K: So, lately I’ve been struggling with the concept of… I’m working remote right now. And I’m going to be working remote – I started working remote in March of 2020. And it looks like I’m going to be working remote probably through the end of… September 2021? I want to say.

C: If things go according to plan.

K: Yeah because we live in Japan, and I can’t stop working remote until I’ve been vaccinated.

C: Right.

K: And the Japanese government is saying they’re going to start vaccinations in March.

C: Yes.

K: They’re hoping. And in their tier system, I’m slated for September.

C: Right.

K: And I was originally slated for… July. And then that got moved back to August, and now it’s being moved back to September. So, I don’t know, it may be… in – I won’t be vaccinated until December 2021. And… that makes me question, like… I don’t know – how safe is it, really, for me to be… working in person with people?

C: I think a lot of people have come to the conclusion of how safe was it ever for them to be working. Like, I go to the convenience stores once every week or two, and they have the plastic barriers up, so that you’re not like spitting in people’s faces when you talk to them. Like, why did we think it was okay before to be spitting in each other’s face when we’re talking?

K: Yeah, there are some people who spit. And I have a handful of clients – so, the way my office is set up is it is set up so that we’re 6 feet apart, but I have three clients that violate that.

C: Yeah.

KK: And want to sit right next to me. And I’ve never figured out how to tell them that makes me uncomfortable. Because it’s not safe because I know that I’m immunocompromised. And… one of the clients is always sick. They’re like very sickly. And… I’m not sure if they’re always sick, but they always have some sort of…

C: Ailment.

K: Irritation going on or a cough or something that makes me feel like they’re sick.

C: Yeah.

K: And… yeah. So, for me, I’m thinking in terms of like… is everybody – all you Musick Notes know that I care very much about climate footprint, and I said no more PET in my office. And my office went paperless years ago. I use recycled paper for my notes…. I just see it – being able to take it another step further in terms of being paperless by – and having a smaller eco footprint - -by going online. And I haven’t lost any clients yet. I just don’t know if I made that decision permanently and said, “you know what, guys. I’ve made the decision to close my offices. It’s just – it’s not safe for me. And Covid has really made me”

C: Aware of that.

K: Yeah. Aware of how unsafe it is. And… (sighs) I don’t know. It’s – it’s a hard call. It’s a hard call.

C: I could see how it’d be a hard call because we’ve had SARs and MERs and H1N1 come through here and all of that, and I think Covid is different in terms of its reach but not in terms of the havoc that it would wreak on your health.

K: I think that I have been putting myself at risk a lot more than I thought I was.

C: That’s – what’s what I’m saying. And I think that you’re not alone in realizing that.

K: Yeah.

C: And I think there’s another side to that, too, which is that businesses are realizing that they’re putting their employees at risk. And also that they’re spending a lot of money on offices they might not need.

K: Yes because, like, it currently takes three offices to run my… in-person therapy practice.

C: Right.

K: I need one office for waiting room. I need one office to do therapy in. And then I need one office for business.

C: Yes.

K: And if I closed it, I could have everyone – because everyone’s been working remote – and so have everyone work remote. And so, I have three offices that have been sitting closed that I’ve been paying rent on for a year.

C: Yes.

K: And I think that’s what people aren’t taking into consideration with a lot of businesses is that… the businesses that are staying open, we’re having to hold these spaces. But it’s a really tough choice because it’s a bell you can’t unring. Like, I love my office. If I’m going to do in-person therapy, I want to do it at those offices.

C: Right. Right.

K: Those are my offices. So, I haven’t made any decisions yet. I just – I don’t – I don’t know what to do.

C: I think that puts you in the same

K: It’s a lot of pressure.

C: I think that puts you in the same situation as a lot of companies. Like, I’m not in charge of the company that I work for. Like, I’m not the CEO. Which I’m okay with. I like the CEO. He’s a good guy. But… I know the struggle – because the company has been very open about talking about it – of keeping offices open that are essentially empty. It’s somewhat easier for them because they have things that must happen in their offices. It’s a retail company, so they’ve got shipments coming in that have to be packaged up and go out and… that sort of thing. But there’s also a lot of technical staff who have now been working at home since March… and the question is do all those technical staff need to come back and work in person? And, for me, I’ve been working remotely – I think… 12 of the last 15 years.

