All about our Christmas-in-Japan experience, with talk of our Christmas-in-the-US past.

**Transcript**

K: So, lately I’ve been thinking a lot about Christmas and, specifically, our family’s relationship with Christmas. And also my evolution into how American I am versus how Japanese I am.

C: So you’re not thinking about my evolution from Chad into Santa Claus?

K: (laughs) Which has surprisingly halted. How grey your beard is, I feel like it hasn’t become more grey this – in like 2019 at all.

C: Oh you are so on the naughty list.

K: It’s just real talk babe.

C: You’re getting coal.

K: Real talk

C: Keep talking, you’ll get more coal.

K: Real talk, babe.

C: (laughs)

K: You’ve got these really sturdy, staunch patches of – it’s either blond or red, depending on the season, because you have a seasonal beard.

C: I do. ‘tis the season for what color of beard? I don’t know.

K: (laughs) Red. It gets red in the winter, blond in the summer.

C: It does get red in the winter.

K: It’s not that hard, babe. It’s really not.

C: It gets red in the winter for Christmas.

K: And how would that be more Santa-like?

C: Well, if I put green in it, then it’d be red and green.

K: What are you saying right now?

C: I’m saying in Japan, you know it’s Christmas because things are red and green.

K: What are you talking about?

C: I am talking about the way that Japan celebrates Christmas.

K: Japan does not celebrate Christmas.

C: Exactly. But things

K: Well no that’s not true. That’s not true. I just told a big, fat lie. Japan, trip on this.. KFC is Christmas dinner.

C: Yes.

K: Kentucky Fried Chicken is Christmas dinner in Japan. I think I’ve talked about this before, I’m not sure. But like months in advance, you have to order your KFC Christmas dinner.

C: Yes.

K: And that’s like the thing they do on the 25th is they eat Kentucky Fried Chicken. Like how does that become a thing, Japan? That’s what I want to know. What’s going on with that, Japan?

C: And go to work. I forget if Christmas is on a holiday this year.

K: No. Because they changed emperors, and so the previous emp- in the Heisei era, the 25th was sometimes a holiday for some companies because it was the emperor’s birthday.

C: The 23rd was always a holiday.

K: Was the emperor’s birthday the 23rd?

C: Yeah.

K: I thought it was the 25th.

C: Nope. Because when I was managing people, I had somebody ask me – and I think I’ve said this story before, so we might be performing a Christmas miracle and bringing back old stories.

K: (laughs) Which is not miraculous for us at all.

(laughter)

C: They asked if they could have Christmas off. It was August, and they asked if they could have Christmas off or if it was too late, and everybody else in the company had already requested it. I was like no,

K: Nobody requested it at all.

C: Everybody’s expecting to work Christmas. Have it off.

K: And I work Christmas almost every year unless it falls on a Sunday or Monday, and then I don’t work. And I take the first week of in January.

C: Everybody takes the first week of in January, just about.

K: Right, but all of my foreign clients are really tripped out by the fact that I’m open on Christmas. And it’s like… this is how the conversation feels because it’s like “Are… you… going to be working… on t he 25th?” and I said “yes, I am, but I don’t expect anybody to come and see me who celebrates Christmas,” and then some people are like “no, I really want to see you before we do Christmas with the family” and I’m like crack on.

C: Yeah.

K: So, you know.

C: Have a Christmas crack on.

(laughter)

K: So, I used to think that in Japan, for me, I felt like Japan celebrated Christmas because in November, it starts illumination season. And illuminations are lights in the trees, various parks have light shows, and there’s like… a whole city that’s just light town – it basically turns into light town – and that happens from November. Which starts the viewing of the changing of the leaves. So, once it’s viewing of the changing of the leaves season, it’s usually also illumination season.

C: And that usually lasts until March, so I think that’s more about it getting dark for enough hours a day.

K: It completely is, but, for me, for the first – I want to say the first five or six years we were here, it felt like Christmas to me.

C: So the local mall celebrates Christmas in that they put up red and green posters that say “Merry Christmas” like one year they said Merry Christmas with no “s” before the “t” but now they’ve got the spelling right. And they put up a giant tree. Like an 80-foot-tall tree.

K: Really?

C: Yeah, it’s not in the part of the mall that we usually go to. It’s down by the bookstore and stuff, on the first floor.

K: Ah okay. That’s where they would have space for it.

C: Yeah, that’s where they have the opening that goes through all the floors of it.

K: Yeah, and when I go to the mall, I just usually go to the dollar store to get prizes for the kids I work with.

C: Right, which is right upstairs from the grocery store, so we… we have our area. We know where to stay to be safe.

K: (laughs) Well, I do go to the bookstore once a year to buy my day timer.

C: You do.

