K: So, lately I’ve been thinking about how systems are rigged, and how differently but similarly Japan rigs systems compared to the United States. I feel like Japan is more blatant in how they’re rigging the system, and America likes to pretend that it’s not a rigged system at all.

C: I feel like… that’s a fair characterization because the times that I’ve encountered rigged systems in Japan, it’s just, “ohh. Nothing could be done about that.”

K: “Shouganai”

C: Yeah. “Shouganai” – “oh, it’s completely unavoidable that this happened.”

K: Anyone who has spent more than a minute in Japan, I’m sorry, I should’ve done a trigger warning before I said the word, “shouganai”

(laughter)

K: Because it is triggering as hell to hear that. Because, once a Japanese person says “shouganai”, there’s nothing – it means, “it can’t be helped.”

C: It means they will do nothing to do change the situation.

K: Yeah.

C: They will not consider reasoning. There is nothing…

K: It’s just “fuck no.”

C: Yeah.

K: “There’s no way.”

C: Yeah.

K: “Give up now.” And… the translation of that is so misleading.

C: Mhm.

K: “It can’t be helped.” In the United S- at least, in my American culture – “it can’t be helped.” If I can figure out a way to help you or make it possible, then you’ll be like, “oh, okay. My eyes have been opened. I have this revelation.” So, when I hear, “it can’t be helped” I go into problem-solving mode.

C: Yeah. In the United States, I think “it can’t be helped” is like… “I’ve done something, or you’ve done something, that we haven’t been sufficient to the task.”

K: Yes.

C: So, if I come up with new ideas, then maybe it could help.

K: “Oh man, I just can’t help it.”

C: In Japan, it is – “it is not your fault. It is not my fault. It is the will of the universe.”

K: Yes. (laughs)

C: “And who are we to defy the will of the universe?” (laughs)

K: Yes. Yes. “It is from on high, and we do not know how high or from where on high, from whence it came, but it is now here forever in the universe.”

C: Even if it’s, to use a trivial example, if you go to McDonald’s, and you want extra sauce. Now, they sell it.

K: Yeah.

C: Like, nugget sauce. But, before if you wanted it, it was like, “shouganai. It’s the will of the universe that you can only have one sauce per five nuggets.”

K: Yeah, so like one little barbeque sauce.

C: Yeah.

K: Or hot mustard or sauce or whatever.

C: And, no, it is impossible to get more by purchasing anything except for more nuggets.

K: Yes.

C: Now they just sell it because it was a ridiculous position.

K: Yeah. So, like, that is a just… barrier, so that’s kind of a little small digression on Japanese language and culture. But something that I feel is really rigged is… the permanent residency system in Japan. I think that… so, in the United States – I think leaving the United States, the cards are stacked against you. Getting out of the U.S. is really, really hard. But, if you manage to get out of the, and that’s – you don’t get arrested, you don’t have any felonies, or if you get arrested you don’t have any court cases. So, you don’t have any criminal charges that have been proven in a court of law against you other than, like, traffic violations. And that you’ve never done any jail time where you went to court and then were convicted of a crime.

C: Right.

K: Because, if you’re convicted of a crime, just being convicted of a crime, a lot of countries won’t take you.

C: Yes.

K: Including the United States. So, like, if you have an assault charge, you can’t move to Japan. If you have an assault charge, you can’t move to the U.S. – you can’t emigrate.

C: Right.

K: So… that whole thing of, like, criminal records and stuff is how the U.S. rigs a lot of stuff. But I want to focus on the permanent residency thing because, although we have permanent residency, our son Rasta is a long-term resident because of something that we didn’t know that I felt rigged the system. I don’t know if you felt like it was rigged when we found out about it.

C: Yeah, I felt like it was rigged, and the reason is – we’ll talk about what it was in the moment – in the U.S., it is not permitted to have laws apply retroactively.

K: Yes.

C: So, in Japan, they changed the system so that you have to have paid 24 contin- contiguous months of your pension at the time that you apply for permanent residency.

K: Yes.

C: Now, before the rule was that you have to have paid the 24 previous months when you apply for permanent residency.

K: Well, and that you didn’t have any outstanding debt for pension.

C: Right.

K: And, now, they won’t even let you pay beyond 3 years.

C: Right.

K: So, anybody who’s been here for ten years and has missed any pension payments during that time cannot become a permanent residency.

C: Well, in the last 5 years. They only go back 5 years in considering it. Supposedly.

K: Oh, do they?

C: But they may change that in the future.

K: Yeah. We don’t – we never know. We don’t know. It depends on how many permanent residents they’re having. Because Japan is very controlled about how many foreigners they want as permanent residents at any given time, and I don’t know how they figure it out.