K: Yeah.

C: And so, I filled out a survey the other day at work – a work survey. Not from my work but just a general survey about work. And it asked… “do you work remotely?” And then it said in parentheses “in normal times.” Which, first of all, what are normal times?

K: Yes. (laughs)

C: I understood what they meant, but

K: We are normcore to the hardest.

C: Okay. But what are normal times? But the question was interesting because yes, I’m a remote worker even in “normal times” – let’s call them – even before Covid forced a lot of offices to shut and things. But a lot of people who do the same job that I do aren’t. And I was encountering that when I was talking with recruiters before Kisstopher convinced me to stop. So, I will admit that I am addicted to being wanted by recruiters.

K: Yeah. You are.

C: I just

K: You need to stop it.

C: It tickles me pink when they’re like

K: Okay. You need to stop it. You’re just… you’re a tease.

C: They write me in their bad English, and they say, “we’ve got a wonderful job opportunity for you because you are so smart.”

K: Why do you have to cap on their English? Some of them write you in perfect English.

C: Some of them write me in perfect English, but the ones who write me in perfect English are not as aggressive as the ones who write me in… it’s not that they’re not native speakers: it’s the business English thing. Like… it’s like describing a house as cozy when what you really mean is that it’s tiny.

K: Mmm.

C: They have this thing where they’re describing a job as flexible when what they really mean is you can choose whether to show up at 9 or 9:15.

K: Yeah.

C: And so, it’s this kind of… jargonese.

K: So, Chad – so, not everybody gets your sense of humor.

C: Okay.

K: And so, what – Chad is being sarcastic right now when he says, “their bad English.” What he’s saying is their bad job offers that they’re trying to make sound good. Because he’s trying to figure out how not to sound like he’s gloating while he gloats. And I think that that’s something he’s never quite measured – measured, never quite mastered.

C: I will admit that I do gloat a bit.

K: (laughs) You gloat a bit?

C: Yeah. Yeah.

K: Why don’t you say I’m super – because you’re coming off elitist, and I don’t think that you want to come off as ableist, elitist, and snobbish. Because those are things that you’re not.

C: No.

K: And so, if someone was really writing to you in broken English, you wouldn’t mention it. And so, I think they don’t understand your current job situation compared to what is the best possible job that you’re currently qualified for. So, I think that they don’t understand the job market in Japan. And if they’re in Japan, they might not even know this. So, I don’t – we don’t talk our money.

C: Right.

K: But I will say this: to get a job in Japan making as much money as Chad has, you have to have won the Nobel Peace Prize

C: Yes.

K: Or the Nobel – or a Pulitzer Prize. You have had to won an international prize, or they – and even then, it is a struggle to make as much money as Chad makes.

C: As a foreigner doing the job that I do. There are plenty of people

K: Japanese nationals, unless you’re working for a family company

C: Well, there are doctors and lawyers and things who make more than I do. On average. Not all of them, but on average.

K: There is a handful.

C: I looked

K: Japan just does

C: I looked it up.

K: Japan just doesn’t pay what you make.

C: No. Not for people who work for companies, and I think that that’s the issue

K: Yes.

C: Is that company employees, people who work for other people, just don’t make very much. It’s really, really hard to pass let’s say

K: Like if you’re famous or if you’ve won a grand prize or something like that

C: Right.

K: You know, there’s artists and there’s people who have started their own companies that make what you make – and we’re not saying that we’re multi-millionaires and you’re making millions and millions of dollars a year. That’s not what we’re saying. We’re saying that the pay in Japan is just… globally, really low. Which is weird because, globally, the standard of living in Japan is really high.

C: Yeah.

K: And I think that’s because… living is so affordable – housing is so affordable – outside of the Tokyo bubble.

C: Right.