K: I’m going to be so devastated when they no longer sell it. I will feel personally betrayed.

C: Sometimes you just send Rasta. Let’s be honest.

K: Yeah. Okay, to be honest, I send Rasta to the store to get my day timer. But you know.

C: (laughs) Because you’ve used the same day timer, the same brand and style for like ten years now.

K: I’ve only ever done it this way. I’ll be personally hurt when they don’t sell it anymore.

C: So you have a stack of old day timers that you could look through and see all of your appointments, all encoded.

K: Yes. And so that’s why – I don’t even know why I keep them, since that’s completely useless to me.

C: Right.

K: Like, the other day… so… I do not engage on Facebook when people talk smack about me, and I never confirm or deny someone’s my client. And when a client tells me someone’s talked smack about me, sometimes they’ll say a person’s name that I don’t remember.

C: Mhm.

K: And then they’ll say like their first, their last name, and my face looks the same even if I remember them or I don’t, but I will come home and look through my old day timers to see if I have a code that could reasonably be that person, and sometimes I don’t. And I’m like “for the life of me, I do not believe that this person was ever my client.” In my head, I’m like “I don’t believe this person was ever my client.” And then I wonder “are they making this up, or is someone who’s never seen me talking smack about me?” And both have been true. And I can’t say when or how because I don’t confirm or deny, but I have had clients say “I have to apologize to you, I totally made up a story to see if you would – to see if I could tell when somebody wasn’t your client.” Because they talked about somebody who wasn’t my client and then they talked about somebody who was my client, and then they said my face was the same.

C: Oh somebody that they knew was your client?

K: Yeah because they had told them.

C: Yeah. I mean your clients sometimes – some of them – come up and tell me “I’m your wife’s client” and I’m like “awesome for you? I don’t’ know what more you want me to say about that.”

KL: Yeah. And there’s, like… some of my clients hang out together. I think I’ve talked about this before.

C: Yeah, I mean people have referred to you

K: I have wicked déjà vu today, so I’m going to think I’ve talked about everything before.

C: Okay.

K: I’m convinced that we’ve had this whole entire podcast before.

C: Well, Christmas happens every year.

K: Yeah it does, but we haven’t been doing – this is our first December because we only started the podcast in May.

C: Yeah, so we haven’t had a Christmas episode before. A very special episode.

K: Oh my gosh.

C: (laughs)

K: So, now that I’m more mentally Japanese, it’s illuminations to me.

C: Mhm.

K: And when I see Santas, it’s interesting to see which Santa they use and what’s the interpretation. Last December, I didn’t see any Santa.

C: Yeah.

K: And I think it’s been about five years since I’ve seen a Santa.

C: I know a few people who play Santa each year.

K: Oh wait, I lie. And I think… I want to say that we were doing… the podcast last year, but we weren’t.

C: We were not.

K: because last year I did see a Santa because we drove – Rasta and I were doing an outcall, and we had a break because we were doing a marathon outcall. Sometimes we’re working with a client or family all day, and we have to take a food break. Like, let’s just take a break, cleanse our pallet and see – come back in. During intensive crisis therapy. And during our food break, we drove around and took videos of really, really pretty Christmas lights in this one – just this one side street. Like eight of the houses, so there were four houses on each side of the street, and all of them had done really intensive Western style Christmas lights. Like timed to music and everything.

C: I think you showed me a video. I think you guys took a video and brought that back to me.

K: Yeah. I showed you the part of the video where the lights weren’t timed because then it would’ve been a strobe and you would have had a seizure, and that would have been uncool of me.

C: Wouldn’t have remembered it, you could have shown it to me again the next day, and I would have been like “oh cool Christmas lights.”

K: That’s not how your seizure work.

(laughter)

K: So, for me, that was interesting and fun to do. And we weren’t expecting to find Christmas lights. We were driving to go get food, and I said, “oh trip out Christmas lights” and Rasta was like “you want to check them out?” I was like “yeah, let’s check them out.” And it was really fun. We really really enjoyed them. What we were surprised about was people were not respecting that we were looking at the Christmas lights and meeped at us with their horn.

C: What the heck?

K: Like don’t stop and look at Christmas lights, and that’s what I thought this street is about.

C: Apparently that street is about making a spectacle of itself so they can meep at you. So that they could melodiously beep their horns at you for not moving.

K: So for me something that I celebrate is the turning of the leaves, but I don’t celebrate Christmas.\

C: Well I think in Japan, any cause for celebration is an opportunity for retail to say it’s a cause for celebration. So, like… everybody takes the first week off in January, except the retail doesn’t. So retail is every day of the year.

K: Yeah.