C: As is the U.S.

K: Yeah, every country does. So, that’s not part of the rigged system, though it kind of is.

C: But the difference between “you have to have paid the last 24 months” and “you have to have paid the last 24 months contiguously” like, not paid any of them late

K: Or consistently.

C: Right. Was a new addition.

K: Yeah.

C: Just like doing back payments on the health insurance was a new condition… I want to say, like, 12 or 13 years ago.

K: Yeah.

C: Because it came out that many of the members of parliament had not paid their pension duties.

K: Yeah. Had not paid their pension, had not paid their health insurance.

C: Right. And so, they were scolding the Japanese people for not doing it because the Japanese Post was being privatized, but they hadn’t themselves paid it. But I encountered this kind of system earlier in the immigration system when I tried for the highly skilled foreigner… add-on to a visa.

K: Yeah.

C: Which is a point system, and it shortens the time to permanent residency. You have to have a certain number of points.

(siren in the background)

K: Oh, they heard that police car.

C: Yup.

K: That is so weird. So, it’s probably a fire engine, and I apologize for that because we live next door to the fire department. And I hope no one’s house is burning down.

C: I hope not, too.

K: I hope they save them.

C: Yes.

K: And I’m so sorry for everyone that that sound is just going to… drive you to distraction. So… yeah.

C: The siren song.

K: Yeah. I still hear it off – just so annoying.

C: Yeah.

K: So rude. So rude. Okay, go on with what you were saying.

C: So, there are three different categories that you can earn points in. And you’ve got to get a certain number of points in one of the categories to qualify for this visa.

K: And one of them is age.

C: No. The categories are like, business, arts

K: Why don’t you – there is an age requirement: you have to be under the age of 40.

C: Yes. But, they’re business, arts, and science. So, I was applying for a science one, and I had managed to get the number of points I needed even though I was getting 0 points for my income because the number of points you get for your income goes down with your age. You have to make more money to get the same number of points.

K: Yes. So, there is an age requirement.

C: So, because I was over 35, which is the maximum age category is 35 and over, and I was making under a certain amount of money, I didn’t get any points for making money.

K: Correct.

C: But

K: Even though you were making enough to support a household of 3.

C: Right.

K: And they agreed that you made enough to support a household of 3.

C: Actually, not at that time: you were making enough.

K: Oh, okay.

C: I was doing my post-doc.

K: Okay. Wow, you applied that early?

C: Yeah, I applied

K: Yeah because you were under 40.

C: Right.

K: Okay. Right. Caught up. Caught up to speed now. Sorry, little spacey today. Well, everybody knows – if you’re a Musick Note, you know I have no idea how old Chad is. (laughs) Or anything. Like, I don’t know when Chad was 35. Way back yonder. On some days, it’ll be like, “way back yonder, back in the olden days when Chad was 35”

C: Right?

K: And then other days it’ll be like, “wait, aren’t you like 36 now?” (laughs)

C: So, I had all my points lined up. I had like 30 points for getting a PHD, another 10 points for it being from a Japanese university.

K: Humble brag.

C: Yes, humble brag.

K: (laughs) Go on with your humble brag, babe. Keep humble bragging.

C: I got some more points for having multiple scientific papers published, and I got some points for having patents.

K: End humble brag.

C: Oh, no. End humble brag for now.

K: (laughs)

C: So, I put in my paperwork. I was a post-doc at the time. And they sent me the – a note that I needed to come in to immigration and talk to them about it like three or four weeks later.

K: Yeah. Which is really common in Japan.

C: Yeah.

K: You turn in your paperwork, and then they send you a postcard, and then you have to go.

C: Yeah. So, I get there, and they told me, “well, if you get zero points on income, then you can’t get this.”

K: Yes. Which is not noted in any of the paperwork, and then they changed it.

C: And I said, “where is it in the rules?” They didn’t change it – they told me, “that’s not in the rules for the public to know.”

K: No, and then later on they put it in the rules for the public to know.

C: Yeah.

K: Like, I think… five or six years after that, they put it

C: I think they probably go tired of people applying with all their points because… it wasn’t easy to get to that number of points, but basically anybody who either was fluent in Japanese or graduated with their PHD here in Japanese qualified.

K: So, I should say I know for a fact that two years ago it was published in the rules because I was helping a client through the process.

C: Okay.

K: And it was published as part of the rules. I didn’t think it was going to be because I remember when we came up against it.

C: Right.

K: And… I know that my income didn’t count even though we were married because it had to be the person who was applying.

C: Correct.

K: And, so, I thought that was really messed up because I had aged out. I was already over 40. And, so, if we had known that, then we would have done it when I was under 40, but it didn’t come into play until I was already aged out of it.

