

= Richard Appel =

Richard James " Rich " Appel (born May 21 , 1963) is an American writer , producer and former attorney . Since 2012 , he has served as an Executive Producer and co @-@ showrunner of Family Guy on Fox . Growing up in Wilmette , Illinois , Appel developed a love of comedy and dreamed of a career as a comedy writer ; he attended Harvard University and wrote for the Harvard Lampoon . Following in his mother 's footsteps , Appel instead became a lawyer . After attending law school he started out as a law clerk for Judge John M. Walker , Jr. before becoming a federal attorney , serving as assistant U.S. attorney for the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York for three years . In 1994 , he moved into comedy writing when he was hired for The Simpsons , writing seven episodes of the show including " Mother Simpson " . He moved on to become showrunner and executive producer of King of the Hill before creating the sitcom A.U.S.A .. He then worked on The Bernie Mac Show , Family Guy and American Dad ! before co @-@ creating The Cleveland Show . He was married to the writer Mona Simpson .

= = Early life and law career = =

Richard James Appel was born May 21 , 1963 in New York City , to Nina (neé Schick) and Alfred Appel . His mother was a lawyer , taught law and served as dean of Loyola University Chicago 's law school from 1983 ? 2004 , and his father (who died on May 2 , 2009) was professor of English at Northwestern University and an expert on Vladimir Nabokov . Appel has a sister , Karen Oshman . Appel lived in California while his parents taught at Stanford University before the family moved to Wilmette , Illinois , where Appel went to North Shore Country Day School . Appel became interested in comedy from a young age , noting : " I grew up watching The Dick Van Dyke Show and always thought that what Rob Petrie did for a living was what I wanted to do . " His father introduced him to the works of Buster Keaton and Laurel and Hardy and encouraged him to " read comic books and watch quality [sic] television " , and he and a friend produced parody adverts and news pieces with a Betamax and often engaged in prank phone calls . At high school , he wrote sketches and routines and dreamt of being a comedy writer but " didn 't know anyone who did it , and it didn 't seem like a career that was open to me . "

He attended Harvard University and wrote for the Harvard Lampoon , alongside Conan O 'Brien and Greg Daniels , both of whom he beat for the chance to give the comic graduation speech , the Ivy Oration . Tad Friend noted : " Everyone thought it would be Conan automatically , but Rich 's speech was funny and self @-@ deprecating , in a way that was both silly and profound . " After graduation in 1985 with a degree in history and literature , Appel attended Harvard Law School rather than moving into comedy , because the idea of following his mother and grandfathers into the legal profession " appealed " to him . He then worked for two years as a law clerk for Judge John M. Walker , Jr . , of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York , working on the trials of people such as Michael Milken and Leona Helmsley . Subsequently , for three years from 1990 , Appel served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York . Fellow attorney Geoffrey Berman stated Appel " was an excellent lawyer . He was good on his feet , articulate , with a sense of the law that was common @-@ sensical , more intuitive than based on books . " Appel still had dreams of becoming a comedy writer despite the security working as a lawyer offered him , but only in 1993 , after his wife became pregnant , was Appel " reminde [d] that this was [his] life and [he] could shape it . " Three months later he had retained an agent , had written and submitted two spec @-@ scripts , and had moved to California .

= = Writing career = =

When starting out as a comedy writer , Appel recalled : " One reason I caught up to my contemporaries is that when I started to send out my scripts , the idea that I 'd been on the Lampoon , even 8 or 10 years before , was a credential I could use . " Appel got his first television job when David Mirkin hired him for the writing staff of The Simpsons in 1994 , initially on a ten @-@ week

contract , and served as a writer and producer there for four years . There , he wrote seven episodes , often employing the use of " joke sequences , a narrative approach to humor that eschews the quick laugh in favor of something that develops over time . " Appel found work on The Simpsons to be a learning curve because it was a " very tough show to write for . " His first episode was season seven 's " Mother Simpson " . Appel was desperately trying to think of a story idea to show and decided that he had to really reach out and opted to do something about Homer 's mother , who previously had only been mentioned once . He named her Mona Simpson , after his wife . Many of the writers could not believe that an episode about Homer 's mother had not previously been produced . The writers used the episode to solve several little puzzles , such as where Lisa 's intelligence came from . Also for season seven he penned " Bart on the Road " , in which he utilized the plot devices of " go to work with your parents day " and Bart getting a driving license , and contributed to the episode " 22 Short Films About Springfield " ; the two segments he wrote for the episode (one about Marge , the other about Lionel Hutz) were both cut . Appel wrote two episodes from season eight , " Bart After Dark " and " The Secret War of Lisa Simpson " , as well as season nine 's " The Two Mrs Nahasapeemapetilons " and season 10 's " When You Dish Upon A Star " .