C: I was shocked a couple of months ago when there was the big typhoon, and they had actually closed the mall. The grocery store was still open, but they had actually closed the mall. It was like whoa. They must take this very seriously. And then it was a really bad typhoon. It caused a lot of damage, but not in Nagoya. But, nevertheless.

K: That was a few months back. I was really disappointed in that typhon because it didn’t really rock Nagoya the way it was supposed to. I was disappointed. I was working.

C: Yeah.

K: But I only had one no-show, I was really happy. Even though I had confirmed, but I was – it was totally fine, when the malls closed, to assume I would be closed. You think they’d like email me and ask instead of no-showing.

C: You’d think so. But like the train closures are only on the website in Japanese and things, so if you can’t read Japanese, it could be harder to tell what’s going on.

K: Mm.\

C: But how does our Christmas in Japan differ from Christmas in the U.S. because what do we do to celebrate Christmas now?

K: We don’t do anything.

C: See, that’s

K: We do nothing at all.

C: Podcast done.

K: (laughs) But for me.. the reason that we don’t celebrate Christmas is what’s interesting. Because we’ve been atheist the whole time we’ve been together, and we celebrated Christmas as a retail holiday where we would just – for me it was

C: American cultural holiday.

K: No. For me it was the time for me to celebrate my ability to find really cool and unique gifts and stocking stuffers.

C: Oh yeah, okay, yes.

K: In obscene amounts.

C: Yes.

K: And so this is really, really significant, and it might gross people out, but I don’t care. I’m just being real, keeping it real, real talk time. So I have this gift that I can, in just a short span of knowing someone, I can find perfect gifts for them. Like gifts that will be super meaningful to them, gifts that they will really enjoy, and I can do it in massive numbers because I used to start shopping for Christmas on July 23rd.

C: So the day after Rasta’s birthday.

K: Yes. I would start shopping for Christmas, which was a habit from when I was really poor.

C: Right.

K: And so I could buy Rasta presents two times a year, and if I went whenever there was a sale and bought something, or, you know, piecemealed it out, and then saved up for big present and buy big presents. Like there would be one or two big presents, and by big I mean expensive monetarily. So I wasn’t out shopping for like really expensive gifts. I was shopping for really cool, unique gifts that wouldn’t be available when everybody else was Christmas shopping. And then I wouldn’t do any Christmas shopping in December because I would spend the entire month of December gloating that my Christmas shopping was over.

C: But you and I did that together, still.

K: Yeah, we would go to the mall, get Starbucks, and watch everybody freaking out.

C: Yea, but we would also do the other thing. Where we go to Toys’R’Us all through the year – like once a month or once every couple weeks – and pick up the rotating stock so that at the end of the year, we’d have like a whole collection. So people would be selling these collections of Digimon or Pokémon n or whatever. I think one year we did the Pokémon marbles, which they come out throughout the year. So people were selling the complete set for way more than they had sold for originally.

K: Yeah.

C: So we had originally bought everything for like $30 dollars because we found it a dollar at a time.

K: Yeah, so it was interesting to me specifically the Digimon and Pokémon figurines. Rasta had every single Pokémon, and it was because

C: Back when there were only 151 one of them.

K: Yes. And so what was interesting to me was when we first started purchasing them back on July 23rd of that year, I can’t remember what year it was, they were in the dollar bin.

C: That’s what I was saying about picking them up a dollar at a time.

K: Yeah, and the Digimon characters were also in the dollar bin, and so I was like the dollar bin queen.

C: And Medabots, don’t forget about the Medabots.

K: Yeah. And so you were like “this is crazy, why are we Christmas shopping? We just celebrated Rasta’s birthday.” And I said, “because we’re going to do it the same way we did Rasta’s birthday, we’re going to hit up the dollar bins man.” And so we would go to the video store at the time – what was the video store’s name?

C: Are you talking about Hollywood Video?

K: No, the – where we got the video games. GameStop.

C: Yeah.

K: So we’d go to GameStop, Barnes’n’Noble, and two different – I have to clear my throat. Two different Toys’R’Us and we would just look at their discount stuff. Because they didn’t know what was going to be the hot thing, and that allowed us to buy the hot – because I also have the gift of figuring out what the hot thing is going to be.

C: You do because some of his early Pokémon stuff said pocket monsters because they hadn’t decided that they were going to market it in the U.S. as Pokémon

K: Yup. And we did all of the Harry Potter stuff at the time. And the figurines – I think those were one of the more expensive things we did where they were like 3 bucks at the time that we bought them. But during Christmas, they were like ten and fifteen dollars apiece.

C: No, it was more than that. There was one – I think there was like an invisible professor Snape or something – I don’t remember, it was somebody who was invisible. Who we never managed to find, so we ordered them online.

K: the ones that we ordered online were more expensive, but the ones that we found earlier were not.

C: Right.