C: Yeah, the new rules didn’t come into play until 2012 with immigration reform.

K: So, that’s one of the ways that Japan rigs the system is with age. Is with… money. Japan rigs a lot of systems with money: they want upper middle-class or nothing at all.

C: Right.

K: And most of the jobs that foreigners can hold in Japan will never, ever let you make enough money to qualify for the visa or to qualify for permanent residency.

C: Right.

K: So, English teaching is the number one job that English speaking expatriates do. The number two job that English speaking expatriates – non-English speaking – let me start over. Number one job for English speaking expatriates is English teaching, and then they have a bunch of expatriates here working in various industries.

C: Right.

K: There’s a large – they’re a whole separate bag. And they’re only coming over here for temporary assignment. And then, for non-English speaking expatriates, a lot of them are doing factory work.

C: Right.

K: Or domestic work. And they’ll never qualify for permanent residency.

C: Yeah. Unofficially, it has an income requirement of 3.3 million yen.

K: Yeah.

C: Which, as of this recording, is about 33,000 US dollars.

K: Yes. So, if you think you’re going to get rich…

C: Right.

K: Teaching English. You’re not. It’s really rare because a lot of companies like to post that they pay… 250,000 yen a month.

C: Right.

K: That’s 2,500, roughly.

C: Right, so that

K: A month.

C: That’s the standard pay, and that comes out to 3 million a year.

K: Yeah.

C: So, the permanent residency is set just above what you can expect

K: With the highest end of being an English teacher you make.

C: Right.

K: So, if you become a manager – if you’re one of the few people who become a manger – you might qualify.

C: Right.

K: Just barely.

C: Right. So, that’s one way. And… then a lot of the English schools are either owned by big chains

K: Yeah.

C: Or are owned by a couple in which one person is a native English speaker and the other is a native Japanese speaker.

K: Yes. And it’s… a lot of them, they – average highs… that you can make up to – the average hides a salary range, and they say, “oh, but you’re new, so we’re going to put you in at this lower salary, and then you’re on a track, and you’ll get to this salary after x y z many years”

C: Right.

K: But a lot of… Japanese companies – aside from English teaching companies – they do two bonuses a year.

C: Right.

K: Which is one month’s salary. Which bumps up people’s income. But the English teaching industry doesn’t do that. And, so, I think that’s another way that the system is rigged against foreigners. Because foreigners coming over here – especially if you’re American – you don’t come from a culture of bonuses.

C: Mhm.

K: You know, if you’re fresh out of college, a lot of the people coming over here are fresh out of college, they have a bachelor’s degree, can’t find a job in the United States, so they reach out, and they find “oh, okay. I can teach English in Japan.”

C: Right.

K: They apply, they come, and then… they are just really uneducated, really unaware of their rights. They don’t trust the union, which I wish that they would. And I refer everybody to the general union. But there’s a lot of stuff that… is done but isn’t a law.

C: Right.

K: So, there’s a lot of cultural things that are done that are not laws. That Japanese people benefit from that foreigners don’t. And I feel like that rigs the system for permanent residency.

C: Absolutely.

K: For foreign nationals. So… I don’t – I just might be a bitter Betty about our permanent residency. We’ve talked about our permanent residency before.

C: Yeah.

K: But we really had to, like, save and scrape and, like, get everything in order, and it was a really stressful time. Really, really stressful time.

C: Yes, it was.

K: And I think a lot of people – now, with COVID and everything going on – they’re bene – a lot of people are benefiting in Japan because they’re able to be on unemployment and still have a work visa.

C: Mhm.

K: Because, prior to COVID, if you were in Japan, and you lost your job, you had 90 days to find a new job.

C: Even though you paid unemployment insurance.

K: Yeah, even though you’re paying unemployment insurance. And not everybody qualifies.

C: Right.

K: So, that’s another way that Japan… rigs the system. Is that foreigners don’t qualify for unemployment insurance even though they pay for it.

C: Yeah. Each city is allowed to decide whether or not foreigners can receive government benefits even if they have paid into the system for those government benefits.

K: Yes.

C: And this has come down in several rulings from the supreme court that “no, just because you have been paying into the social welfare system for 20 years does not mean you’re entitled to any money from it.”

K: Yes.

C: And, so, we are not counting on any government retirement form Japan because… they can just decide that, as foreigners, we don’t get it.

K: Yes, even though we paid into it the whole time we’ve been here.

C: Even though it’s covered by a treaty with the U.S. and…

K: Yeah.

C: So…. It’ll just be, “oh, this decision is out of my hands.”

K: Yeah.

C: “There’s nothing to be done. There’s no appeal to be made.”

K: And, so, I feel like the U.S. rigs the social security system as well.

