going to buy your script or that person is going to get you a job. But it's the long game, you're playing the long game. And to me, that's helpful because it takes a lot of the pressure off, if you don't feel like you're having a lunch with somebody in hopes that this stranger you just met will make your movie tomorrow.

**[00:35:20] TF:** That's something I tell clients. You can't cram networking. It has to have an organic aspect and also remembering how you can help people too, so it's not just a one-sided ask.

**[00:35:31] CG:** Tiffany, you're dead on. To me, that is maybe the most important piece of networking, I'm like, “Tiffany said that I should have led with that.” But figuring out how you can help somebody is maybe the best way of networking

at all. And that can be something big, like finding out what they need in their job or their life and then figuring out a way to provide it. When somebody says, “Oh, I’m looking for a new assistant”, and you can say, “You know, I have somebody great for you, or let me send out some emails, and I’ll have some something great for you.” Or it can be just smaller things throughout the course of your day. I keep on my computer, the birthdays of all my business contacts, and just sending somebody a happy birthday note, or when you see their name in the trades, because they sold a project, sending them a congratulations. Or if you see a fantastic comic or a great actor somewhere and your friend is casting something and you send them an email saying, “Hey, I know you’re casting for a middle aged African American mom, I just saw a great actress in a play, you should look at her”, that makes their day so much easier and you’ve provided that.

Or another friend of mine, who’s a showrunner friend of mine once said this to me, and I thought this was invaluable advice and then I’ll shut up. But she actually said to me, that even more helpful than sending somebody a note when something good has happened to them is sending them a note when something bad has happened to them, when somebody show gets canceled, or when somebody loses their job. Send them a note or give them a call or shoot them a text. A friend of mine just had a show that did not get picked up at Disney. And I just sent her note and I was like, “Oh my god, I’m so sorry. That sucks. I’m never watching them again. I’ll never watch a Disney movie for the rest of my life.” And just reaching out when somebody is in a time of unhappiness and just saying like, “Oh, that sucks. I’m with you.” Means so much. Everybody reaches out when something good happens to you. But when something bad happens and you hear from people, I think it means a lot. And that’s how you build those relationships, even professional relationships.

**[00:37:38] TF:** Well, such great advice and so true. For you guys, what advice do you have for people? You have this amazing program, Vandy-in-Hollywood, but what about people who don’t have access to a program like that? What would be some of the tools that they could use to infiltrate Hollywood and land a job either like, a TV writer, like you Chad or Rich in media, or production, or any other way?

**[00:38:03] RH:** Oddly, I’ve never gotten a birthday wish from Chad on my birthday. So, it bums me out to hear that you reach out to everybody else on their birthday, not me.

**[00:38:15] CG:** On my calendar says, it does say Rich Hull’s birthday, but then it says, “Do not send” right there.

**[00:38:22] RH:** I appreciate that.

**[00:38:22] CG:** I don’t know why I put that in there.

**[00:38:25] TF:** You're waiting to see how long till he said something about it?

**[00:38:28] CG:** That's right. That's right. That's right.

**[00:38:28] TF:** Well, we know who's paying at the next dinner.

**[00:38:31] RH:** It's only been two decades and he finally said something.

That's a good question, Tiffany, sort of what are the tools people use to start networking. One, we talked about earlier, which is be specific. Do the legwork on your own to figure out what it is that you want to do. So, if you've never had a job, and you're just getting out of college, and you're looking for your first job, be specific about what that is. If you have a job and you want to change careers, be specific about what that is. I think that one of the neat things about LA is that very few people are from LA, it seems like. Everybody comes here for the same reason, which is the entertainment business. So, we've kind of all been through that beginning phase where you show up in town with a list of friends, of friends, of friends. And when you make those calls to people, more often than not, people are receptive because they've been in your shoes as well.

And to Chad's point, taking them to lunch is a great thing. Taking people for drink is a great thing. Sometimes though, a drink or a lunch is a burden on that person. And so, if I had a lunch or a drink with every student from Vanderbilt that wanted to get into the entertainment business, like that would be a full-time job. So, I spent a lot of time just doing phone calls with them. The best thing to do on those phone calls or at those lunches or coffees is to hear their story. I mean, everybody loves to hear themselves talk, me included. And I think you can get a lot out of just hearing people's story. How do they get from here to there? And pretty soon you're going to find one of those stories that you're like, "Oh, that resonates with me. I want to be doing what that guy is doing." And then you can kind of work backwards. You're like, "Oh, well, if he did X, Y and Z to get there, I wonder if I should do that?" That gives you a pretty good roadmap that you can emulate.