K: So, like, in Nagoya – and I know a lot of foreigners are going to clutch their pearls – but for – because they’re paying way more than this because they’re living in air quotes “foreign friendly” places, but you can get a 2 bedroom with a living room – not with a living room – a 2dk – I think we’ve talked about this before. A 2 bedroom with a dining room and kitchen for 500 bucks a month.

C: Yeah

K: Or – 550 dollars a month.

C: When we were looking for your offices, which was a few years ago now, so… but inflation in Japan is extremely low.

K: Yeah.

C: There were studio places – new studio places – on offer for 250 dollars a month.

K: Yeah. So, that’s ni man go sen. And… so… my offices that I’m paying for – they had to do a cost-of-living increase. They do it every… 5 years or so. And so, now they’re go man san zen. So, 5 thousand – no. Yeah.

C: 53,000.

K: 53,000.

C: Yeah.

K: Takes me a while to switch. And…

C: Just over 500

K: 530 dollars

C: Just over 500 dollars for a 2 bedroom.

K: Yeah, so it depends on the…

C: Exchange rate.

K: Exchange rate on any given day. And so, when we talk dollars, we’re talking American dollars because we’re Americans. So… the cost of living is super reasonable, and then… as long as you don’t buy fresh fruit. If you buy fresh fruit, the cost of living is rather high.

C: Yeah, there are certain things that will – that will cause you to have a high cost of living, but Japanese companies tend to pay extremely low. Like, Japan regularly gets voted worst place to work in Asia as – as an expat.

K: Yeah.

C: And… I think the – it used to be like 25 years ago – and there are still a few people here that talk about those glory days – that you could come over and work in Tokyo as an expat and speak no Japanese and make a quarter of a million dollars a year. And that’s just not happening anymore.

K: Yeah.

C: People who come over here are making roughly what Japanese people do. Which starting salaries out of college are $20,000 a year.

K: You can actually – we’ve talked about this before – you can put any job that you have in mind into google and… the Japanese salary – like, you can do “Japanese salary, average salary for Chief Technical Officer”

C: Right.

K: And they’ll give you what that general salary is.

C: Yeah.

K: I don’t know it off the top of my head, so if you’re waiting for me to tell you, come on Musick Notes. Y’all know we don’t google.

(laughter)

K: Come on now. You know I’m not going to google that, and sorry that you can hear

C: It depends on whose salary you look at

K: Yeah. It’s gonna drive Chad – it’s going to drive him to distraction, but our heat… we didn’t set the fan to not toggle, and so you might be hearing the thing toggle. But I am so…

C: It is not driving me crazy.

K: So cold today. I am so cold. I was like, “please, sir, may I have some heat?”

C: Yes. So, before we started recording

K: Please? And I have like 3 blankets on because we redid the setup.

C: Yeah.

K: I love my husband so much. We redid the setup so that we’re now recording in bed again. Because it’s like – it’s really hard for me to sit at the table and record.

C: With the

K: Why are you torturing me?

C: With the heat on because the microphones we have now are direction, so unless you have the fan blowing directly into the mic, it does not show up.

K: Now I’m tempted to point my mic at the heat.

C: (laughs)

K: Like, why are you doing that? You know how I am.

C: Your arms are not long enough to make it make noise on that. There would be al to of noise when you moved your mic around, but there would not be fan noise.

K: I feel like pointing it at the heat and asking people if they can hear it.

C: I think maybe

K: Now it’s a very intimate conversation.

C: I think maybe you should save that for the take two.

K: No. I – I’m doing it right now, okay?

C: Okay. She’s doing it.

K: I’m gonna point it, can y’all hear it?

C: There’s going to be a lot of noise if she moves it.

K: It’s up there, guys, can you hear it? Can you hear it? It’s moving right now. It’s stopped moving. Okay, now it’s moving.

C: Okay, she’s gonna stop now.

K: Can you hear it?

C: Okay.

K: I think y’all could. But I think Chad’s gonna buffer that out. (laughs)

C: I am totally going to, yes.

K: (laughs)

C: We use Audacity for our sound editing.

K: He is married to me by choice, I swear it. (laughs) I sweat.