K: And it wasn’t an invisible professor Snape. It was Voldemort.

C: Was it? Okay.

K: Yeah.

C: I just remember we had never seen it in the store despite going every week to check.

K: Yeah. Voldemort was the only one that we couldn’t get, and Voldemort – there were two different Voldemort characters

C: Stop saying his name.

K: There were two different Voldemort Voldemort Voldemort Voldemort characters. One where you turn their head and it was Voldemort and the other one where Voldemort was invisible.

C: Okay.

K: And like the Pokémon board game and all of that.

C: Yeah.

K: So, Rasta had eleven of those, or twelve of those, types of Christmases. And his birthday was always celebrated a month long. If you guys follow us on twitter, you know that I am a huge unbirthday fan. Like “a very merry unbirthday to you” we sang the song and everything. So come July 1st, he would start getting presents, and he’d get woken up, and we’d do things like chocolate chip cookies for breakfast, cinnabuns for breakfast. So basically it was like a sugar gorge.

C: Like a regular day.

(laughter)

K: A sugar gorge, and instead of the good morning to you song, we would sing the unbirthday song every morning. And there’d be special birthday notes and balloons and tickle fights that were all about what - birthday themed. And so, when he was 12, he decided that he was over Christmas.

C: Mhm.

K: And Christmas was done for him. And he was bored of opening presents. And when he was about 10 or 11, he said “I still like unbirthday, but I don’t want any birthday presents” because he actually was like “I’m bored of opening presents, so I’m going to go play with the ones I have. Can you finish opening the rest for me?” And I was like F that.

C: (laughs)

K: I did open them. And so we still – we randomly celebrate his birthday, and it’s just a cake and we come over and we usually teach him how to cook something.

C: Yeah.

K: Like I think last year we taught him how to cook – in 2019, I think it was French toast, I want to say.

C: That’s right.

K: But I don’t know if it was chicken

C: No, it was French toast.

K: Yeah. So. Basically we stopped celebrating Christmas because of the glut of consumerism.

C: Yes.

K: I burnt our son out on consuming.

C: Yeah, which is awesome.

K: He could consume no more.

C: And then we came to Japan where it’s a pure consumer holiday because, I think Christianity is about 1% of Japanese residents. And a lot of that is foreigners who live in Japan.

K: Yeah.

C: So.. I’m not saying that nobody celebrates Christmas as a religious holiday here, just that that’s not

K: Because there’s a Catholic church and non-denominational church in Nagoya.

C: Right.

K: And there are several Catholic organizations in Nagoya.

C: Right.

K: Several Christian organizations in Nagoya.

C: Yeah. Catholic private school and everything. Just that it’s primarily celebrated as a retail holiday. And so… that was interesting because… it not – there being often nobody around to say the “correct” way to celebrate it at organizations, you do get things like signs up all over the mall – I think it was only the second year the mall was open – saying “Merry Christmas.”

K: Mmm. Yeah.

C: Because nobody knows that that’s not what it’s supposed to say. They’re just copying the American celebration style. So I think the KFC is like that, too. Instead of having the Christmas turkey, which who in Japan has an oven big enough to cook a turkey?

K: Right?

C: I mean some people, but that’s not standard. You have to get a chef’s kitchen to have an oven that big. You just get some chicken. And why cook it yourself on a day you’re working when you can just get it from KFC?

K: Yeah.

C: And I’m sure that there’s probably some website explaining the whole history behind KFC Christmas, but

K: Good marketing.

C: Yeah. And then there’s also “Christmas keiki”

K: Ugh.

C: Which is just strawberry shortcake.

K: Ugh. I do not like strawberry shortcake.

C: But you have to order it a couple months in advance. Here’s the thing, you don’t go to a bakery to order it. No, no, no. That would make too much sense. You go to your convenience store. And you reserve a “Christmas keiki.”

K: Yeah. And you’re only saying it half right. Say it correctly.

C: Kurisumasu keiki

K: Yup. So, for me, in the United States, Christmas was about celebrating my ability to get a good deal on cool gifts. And my ability to predict what the hot, hottest, gift of the year was going to be. Because I loved having the thing that would sell out in December. It was just like perverse joy and pleasure.

C: (laughs)

K: Like… tickle me Elmo was on the shelf for a year before it sold out.

C: But you never tried to flip them. You were never like “I’m going to buy these up because I know they’re going to be good, and I’m going to sell them.”

K: No, that wouldn’t be any fun because then people would be able to successfully get them.

C: Right.

K: My joy was in the misery of people not being able to get whatever it is their child’s heart desired on baby Jesus’ birth even though it was the wrong time of the year to be when Jesus was born.

C: So there’s a word for that.

K: What?

C: Shoppenfreude.

K: Yeah. You’re alone on that.