I mean, there's no reason to reinvent the wheel all the time, most people have already figured out how to get from here to there. So, it's about finding one of those people that you can then copy. I think hearing people's stories is just a great way to do it. And it's like anything else, you got to kiss a lot of frogs before you find your prince. I'm the same way. Sometimes I need to meet people and I'll shoot them a note through LinkedIn, and they'll ignore me. And then I'll have to go find somebody that we know in common, or sometimes I never get through. But it's a proactive effort. If you're proactive, instead of reactive, usually, you're going to be able to kind of get those calls set up, hear those people's stories, find out the roadmap that they use and copy it. That's what I would do if I was doing it all over again today.



And I also think Chad's point earlier about pressure is a really important one. I mean, we're in the middle of the Olympics, as we record this. And we've heard a lot about pressure about athletes that said, "Oh, the pressure is just too much. I'm going to take a mental health day." And I think a lot of pressure comes with networking too, that in a way it's kind of needless, but in a way, I also understand it. I'm somebody that in my life I kind of was an introvert who over the years became an extrovert. And now I get energized by being around people. But it wasn't always the case. One of the ways I did that was by every time I would go to some event, I'd feel super intimidated, like, "Ah, got to work the room. Ah, it's scary. How do you just walk up to somebody that buffet line and start talking to them?" And I realized that that's a lot of pressure to put on yourself.

So, for me, I try to start defining success. And for me, success was walking away with one person's phone number, or email address. And if I did that with just one person, that was a success. So that meant for me, my job was to go get that one and then I could get out. I could leave if I wanted to go home. And sometimes I'd left because I was like, "Oh, my work here is done. This has been a success." And other times, I'd be like, "Oh, I feel like I'm on a roll. Got good Mojo tonight." So, I'd go try to find someone else. And if you came away with two contact information, then that's gravy.

So, if you kind of set the bar at an appropriate level, it takes a lot of the pressure off. And I think a lot of people get kind of hung up on that when it comes to networking and trying to get their next job and that kind of stuff.

**[00:42:31] TF:** Rich that really resonates with me, because I was the same way. I was super – well, I was shy, but I knew I wanted to go into psychology and counseling. So, I would give myself little, go into a coffee shop, talk to someone I don't know, or go to a thing. And I think like you said, taking the pressure off, where I tell my clients, you don't look to anyone person as the one who's going to get you the job, just talk to them, make a connection, and you'll learn something that will help you on your journey.

**[00:42:59] RH:** I agree.

**[00:42:59] CG:** A couple things you can do if you don't have a program like Vandy-in-Hollywood. And the first and maybe the most important is if you're a writer, or an actor, or a director, or a producer, a creator, an artist of some kind, you should be making. You should be constantly making stuff. And wherever you are, write things that you can make, and that will be seen, write and put up a play, join a sketch group, do standup comedy, shoot a short film with your phone, make a web series, whatever you can make and put out there in the world, do it. Not only because it will get you seen, but because more importantly, it'll help you get better.

And one thing that I think is important to know is that when you get to Hollywood, you are not only one of a billion people – everybody in Hollywood has a screenplay in their desk drawer, three screenplays in their desk drawer, short films that they've shot or trying to get made, and everybody is more talented than you are. That doesn't mean you're not more talented than other people, but –

**[00:43:57] RH:** Great pep talk, Chad.

**[00:43:59] CG:** Well, what I mean though, is your job, if you are a writer, or a director, or a producer is not to be aspiring to be a writer or a director or a producer. Your job is to produce. Your job is to make. So, if you're not in Los Angeles yet, if you're not in New York yet, if you're not in Chicago, or Atlanta or somewhere else with a strong entertainment industry or community, it doesn't matter. You need to be making wherever you are, not only to be putting stuff out into the world, but to be getting better because the competition, the professional competition in the industry is fierce. So, you should be constantly, constantly making.

The other thing I would say is if you're not yet in Los Angeles, or New York, or somewhere with some type of entertainment industry where you can be meeting people or working, get into the professional entertainment industry, wherever you are, so you can at least start learning and almost every major American city or midsize American City has opportunities to do that. Local television stations, even if they're just doing local news, they'll learn how production works. You'll learn how to shoot, you'll learn how to edit. The work in a movie theater, you'll start to learn the exhibition and distribution end of things. But figure out what are the internet payment opportunities available to you and take advantage of them, because you will gain knowledge, you will gain experience and you will build your resume.

But if your goal is to be a Hollywood writer, and you're living in Nebraska, or Wisconsin or Mississippi, what you should not be doing is waiting tables at your local restaurant, and biding your time and saving your money so that you can get out to Los Angeles in three years and then begin your life. Your life has begun, so you need to be making and working now.

**[00:45:47] RH:** Wow, Chad, you get fired up about this stuff.

**[00:45:50] CG:** Was that a better pep talk? Was that better?

**[00:45:53] TF:** I love it.

**[00:45:53] CG:** Let me just say I do get fired up. But I feel like I meet so many people, whether they're students or other people who say, "Oh, I want to be a screenwriter. I want to be a director. I'm just saving my money till I get out to Hollywood." Well, what are you doing right now? Nothing, I'm just saving my money. Well, you're not going to make it when you get out here. Think of this time as your time in the gym. If your goal is to go to the Olympics, you don't start training once you show up at the Olympics, wherever you are, you're hitting the gym, you're running the streets, you're doing exercises. So, this is your time to work out in the gym and get better and get stronger and get faster and get smarter. So, when you show up for the Olympic trials, you're ready.