C: (laughs)

K: He chose this.

C: I did.

K: I was like this before we got married.

C: And I would choose it again right this minute.

K: (laughs)

C: Will you marry me?

K: Yes, I’ll marry you. Thank you so much. I needed a proposal right then. I was like, “why did he choose this madness? Why did he choose this?” And when we say madness, I do mean madness. I am mad.

C: Yes.

K: I am – I am cracked, and those are my adjectives. My adjectives, people. I know they’re saying don’t use crazy, don’t use lazy, and those kinds of things. And it is madness because I am compulsed and driven by my OCD, which is a madness for me.

C: Well and your HCP, too, has – has mental components of obsession and that kind of stuff.

K: Yeah.

C: We’ve talked a lot about that in other episodes, and I’m sure

K: Yeah. And get off me about my adjectives. My adjectives are my adjectives. They know I’m like – you can call yourself whatever you want, and I don’t view it as a negative.

C: Yeah.

K: I view, like, having a different drummer in my head to be an interesting beat.

C: Yes.

K: Why would you want somebody with the same drummer? Why would we all want to march to the sound of the same drum. That’s so weird to me. I never understood that.

C: Because we want to be fascists. That’s why.

K: Mmm. Fascists. Which makes me think of Pennyworth. Does anyone else feel like season 2 of Pennyworth is just… why? Why are we doing this? I do. Like, every time.

C: I felt that when you were watching that, and I wasn’t even watching it.

K: Yeah. A couple weeks ago, I tweeted – I tweeted about it, but I only did one tweet because I try not… at them. And I use the hashtag Pennyworth. I so… like… ugh. Season 1, the ending of it was so… sloppy and meat fisted and just… ugh. They had something going really, really good at the beginning of it, and then they figured him being married didn’t work out. It… it just… I don't want to spoil it for anybody. Season 1 has some really great stuff. Like, the first 2 episodes are the best 2 episodes, and then it kind of goes… south from there. Although I love me some Betts. So, sorry for that Pennyworth digression.

C: No, that’s okay.

K: Chad’s just sitting there. I feel it was significant.

C: It was.

K: And it has to do with working remotely because he’s trying to start his own business, and he doesn’t have any offices. He works out of a club. So, he’s kind of

C: Oh, Pennyworth does. I was like, I’m not trying to start my own busines. We’ve talked about

K: (laughs)

C: What are you talking about?

K: I love having a literal husband.

C: (laughs)

K: That is so cool, and it works on all levels. I have a literal husband.

C: Yes. Yes.

K: You are literally my husband.

C: Yes.

K: Are you aware of that?

C: I am aware of that.

K: That you’re a literal husband?

C: I am aware of that.

K: Okay. And you’re a literary husband.

C: Yes.

K: You’re a husband in every sense of the word.

C: That’s true.

K: Yeah. Even like… I guess for animal husbandry because I do keep you.

C: Yeah, I think that one’s a bit of a stretch, but I’ll let you have it. I’m feeling generous.

K: I feed you and water you.

C: You do. Yes.

K: And not all animal husbandry means that you eat the animals.

C: Yeah. Knock knock.

K: Who’s there?

C: John.

K: John who?

C: (snickers) John the Baptist.

K: (laughs)

C: (laughs)

K: You did the movement.

C: Yeah.

K: (laughs) That’s my favorite knock knock joke. And I did it to him for years. Anytime I was around water, I would just look at him. Knock knock. “I’m not going to do it.” Knock knock.

C: (laughs)

K: “I’m not gonna do it.” And then finally he would do it, and then I would just flick – as long as I just did the flicking fingers with no water.

C: Because I can’t stand somebody just knocking and knocking at the door and not answering.

K: I know you can’t, so I’m like, “he’s gonna break.” (laughs)

C: And like, here I know that the… the automated system that lets people ring our doorbell only goes so long. Like, they can’t let it just keep going because eventually it will stop it. It will just… turn them off.

K: It used to bug you because I would be at my house

C: Oh, it still bugs me. It still bugs me. I just learned to

K: Yeah. I don’t answer my door. I never have.

