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2023-06-21 Pit Stop with Tanya Eby.mp3

DATE

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DURATION

1h 1s

7 SPEAKERS

Karen Commins
Anne Flosnik
Tanya Eby
Andrea Aal
Jeanie Sheneman
Evelyn
Speaker4

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:03] Karen Commins

Well, it is the top of the hour, and I want to welcome everybody to Pit Stop, which is your fortnightly midweek rest area to refuel your drive. I'm Karen Commins. I'm an audiobook narrator and I'm the chief cartographer for NarratorsRoadmap. Com And I'm your host for Pit stop with me in the copilot seat is my lovely friend and award winning audiobook narrator Anne Flosnik, who hosts the Narrator Uplift show here on Clubhouse. How are you this afternoon, Anne?

[00:00:32] Anne Flosnik

Very happy to be here. Thank you.

[00:00:34] Karen Commins

Well, I'm glad you're here, too. Every other Wednesday audiobook narrators who do more than narrate Pull into the Pit Stop. They're sure to inspire you to follow your interests and use all of your talents and gifts. I want to let you all know the conversation is being recorded so you'll be able to relisten or catch parts you missed. Feel free to comment in the chat and raise your hand in the app if you want to be part of the conversation, because we'd love to hear from you. Thanks so much for joining us today. I am super thrilled to welcome Tanya Eby to Pitstop. Tanya Eby is an award winning narrator of over a thousand Audiobooks. She's a I'm sorry, What?

[00:01:17] Tanya Eby

I'm just laughing. Oh.

[00:01:19] Karen Commins

Well, that's mean. That's such a huge, huge, huge milestone. She's also a USA Today bestselling writer and now she's a casting director and producer for Deyan Audio. Tanya ran Blunder Woman Productions, where she brought new work to audio. And for fun, she likes to forage and mushroom hunt, and she spends a lot of time cooking. She says she's successful at it 87% of the time. And of course, we want to know how that statistic was derived. But thank you, Tanya, for joining us. I'm so glad you're here.

[00:01:54] Tanya Eby

Thanks for having me. I'm excited.

[00:01:58] Karen Commins

Well, I'm excited, too. And, you know, I've known you a long time, but there's a lot about you. I don't know. I mean, I saw you. You have a you had a double major in College of English and theater. And what what was your original career aspiration?

[00:02:17] Tanya Eby

Um, originally, I wanted to be a professor, and I did do that for ten years. So I was a I was a professor of writing at Kendall College of Art and Design.

[00:02:30] Karen Commins

Yeah. I saw you taught a variety of classes. You had comic book writing, creative writing, gender and leadership, writing about art, written rhetoric, speech and women and madness in literature. That sounds like a fun class.

[00:02:45] Tanya Eby

That was my favorite class that I came up with on my own. So that was really exciting. Yeah.

[00:02:51] Karen Commins

I mean, I'd like to take that class now.

[00:02:55] Tanya Eby

I should look up the reading list because it was really, really fun. I can't remember it right now, but if I. If I find it, I'll send it to you.

[00:03:04] Karen Commins

So how did you move from that to narrating audiobooks, or is this something you did concurrently?

[00:03:12] Tanya Eby

Yeah, it was kind of organic. I'm in located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and I was doing some radio and stuff when I was in college, some little commercials. And then I heard that there was an audio book company and I would listen to audio books. I would pick them up from the library and listen to like good murder stories while I was cooking or whatever. And and that happened to be Brilliance audio. And I sent them a demo. Recorded one when I was recording a commercial and they never responded. So I called them, which you're not supposed to do, and I asked if they would hire me, and it was actually like, Don't do this. You can't do this now. But this was 20 or something years ago. It was actually that phone message that got me my first gig. Wow. Wow. They liked they liked how my voice sounded. And they were casting a book that needed someone that had those qualities. Yeah. And so then I taught for a long time and I narrated in the morning and in between teaching classes. And I did that for a really long time.

[00:04:23] Karen Commins

Well, I saw that on your LinkedIn profile. You were also assistant to the director of development for Carnegie Hall, and you were doing grant writing and event planning research. So I guess you were actually living in New York at that point?

[00:04:37] Tanya Eby

Yeah. So I was in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I lived in Detroit for a while. I lived in Florida. Then I did that whole picked up move to New York with \$60 in my pocket. And I had grant writing experience and I had worked at a music society and I went to a temp agency and they said basically that no one would hire me because I didn't have any skills. And as I was leaving, they chased after me and they said, You'll never believe this. Carnegie Hall just said that they need someone to fill a temporary position and they need someone who has grant writing skills and hopefully has worked in a music society. So it was a crazy thing that happened and I was there for a year, but I happened to be there for September 11th, and I just I didn't have I didn't have any friends. I didn't have a network. I had no money. And just going at that time was too difficult for me. So I ended up coming back home, becoming a professor and then returning to audiobooks. Yeah. So I've done a lot.

[00:05:51] Anne Flosnik

You have?

[00:05:52] Karen Commins

You have. And just these magical connections mean the phone call and then the temp agency that just happens to get the lead of the things that you just happen to know how to do. Yeah.

[00:06:05] Tanya Eby

Isn't that crazy? Yeah, I don't understand it either, but I kind of have this philosophy that you have to be prepared for luck. And I think that's happened over and over in my career where I have followed things that I wanted to do and got education experience. And so when something lucky happened, I was ready for it.

[00:06:31] Karen Commins

Uh huh. Yeah. What's the the quote? It's luck is when chance meets preparation.

[00:06:39] Tanya Eby

Yeah, exactly.

[00:06:42] Karen Commins

And that certainly sounds like what's happened with you.

[00:06:46] Tanya Eby

Yeah, I think so.

[00:06:49] Karen Commins

Well, you.