But I think there's a lot of ways to exercise that muscle too. If you want to be someone who develops stories, go watch stuff on Netflix, and then go do a Google search and read the script and start to figure out how that stuff got made. So that when you show up in a place where you can actually be in a dialogue with folks who can get you a job or get your project paid or whatever, you have a perspective to bring to the table. I mean, ultimately, that's what we're all paying you for, as a writer, as a director, as a producer, as whatever, even a marketing person, it's for your perspective.

So, develop that perspective. Know what your favorite films and TV shows are. I mean, that's the most asked question in any interview, whether you're in front of the camera, behind the camera, in an executive job, "What are your favorite movies and TV shows?" And I can't tell you how many times I've asked that of people and they don't have that answer down. I'm interested, that tells me so much about you. We live in this business where I can learn so much about you by having you tell me what your favorite TV shows and movies are, and why you like them.

**[00:47:41] CG:** That's the important thing, the why. I don't care if I agree with what you like or not. But tell me why because that shows me how the wheels are turning inside your head. That shows me what you see.

**[00:47:50] TF:** Well, I have to ask guys, then what are your favorites?

**[00:47:54] RH:** Well, I would say before I tell you what my favorites are, I will tell you that learning the ones that you don't like is also super important as well. And that can be just as helpful in a job interview too. For me, I'm not a person that likes sci fi really. I wouldn't have any idea how to develop a sci fi script. I love teenage movies. I love action movies. I love sports movies. So, I kind of know what's supposed to happen on page 10, what's supposed to happen at the end of the first act, into the second act, what's supposed to happen in the third act. Sci fi movies, I mean, my definition of hell would be starting a job and someone said, "Okay, cool. All you have to do is develop a whole bunch of sci fi movies." I wouldn't know how to do that.

**[00:48:35] TF:** So, we're not going to Mars anytime soon with you Rich?

**[00:48:38] RH:** You're not. You're not. You're more likely to be on a Rich Hull rocket ship than to see a Rich Hull movie about going to Mars. No, it's just not my thing. But I don't know that unless I go out and develop that perspective. It also helps me sort of narrow things down in my job hunt.

So, in terms of my favorite movies and TV shows, look, I've got a bunch of old school ones and then I've got what I'm currently watching. My all-time favorites are sports movies, like *The Natural*, *Field of Dreams*. I love all the teenage movies that I grew up on. The ones that we were talking about earlier, the John Hughes movies, the *16 Candles*, *Some Kind of Wonderful*, *Pretty in Pink*. Currently, though, we just started watching *A Teacher* on Hulu, which I think is great. Kind of a taboo subject but like, very cleverly handled, I think. I think the best show on TV right now is *Hacks* on HBO Max with Jean Smart. Brilliant. It's so funny, so smart. What else have we seen lately that I'm loving? Even Chad got me onto one of my all-time favorite shows, which is *Fleabag*. I still am going to put *Tiger King* in my top 10 of all time because I thought it was so awesome at the beginning of the pandemic, like I could go on for hours on this.

But that's the point. I can create a dialogue with anybody over movies and TV shows because I've got them on the tip of my tongue at all times, knowing that that's a great way to connect with people. That's a great way to tell you a lot about me. Sadly, you learn a lot about me when I say *Tiger King* goes in my top 10. But it's a conversation starter and that's really what an interview is. It's a conversation, right? So, Chad, what are your favorite movies and TV shows?

**[00:50:20] CG:** My favorite TV show of all time is *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

**[00:50:24] TF:** Classic.

**[00:50:25] CG:** Oh, my God. I mean, that, honestly, is the TV show, I feel like most probably changed my life. And I'm not a huge sci fi, horror guy, but that's not even what I fell in love with in the show. That show was so real and so honest emotionally. I was watching it at a time in my life, I think when I just felt everything that was happening to *Buffy* and her friends. *Fleabag* is one of my favorites. Right now, maybe my favorite show, aside from having the best title of any TV show in the history of television, Chad, on TBS, is fantastic. *Ted Lasso* is great, but I feel like everybody says that. But it is great. I used to love *Parks and Rec*. You know what, *Blackish* is one of my favorite shows. When I teach pilot writing classes, we watch that pilot. I've probably seen that pilot over 100 times and read that script. Because to me that *Blackish* pilot is maybe the most perfect pilot I've ever seen. I just love it. So, those are my favorites.