C: No, I’m not. (laughs) Our listeners are with me; you just don’t know it yet because this hasn’t aired yet as of this recording. But shoppenfreude. When you take joy in the misery of other people who are shopping.

(Moment of Silence)

K: Yeah, I just wanted there to be a moment of silence for that.

C: (laughs)

K: Like when something dies. You just do a moment of silence to respect the death of that.

C: Right. And what died was the possibility of anybody coming up with a better pun. (laughs)

K: Wow. Okay. So you’re in your own world, today.

C: Oh, I am.

K: Okay. Well, interestingly enough, my déjà vu is over.

(laughter)

K: That pun was so bad it snapped me out of my déjà vu. Snap out of it Kisstopher.

C: See, but we do more on the New Year’s Celebration side of things than o the Christmas side of things.

K: And even the New Year’s side of things over the like 14 years, 13, 14 years we’ve been here

C: Yeah, 13.

K: New Year’s has changed. It’s not as big. Like, very few families do oseishi anymore. The big stack New Year’s meal. And a lot of modern Japanese nationals can’t even tell you what the different foods in the traditional New Year’s meal mean. I can tell you because I researched it and learned all the different meanings and why you eat them. And I think it’s rather cruel that they don’t want their elders to live a long life when they don’t eat lobsters on New Year’s.

C: Don’t you know the burden on the social system? Japan is an aging society.

K: (laughs) So they’re doing what they can by not eating the foods that create long life and the roe for babies and all of that.

C: Exactly, they’re being generous like that.

K: So I’ve been really surprised at the fact that the traditional New Year’s is going out of style, and like the New Year’s Day cards are going out of style. But I do explain to all of my Japanese clients that I don’t send a New Year’s card out to my clients because that would violate their confidentiality.

C: Yes.

K: To get a New Year card from Adjustment Guidance. And then the psychiatrist that I work with sends me random boxes of cookies at random times of year. And so sometimes I get something during New Year’s. And sometimes I don’t.

C: Mhm.

K: So I wonder, like… I actually wonder sometimes “are these regifted?”

C: (laughs)

K: Am I just getting random regifted things? And it’s cool if they are. Sometimes I bring it home to you, sometimes I give them to Rasta.

C: You know you could send some to them and see if you get them back.

K: No.

C: (laughs)

K: I don’t send them anything. Because I send them a tonnage of clients.

C: Yes.

K: Like the majority of their business has changed from Japanese nationals to my clients.

C: Interesting.

K: Yeah. Because I only refer to them. Because there is another psychiatrist. There are several other psychiatrists who speak English, but one of them does appointment only, and they only see English speakers two days a week, and they’re booked for like months and months in advance. And my clients’ needs are more urgent than that, so they need a quicker turnaround on their referral. I do put them on a list because I have a list of doctors of ones that I mainly work with.

C: Mm.

K: Because I’ve been working with them for years.

C: Yes you have.

K: so that’s my main thing. And the other English-speaking psychiatrist, I reached out to them to discuss how we would work together, they just aren’t interested in working with me.

C: Yeah.

K: So I’m just like crack on.

C: So there is a Christmas-themed charity that runs all year. And I can not remember for the life of me remember the name of it.

K: A Christmas themed charity?

C: Yeah, but it’s not Toys for Tots because Toys for Tots is a U.S. thing.

K: Yeah.

C: But it’s... like Santa’s Helpers or something.

K: Oh yeah. I don’t remember the name of it either, but I know what you’re talking about now.

C: Yeah.

K: It is Santa something. And I don’t remember it.

C: Yeah, they collect money and various things for orphanages and stuff, so.

K: Yeah.

C: I know they always hire a Santa. Harking back – Hark, like the herald’s angels – harking back to the earlier conversation about Santas, I know somebody who does Santa for them every year.

K: Mmm. Interesting.

C: Yeah.

K: Do you feel snubbed?

C: No, I don’t. They’ve been here longer than I have.

K: Do they look more Santa-esque?

C: No, they don’t. They do not.

K: Because… do they have Santa’s body?

C: No, they do not.

K: They don’t have Santa-bod?

C: They don’t.

K: Because you’re rocking Santa-bod.

C: Thank you.

K: Yeah. I like it. Like, I’m grinning ear to ear every time I say it. I think it’s dead, dead sexy.

C: Yes. I know you do. Because you’re grinning ear to ear right now.

K: Yeah.

C: Like, dang where’s the mistletoe when you need it?

K: (laughs) Lucky for us, I don’t need anything to ravage you.

C: Oh that’s right.

K: I just pounce on you and ravage you when I feel it. Which is every day, so… deal with it. I think you’re sexy. Deal with it. I’m like really aggressive with my compliments to you.