[00:06:50] Karen Commins

You know, so then you're you're back in Michigan in the early 2000 and you're narrating and. But you didn't just keep narrating. I mean, you started doing other things and continued to narrate, which is what I always find so interesting is, you know, how people find time to fit all these things in their life. And, um, you, you know, I saw you had an audio file profile in 2018 and you said something. I just love this because this, this to me is the whole reason that I wanted to do Pit Stop. Because you said "it's funny. People perceive that I have a multifaceted life, that I'm doing all these different projects. But for me, it's one life, one project narrating, writing, producing, blogging. All the things I do are actually one thing, and that's telling stories." But in that profile, you said your story began with a lifelong love of writing and that you talked about your writing. And so at what point did you start? Or really push writing further mean No, you were teaching it. But as far as becoming the writer that you are.

[00:08:08] Tanya Eby

Yeah. I mean, writing always came. Came first for me. Um, it's something I've done since even before I could spell. Like, people would draw pictures and I would draw books. I would draw words even though I couldn't spell them. So that has been the driving force. And I think it's something that really saved my life and shaped my life. Um, and so it's something I've always pursued. I have not been until recently. It's taken me a long time to find success doing it. Um, and I think now I'm really settling in. I'm not trying to be anybody else. I'm just telling the stories that I want to tell, how I want to tell them. And especially over the last two years, something has shifted in my my writing that's been very fulfilling.

[00:09:06] Tanya Eby

Does that answer the question? Sure. Yeah.

[00:09:10] Karen Commins

Yeah. Oh, yeah? Yes. Thought Anne was asking. Asking a question.

[00:09:16] Anne Flosnik

No, but if I did, I would say what was the something that shifted.

[00:09:22] Tanya Eby

So something that shifted is in my my blogging. I, I write about things that I'm, I'm struggling with or thinking about or feeling. And I made a conscious choice that I was going to be as honest as I possibly could. And that one rule for me changed everything. Oh, and I think too, I could even apply that I've had some breakthroughs in my narration performance and I think it can also be applied to that be as be as truthful and as real as I can be in every moment. But it is an exercise and it does not always successful at it. But in terms of my writing, I think whether or not it's it's financially successful, it's very satisfying creatively and emotionally.

[00:10:20] Anne Flosnik

Yes. Must be cathartic.

[00:10:22] Tanya Eby

Yeah, it's pretty awesome.

[00:10:25] Karen Commins

Well, and I mean, I've noticed that about the pieces you're writing. They're. They're longer and they're a more in-depth look, and they seem like they just kind of flow out of you easily and effortlessly. Effortlessly. And, you know, I know when I write something, it might take me hours and hours and it doesn't seem like it's that way for you. It seems like it's just here It is. And I and I just naturally think in this very lyrical, in-depth manner and I just envy what you write. It's so beautiful and a lot of it is so profound. And you seem to write about a lot of universal truths that we all can relate to.

[00:11:08] Tanya Eby

Thank you. Yeah, I think what I've what I've discovered is I'm learning more about how my own brain works, and I will have an idea of something that I want to write. And I kind of think about it here and there. I don't spend too much time and I just let my brain work it out while I'm busy doing other things. And so then when I sit down to write, it's usually pretty ready to go. So I know that sounds a little weird, but that's just my my process of how I figured out how to do it.

[00:11:44] Karen Commins

No, it doesn't sound weird. It's something that I wish I could replicate. Well, how did how did the Manhattan series with Serena Bowen? How did that come about? Because, you see, this is the thing. You're busy narrating this whole time. And and with a thousand books. I mean, you're constantly doing the next book, so. How did that come about to work with her and what? Did you learn from that or how do you how do you integrate these two things?

[00:12:17] Tanya Eby

So after you after you've recorded quite a quite a bit, it's not that things get easy. Well, they do get easier, but I also felt like I wasn't being challenged in and I couldn't get casting directors to look at me in a different way. I couldn't get books that challenged me or stretched me. They were great books, but they weren't because I'd kind of mastered the technical process of narrating. I didn't feel as creatively challenged anymore. And so when that happened, that's when I started branching out and I had my production company and for fun on a break, I was I write things and I wanted to write some comedic stuff. So I started working on Man hands and that it just made me laugh. The title made me laugh and I wrote about 100 pages and then I got really stuck. So I decided, screw it. I'm going to ask Sarina Bowen, who I had recorded a book for and who happened to know my husband from high school. If she would jump in on this book and write it with me. And so it's kind of an audacious thing to ask someone, but I just I knew she could say no. She didn't have to say yes. So she read it and she loved it. And again, timing was right. She happened to be looking for projects that she could coordinate with someone and have someone be a partner. And one of the things that she wanted to work on was her her comedy. So I brought the comedy. She brought the structure, and it worked really well for four books. And that was how that happened.

[00:14:16] Karen Commins

Yeah. On the other titles are equally funny Boy Toy, Man cart and man cuffed. Yeah, I mean, just the titles make you make you smile.

[00:14:25] Tanya Eby

They do.

[00:14:28] Karen Commins

Well, love you say it was audacious, but mean that's how things happen if you don't speak up for yourself or make your needs known, it's not going to happen.

[00:14:38] Tanya Eby

Right. And that's what I realized. A lot of this, whether it's writing or narration, anything creative, is that we kind of think people should just know that we can do certain things and they don't know it unless you show it to them. So in a lot of things, I think I wasn't being challenged because they didn't know that I could do challenging work. So then I had to do the challenging work to show them. And I've done that all across my creative career.

[00:15:15] Karen Commins

But how did you show them? I mean, because I think that's a question that I know I have and other people may have is I think I've been telling people what I can do and I've been showing people what I can do or I think I am, but, you know, somehow doesn't stick. And I know it does take multiple touches for people to even realize that you're alive because everybody's busy and got so many things going on.