Just to tag on to what Rich was saying about figuring out your point of view, I want to give a piece of advice that is going to contradict all the other pieces of advice that I gave earlier. Because a lot of times when people say, "Oh, I want to

start my career, what should I do?" I will tell people, "Get to Los Angeles as soon as you can. Or if you can't get to Los Angeles as soon as you can, be making something wherever you are, or get into whatever version of the entertainment industry is wherever you are."

But the other piece of advice that I do want to give if you are a writer or a producer or a director, I graduated from college and immediately came out to Los Angeles, and went to grad school for writing, and then immediately started working in the industry. I don't necessarily regret that. I like my path. But I feel like the one thing I have not done is kind of spent time living. When you're a writer or an artist, your job is to draw on your own personal experiences and tap into those and present them to the world as brutally honestly as you possibly can. And if your gas tank, if your reservoir of life experience is not filled up, you don't have much to actually say, much to write about.

I remember getting this piece of advice from a friend of mine who's a show runner, and I'm going to attribute it to Howard Gordon, who used to run 24 and Homeland. But Howard may not have actually said this, but I'm going to attribute it to him anyway. But we were actually talking about ageism in Hollywood, and obviously there is ageism, and it is a problem and it's not good. But I remember Howard saying that as a showrunner when he's hiring, the last person he wants to hire in his writer's room is the 23-year-old wonder kid right out of USC, because that kid has nothing to say. They have no life experience. And he was saying I would much rather hire the 55-year-old woman who has been divorced and remarried three times and has six kids and has worked 17 jobs and lost her brother to cancer and is taking care of her sick mother and has spent time in jail for whatever. He said, that person comes to my table, comes to my writer's room with stories and lived experience and something to say about the world. And I think that's right.

I don't think there's a college kid in the world, maybe there's two or three, who graduated from college, and no matter how talented they are at wordsmithing or telling a story, actually has something real and profound to say. And being able to put together a great sentence and structure a great script is important. But it's not as important as having something real to say and being able to say it in your voice.

To contradict everything else that I just said is, I think the other thing that writers need, especially young writers and it takes a while to get this is life experience. So, if you don't have a program like Vandy-in-Hollywood, make things wherever you are, get a job in the industry wherever you are, or go live. Travel the world, take a job that you never thought you would take but is always fascinated you. Date people. Meet new people. Just fill yourself up with characters and stories and things to say. Because once you get to Hollywood, if your gas tank is not full, it's going to be hard.

**[00:54:53] RH:** I think I'm going to broaden that because I think, Chad, you're talking specifically about writers and creatives that want to work in Hollywood, but I'm going to broaden it to be anybody that wants to work in the real

world. I've slightly evolved how I've discussed this with college students over the years. But the reality of it is, the business world is not going anywhere. Hollywood is not going anywhere. It's going to be there when you're ready to tackle it. And to Chad's point, having that year of life experience is super important. I mean, it was important for me, simply, I thought I was going to go in one direction, I was open to being exposed to something else and it took me in a totally different direction.

Having said that, life gets way more complicated the older you get. And people get spouses, and they get kids, and they get obligations and mortgages, and their feet tend to get buried in a particular spot. There's probably, for most people, never going to be another opportunity in their life to go out and do something crazy that you would never get a chance to do. In my case, it was be Indiana Jones for a summer. I can't do that now. I have two kids, I've got a wife, I've got obligations, I've got a job. I can take two weeks off, but I can't take six months off, or get a euro pass and go around Europe, staying in youth hostels because they're cheap, go zigzag the country in your car, like there's a million things. And this is the opportunity, this is that one time in your life where you get that opportunity.

The way I've evolved this over the years is that I've had people that have said to me like, "Hey, that sounds really cool. But I don't come from a wealthy family, that gives me the opportunity to just live for 12 months on my parents." So, there are other ways to do that. Going and living in a crazy bizarre city and working at a Starbucks is just as valuable as traveling the world. But I think the important point, and what Chad is trying to say here is applicable to everybody, which is just see a different side of life and I think that's super important.

**[00:57:05] TF:** I love it. Well, I know for me, just even living in different cities over the years has been my adventure. And in each city, I learned something new about myself and met people who have been so pivotal in my journey. You guys have filled this hour with such amazing advice.

**[00:57:22] CG:** We're just getting started, Tiffany, let's do another three hours.

**[00:57:25] TF:** Of course. We're on a marathon. Hey, I've got a hotspot now, this works. Okay, so what is the best piece of career advice you have ever been given?

**[00:57:36] RH:** Buy Bitcoin 10 years ago.

**[00:57:44] CG:** Let me just say, I was so proud of myself when I gave Rich that piece of advice.

**[00:57:51] TF:** So, early retirement then, for both of you guys?

**[00:57:56] CG:** Yeah.

**[00:57:57] RH:** I would say for me, in my high school yearbook, they forced us to add a quote under your picture. And my quote was, “Not to decide is to decide.” And there was just something I thought was kind of cool about that. But here we are, however, many decades later, it's actually something that actually has a lot of meaning to me now. I think that from a career standpoint, it's easy to kind of get stuck in a rut, and it's hard to make changes. And when you are deciding not to make any changes, you're really making a decision to keep up with the status quo. And so that's, for me, the most important thing when it comes to careers. It's like, it's okay to get in there and break things, and to put yourself out of your comfort zone and to try new stuff and to fail and reinvent yourself. I think that's super important.