C: Yeah. I’ve just learned to deal with it.

K: Yeah.

C: Especially working

K: If my door is locked, it means you can’t come over. I’m not accepting visitors.

C: And especially working with both of us here – we’ve talked about our work setup before, but… the doorbell is in Kisstopher’s half of the apartment. So, if it goes off while she’s in session, I don’t know what she tells her clients, but I know that I am not allowed to answer the doorbell.

K: Nope.

C: Because that violates somebody else’s privacy. So, I’ve just learned to live with it.

K: Yeah.

C: And then wait for the thing that says that they’ve

K: I tell them the truth. I say, “I think we’re getting a package delivery, but you’re more important than whatever that is.” And so…

C: That’s a very – that’s a very kind truth.

K: “They’ll either come back or get over it.”

C: Yeah.

K: And that we have a mailbox, and they’re rude for ringing my doorbell. You should just put it straight into my mailbox.

C: Right?

K: Like, why? You don’t need me to sign for it. Because, in Japan, if you’re going to get mail that you have to sign for, they actually… send you a postcard of notification that, on this date and time, you’re going to need to sign for mail.

C: Those are actually

K: Or they tell you at the time

C: Those are actually retroactive. They’ll drop those in your box if you weren’t there.

K: And they do it beforehand because over at the office, whenever I’ve had to get mail

C: Oh yeah, I think at the office

K: They send you a notification.

C: I think for you because you don’t have a secure mailbox at your office.

K: Here’s Chad trying to pretend to know something he doesn’t know. He’s so aggressive.

C: I try to pretend to know everything, thank you.

K: Yeah. He doesn’t know what he’s talking about. In Japan, if you have to sign – at least in the ward that we live in – he doesn’t like me playing with chord. I’m playing with the chord. It might be making a noise. I don’t know. He just took it from me.

C: I did. Because it was making a noise.

(laughter)

K: We bug each other. That’s what we do.

C: (laughs)

K: Like all great married couples. So, anywho, as I was saying: if you have to sign – I’m going to say it for like the fifth time.

C: Okay, please say

K: If you have to sign, if you’re getting registered mail, they’ll send you a notification so that you will be around to get your registered mail.

C: Mm. Yeah, you’re – you’re out of a different post office at your office than we are here at the apartment.

K: He just so wants to be right, and he’s not. He’s not right about this because here’s the thing: Chad does not get the mail.

C: I don’t.

K: Rasta gets our mail, so I don’t know why he’s even, like, going down this road.

C: The same reason I used to try and get the mail: because I want to be involved with all things postal. But I’m not very good at it.

K: No, you don’t want – that – oh my gosh. Oh, my go – I will not let you lie to our Musick Notes like this. You do not – you just want to collect paper. You want to hoard paper. You do not want to be involved in the mail.

C: And this is one of the ways to do it.

K: You want to hoard the – okay, so this is like a serious thing. Chad has a paper hoarding thing. Paper and PET. You like to hoard paper and PET. And so, you once had a room that was full of paper and PET, and Is aid, “babe. This is not healthy for you. Like, emotionally, mentally, or anything. It’s making you feel bad about yourself. It’s not healthy.”

C: Yeah.

K: And you were like, “I just – I really like all of my papers.” And I was like, “really? All of these papers mean something to you?” And we had to do, like, if you see an episode of hoarders, we had to do like two second rule. Do you love it? No. Do you love it? And he was like, “this is hurting me too much.” Like, “yes that paper might have a coupon. Let me read it.” Because it’s in Japanese. I’m like, “you do not need to read every single paper. Why don’t you leave. I’ll fill it up, and then you can look through the bags whenever you want. If you haven’t looked in the bags in two weeks, we’ll throw them out.”

C: and I will admit sometimes, it’s not even about the content of the paper. It’s just about the paper itself.

K: Yeah, so that’s why – hello – that’s what hoarding is.

C: Like, sometimes they’re very smooth pieces of paper.

K: Yeah. You really love the smooth paper.