Daniels hired Appel as executive producer and showrunner on King of the Hill in 1997 , leading the show 's writing process and overseeing all aspects of the show . Daniels noted : " It was essential that Rich was a good writer who could deal with people , who could help manage the business in the room . But equally important was the fact that he was someone I could trust , who had a similar sense of taste and values . " He stayed until 2001 . For his work on The Simpsons and King of the Hill , Appel won three Primetime Emmy Awards . Appel created the short @-@ lived series A.U.S.A. , which aired in 2003 , which he based on his own experiences as an assistant U.S. attorney . He conceived it in 2001 and NBC ordered 13 episodes the following year ; the show 's original pilot used a single @-@ camera setup but NBC executives felt it would have more appeal as a multiple @-@ camera setup , so it was re @-@ shot . Appel noted of the show : " There 's a sense sometimes in Hollywood that writers and producers who come from animated shows maybe have something to prove to justify their credibility as live @-@ action show @-@ runners or writers . My own experience has been fortunate . I haven 't felt that . But I know it exists . " He was inspired by the comedic side of working as a lawyer when writing the show : " Whether you 're working on a case that you 're proud to tell you mother and grandmother about , you 're still going to encounter possibly really shifty dishonest lawyers , or a judge who is a little crazy , or witnesses who self @-@ destruct on the stand . " The show was not acclaimed : Scott D. Pierce of The Deseret News praised the premise but felt the show was " sort of like watching a train wreck , " while Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger said it was " too cartoonish to work . " Appel then wrote and worked as a co @-@ executive producer on The Bernie Mac Show and Kitchen Confidential , and appeared as Josh in the 2004 film I ? Huckabees . In 2006 , Appel produced a pilot called My Ex Life about two divorcing couples for CBS , which was directed by Kelsey Grammer .

In 2008 , he served as a co @-@ executive producer on Family Guy and executive producer on American Dad ! from 2008 until 2009 . Appel wrote the Family Guy seventh season episode " Family Gay " . Appel co @-@ created , alongside Mike Henry and Seth MacFarlane , the Family Guy spin @-@ off The Cleveland Show , which they began discussing in 2007 and which premiered September 27 , 2009 . He and Henry serve as the show 's executive producers and showrunners , handling the day @-@ to @-@ day operations , with limited involvement from MacFarlane . Henry and Appel conceived the show as " more of a family show , a sweeter show " than Family Guy . The show , which was picked up to air a first season consisting of 22 episodes , was picked up by Fox for a second season , consisting of 13 episodes , bringing the total number to 35 episodes . The announcement was made on May 3 , 2009 before the first season even premiered . It was extended to a full second season . Appel signed a new three @-@ year , seven figure deal with Fox to continue serving as showrunner on The Cleveland Show in 2010 . Fox chairman Gary Newman commented : " What is special about him is his incredible leadership ability . He is a terrific showrunner , and he really sets the tone on a show that is exactly what you 're looking for . "

= = Personal life = =

He married novelist Mona Simpson , the biological sister of Apple founder Steve Jobs , in 1993 .
They have two children . Appel and Simpson have since divorced .

= = Credits = =

Appel worked on the listed shows and wrote all the listed episodes :

The Simpsons (1994 ? 1997) ? writer , producer , co @-@ executive producer , consulting producer and story editor

" Mother Simpson "

" Bart on the Road "

" 22 Short Films About Springfield " (co @-@ writer)

" Bart After Dark "

" The Secret War of Lisa Simpson "

" The Two Mrs. Nahasapeemapetilons "

" When You Dish Upon a Star "

King of the Hill (1997 ? 2001) ? executive producer

A.U.S.A. (2003) ? creator , executive producer , writer

" Pilot "

" 12 Happy Grandmothers "

The Bernie Mac Show (2003 ? 2005) ? co @-@ executive producer , writer

" Eye of the Tiger "

" That Old Mac Magic "

" Stiff Upper Lip "

" Nerdy Mac "

I ? Huckabees (2004) ? Actor (as Josh)

Kitchen Confidential (2005 ? 2006) ? co @-@ executive producer , writer

" Praise Be Praise "

" Let 's Do Brunch "

My Ex Life (2006) ? creator , executive producer , writer

Family Guy (2008 ? 2009 , 2013 ?) ? co @-@ executive producer , writer

" Family Gay "

American Dad ! (2008 ? 2009) ? executive producer

The Cleveland Show (2009 ? 2013) ? co @-@ creator , executive producer , writer

" Pilot "