C: Yes.

K: Because you have to be in the United States to get your money.

C: Mhm.

K: so, you have – so, let’s say that you’re a foreigner living abroad. You’ve paid into social security the majority of your life in the United States. You have to spend… a cer- I don’t know the exact amount of time – but you have to spend a certain amount of time in the United States to actually get your social security.

C: Mhm.

K: So, you can’t retire to a country where you could actually live off of your social security. And a lot of… older Americans are like “wait a minute, I didn’t know about this loophole.”

C: Right.

K: “And my whole retirement plan was that I was going to go live someplace that it was less expensive” and it makes it really difficult. That’s rigging the system. Yeah, you can live in a U.S. territory where it’s cheaper – I think it’s a little bit cheaper to live in Guam and a little bit cheaper to live in Puerto Rico – but if you want to live in… any other place, like the Bahamas or someplace where you may have family…. You can’t do it because you have to be back in the United States to get those – to get your check. And I think that rigs the system.

C: I think so. If you’ve paid into the system, you should be able to get the money out. And I think that that’s… feeling – the strength of that feeling for me is also informed by my experiences with social security.

K: Mhm.

C: Which is that I had paid in quite a bit of money for the few years that I had worked when I became really ill with epilepsy.

K: You hadn’t worked for a few years. You’ve been working since you were 16. You had been working for over a decade.

C: I had been working for 7 or 8 years, which for social security

K: By the time we met, and you went through the process babe, you were like 26. And you had been working since you were 16. That’s a decade.

C: Yeah. That is a decade.

K: Why are you questioning my math on this? That’s like legit a decade.

C: But I

K: Are you saying that you went through it before you were 26?

C: I went through it before I was 26. But what I was saying was that I had paid in quite a bit of money for the amount – for my age.

K: Yeah, for your age, you had paid in quite a bit because you were working in tech.

C: Yeah, so I was making good money when I was working in tech.

K: Yeah.

C: So… the social security rules said, “if you’ve got epilepsy, and you’re having complex partial seizures more than once a week, you automatically qualify.”

K: Yeah.

C: But, when we applied, they said, “we agree you’re having it more than once a week, but we’ve decided to decline you.” And I didn’t know that they decline something like 70% of people first time. And then half of those people they end up deciding, “oops. We made a mistake in declining you” if they appeal.

K: Yes.

C: So, I didn’t know – we didn’t know – that the system is designed for “we just turn you down no matter what.”

K: Yeah, and you have to appeal.

C: And you have to appeal.

K: So, for everyone who’s disabled in the United States, if you et turned down the first time appeal it. And keep appealing it.

C: Yeah.

K: And I know it’s arduous. And I know it’s soul-crushing and disappointing but keep appealing it. And for those of you who are disabled in Japan, keep appealing it. Because I had a client that went down to Hello Work, and they were turned down. And I said, “no, go back down. Appeal it.” And, so… if – you know, find a doctor that will write for you. And, so, I have a psychiatrist that – two – I have two psychiatrists I work with, both lovely women, who write for my clients. Because it hast o be a medical doctor.

C: Based on their own judgment.

K: Yeah based on their own judgment. Not like I’m like, “hey, write this for my clients” but clients that have disability to get time off. Something that you can do in Japan is you can take 30 days off of work without pay for mental duress and mental stress. But, again, t hat system feels a little bit rigged to me because it’s 30 days without pay.

C: Yes.

K: And there’s some companies that say if you take off more than – if you miss more than three days of work, you lose your employment.

C: Right.

K: And, so, what I usually advice clients to do is take three weeks off, go to work for a week, and then take another three weeks off if they can afford it.

C: Mhm.

K: And some clients can, and they’re like, “are you serious?” And I’m like, “yeah, you can go to work for two days. You can take 25 days off, go to work for 2 days, take another 25 days off.” You can take 29 days off, go to work for one day, and then take another 29 days off, and you’re covered.

C: Yeah, it’s that continuous thing.

K: Yeah.

C: That bit us on the permanent residency application

K: Yeah.

C: But can

K: Well, bit Rasta not us.

C: Yeah. But the last company that I worked for – the last Japanese company that I worked for – did have a thing where I was a regular employee, which meant that I was basically unfireable unless I got sick.

K: Yeah.

C: That’s in there. “If you get sick and you can’t work a certain number of days in a row, then we can fire you.”

K: Yes. And, back then, it was also if had a disability.

C: Yes.

K: If you were found to – if you became disabled or were disabled, and then they found out that you were disabled

C: They could fire you regardless of whether or not it impacted your ability to do the job.

K: Yeah.

C: Which is interesting because the disability system is also disconnected from whether or not you’re able to work.