[00:15:41] Tanya Eby

But yeah, I have.

[00:15:43] Karen Commins

A secret sauce for that.

[00:15:46] Tanya Eby

I?

[00:15:46] Tanya Eby

Oh, I don't feel that I do. I feel like it's some of it's a numbers game. The more you try, the more people, even if you get just a small percentage to listen to you or notice you, it builds over time. And still to this day, there are a lot of companies that don't hire me, like major publishers that I've never been hired by who won't respond to emails. So I'm I'm constantly trying. So it doesn't always work. I do think if you are in a place where you can create content or you can work with someone who creates content that you have a better chance of, of showing some things that you can do. Right.

[00:16:34] Karen Commins

Well, in just the creative process makes your every day more fulfilling. And it may be something that is financially beneficial to you, this creative, whatever thing you've done. So it kind of takes the reliance off having somebody else hire you to do something because you can just you don't need anybody's permission to do things and you can just do it yourself, right?

[00:17:00] Tanya Eby

But it is all it's very time consuming. And then eventually you have to be realistic and like, look at what where am I making an income and where, you know, you have a finite amount of energy. So you have to figure out where to put it. Um, but yeah, it's all try trial and error and I'm, I'm still trying to figure it out. Um, but it is engaging. So that's really fun.

[00:17:29] Anne Flosnik

All in. It's so honest and you can't publicly show the highs and the lows of your journey, don't you, Tanya?

[00:17:37] Tanya Eby

Yeah, so that was something I think that in narration there or in writing, there's a lot of shame of being a failure or not being enough. And so what I wanted to show through my writing and my process that it is just part of the process. And it's a reminder to myself too, because I'm a very sensitive person, so every know that I get hurts. It doesn't feel good, you know?

[00:18:08] Tanya Eby

Yeah, we're human.

[00:18:09] Tanya Eby

Yeah. And I and I found that the more that I talked about it, the more other people would write to me and say, I have the same I'm having the same experience. Yes. And just normalizing that made me feel like less of a failure and that I was at least in it. Even if I wasn't accomplishing everything that I wanted to, I was at least in the game.

[00:18:33] Anne Flosnik

Always? Yes.

[00:18:37] Karen Commins

And I think for us in audiobooks, you know, I see comments all the time. Of people who are in other acting fields. You know, they may do stage or they may do theater. You know, there are commercials or whatever. And the comment that I keep seeing is audio. The audio book community is so warm and giving and generous. And in my experience, that's very true. But I think that because it's a warm, generous, caring community, we kind of lose sight of the fact sometimes, well, it's still in the performing arts and it's still highly competitive and there are still thousands of other people out there who well, maybe not thousands, but, you know, there are hundreds of other people who are all capable narrators and they're you know, there's still a finite number of books being published, even though that number keeps increasing dramatically every year.

[00:19:35] Tanya Eby

So, yes. And.

[00:19:37] Karen Commins

You know, we forget that.

[00:19:38] Tanya Eby

Yeah. And I would say that if you've been in the industry for more than five years already in the last five years, the industry has shifted and changed enormously. And I have some thoughts on that. But it is there are now thousands and thousands of narrators where even five years ago it might have been hundreds. So that's a huge shift. And I think it is shifting the intimacy of our industry into more. It requires more hustle. Thicker skin than we've had in the past. And for those of us that have been in it for a long time, that can feel very personal, even though I think the business is becoming more of just an actor business.

[00:20:33] Karen Commins

Well I mean, I want you to continue on that thought. When you say more of a just an actor business, what do you mean?

[00:20:41] Tanya Eby

Oh, well, I mean, competition is really, really fierce. There's a lot of people. Yeah. And so before and also, like everyone has gotten educated now about audiobooks, so now authors want to be involved in the process. They want to have say over their narrators there's more auditions that are happening, whereas before we would just be given a book, um, at Deyan, I don't have any power to cast my own people. My power comes in, who do I put forth to audition? And then that's taken over by whoever our client is or authors. But everyone's gotten more savvy, so there's more competition from actors who have gotten savvy about knowing about audiobooks from publishing, like from all aspects. So it's just more competitive and it is a business.

[00:21:44] Karen Commins

And it does take, as you said, more hustle and more. I don't know. The thicker skin. I keep thinking about that, too, because when you said you're a sensitive person, I thought, so am I. Yeah, I think a lot of us are. You know, and then to, like, feel like you keep just talking into the void and not getting any sort of response or not getting the traction that you think you should. It's sometimes it's just really hard to keep putting that foot forward and keep going in the same, you know, in the direction forward because you're not sure that your message is even being received.

[00:22:25] Tanya Eby

Right. So that's why I think having other things in your life that isn't just narration can be soul soothing. And that has been important to me and that helps me keep things in perspective. And I'm also realizing now that I had my production company, I learned a lot from that. But now being part of Deyan, just seeing the amount of emails and correspondence and like everyday tasks that casting has to deal with makes me understand that brevity and emails or not responding to some things isn't because they don't like me. It really is because of time, time constraints. So it's kind of like when you get, you know, like you have. A book that has 150 chapters. And if you had to set each chapter up manually, right, and each chapter took you a minute. That's 150 minutes of time just setting up so you can think of it that way. If there are a thousand emails, you can't respond to every email or you can, but you have to be really short and it doesn't have anything to do with the person on the other side. But as sensitive artists, we want that connection and things are just changing because of the sheer volume of what's happening.