C: (laughs)

K: I don’t think that they know that. That I’ll be like “you are dead sexy. Deal with that.” Like I’m (laughs) like I do it like I’m insulting you.

C: Like I’m like “nooo, stop, stop with that!”

(laughter)

K: Yeah. And then I’m also offhand, like “I like what your butt’s doing.” You’re like “cool, it’s just doing what it always does. It’s just back there at the end of my back.”

C: So Christmas is interesting because kit’s such a tacked-on holiday in Japan.

K: Unlike your ass. (laughs)

C: Yeah.

K: I celebrate it every day. (laughs)

C: If you would stop laughing, we could have a moment of silence for that.

K: (laughs) Nope. Everybody’s like “dang, Chad has a sexy ass.” And I’m like “yup, he does.” And they need to stop ogling my husband’s ass now. So we can move on. Because now I’m like “stop looking at that.” Stop looking at that ass.

C: Okay, there was a moment of silence.

K: I like the way you work it.

C: (laughs) No-diggity.

K: Yup.

C: Now

K: I don’t have to bag it up though because I don’t have a penis.

(laughter)

K: Oh my gosh. That was awesome.

C: Wow, okay.

K: Yup. Hey, you went there.

C: Yes. Yes, I – I brought up Black Street, and you decided people should know the full context, so

K: (laughs) So, but wait, what was Christmas for you in the United States? A time when I gave you really cool presents that you didn’t even know you wanted? That you would love and cherish.

C: Yeah. So Christmas was a time when I had anxiety about giving you cool presents because I knew you were going to give me cool presents, and you’d be like “no, here, get me this.”

K: Yes. (laughs) I always told you what I want.

C: And it was usually cooking stuff from Williams-Sonoma.

K: Yes.

C: Because we both

K: Looooove William and Sonoma.

C: See, it’s Williams-Sonoma.

K: Looooove Williams and Sonoma.

C: There’s no and.

K: Looooove William’n’Sonoma.

C: Yeahhh. That would be like two people. We’re talking about a store here.

K: I love William and Sonoma.

C: There’s no and in it.

K: Welcome to my world. I love William and Sonoma. Not into Yankee Candles.

C: Nobody. Nobody’s into Yankee Candles.

K: There are people that collect scented candles.

C: I know that people must be into Yankee Candles because they’re still around. And I don’t think they are a money laundering organization, for the record.

K: And I love Things Remembered even though all of their stuff – sorry guys, please don’t sue us – but any time they put their – they put your name on a plaque and glue it to something, it always falls off. I don’t know what glue they’re using. Why don’t they solder it down?

C: Yeah. We love Things Remembered. We still have the globe you got. We still have a photo box. But it’s cheaply made, and so like all the hinges have broken on it.

K: But neither of those things came from Things Remembered.

C: They did. They both came from Things Remembered.

K: No, the tiny globe did not.

C: The tiny globe did not. Did that come from that – that… Bombay?

K: Yeah, that really cool travel store where I got our passport wallets.

C: Okay, yeah, that was called like Bombay and Co. or something.

K: Yeah.

C: Okay. But the photo box definitely came from Things Remembered.

K: Yes.

C: And it’s

K: And we’ve repaired it several times. And now that nobody comes over our house, we just leave it all busted up.

C: Yeah. Because the photos are still protected. Don’t worry, folks.

K: Yeah. We don’t really look at those photos anymore.

C: I can se them in my mind.

K: Me, too. I’m not a big photo person.

C: Every couple of years we pull them out and say “wow, we’re so much younger.” So, for me, Christmas at first was about healing Christmas wounds.

K: Mhm.

C: Like all the damage from

K: (laughs) I had what’s it called? I had stigmata in my mind.

(laughter)

K: When you said healing Christmas wounds, I thought “Chad’s healing his stigmata.”

C: No, stigmata’s a different story.

K: Oh my god. Oh my god. Have you ever had stigmata?

C: No. But because we’re digressing, apparently

K: Yes, we are. Apparently.

C: Because people need a tale for their holiday season.

K: yeah they do.

C: Stigmata was the movie that you and I saw that we realized we shared mutual friends. That we had a lot of friends in common that we did not know we had in common.

K: Yes.

C: Because we went to see Stigmata. So it was like 1999?

K: was it?

C: Yeah.

K: Okay.

C: Yeah, it had to have been. Like 1999 or early 2000.

K: We don’t google stuff on this show but go ahead and google and correct us if you’d like.

C: Or early 2000 because it was pretty early in our relationship.

K: I thought it was 1998.

C: We did not meet in 1998

K: Mmm.

C: (laughs)

K: Yeah we did.

C: Oh, okay.

K: Yeah.

C: Okay.

K: Yeah.