K: Yes, completely.

C: Here in Japan. And, in the U.S., it’s not. In the U.S., if they think you can work, you’re denied disability.

K: Yeah.

C: So, it’s different. There’s not the same kind of payments. Like, I’m considered mentally and physically disabled because the epilepsy is considered mental

K: Yes, and so is autism.

C: Right.

K: But you won’t qualify for the designation of autism because you speak using words.

C: Correct.

K: You’re vocal.

C: Correct. And then the AS is considered physical, but it doesn’t automatically come with a check that disability in the U.S. does. I’m not saying the check is sufficient in t he U.S., but it comes with a check. In Japan, it comes with, like, 50% off from public transit. And going first in line at public museums and attractions and things. So, I think just by itself it’s not particularly useful. It can make it a little bit easier to get a job because companies over a certain size are required to… have a certain number of disabled people working for them, or they pay a penalty.

K: But with that disabled people working for them, you have to go – physically go – to work every day. And something like COVID is really exposing Japan on this.

C: Yes.

K: Because you hav – even if you’re disabled and at a high risk – so someone like myself who has hereditary coproporphyria and lupus, I would be forced to go in if I work for a Japanese company, to go in to work every day. And, so, I’ve been helping my clients who are at a higher risk – because I do have a lot of disabled clients. And, no, they don’t want to be called clients with disability. Just all you people out there trying to be the PC police – if you want to be called a person with a disability, I will call you that. My clients want to be called disabled. End of. So, my clients that are disabled – I really help them with not having to go into work and getting accommodations during COVID. And talking with them about what their doctors need to write, and when their doctor – and this happens.

Their doctor is saying “okay, I know you have a compromised immune system, and I know that you talk to people for a living. I know that you work in a room that has no ventilation whatsoever, and I know that you’ll be in a building with over 40 people. And those 40 people are rotating people, and that puts you at higher risk for having COVID, but I will not write you a note to not go into work.”

C: Yeah.

K: And I say, “oh, no, no, no. That’s not going down.”

C: (laughs)

K: Not on Kisstopher’s watch, baby. No, no, no because I’m an advocate. I tell them, “you go back, and you say ‘is my immune system compromised? Yes or no, that’s all I want to know.’ And if they say ‘yes, my immune system’s compromised’ you say, ‘write this note.’ That’s it.” And then they’ll do it, and they’re like, “it was that easy, but the whole time my doctor was writing it they were like I really don’t feel like you need it.” I said, “I don’t care how your doctor feels.”

C: Right.

K: Let’s go under the law baby cakes. Let’s do what they must legally

C: I didn’t ask you pass judgment on what you think I ought to do.

K: Right.

C: All I’m asking for is your medical opinion.

K: Yes.

C: About this aspect.

K: And my clients are consistently blown away, like “my doctor thinks I should risk my life to go to work for the betterment of Japan, and they’re putting that before” and I’m like, “yes.” And it’s a whole – to me, it’s a really rigged system because… even my clients who are from the United States. My clients are from abroad – my Japanese clients, it’s really hard to get my Japanese clients who are disabled to not go into work. They’re like, “but my company really needs me.”

C: Yeah.

K: I get that. I get that. But if you’re a parent, your child needs you more.

C: Mhm.

K: Like, you know, I have clients that are just really, really sick. And, like, can’t even come into my office to see me but think they should go to work. And I feel like that’s culturally rigging the system.

C: It is. So, I warned you that the humble brag was not over.

K: (laughs) To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

C: Yes.

(laughter)

C: So, I was talking with a recruiter on LinkedIn. I get contacted by a lot of recruiters.

K: A lot.

C: Yeah.

K: A lot. And you’re not even slutting about on LinkedIn.

C: I’m not. I don’t have looking for positions or anything. I’m happy with my job.

K: Yup. And yes, I am slut shaming Chad for not being a slut.

C: I’m open with my job that if something else comes along

K: (laughs) Tell the people that you’re fine with me calling you a slut.

C: I am fine with that.

K: Well, actually, in this case I’m saying you’re not a slut.

C: Yes.

K: Why aren’t you more slutty on LinkedIn?

C: See, you’re using the wrong adjective.

K: Okay, what adjective should I be using?

C: When you want to – when you want to call somebody a slut, the adjective is slatternly.

K: Slatternly?

C: Yes.

K: Why aren’t you being more slaterning, my love, on LinkedIn?

C: Because I like my job.

K: Oh. Okay. It’s that easy for you.

C: It’s that easy for me.

K: “I like my job, so I don’t need to go looking for a new one”?

C: Exactly.

K: It’s that simple?

C: But now when they come

K: (laughs)

C: It’s that simple. But when they come banging on the door

K: We are so privileged that we like our jobs. We get it. We’re privileged. Thank you. Not defensive at all about that.