[00:23:54] Karen Commins

And it's funny you mention that because I don't answer every email I get. And I had, you know, I did a biography of Margaret Mitchell who wrote *Gone With the Wind* and she made a business. Now, this was, you know, 1936 when that book was published. Things were different. But people she got a huge volume of letters and this became her business was answering all these letters. Nobody's got time for that anymore. And so mean. Even where I sit, people ask me a lot of questions and if it's something I can answer in a few minutes, I will usually, but usually I can just point somebody to a link. Here's what you need. But more than that, I don't have time for it. And so even though I could answer it or I just can't, because if I answer everybody else's question, I don't have time to pursue my own agenda. And so, you know, I see it from my side. But then, you know, I still want all of mine answered.

[00:24:56] Tanya Eby

Of course.

[00:24:56] Tanya Eby

And I do, too, right? And I want everybody to like me. And not everybody likes me. Not everybody wants to work with me. And that's why having lots of clients and lots of possibilities helps with some of that.

[00:25:13] Anne Flosnik

And what are other things that we can do that help? Tanya, What should we be saying and how should we, you know, the whole thing, what do we do?

[00:25:21] Tanya Eby

Um, well, what's working with me now as a casting director is I do like to know every once in a while, not every week, but maybe every month or so, who, who's available, who wants work and who needs it. Because I'm getting when I get a batch of stuff to cast. Um, what's interesting is it's like you, you read as much of the book as you can and you look at all the characters and then people pop up in your mind and if you need more, then I scroll through previous emails or I use keywords to search in emails if it needs someone specific. So just knowing that you're available, because I also waste a lot of time reaching out to people who are some people are really busy or they're on vacation and booked and that takes extra time. So just knowing that you're available is helpful. Um, other things to do. Recognize that when you reach out to a casting, how many emails they're reading and try not to require more work from them. So try to keep your emails informative, but not something that requires responses. Um.

[00:26:49] Karen Commins

And then don't be hurt when you don't get the response.

[00:26:53] Tanya Eby

Yeah, I mean, some of it is I'm not going to say don't be hurt because we will you know, we will be. But but keep at it. Again, like all I can emphasize is how I've had a career is having lots of clients keep trying, living the life that I want to live, having fun, posting about things that I like to do. So people know me as more than just a voice. They know I have some quirks or some expertise, like in foraging and mushroom hunting. I'm I'm waiting for those books to come out that are about mushroom hunting.

[00:27:30] Tanya Eby

So that coming, right? Yeah.

[00:27:34] Tanya Eby

Yeah. Keep at it. But I also think the what we missed during Covid and I really felt this in my career was the opportunity to go to conferences, to go to mixers, getting to know people in person is such a huge benefit. And it was something that many of us, especially those of us who don't live in LA or New York, really felt the absence of that during Covid. So if you're like me, I'm an introvert. And and and social networking is very new to me. Um, but I think it's really important. So if you have an opportunity to meet some people at a conference network social event, something you should really find a way to navigate that.

[00:28:24] Anne Flosnik

That's good advice.

[00:28:26] Karen Commins

Renee Chambliss had a comment in the chat, a question in the chat of how far ahead of time do you want to know our availability?

[00:28:37] Tanya Eby

I mean, it's nice to know if you have a availability for books within the next three months. So because most of the things that I'm casting, at least they'd like them done within the next. Yeah, three months. So if you're not available until January, that doesn't really help me with things that I'm casting right now. But if you're available in August or September, that's awesome.

[00:29:05] Karen Commins

How are you doing? More simultaneous releases or are you doing backlist or is it an even mix?

[00:29:14] Tanya Eby

Um, the stuff I'm doing, I'm primarily working for casting for one client. I don't want to share that publicly. No, that's fine. Yeah. And it's most of the stuff I'm working on is backlist titles or but at Dien, there's lots of things that are for they have many clients, which is awesome with some really great books and some that are new. Many of them are new releases. Um, and all of that .

[00:29:48] Karen Commins

So I would think backlist would have a little more flexibility on.

[00:29:53] Tanya Eby

If it's a back. Yep.

[00:29:54] Tanya Eby

If back if it's a backless title, there tends to be more flexibility.

[00:30:00] Karen Commins

And Marcus Zarco put in the chat that he hopes to run into you this Sunday in Chicago at the APA Social.

[00:30:07] Tanya Eby

Oh, good. So here's the thing. I volunteered to take selfies and pictures at the because I like to have a task. So if you're there and you see me come up and you can remind me and that at least gives us a way to talk for a second and we can take a really awkward and probably horrible picture. So I apologize in advance, but if you're up for that, let me know.

[00:30:35] Karen Commins

And I like your comment about having a task because I know I went to an mixer in New York and I was giving out people's name tags. So, you know, you had to come to me. Well, and a couple other people to even get your name tag for the event. So it was a great way to be able to say at least hi to people. And it I'm a total introvert with you. I'm like, yes, give me a task that I can focus on that and then that'll take care of everything.

[00:31:04] Tanya Eby

Yeah. Or then or like tasks really helped me. But also if you can find a friend who's an extrovert. So my friend Amy McFadden, she's a total extrovert, like she is charged by people. So we go to an event and we kind of go together as a buddy system or we have a couple more friends and then we can introduce each other to people that we've worked with, and it just takes a little pressure off. So that's another tool that you can use going to these events as a team.

[00:31:41] Karen Commins

Yeah. I should find the link of the little video you and Amy did where she was. Wanting you to cast her for a book without giving away what you actually did. That was so funny. I'm going to find that and put it in the chat while other people talk. But want to ask you about you were you were on the Netflix Nailed It holiday. What and I know you love to cook and I've seen many of your cooking videos. What how was the audition process for that? How did you even get on that show? And I mean, speaking of funny, that was pretty funny.