C: So anyway, it was whenever Stigmata came out. And we were at the movies, and we left. And we ran into people, and they were like “hey Chad, hey Kisstopher.” Both of us looked at each other and were like “how do they know you?”

K: And then I went to a party wearing clothes that you’d only wear when you’d go to the movies with your best friend. I was not dressed for a party. I was so self-conscious. Then when I got there, people still found me to be sexy, and that was ego-boosting.

C: Yeah.

K: Because my hair wasn’t done, no makeup, and I was wearing overalls and a sweatshirt.

C: Yes. And this was long before Instagram, so there was no hashtag no filter. You just never had a filter.

K: (laughs) I think what Chad’s trying to say is that my beauty has never needed a filter.

C: This is correct.

K: Yeah. So I speak Chad.

C: Yes.

K: (laughs)

C: It’s a small vocabulary, but very specialized.

K: So, what was Christmas to you besides the high pressure – it was never high pressure on what to get me because I’ve never made you guess on what I want. I’ve always given you a list, and I said, “do not surprise me, and if you get me a surprise gift know that I may not like it, and I will not pretend to like it if I don’t.”

C: And it needs to be additional to the gifts you have asked for you.

K: Yes.

C: And I didn’t have to get you all the gifts that you had asked for, but here was the list. And if I wasn’t going to get you the whole list, don’t get anything that wasn’t on the list.

K: Yes.

C: So yeah, that worked out fine. So for me, I think Christmas was just a time to solidify the good memories I had of childhood Christmas and overwrite the bad ones. Because I had some really good Christmases as a kid. Like staying with my maternal grandparents when we were living there.

K: Mhm.

C: They had a whole Christmas village set up with the model train and the houses that had the Christmas lights in them, so they light up and everything. And, like, were really big into Christmas. And we’d go to Mass, they were Episcopalian, so we’d go to Mass with them. And just have a really nice Christmas with all the family over because my mom had four siblings – I know my mom had four siblings, and their families would all come over, and there’d be like 40 or 50 people. Just family. That was nice. Like, the only weird part about that was that they served champagne at dinner and, being Mormon, we didn’t drink, but my cousins who were like 12 were having champagne.

K: Okay.

C: So that was like… happy memory. And then bad memory was like… the first year that we moved to Texas and got all these presents and started to open them up, and it was like… soap. Literally liquid soap. But it was G.I. Joe liquid soap because as a ten-year-old boy of course I liked G.I. Joe, which I’ve never liked G.I. Joe.

K: Mhmm.

C: And socks and things. So, the Christmas fluctuated so wildly that it kind of… I never knew what to expect. So us having the same Christmas every year – the same level of Christmas every year -was very comforting. It was just like; I know what Christmas is going to be. I’m involved in planning it, I know how many people we’re going to have over, I know if we’re having any overnight guests, I know if we’re having any parties.

K: Mm. Yeah, and if you want to know about my Christmas of past, follow us on twitter. I’ll tweet about it. I’m not talking about it on the podcast. There’s so like – because I have really horrific Christmas stories and really amazing Christmas stories, but if you want to know Kisstopher’s Christmas stories – I don’t know if that’ll be a hashtag, I doubt it will because it’s just way too many words.

C: Yeah, that is way too many words.

K: Yeah. But I don’t know, I might do a thread about it. I don’t know. I’ll have to see how I feel. I don’t fee like talking about my Christmas of past.

C: Okay.

K: So I’m not going to.

C: Okay, Scrooge.

(laughter)

K: Because I have too many – it’s too disjointed. Because I have Christmas with my mother, then I have Christmas with my father, and then I have Christmas with my father’s side of the family, and Christmas in all of the foster homes I’ve been in, and then Christmas at the children’s shelter. So like, that’s just way too many Christmases to take everyone through. And if they want – if you’re really interested about it, I’m sure I will tweet about the various Christmases or not at all. Or maybe I’ll write a blog about it. I don’t know.

C: Exactly. Yeah, who knows.

K: If you want something, you can always hit us up. You can hit us up on twitter or hit us up on the website and say “hey Kisstopher, tell us your Christmas stories” and I’ll be more than happy to do that because we do interact when people interact with us. And I’m really excited that we have been getting so much more interaction on the website with people reaching out to us and walking to talk to us. And so much more interaction on twitter based on listening to the podcast. And we’re like all over the world now. We’re constantly adding new countries, and so I’m really grateful to everyone how takes the time to listen because I know that everybody’s time I a precious resource, and I’m really humbled and honored that people take between 40 and 60 minutes of their day to listen to our ramblings and shenanigans. It really does make me feel good, and some weeks when I have really, really bad weeks, knowing that you guys are listening to our podcast really does make the difference to me. Sometimes how I get through is the fact that people listen to our podcast.