(laughter)

C: When they come banging on the door, I answer and say, “who is it?”

K: Mhm.

C: “How much money you bringing?”

K: Yes, you do. It’s always amazing to me that, like, they come to you, they tell you “this job sucks, they’re not going to pay you. The conditions are horrible, but will you take it?” And I’m like, “are you even listening to yourself at this point recruiter?”

C: So, this one they said they want a data scientist. They want somebody who’s familiar with Japan and is already here.

K: Mhm.

C: “It’s a 20% raise from what you’re making” because we discussed how much they would be paying. So, they didn’t say it was a 20% raise. They told me what the job was offering, which is a 20% raise.

K: Mhm.

C: “And they have an office in Osaka, and they want to know if you’ll come to that office.”

K: Mm.

C: And I said no. And they said, “are you sure you won’t move?” and I said, “I am sure I won’t move.” Then the recruiter said “well they still want to talk to you. They just want to know if they hired you, would you commute to Osaka every day from Nagoya?”

K: No.

C: And I said no. I said, “if you want – please relay to them that the reason that I was able to finish my PHD in 2 years rather than the 5 that the person who graduated at the same time as me and spent 60 hours a week at the office was because I didn’t spend 60 hours a week at the office.”

K: Yeah.

C: And… it was a back and forth, and then a couple weeks later they responded that… regardless of COVID or any exceptional circumstance, no matter how bad the world is, employees must come to the office from 8 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday.

K: Yes.

C: Well, then, shit don’t bother me.

K: and that’s not a law. It’s just company policy.

C: It’s just company policy. So then, shit, don’t bother me. Because they’re supposedly a high-tech company who’s looking for somebody who can give them good advice. So, here’s my piece of advice: that’s a stupid fucking rule.

(laughter)

K: Yes. My advice is “change your rules.” (laughs) I have looked at the data, and I have engineered it into work remote. I don’t understand this obsession because I am – seriously, I am tripped out by how low my overhead has gotten just by not going to the office.

C: Mmm.

K: Like, I’m still paying the rent, but that’s it.

C: Ain’t nothing going on but the rent.

K: Yeah, ain’t nothing going on but the rent. And the internet.

C: Yeah.

K: Because the internet – I know why I haven’t closed it down. Because I want the internet ready to go.

C: If you shut it down, it’s a whole thing to get it started back up

K: Yeah. And I don’t want to have to change my carrier and all of that. I like my internet setup. Because, in Japan – another system that’s rigged – if you change anything, you lose everything.

C: Yes.

K: So, if I were to cut off my internet, I would lose everything. I would lose my rate. I would lose my

C: Your 7 years of history, now.

K: Yes.

C: That gets you all kinds of discounts.

K: Yes.

C: Yeah.

K: So, I’m like, okay. So, it’s just rent and internet. And, like… the owner of the building is shady as hell because every other month they charge me for water. Even though they know I’m not using a drop of water.

C: Yeah because that’s not separately metered. In most places, it is separately metered – like at our, at our residence it is separately metered.

K: Yeah.

C: We pay for what we use. But, in that building, it is not.

K: And, so… I like that they’ve taken down the shadiness of it, and they’re just doing it every other month now. (laughs) And they’re really scared I’m going to move out because it’s just empty.

C: Well because you rent half the building.

K: Yeah. And… I – Rasta goes there once a week and flushes all the toilets so that it doesn’t smell like sewage because

C: So, you admit you’re using water.

K: Right? Okay, busted, I flush the toilet once a week. I flush three toilets once a week. So, for me – I’m – I don’t know why every company doesn’t go remote. Like, I k now why I’m not going to stay remote forever. I know why I’m going to eventually go back into my office. It’s – it’s a different feeling to do therapy in-person than it is to do it over the internet even though I don’t hug.

C: Right.

K: (laughs) Which probably sounds so mean, but if you’re a Musick Note, you know I don’t hug my clients. And they’re cool with it. So… for me, I just – if I were a tech-company, I would so just stay remote.

C: Well, and they offer their service

K: Because it’d be so cheaper.

C: Because they offer their services through the internet.

K: Yeah.

C: They mostly have to – a lot of them don’t even have their own computers, so going to the office you’re still connecting to a computer possibly in a different country on a different continent.

K: Yeah.

C: Like, the whole thing of it. I understand some people really like working in person. I get that some companies want some of their workers in person for whatever reason.

K: Yeah.

C: The ones that I don’t get – that I feel are really kind of just… you’re doing this to force compliance so that people know their place.

K: Yes.