C: Yeah. Especially if they’re not – if they’re not gloss. Like, glossy magazines I get; it’s gonna be smooth because they’ve got the gloss on it.

K: Yeah.

C: But if it’s a matte piece of paper that’s completely smooth, I’m like “ohh. It feels so nice.”

K: Yeah. Receipt paper is your favorite.

C: Yeah. Thermal paper.

K: Yeah.

C: Yeah, I like… especially if I can hold it in my hand and make all the writing disappear. That is so fun.

K: Yeah. And even after you’ve done that, you still want it.

C: Yes.

K: Because you want to wait and see if months and months later, it’ll come back.

C: Or if it I put it in the freezer, will it come back.

K: You’ve never put it in the freezer to see that.

C: We – I did that with the thermal pens, and it kind of worked. Because you didn’t like the thermal pens that you can erase them by rubbing on them.

K: Mhm.

C: And it kind of worked.

K: I use thermal pens.

C: I know you do.

K: I love the thermal pens.

C: So, one thing that working remotely has done for me.

K: (laughs)

C: To bring it back around.

K: We’re not even pretending that we’re not just doing some ramble about paper.

C: Is that

K: It’s tied in because I want to have a paperless office.

C: Yeah. Is that I don’t get any paper from work.

K: Yeah.

C: Like, every once in a while, there’ll be something I have to print out and take down to immigration, but that stopped as soon as we got permanent residency. So, there’s not even that anymore.

K: Yeah.

C: And I have a – a Wacom tablet that I bought, I don’t know, like 10 years ago. I bought it during my Master’s program, so it’s like

K: What did you buy?

C: A Wacom – that’s the brand name – tablet. That black

K: A what?

C: That black, square thing that I use with the pen to

K: The signature thing?

C: Yeah.

K: the signature pad.

C: Yeah, the – yeah.

K: It’s a name brand?

C: It’s a name brand. It’s an artists’ thing.

K: Okay, so what is it?

C: It’s Wacom – w, a, c, o, m – that’s the brand name.

K: Uh-huh.

C: And it’s called a tablet.

K: Or better known as a signature pad.

C: Yes. Because I have

K: In this family, it’s the signature pad.

C: Yes. It is. But having that means that we don’t have to print out anything to sign it.

K: Yeah, when you walk up to me with it, I’m like, “what do you want me to sign?”

C: Right.

K: Because I don’t like to sign anything. So, I would be like – we were watching this show the other day about this conman who would get – who was conning people by getting them to sign stuff, and I thought, “I would just be so frustrating for them.”

C: (laughs)

K: Because I don’t like to sign anything. Like – and I get angry, too, like – I’m like. “you want me to sign what? Why am I signing this? What is this about? What do you want me to sign it for?”

C: Okay.

K: I get super angry and suspicious.

C: So, I want you to sign something – I go down to the post office, and I send you certified mail saying you’re going to need to sign something, so you get the postcard and you’re like, “oh dang. In 3 days, I’m going to need to sign something.”

K: It’s almost that official.

C: Yes.

K: I give you dates every month. I say, “if you need me to sign something, I will sign something for you

C: I will tell you in the advance, and I will tell you yes

K: “On Friday the 20th after I get off of work within 15 minutes of me coming inside the house after I’ve taken my shoes off.”

C: You tell me, “and have it ready. I’m not gonna wait while you get it set up.”

K: Yes. If it’s not set up by the time I walk from the doorway to the table, if you’re bustling around trying to set it up, you’re going to have to try again tomorrow or wait ‘til next month.

C: (laughs)

K: And this has been with like checks – things that will give me money. I won’t sign them.

C: Yes.

K: I – you’re like, “babe. We have a year. I’m trusting that in the year, I will get you to sign this.” I’m like, “I hope you will.”

C: Right?

(laughter)

K: “I hope you will. I’m rooting for you.”

C: (laughs)

K: Rooting for you. Mean it. And… working remote, I don’t have to sign anything.

C: Yeah.

K: But being the owner of the company, there’s months that I sign… a lot of stuff. So, like, I do my paperwork for the company – which there’s far less paperwork to do now that I’ remote.