[00:32:19] Tanya Eby

It was it was one of the best things I've ever done. So I watch all the cooking shows, like literally all of them. Um, Iron Chef, Master Chef, like all the cooking, like everything. And my kids, we were watching, Nailed It. And they said that I should go on that show because it's for terrible bakers, because I could never be on any other cooking show. And we all laughed. Ha ha ha ha ha. And so I went to my computer and I did a search and they just happened to be casting. And I said, So I found the casting link and they had a really lengthy application. Um, but I was able to use my writing skills to be funny, I think. Um, and, and they, they responded right away and cast me. They cast me actually, I was at the Audies I think with the "Nevertheless We Persisted" people. Oh um, and they, I was in the final bit of casting and they decided to have me on the show and we finished with the Audies. I went home for a day and then I flew out and did the show, so. Wow. Yeah, that was just another thing. Like, I do this a lot where it's like, if I want to do something, then I research it and then I just try. And I have applied to the Great American Bake Off and other things that hasn't worked out. And you just don't hear about you only hear about the one that did. But.

[00:33:57] Anne Flosnik

Um, it's a big one, though. It's a big one.

[00:34:00] Tanya Eby

That's a big one.

[00:34:01] Anne Flosnik

Yes. Yeah.

[00:34:03] Tanya Eby

So just try.

[00:34:05] Anne Flosnik

Yeah. And you really succeed. Now, what about is Blunder Woman kind of on the back burners for now?

[00:34:13] Tanya Eby

It. It is When I decided to open it back up, I so I've noticed a big drop in my narration work, especially over the last year. And I also after a thousand books and 20 years, I'm also fatigued. Um yeah. And so, and the hustle is, is, is hurting me more than it used to. Um, so I opened Blunder Woman Productions back up but and I had some clients that we were working on getting things going, um, but it wasn't happening fast enough. So the opportunity came up and I think Karen you told me about it, which was awesome.

[00:34:56] Karen Commins

Yeah, I'm so excited that worked out for you!

[00:34:58] Tanya Eby

Yeah, And it's been it's a perfect fit. So it takes some of the pressure off. And now I can do I don't have to do as many narration titles and I can kind of give them more focus and energy. And then I have casting is very creatively engaging. I find it really fun. Um, and the Dian people, they're so they're really easy to work with and fun and I'm excited. It feels like the right, the right turn. But running Blunder Woman Productions would be a conflict of interest. Yes. And so that's going to take. Yeah, it'll take the back burner at least for having other clients, but I'm still leaving that open to create original content like I did with the. Nevertheless, we persisted. I still think about doing a another book or a community performance. Oh good.

[00:35:56] Karen Commins

Oh yeah.

[00:35:57] Tanya Eby

That is in the back of my mind too.

[00:36:00] Anne Flosnik

Oh, that's great. And before we that you answered that perfectly. But when you said about the the hurt of the hustling, can you tell us more about that? Because not everybody has all your years of experience in the trenches.

[00:36:14] Tanya Eby

Oh, well. And I think part of it is that I've been in it so long. So, you know, the the grumpy part of me is it's hard to have to hustle as much as I did when I was first starting. Um, but because it is more competitive, um, I, I have to do all of the same work and reach out to get those jobs. And I just felt like just lately, just where I'm at, that the no's were hurting me more than they used to. Uh huh. Um. Yeah. So I think I just needed a little rest maybe from it.

[00:36:55] Tanya Eby

Mhm. Mhm.

[00:36:57] Karen Commins

Yeah, you actually you wrote about that recently on Substack about how it just kind of felt physically hurtful to you that that you're having to still hunt people down, so to speak, to land work. And, you know, it's just a repetitive cycle of it.

[00:37:18] Tanya Eby

Yeah. Yeah. I just it felt lately like I'm just having to convince people that I'm worthy. Um, and that just hasn't felt great.

[00:37:29] Anne Flosnik

Uh huh.

[00:37:30] Tanya Eby

Uh, so I'm trying to get in a better head space. And now that I'm casting, I do realize just how many people are. Like, I'm shocked every time I get a batch of people responding how wonderful everybody is. And it's like any of these people could perform this book, anybody could any of them, because everyone's so great. Um, and why one is chosen over another is still a mystery to me.

[00:38:00] Anne Flosnik

And the experience part of it seems to almost be less and less and less. I feel. Yeah. Because, I don't know, maybe the whole trajectory of what we do is just so accelerated now because as people seem to start, they're hitting the ground running. They know how to, you know, run all the machines and do all the things and who the best coaches are. I've been at so long, you know, we didn't even have computers, so. Right. But it's true. You know, so yeah, and it's the attrition of it, I feel, anyway, for all my years, for all the reasons that you say and just that, that fact of, well, here we go again, you know. Right. And it's yeah, every day you start out as if it's your first day, but it isn't, you know, And you just get weary, I suppose. Yeah. At points. Yeah. Yep.

[00:38:58] Tanya Eby

But I think that can happen with any career. Anything. Yes. And it is something I'm very aware. Like I do lots of things, but I don't do them forever. Like I was writing lots of little tiny poems and that was the thing I was really excited about. And then I kind of lost interest. It doesn't mean I won't go back to it. I might, um.

[00:39:19] Karen Commins

I love the tiny poems!

[00:39:22] Tanya Eby

I love them too. I and I probably will go back to them. It's more like I enjoy trying and mastering new things. Mhm. Um, and so I like to change it up every now and then. And the same has been true with my career, which so when I felt like I'd mastered a certain level of narration, that's when I started producing and then that's when I started creating original content and now I'm doing casting. So yeah, yeah, again it is all the same stuff, but in a slightly different angle kind of, yeah. Angle or timbre, right? Like a different sound, a different feel to it.

[00:40:02] Anne Flosnik

Yes. Yes. And I'm the exact opposite to you, Tanya, you know, put in the same time and just the one focus, literally the one focus. But then I say to myself, well, yeah, I mean, but it wasn't just one focus because the whole thing keeps changing anyway. And if you have to learn computers and then learn how to use Pro Tools or whatever, you know, all these things, so it doesn't let you just remain. If you just wanted to do the one thing and master narration, which for me is quite enough, Um, right. The industry doesn't let you just do the one thing, but then you magnify that with really creating other things. And I so admire that and must take a leaf out of your book sometime.