Hollywood is actually a place where you're allowed to reinvent yourself. I mean, I've kind of reinvented my career multiple times over the years. For a while, I was an independent filmmaker guy, then I became studio filmmaker guy, then I became teen movie guy, then I became social cause guy, then I became a digital guy. It's helped me stay relevant. It's also helped me stay engaged in my career, because it keeps it fresh and new for me. I think the real world is the same way, kind of the non-Hollywood world. I think pushing yourself to do stuff that makes you feel uncomfortable is a great path when you're just getting started. It's a great path when you're in a rut, trying to reinvent yourself, trying to start a new career. I think that's really important.

**[00:59:34] TF:** Awesome advice. Chad?

**[00:59:36] CG:** This is a piece of writing advice. Because it's really all I feel like I'm barely qualified to talk about. I remember when I was in –

**[00:59:46] RH:** I agree with that. You're really not qualified to talk about other stuff.

**[00:59:50] CG:** No. But I remember when I was in grad school, my playwriting professor said to us one day in class, “When you are writing something and you are terrified, that somebody you know, your wife, your brother, your sister, your parents, your friend will come in, look over your shoulder, see what you're writing in it and it's so personal that they see what you're writing, you will be mortified, that and only that is when you know you are writing something good.”

**[01:00:21] TF:** Wow. That's powerful.

**[01:00:23] CG:** And I always felt like that's a great barometer and I try to go back to that all the time, because it is so easy to just write – to think, “Oh, you know what would be a great idea for a blockbuster movie idea? This.” And it is something that is devoid of passion or personality or anything close to you and that doesn't mean that there aren't great blockbuster movies. Just the other night, we were watching Avengers: Endgame, which I had never seen before. And first of all, like I loved it, like how could you not? It was fantastic. But also, I thought they did such a great job of dealing in that movie with loss and grief. The writers who wrote that have clearly lived that. And even though they were writing the biggest blockbuster movie of all time, they were writing something that was clearly personal and close to them. So, I just try to go back to that little writing tidbit, as much as possible.

**[01:01:12] TF:** I didn't expect to cry.

**[01:01:14] RH:** Yeah, I think the same holds true, Chad, not just with writers, but with anybody that is doing something that they're passionate about. The reality of it is, if you go and you take a math test, and you fail it, you're like, “I didn't study hard enough, failed the math test, bummer.” But if you write something, you're taking a piece of yourself, you're putting it on the page, and you're bringing your life experiences to that, and you show that to somebody, and they give you an F. You're like, “Screw you, man.” You get really wound up, right? Because they're criticizing a piece of you.

So, I think you have to sort of get past that fear of taking criticism, because you're not going to be able to please all the people all the time. And the more you put yourself out there, the more authentic it is and the more likely that you're going to succeed, but also, the more likely you're opening yourself up for criticism. So, the mark of a young writer is that they have a really tough time taking criticism, and they will say things to you, and I've had this happen a million times, they'll say, “Well, that's not what I meant.” And I'm like, “Okay, it could be true, but you don't get the opportunity to stand in the room whenever somebody is reading your script, or watching your movie and tell them what you meant. It's got to be on the page.” I think that's human nature, too, to struggle with getting notes and criticism.

But ultimately, that stuff can make you a lot stronger, whether you're working at Microsoft, or you're working in something that is completely a creative business. So, I think that's one of the things that sort of separates the adults from the kids in the room is like, who can take notes and comments in a constructive professional way, and not get all wound up about it? And be receptive, be open to it. That's a learned art. Nobody's really good at it, naturally. But I think it's kind of what separates the people that keep rising up to the ranks from the people that ultimately kind of get stagnated.

**[01:03:08] TF:** Well, and that's across industries.



**[01:03:09] CG:** Rich is exactly right. And I think one thing that the people who grow into adults, who stopped being kids, when it comes to taking feedback and notes. One of the things that the adults learn to do often is, you first of all have to learn how to take the notes, you have to learn how to sift the good notes away from the bad notes, because there will be plenty of bad notes. But you also will have to learn how to figure out how to see the note behind the note, which I think is something that young writers, or creators, or artists of any kind sometimes have trouble doing, which means, if you've written some searing family drama in which you've poured your heart and soul into it, and somebody gives you the note, "This would be so much better if the main character had, I don't know, like a talking wisecracking monkey with him all the time. Like give him a wisecracking monkey." And you're thinking, "That is the stupidest idea I've ever – this person doesn't understand my work at all. They don't understand what I'm doing. That's a horrible, horrible note."