C: And that’s something that happens a lot in Japan – it happens a lot in the U.S. – are the English teaching companies that are requiring people to come into the office

K: To do Skype

C: To do Skype calls with clients because it’s too dangerous for the clients to come in.

K: That pisses me off. Yeah.

C: So, they’re having the teachers all come into a central office instead.

K: Which makes no sense, and it’s even more confusing to me when it’s done based on favoritism and done based on which employee you don’t like. There’s a lot of power harassment in Japan.

C: There is, yeah.

K: I have several clients that their colleagues are allowed to do their lessons by Skype and allowed to do their lessons by Skype from home that are not allowing them to do it just because their boss doesn’t like them. And knows that they’re afraid of COVID and don’t want to come in. And I’m encouraging them to look for other work.

C: It’s interesting to me having worked at Japanese companies and having worked in tech in Silicon Valley before that how differently people who were not from Silicon Valley perceive things.

K: Yeah.

C: So, when I started working at Japanese companies, it was “I am not being paid enough to put up with this paranoia and micromanagement that I am going to steal a client.”

K: Yeah.

C: People who… were not working in Silicon Valley were like “I’m being paid great money, but why are they still micromanaging?”

K: Mhm.

C: So, I think in Silicon Valley, there’s the expectation that, of course your employer is entitled to spy on your computer and watch your internet usage 24 hours a day and

K: Yeah.

C: and invade your privacy and all of that because they own your life, so

K: Because of how much money they’re paying you.

C: Right.

K: So, they’re like, “if I’m paying you and I’m offering you stock options” it was really, really bad during the Clinton Era.

C: Right.

K: It got really, really bad with companies that were like, “hey, if I’m offering you stock options” some companies even today want to put keystroke on. What’s the name of the program that they want to use nowadays. Like, I’m boss manager your computer or something like that?

C: Oh, the general term is boss ware.

K: Yeah. Boss ware where they can log your keystrokes, so they know exactly what you’re doing on your computer at any given time.

C: Right. And I feel like if they give you your computer that’s still not

K: It’s still not okay

C: It’s still not okay, but I understand it more. But there are some companies demanding it on computers they don’t own. And demanding things like, “you work for us and therefore you are not allowed to use any employ- any products by our competitor.”

K: So, I find that that’s happening more in the United States than it’s happening in Japan.

C: Yeah.

K: So, we’re talking about, now – we’re talking about two different cultures and two different countries. So, I think it’s so interesting how many Americans are agreeing to this because they believe that don’t have the right because the government has been, and companies now are just being so shady and using VOCID to just reduce numbers. And just firing people they don’t like, and a lot of companies are going after government funding and government support by laying off employees.

C: Right.

K: Because they’ll make more – they’ll actually make more money from the government than they will by actually doing business.

C: Mhm.

K: Not every company. There are some. So, I feel really bad. And I feel really bad for the people – essential workers. That is such a generic term. Why don’t we call it what it is? The working poor, the lower middle class. The people who can’t afford to not work. And, so, like gas attendants, people at 7/11, people working at restaurants that decide to open. People working for Amazon delivering packages, people working for Uber Eats. The list goes on and on of people who are working poor – and some are not that have those jobs – that can’t afford the luxury of if their company is staying open and running to say “no thank you, I don’t want to go to strangers’ homes.”

C: Right.

K: “I don’t want to have to drive around in this van to stranger’s homes.” And there are people walking up – there are tons and tons of people walking up on Amazon. People that are like, yo, you’re supposed to stay in your house. I’m going to drop it off, but they want to come out and have a conversation face to face. A couple of people have gotten fired because they’re like, “don’t come near me. Get back in your house.” I don’t want to die so you can get your whatever from Amazon.

C: Yeah.

K: Hopefully, a product from my husband’s company, but

C: Hopefully.

K: Yeah. We never say your company because, you know, we’re weird like that.

C: Yes, we are.

K: It’s not our story to tell. (laughs)

C: So – and the – the companies here in Japan… the micromanagement is just part of their DNA, so many of them.

K: Yeah.

C: And I think – I feel like, just read some management theory because… the reason that you have to micromanage people is that you are micromanaging people.

K: Yes.

C: Well, that and you’re just assigning people to whatever job you feel like they should be doing rather than what they’re interested in doing or what they majored in.

K: What they’re qualified for, and…. A lot of people get shuffled into sales with no sales training or experience. Like…. They have a degree in economics and be put in charge of sales. Like, yo, I’m not trained in this.

C: Okay.

K: (laughs) Or tell them marketing. A lot of new graduates do cold calling telemarketing at the business level

C: Well, and that’s a – that’s a second industry for English speaking expats is the recruiting industry. And a lot of it is cold calling. And that’s why I kept getting so many cold calls because

K: (laughs)

C: They’re looking for

K: I laughed and hiccoughed.