[00:40:46] Karen Commins

Huh?

[00:40:47] Anne Flosnik

Well, think about it anyway. But even thinking about it feels like a betrayal. I don't know. Yeah, well.

[00:40:54] Tanya Eby

I mean, it can be anything that keeps you engaged. It could be like maybe you want to start running. I don't know why someone would want to do that, but maybe that's the challenge, right? Like, yes. Yes. It's learning a new recipe or it's going on a trip somewhere to a place that you've never been like. These are all things that can energize us besides career stuff.

[00:41:19] Anne Flosnik

Yeah, yeah, that's that's that's fabulous. Energizes the word.

[00:41:26] Karen Commins

And I want to remind the audience we're coming up on the end of the show. So if you've got questions or comments for Tanya, definitely raise your hand and we'll call you up to the stage. I have a question for you, Tanya. This is what I like to call the pit stop hot seat. And I would like to know what is your most trivial, useless or flat out counterproductive superpower?

[00:41:51] Tanya Eby

Oh.

[00:41:55] Tanya Eby

Um, what is. What's a superpower? Oh, well, that's obvious. Like, my Twitter handle is blunder woman because I'm really awkward and I make a lot of mistakes. So I decided a long time ago that instead of fighting it, I was going to embrace it and I was going to make it my superpower. So, um, I'm really good at, at tripping and making mistakes and being a little bit awkward.

[00:42:27] Karen Commins

Well you say that, but I haven't actually seen you seen you do those things.

[00:42:32] Tanya Eby

Yeah, I do it all the time. I have to eat with a bib, so.

[00:42:37] Karen Commins

Well, now there's nothing wrong with that because I don't, you know, I. I do that too, Although not an official bib, but, you know, I'll tuck the napkin in because I don't want the stuff on my shirt, so. Right, right. There's that to me is absolutely normal behavior. Well, I have another one. Okay. What is your strangest possession?

[00:43:03] Tanya Eby

My strangest possession.

[00:43:05] Karen Commins

Yeah.

[00:43:05] Karen Commins

That you want to talk about. You may not want to talk about it. Oh, God.

[00:43:11] Tanya Eby

Huh? I'm. I'm looking around my house. I think I. I have a.

[00:43:18] Tanya Eby

Bit of an obsession with paint by numbers, so it's not really a strange thing, but there's probably 20 paintings in my house, and they're all paint by numbers.

[00:43:28] Karen Commins

I think That's so cool. Yeah, I find.

[00:43:32] Tanya Eby

It.

[00:43:32] Karen Commins

I started doing one because you inspired me, but it's so complicated and it gives me a headache every time I try to work on it. So, I mean, it's probably been a year and I haven't gotten even half of it done.

[00:43:44] Tanya Eby

So if it's too complicated, I move on and like I order a size up so that they're not so tiny.

[00:43:52] Karen Commins

Mhm.

[00:43:53] Tanya Eby

The numbers aren't so tiny, but yeah, that's something that I have a lot of these pictures in my house.

[00:44:00] Karen Commins

I remember that spring time in New York one that you did. That was so pretty.

[00:44:05] Tanya Eby

Thank you.

[00:44:07] Karen Commins

Well, see, Andrea all wants to ask a question or say hello. So I'm sending the microphone to her.

[00:44:16] Tanya Eby

Okay.

[00:44:16] Andrea Aal

Hello?

[00:44:18] Tanya Eby

Hi. Hello.

[00:44:19] Andrea Aal

Hi, Tanya.

[00:44:21] Andrea Aal

I'm so thrilled to speak to you. I love that you just said you're kind of a I hope you don't mind me rephrasing kind of a klutz. Would that be accurate? Okay. Me too. My. My brand is perfectly imperfect, so I'm with you. So I have a question. I think I did write you on LinkedIn, and I told you I got invited to be on the roster, but I'm paralyzed filling out the form because you get one sample and it says on there cannot be edited can never be No it doesn't say can never be changed never but but I mean I feel I'm I'm like oh my God how do I just send one and, and you know, like you were saying, you you want to know, you know, if I would be right for this or that. And I'm like, I said, I'm paralyzed, so can you help?

[00:45:12] Tanya Eby

Yeah, sure. First of all, you don't need to be paralyzed. I would just fill it out to the best of your ability and let it go.

[00:45:18] Andrea Aal

Okay.

[00:45:19] Tanya Eby

Okay. Remember that databases or databases, For the most part, there's so many people on them. What I'm learning and I'm still learning is that there are good tool for getting contact information or doing some basic searches. But what is more useful is getting to know you as a person. So, okay, fill out the roster so that you're all legal and you're in the database. Okay, then send a follow up email and then email with availability every 4 to 6 weeks. Okay. And it may be in that email you have some of your skills, maybe your, your cultural background, any languages or anything that you just love to narrate or hate to narrate. And that's how you offset that. So don't be scared by don't be scared by the computer. It's okay.

[00:46:15] Andrea Aal

Okay. All right.

[00:46:20] Karen Commins

Well, thanks, Andrea. Is it Andrea or Andrea? Well, I guess she doesn't hear me. But anyway, that's that's a really good question because we don't know how to fill out forms. And then how do you pick out the one sample that best represents you? So that's some great advice. Barbara Henslee had a question in the chat. Barbara, did you want to come ask it personally? Because I can. I can. If I can find you here in the audience, I can.

[00:46:54] Andrea Aal

Thank you guys to.

[00:46:55] Karen Commins

Speak. Thanks, Andrea.

[00:47:00] Andrea Aal

Okay. I'm sorry, you guys. I lost sound, but I'll go back and listen to the replay. Thanks.