But the note might not actually be, "I want a talking monkey." The note behind the note might be, "This story is so heavy and so dark, we just need some kind of levity in it. Some character who's cracking jokes or taking a lighter angle at things and that can be a very valuable note." So, learning how to see the note behind the note and figure out what that is, is a really valuable skill.

**[01:04:37] TF:** And I guess if you're really passionate, like you're saying, then you will know to stick with it, stick through the criticism. How do people know though when it's just criticism that you know, because sometimes you hear about these great projects that are passed on by people and then they go on to be super successful. So, is it, are you looking for patterns among the feedback that people are giving you?

**[01:04:59] CG:** That's a big part of it. If you start hearing the same note over and over from people, if you're showing people the same script, and they keep saying, "I don't understand why this character does this", or "This ending doesn't make sense." If you start to hear that over and over again, and that's a pretty good signal that something is wrong. Also, I feel like a lot of times, if you hear a note, and it just makes zero sense to you, it just doesn't resonate with you. We were out with a pitch a few years ago that was about a kid and his dad. And we pitched it somewhere and one of the things I said is, "Oh, we really like the character of the principal in this. Could you make the principal a main character?" Okay. The principal appeared in one scene and have like three lines, there was no – it had nothing to do with the story. And in my head, I was like, "That's a really stupid note. We're not setting this up here."

**[01:05:50] RH:** How did you react to that note in the moment in the room?

**[01:05:52] CG:** You know what? That's interesting. That's interesting. We'll talk about that. We'll talk about that. There's a difference when you're hearing, when you're pitching something and people reacting to it, than when you're in bed

with somebody, and they're your partners. When you've set it up at a studio or a network, and then they're invested, then it's different, because they're your partners.

**[01:06:12] RH:** But this idea of consistency of feedback, is one that I've sort of taken with me as I've segued out of being a guy who runs movies to being a guy that runs companies that sometimes have something to do with movies. And so, selling a movie pitch is the same exact exercise as raising money for a company. And the reality of it is, when I first sort of made that leap, and started my streaming service, people would say, "Tell me about your experience." And I'd be like, "Well, I've run 30 companies," because I've done 30 movies. A movie is exactly like a startup, you come up with an idea, you create a product, you package it, you've got to market it, you've got to distribute it, it's the exact same thing as a movie.

And so, what I've found is that that art of telling that story, is the same exact thing. That also applies to going in and pitching your boss on something you want to do, or pitching yourself for a job. Somewhere, there's a guy that wakes up and knows how to tell that story perfectly on day one. I am not that guy. I have to go out and I have to test drive it over and over and over. And each time I get a little tidbit from somebody and I work that into the story. And when I start to hear the same feedback over and over, I know that's a weak point of my story. And after a while, after 10 or 15 of these kind of dry runs, or even live runs, I'm like, "Oh, my story is starting to get pretty good."

My wife and I are in the process of applying to kindergartens for our four-year-old in LA, which is a crazy overcomplicated process. And with those applications, you have to write all these essays for kindergarten.

**[01:08:00] TF:** Wow.

**[01:08:00] RH:** So, of course, my wife, who is a lawyer, sort of handed me all the essay questions and is like, "You're going to deal with these." So, I wrote the first set of essays, and I gave it back to my wife. And next thing I know, she said, "Oh, hey, I sent that into the school." And I was like, "Why? That was just my opening offer."

**[01:08:19] TF:** Where's the editing?

**[01:08:20] RH:** Yeah. And as we've gone through more and more applications, the story's gotten profoundly better, because I've just gotten better at telling it. And it's like this, when you're going for a job, trying to get promoted, trying to sell something internally, it's the same exact thing. You've got to workshop that story and then to Chad's point, you've got to be open to that criticism, and you've got to be able to sort of discern between good criticism and bad criticism, consistent versus inconsistent, and sorting through all that, and reacting positively that in the room, there's a whole art

around that. But nobody wants to be in business with someone that's like, "Uh-uh, that's not the way it's going to go." Right? But to hear what Chad just said, "Oh, interesting idea. Let me think about that." Everybody's going to find their own vibe on that. But still, like, that's the guy you want to be in business with, Ultimately.

**[01:09:09] TF:** Yes. So, having a thick skin, but also realizing it's the good of the project. And kind of putting egos aside, I guess, as you're thinking about what could really make this the strongest it could be?

**[01:09:21] CG:** Yeah. A friend of mine used to run F.R.I.E.N.D.S, like a million years ago. And I remember he once gave me this piece of advice that I thought was so good. And he said, "Take every note. Every note the executives give you, take it." I was like, "What?" He said, "It doesn't mean that it's going to make it into the script. But if you take every note and try it, even if you know it's not going to work, you can then come back and they're like, "Well, how come you didn't put this in the script? Or what about this or this note?" You can say, "Oh, you know, we tried that and it didn't actually work because of X, Y, and Z. So, we did this instead, and it works way better." And if you just take the notes and try it, and then it fails, it gives you a leg to stand on when you go back and say, "Yeah, that note didn't work, but we fixed it this way instead", which I think is really smart.