C: I heard.

K: It didn’t hurt, but it was interesting. I don’t think I’ve ever done it before.

C: I think one thing that I have noticed since Corona Virus started is the salaries are going up.

K: Yeah?

C: Yeah. So… before this, I would get calls from recruiters, it’d be like “I’ve got this really great job for you…” and blah blah blah. And I’d say, “how much does it pay?” “Well, I mean I could maybe talk them into… maybe 4 million a year.” Which is

K: Which is like 40,000 or 45,000.

C: Yeah, which is like 40,000. Which is a little bit

K: A good job. Nothing to turn your nose up at.

C: No.

K: Unless you’re making more than that.

C: Yes. Which is like… less than an English school manager makes.

K: Yeah.

C: But more than an English teacher makes.

K: Yes.

C: So, if you’re looking at my resume, and you see that I was not an English teacher

K: And I think the conditions are important to explain, too. With mandatory overtime

C: Right.

K: And so, this isn’t “we’re offering you 40,000 to work a 40-hour week. We’re offering you 40,000 to work between 50 and 60 hours a week plus, you know, limited holidays and…” they have rolling mandatory. It’s not as straight…

C: Right.

K: Yeah. So, I just wanted to put that in there because I don’t want people to think that we’re flossing because we’re not.

C: No, no.

K: Or that we’re flexing because we’re not. We’re – we’re struggling. Everybody’s on their own struggle.

C: Yes. But… I was making more than that at my previous job.

K: Yeah.

C: I didn’t start at more than that, but I got raised to more than that.

K: Yeah.

C: But now the companies are coming with higher and higher numbers. But with weirder and weirder restrictions. Like, there’s a lot of them are still “you have to move to Tokyo.” But there’s some of them that are “you have to move to this specific city and”

K: “This specific neighborhood.”

C: Yeah. You’ve got to come in at these weird hours. You’ve got to agree to

K: Yeah, like you’re a chemist just running (laughs) chemistry experiments.

C: Right.

K: And you better be here to watch to make sure nothing happens.

C: Like, one of them which was completely unsuitable for me – so I didn’t even reply – but the recruiter wanted to talk to me about it was… testing the graphical user interfaces for cars.

K: Mhm.

C: That have GPS and stuff. And, so, I was supposed to move to that company’s city, and then I was required to drive their car at least 30 kilometers a day.

K: Yes.

C: Even though I would have been living down the street from their factory.

K: Yes. And you don’t have a driver’s license.

C: And I don’t have a driver’s license.

K: (laughs)

C: I can’t get a driver’s license. Me having a driver’s license would be a bad idea.

K: Yeah, but you can drive it on their property, on their course without a driver’s license. It’s just, it’s so weird. So weird.

C: The whole thing of it was just weird.

K: See, I think that’s super rigged, too. Like, the level of exceptions that they’re willing to make for you because you have a PHD and all these years of experience that they wouldn’t make for someone else.

C: No, they wouldn’t make those exceptions. Like, I know that they wouldn’t. I talked to the

K: They would say that they would and then when you got there, they would force you to get a driver’s license. When you got there, they would force you to do all of these different things.

C: Right.

K: But the fact that they’re even willing to lie and say that they would.

C: Mmm. Yeah, that’s a good point.

K: To me, it’s just like you’re not having to face – I don’t know. I think that’s kind of rigged against you but kind of rigged for you because maybe you can. So, because I’m an advocate, I’m really good at getting the ability to enforce what’s in their contract.

C: Yeah.

K: And I’m really good at contract negotiations. And, so, if it’s not in the contract, they don’t have to do it. And I build my clients up so that they’re strong enough to say “this is my contract. I am performing my contract.”

C: Yes.

K: And, so… that’s something I’m really happy with. Another way that they rigged was system in the United States that we’re probably going to talk about next week is with the criminal justice system. So, the criminal justice system here in Japan is rigged. We talked a little about it with like the 98%

C: Conviction rate.

K: Conviction rate and all of that. And, in the United States, by not giving felons the right to vote and not allowing felons to have a passport. And if you have a criminal history, most countries won’t take you.

C: Right.

K: That’s why Chad is so very stern and strict that I do not have a criminal history. Even though I have been arrested, no one has pressed charges.

C: Yes.

K: And, so, the only charges I had were as a minor, and that was sealed. So, I don’t have a record.

C: Yes.

K: So, there’s that. So, yeah.

C: Yeah.

K: (laughs) So, if you want to keep the conversation going, if you want to see where we’re going with all of this, head on over to our Patreon and we’ll keep the conversation going. Talk to you soon.

C: Bye.

K: Bye.