[00:47:05] Anne Flosnik

Thank you.

[00:47:09] Karen Commins

So I sent the mic to Barbara.

[00:47:12] Tanya Eby

It said she said she.

[00:47:13] Karen Commins

Says she's she says she's at work. She wanted to know if you've ever been pranked or have you ever pranked anybody?

[00:47:19] Tanya Eby

Ha ha ha.

[00:47:20] Tanya Eby

No, I'm not a prank person. I don't I don't even I don't like I like things that are true. So things that aren't true. I just don't. I don't understand it. Um, I don't understand April Fool's Day. Like, people love that, but I'm just like, I'm Leary. I'm suspect of pranks, and I'm also. You would think I'm, like, a terrible liar. Like, I cannot lie. Um, I can act. And if I have a script, I can make something believable. But on my own, um, I, I, I'm just awful at it.

[00:48:01] Karen Commins

Mm. Well, I'm wondering, with all the things that you are doing, do you have an assistant or other help, whether it's a virtual or a physical assistant?

[00:48:14] Tanya Eby

No, sorry. That's funny. No. Oh, my gosh. I wouldn't know what to do with that. That would be amazing. No, it's all me doing my own stuff.

[00:48:29] Tanya Eby

Now, tell us how your days go now, Tanya, because aren't you an advocate or a proponent or whatever the word is of getting up early in the morning?

[00:48:38] Tanya Eby

So I'm a freaky morning person, which means I wake up naturally without an alarm, probably around 445, five in the morning, and I check my email. And then right now I still have a couple of books to narrate. So I narrate for a couple of hours and then I do Deion work. Um, but the, the problem with being a morning person is by 6:00 at night, I'm done. So, um. Yeah, that's kind of my daily routine.

[00:49:13] Karen Commins

Because you have two kids and but I guess they're teenagers and are kind of self sufficient.

[00:49:21] Tanya Eby

Yeah. Yeah, but did the whole narration thing as they were growing up and they've learned to walk quietly, although they're their idea of walking quietly is not my idea of walking quietly. But yeah, it's a lot. It's a lot to manage.

[00:49:40] Tanya Eby

Yeah. And I think you're.

[00:49:44] Karen Commins

I think you're going, isn't it, to the American Library Association Conference. And I see that you and Debra are going to that or did that just happen?

[00:49:54] Tanya Eby

No, no, that's that's a thing that's happening this weekend. I'm only going to be there for part of it. I'll be there Saturday or Sunday and Monday. I'll be there for the mixer and stuff on Monday, but the team will be there. Um, and they are casting a lot of books, so meeting the team is a benefit I think.

[00:50:18] Karen Commins

Yeah. I went to their meeting. It was a midwinter meeting in Atlanta in 2017, and that was really a beneficial place for a narrator to be because there weren't other narrators. You know, the audio publishers were there to talk to the librarians and the. And so I was able to actually talk to Debra for a good bit that day. And yeah, you're, you know, when they're on break between sessions, you might be able to schedule some time. So. Would encourage anybody who can't could get there to go see that. Jenny Sheneman, I hope I'm saying your name right has a question. So I am sending the mic to you.

[00:51:01] Tanya Eby

Jeannie.

[00:51:02] Karen Commins

Jeannie, You got.

[00:51:05] Jeanie Sheneman

It. Hi. Hi, everybody. Hi. Hi, Tanya. I know. I know. I know Tanya in real life. But this is something I don't know about you, so I thought I'd ask. Okay. I know that you like to watch horror movies, and I wondered if you also like to listen to them in audiobooks or like to narrate them.

[00:51:24] Tanya Eby

Yes to all of the things. I don't get cast in them very often. And I think as I've listened to my voice, I think I might just sound too cheerful. And I'm I'm delighted. I'm literally delighted by horror movies and horror stories. So I think I sound maybe too excited and happy. But yeah, I listen to all of the things. Watch them, listen to them. Um, yeah, it's great. Is there such.

[00:51:53] Jeanie Sheneman

Thing as cozy horror? Maybe that would be a good niche for you then. I know, right?

[00:51:58] Tanya Eby

Maybe I should explore that.

[00:52:01] Anne Flosnik

Yeah.

[00:52:01] Anne Flosnik

Or write it, Tanya!

[00:52:03] Tanya Eby

Yeah, right.

[00:52:05] Anne Flosnik

Yes.

[00:52:06] Jeanie Sheneman

Great. Well, I just thought I'd pop up and say hi, and I never knew that about you, so thought I'd ask, so.

[00:52:11] Karen Commins

Well, that's a great question. Thanks for asking. I think her name is Evelina Voce and forgive me if I mispronounce that, but I'm sending the mic to you for a question. Oh, so it says Evelyn. So it didn't show up for me correctly. So. Evelyn, That makes much more sense. You'll have to tap your microphone in the lower right corner to unmute yourself. There you go.

[00:52:41] Evelyn

Got it. There I am.

[00:52:43] Karen Commins

Um, hi, Tanya. We've communicated once or twice on LinkedIn. I am relatively new to the audio book world and it's exploded for me. I have 11 books right now.

[00:52:55] Tanya Eby

Awesome.

[00:52:56] Evelyn

And I wanted your advice on how to manage multiple narration projects.

[00:53:04] Tanya Eby

Um, do you mean you're recording them at the same time or in a queue?

[00:53:07] Evelyn

In a queue.

[00:53:10] Tanya Eby

And what do you mean by manage them?

[00:53:13] Evelyn

Well, I'm starting to feel a little overwhelmed by them because I didn't expect to have that many books to do this summer.

[00:53:22] Tanya Eby

Uh huh.

[00:53:23] Evelyn

Um, so I just want to, you know, do it in a sane and reasonable way so that I don't burn myself out.