**[01:10:06] TF:** I love your stories.

**[01:10:08] RH:** I love it when writers do that with me. I love it. No, I mean, I'm serious. I truly love that. Because it's like you took my idea and then you made it better. Like, "We tried your idea and it didn't work because of this reason, but here's how we tried to solve it. But what we realized is you had identified a problem. So, here's how we solved it." I love that. I mean, that's the collaborative art.

**[01:10:31] CG:** Yeah, that's exactly right.

**[01:10:32] TF:** I'm struck by how many transferable skills are just, whether it's Hollywood or consulting, or what you're doing, it's teamwork, being open to criticism, editing, and there's so many competencies here. And I think that's what it shows that if you come back, even if you're switching careers, if you have a compelling story to tell, if you have skills that you can bring, that could be marketable.

**[01:10:55] CG:** I feel like you're right. I feel like in Hollywood, there are lots of soft skills like that, that people develop well. But that's it. I have no hard skills that could be used anywhere else. I am completely unhirable anywhere else on the planet.

**[01:11:10] TF:** What about for those people that aspire to be in front of the camera? Any just quick tips for them as far as how they can start to get that career launched?

**[01:11:20] CG:** Well, I guess, first of all, wherever you are, start acting all the time and performing all the time. And that means if you are not in Los Angeles, if you're not somewhere where there are movies and TV shows being made, start doing as much theater as you can, start doing stand up comedy, start doing sketch, start doing toastmasters, or public speaking or whatever, just start performing constantly. There's a Vanderbilt student I actually know who wants to be an actor, and I said to her one day, "Oh, so have you been doing Vanderbilt theater?" And she was like, "No, not really. I don't really know anyone over there and I haven't really liked the plays, whatever. So, I've never auditioned there." And I'm like, "Then you're not an actor. Get out there and start acting."

And if you're in Los Angeles, or not in Los Angeles, if you're in Chicago or wherever, start doing student films, start doing indie films. Just get out there and perform in everything as much as you possibly can. Because when you get to Los Angeles, this town is full of not thousands, not tens of thousands, not hundreds of thousands, but literally millions of people who want to be actors. And 80% of them were the best actor in their high school play and the best actor in their college play. And out here, they're lucky if they get bit parts. So, you have to start acting and acting and acting to get better and better and better and better and better.

**[01:12:52] RH:** I think that's great advice. I don't have much more to add to that. Actors act, writers write, directors direct. It's funny, though, how many of those people, Chad, that come out, that remaining 20%, what I've found is that they are people who are rarely willing to do what it takes to actually become an actor. And it's strange that you would pick up your life, move across country, sign a year lease in LA, and then not do anything. But it's almost like they're kind of scared. So, you can go to parties, and you meet these people and you're like, "Oh, you're an actor? Will you tell me about it? Who's your agent?" "Well, I don't have an agent." "Who's your manager?" "I don't have a manager." "Okay, where are you studying?" "I'm not studying." "Well, have you done any student films?" "No, not yet." "Who have you worked with recently?" "I haven't really worked." You just keep going down the list and the list and the list and you're just like, "Alright, then, what are you doing here?" They're like, "Oh, well, I'm waiting tables and I'm thinking about writing a script. I got an idea of trying to kind of sketch out for a script and got this one man show that I've been jotting down ideas on cocktail napkins." It's never going to happen for them. It's not.

A lot of it is because what Chad pointed out, 80% of the people that come out here are the best at what they did in high school, or their college or their small town or their big city. And by the way, they're also probably the best looking as well. They were the best-looking guy or the best-looking girl in their high school or their college or whatever and they

come out here. And that's a whole different set of existential crisis, when you're used to being the hottest person in the room and you walk in everybody looks like you. You're like, "Oh my God. What does my life represent?"

**[01:14:31] CG:** Tell me about it. That's my story. Right there.

**[01:14:35] RH:** But I think Chad's point is super well taken. It's really about doing stuff. It's about stepping up to the plate and taking some swings. And if you make a few strikeouts, who cares? Everybody fails, it's no big deal. And as long as you're learning from it and not repeating the same mistakes, you're making forward progress.

**[01:14:50] TF:** Words to live by.

**[01:14:52] CG:** Another thing I see a lot from young aspiring newbie writers, actors, whatever, is it is very easy to get sidetracked by stuff that takes you away from just doing the work. I can't tell you how many times I talk to young writers in college or right out of college or right out of grad school who've just gotten here. And they say, my biggest question is, "How do I get an agent? Or how do I get a manager? Or how do I get my script to Disney?" And none of that stuff matters – I always feel like that the biggest sign that somebody is not ready to work professionally and is not ready for an agent is if they say, "How do I get an agent?"