C: Yeah. And this is a busy time of year for you.

K: Yes it is.

C: And any time that you take a week off becomes busier because everybody shuffles to one week before or one week after, but also it’s a hard

K: Yeah. It helped that November was a five-week month, but the holidays are also a crisis-inducing time. And at the beginning of December, there’s December flight. So people usually wait until the last week of November to tell me that they’re going to be gone for the month of December, so I work with a lot of new clients and clients in crisis. And that’s really… it’s a rough mix.

C: Yeah, a lot of

K: Clients I don’t know and then clients I know in crisis, and then sometimes clients I don’t know in crisis.

C: Because a lot of people on an expat deal with their company, if they’re over here as a temporary placement, get a flight home for the holidays.

K: It’s called home leave.

C: Home leave, thank you.

K: You get one trip a year. It’s not specifically for Christmas, but for every year you do in Japan, they give you one vacation home where they pay for the flight there and back, but it has to be to your country of origin.

C: Yeah, it’s not just a free vacation.

K: Yeah. So it depends. Some – two of the countries that I know, two of the countries. Blah. Two of the companies I know, it is specific to your country of origin, and one company is still you get one flight out of Japan.

C: Mm. Nice.

K: Yeah, so those families are like the envy of all the families that have to go back to their country of origin or nowhere.

C: But I know from working with some of them that the people who don’t get that feel left out, and they have crises. I don’t know if they come see you as a result, but I know that

K: Yeah. And also it’s not – I should be clear, it’s not any country. They’re given an amount, like whatever the flight to your country would be. And so for people who have really expensive flights are like “whoohoo we can go somewhere else.” Because we have a whole list of places we can go, so a lot of people travel. So August and September, not September, and December are always a mystery o me. I have no idea.

C: It’s like a little present you can unwrap

K: It’s nothing like a present. It’s nothing like a present. Just dead nothing like a present. My scheduling is the bane of my existence. Trying to get everybody in and give them what they want, and then there’s a lot of pressure. Just interesting factoid: My clients that I see have nothing to do with my PhD. I have a master’s in psychology, so I am – and I did supervision, so I am completely cleared to do clinical psychology that has nothing to do with my PhD. And my PhD has nothing to do with clinical psychology. My PhD, if it had to be – it’s a general psychology PhD, but my focus of – the focus of my PhD would actually fall under the umbrella of industrial psychology.

C: Interesting.

K: Yeah. Just thought I’d share that little nugget.

C: That’s your wisdom for the New Year.

K: (laughs) Interesting facts about Kisstopher. So, I don’t know. I just think it’s an interesting fact. Because it’s come up a couple of times, like people are like “is this for your PhD? Do you see clients for your PhD?” Nope, this is my business. This is my therapy practice. I have a solo practice. I had a group practice in the United States that I headed, and now I have a solo practice in Japan that I head. So, if you look for my licensure, Japan doesn’t do licensure for clinical psychology. Interesting enough. I think I’ve talked about it before.

C: You have talked about it before.

K: And so I belong to the Japanese Psychological Association. I don’t belong to any of the American stuff anymore because I’m cheap.

C: Yeah.

K: And I don’t have any certifications or licensures through – in the United States because my home state of California would require that I go back to California, and I haven’t been back to the States in over a decade?

C: Yeah, it’s been over a decade now. We were last there… what, 11 years ago.

K: Yeah, me. You were there as recent ago as April of 2019, right?

C: Yes.

K: Yeah.

C: So that’s why I said we.

K: Yeah. You’re a sexy jetsetter.

C: Yes.

K: You’re just a man about town.

C: Thank you, I am.

K: You’re just a man of the world. Yup. Spread those wings, baby. Spread those wings and fly, baby.

C: (laughs)

K: All about you. So, thank you for listening to another ramble and listening to our talk about Christmas. So, one thing that I didn’t mention is that starting in November – it’s actually about mid-November that it starts – with the illuminations, just playing in the background of my head, even though there are no illuminations in our neighborhood, it’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

C: You mentioned that at the very beginning.

K: No, I don’t think I did.

C: Okay, we’ll see how’s right.

K: (laughs) See, not only do I have wicked déjà vu, I have no memory. So, I really don’t know what we talked about this podcast. I think it was Christmas. I don’t know. Don’t harass me. Don’t pressure me. There were some digressions, I think we stayed pretty much on theme, but I know I laughed, and I know I got to look at my beautiful husband. Staring into your eyes as they twinkle like Saint Nick.

C: Yes. That’s it.

K: (laughs) I know we talked about Santa-bod.

C: Yup.

K: Yeah, we did talk about Santa-bod. Your sexy Santa-bod.

C: Come back next week. Hear what we got going on.

K: (laughs) Bye.

C: Bye-bye.