[00:53:30] Tanya Eby

Yeah. So that is something that happens to most narrators when you reach. It's like a tipping point, right? And so what is helpful is if you can figure out what can you comfortably narrate, how long can you like what's your total runtime that you can comfortably narrate in a day without stressing out your body, your mind, your spirit?

[00:53:57] Evelyn

Which I think I know which is good.

[00:53:59] Tanya Eby

Okay.

[00:54:00] Tanya Eby

Do you want to share what that is?

[00:54:02] Evelyn

Sure. I usually do it in about two hour stretches, and I can do up to 4 or 5 hours in a day.

[00:54:11] Tanya Eby

Okay, so you can. But that's not your total runtime. You can you can record for 4 or 5 hours a day. Right?

[00:54:18] Evelyn

Right, right. Yeah.

[00:54:20] Tanya Eby

So what's going to help you is figuring out how many minutes you can actually record during those 4 or 5 hours. If you can record a finished hour, like an hour a day, do you do two hours a day? Do you do 2.5 hours? And the reason why I say that is because it's going to help you when you look at how much you have to record to know what your goal is every day. So when you have a long queue, basically what I do is I hit my page goal and then I stop and that's the hardest thing, because you feel like you can keep going. Right. Yes.

[00:55:01] Evelyn

Yes.

[00:55:02] Tanya Eby

But to stop yourself, to stay in balance, you know, hitting your goal is awesome. And that's enough.

[00:55:13] Tanya Eby

Okay, That's going to give you the ability to continue narrating, not blow out your voice, be grounded, be connected and be consistent.

[00:55:25] Evelyn

Uh huh, uh, okay.

[00:55:27] Tanya Eby

And then I would also, during your breaks, get some physical movement, go outside for a couple of minutes, do something, and then make sure that you have time with your loved ones. Do some stuff that doesn't require brain work. You know, relax, recharge.

[00:55:45] Evelyn

Absolutely. Yeah. Just got back from a vacation, so.

[00:55:50] Tanya Eby

Oh, nice.

[00:55:52] Evelyn

Yeah. So I'm trying to get back in the groove. Thank you so, so much. That helps a lot.

[00:55:56] Tanya Eby

You're welcome.

[00:55:57] Tanya Eby

Congratulations.

[00:55:59] Evelyn

Thank you.

[00:56:00] Karen Commins

Great question. Well, we are fast coming up on the end of our time. Tanya, do you have any advice for people who want to branch out beyond narration and, you know, add more to their life just as you've been doing?

[00:56:18] Tanya Eby

Yeah. I think one of the things that I realized pretty early on as a freelancer is that I didn't need to ask permission. So if there are things that you want to do or try, you don't have to ask anybody. You can just do it and try it.

[00:56:43] Karen Commins

Yeah, well, I love that.

[00:56:48] Karen Commins

But that's great advice for all of us that you don't need to ask anybody as a permission or get their approval.

[00:56:57] Tanya Eby

That's right.

[00:56:58] Tanya Eby

You want to do something, then why aren't you doing it? Do it.

[00:57:01] Tanya Eby

Do it.

[00:57:04] Tanya Eby

And, you know, sometimes things work out and sometimes they don't. And there's no there's nothing to be ashamed of. You're learning. You're stretching yourself. It's. It's awesome.

[00:57:15] Karen Commins

Well, that is great advice and sounds like a perfect ending note. Do you have any other final words or anything you want to plug and how should people contact you?

[00:57:27] Tanya Eby

Contacting me via email is the best, and that is Tanya dot Eby. E-b-y at DeyanAudio.com. Make sure you add me to your contacts because some of.

[00:57:43] Tanya Eby

Some folders.

[00:57:46] Karen Commins

We lost your audio there for a second. You said be sure to add to the contacts and then we lost because.

[00:57:53] Tanya Eby

Yeah, because some of my emails have been going into people's spam folders.

[00:57:59] Karen Commins

So she can't offer you a job if you your email right. You so.

[00:58:05] Tanya Eby

Right so follow up with.

[00:58:07] Tanya Eby

Email you can let me know that you listen to this and I have a list of people I'm trying to keep in mind for the next batch, which I hope to get any day now.

[00:58:18] Karen Commins

Well, that sounds exciting for all of us, but we have exhausted our time with you and want to be respectful of that. So I'm going to conclude today's Pit Stop. The recording is going to be available on clubhouse later today and next week sometime. I'll post it with a transcript and her links on narrator's roadmap and who's coming up tomorrow on Narrator Uplift.

[00:58:43] Tanya Eby

Johnny Heller and Jo Anna Perrin.

[00:58:47] Karen Commins

Well, that should be a great conversation.

[00:58:49] Anne Flosnik

Yeah. Yeah. I saw them down in Fredericksburg talking about meeting people. Tanya making the effort. Drove 90 miles. Yeah, but that was kind of doable, so. Yes.

[00:59:00] Karen Commins

So you did it?

[00:59:02] Anne Flosnik

Yes.

[00:59:03] Speaker4

Awesome. Well, yeah. Yeah.

[00:59:06] Karen Commins

Well, I hope all of you will take another road trip with us on July 5th when we do another Pit Stop picnic. I want to do one of these kind of shows every quarter, and that seems like a good time. A lot of people have July, July 4th vacations and but the audience can come with your topics and we'll all have great fun discussing them. But in the meantime, I hope you find joy in every journey and live the life of your dreams. Thanks again so much, Tanya, for this fantastic conversation and thanks.

[00:59:37] Tanya Eby

It's really fun. Thanks, everyone.

[00:59:39] Karen Commins

And thanks to Anne Flosnik for all your great questions and support. And to all of you in the audience for spending time with us today, we really appreciate it and wish you all well. And we will see you soon.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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