**[01:15:41] TF:** Buy your book?

**[01:15:43] CG:** Yeah, buy the book. But no, no, no, because the truth is, my friend Drew, who's a screenwriter always used to say to people, "If writers took all the time and energy they spent on wondering and worrying about how to get an agent, and instead used that time and energy to just write, they would get the agent," and I think that is 100% true. And I think that is probably very true for actors as well. And that obviously leads people to ask the next question, and that is, "Well if I'm just writing and writing, and I don't have an agent, how is anybody going to see it?" The truth is, when you have written something that is good enough to earn you an agent, or good enough to be read by a real producer or executive, it will find its way there. The reason I say that is because you're going to show it to your friend who is an assistant at some [inaudible 01:16:30] agency, or you're going to show it to your friend who is a little actor, or you're going to show it to your friend who does this. And when people see something amazing, they pass it along. And they don't pass it along because they want to help you, they pass it along, because passing it along to somebody else helps them.

So, like when you have a friend who's an assistant at a little agency, or an assistant at a startup production company, and you show them your script, and it is good enough to blow their mind, they know that by showing it to their boss, or

their friend who actually is an agent or their friend who is a producer, it makes them look good, or helps them get the next job. So, when you write something that is good enough that it makes other people say, “Oh my god, by passing along Tiffany's script, I will get myself a promotion, I will get myself a new job, I will get myself a relationship that's going to pay me dividends down the road. I'm passing along this script.” That's when things start to happen. Your script will start to find its way to the right people, not because you asked how to get an agent, but because you instead worked so hard on that script that it makes other people want to be a part of it.

**[01:17:40] TF:** It's interesting, because I've been doing a lot of research on this podcast and all that. And I look at Pat Flynn and the Smart Passive Income site, where he talks about websites and how to create that and he always talks about creating value. For the people that are just trying to get rich quick, he said, “It's not going to be successful.” But if you focus on giving value to people, or like you're saying, having quality content then the other things will follow if you keep at it steadily.

Awesome, guys. Well, this has been amazing. Any parting words before I let you get back to all your business?

**[01:18:14] RH:** No. I love what you're doing. I love the service you provide. And you've been doing it as long as I've known you. More for college students, in my experience with you, but for executives and anybody else, I think it's such a valuable role.

I mean, starting a company, getting a job, it's a team sport and you really need a sounding board. Sometimes you even know the answer deep down, you just need to kind of workshop it. And it's hard to do that by yourself. So, I love the service that you're providing. I love conversations like this. I got to think that they're super helpful to people. There was a group of guys that got together in LA, about 15 years ago and they'd get together on Saturday mornings and they talk about what was happening in the media and entertainment and technology spaces. I would go there and I would come away with all these notes, just jot it down because just the brainstorming and even hearing other people brainstorm triggered so many cool ideas in my mind that I wasn't getting by sitting there by myself in my house every day. It became very valuable.

Okay, of course in that group, like kind of half the group split off and went into digital media and I went into that half and then the other half were like, “Hey, you should buy like cryptocurrency and Bitcoin at five cents.” And some of those guys are billionaires that have moved to Puerto Rico for the tax breaks. The other half got all their crypto stolen out of their wallets and they're super angry about it and they're going to die that way. So, maybe I should have gone into that group.

**[01:19:52] TF:** That's an awkward coffee chat.

**[01:19:55] RH:** Maybe it really is. But I think just that idea of being around people that are brainstorming, having someone to brainstorm with, no matter what level you are, it's so valuable.

**[01:20:04] TF:** Well, thank you so much. And I've appreciated how much you guys just giving back has been such a big thing for you – it took me, I think five minutes when I recording your bios on here to show all the good stuff you've done. But they always take time to help other people and I think that is just what makes you guys you and so special.

**[01:20:24] CG:** I think you're right. There's no denying that we are givers. We are just givers who do not stop giving.

**[01:20:33] TF:** I want to know when the comedy show is going on the road, because you get you two together. And I mean, it's comedy gold, folks.

**[01:20:38] CG:** I don't know. That last joke I tried got no laughs from you guys. So, I feel like the comedy show is dead before it gets off the ground.

**[01:20:46] RH:** Maybe you're the opening act, Chad.

**[01:20:51] TF:** We see the food chain here. Thank you guys. This has been amazing!

**[01:20:56] CG:** Thanks, Tiffany. This was super, super fun.

**[01:20:59] TF:** This was so much fun.

**[01:21:01] RH:** Let's do it again next week. What are we going to talk about?

**[01:21:05] TF:** Hey, and I'll do another hotspot by the way. So, thanks for bearing with me. And if you're ever to Amelia Island, come say hi.

**[01:21:10] RH:** Absolutely.

**[01:21:11] CG:** For sure.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[01:21:13] TF:** Thank you so much for listening to Job Search Strategies with Tiffany Franklin. I really appreciate you and I hope you will subscribe and join me for additional episodes through Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, iHeartRadio, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.

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