C: right.

K: Which I really enjoy. And… I’m just not knowing if I want to take on – I don’t know. Like, I’m not – actually – I’m literally not paying anything but the rents because I’ve turned off the electricity.

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

K: And they’re charging me water every other month.

C: Mhm.

K: Which is scandalous on their part because

C: But you do have Rasta go flush your toilets every week or so just so that they don’t

K: Yeah because if you don’t flush your toilets, it’ll smell like sewage.

C: Yeah.

K: Yeah.

C: So, you use a little bit of water. I’m not saying you’re not being – because your electricity is separately metered, but your water is not separately metered in the building.

K: Yes. I am not using two thirds of the water in the building.

C: No, you are not.

K: So, come on now.

C: That’s what I’m saying it’s not separately metered. Like, our apartment here; all of our utilities are separately metered.

K: What’s your company doing?

C: Which one? My – my main gig?

K: Yeah. Your main gig. Because the Cinnabar Moth is completely remote right now.

C: Right.

K: And we don’t – we have an office. We have an office in Japan, and we have an office in Tokyo, but those are virtual offices.

C: Yeah, so starting in… late December

K: For mail purposes, we have like

C: Right.

K: Postal addresses.

C: Yes. In multiple countries.

K: Yeah.

C: Two

K: Because we’re multinational

C: Yeah, two is multiple. So, the main office for the company I work for – they’ve got two, and they’re both in the Melbourne area in Australia, which is in Victoria state. In late December, they announced they were

K: This is your main gig, not Cinnabar Moth.

C: Yeah. My main gig. They announced they were lifting the restrictions and offices were allowed to be up to 25% full.

K: What?

C: They had restricted offices to only being allowed to be 10% full – first it was essential personnel only. Like, literally if you can possibly in any way whatsoever do your job from home, you must do your job from home.

K: Okay.

C: so, I think we had 3 people who could not do their job from home because they involved physically handling shipments and things like that.

K: Yeah.

C: And then they went to, like, your office can be 10% full. So, if your office has a capacity of 40 people ordinarily, you can have 4 people working there during the day. And then they went to 25% full, which is where the year ended at. And so, people were – there were signup lists, and people were signing up to go into the office on different days. Like, the rest of my teammates all signed up to go into the office on the same day. And then they’re still required to physically distance, so they’re still required to be 2 meters away from each other. So, we had a meeting where everybody was all spread out and such.

But, for the most part, most of our people are still working remotely. And certain departments have always been remote: custom service is entirely remote. And… I think about half of the technical people are remote. In different countries and things.

K: And so, the way Japan has been doing remote is… completely different.

C: Yes.

K: Than the way the rest of the world has been doing it in that – it’s been – like, if you work on a team of 5, it has one person from the team of 5 stayed home at a day.

C: Yeah.

K: So, that is a team of 4. Which reduces the people in the building by 25%

C: Yeah, so it goes to 80%

K: Yeah.

C: Because 5 to 4 would make 80%. So, that’s what Australia had been doing. Victoria had been doing was – but 3 out of 4 people had to go home.

K: So, Japan was doing – it was 80% full.

C: Right. And Australia was doing

K: And only 20% - it was 75% full with only 25% working from home. And Japan looks like it’s going to continue doing that.

C: Mhm.

K: And so, Japan doesn’t really do… remote. Like…

C: They don’t. So, this circles back to – I don’t know if you remember last year. Or like 15 minutes ago, I was talking about recruiters. To the remote options that they had been presenting me with until I stopped talking to them. Because I’m happy in my job – I’m not looking for anything else.

K: Until I put my foot down, and I said, “you need to stop this.”

C: Yes. So, some of them were saying, “you can work remotely for the next 3 weeks and then you would need to come into the office.”

K: Yeah.

C: Some of them were saying, “you could work remotely for the next 6 months.” Some of them, it was “you could work remotely, but you’d need to come into the office a couple times a month.” Which is what I had in my previous job.

K: Yeah.

C: And then there was one company that said, “you’re not allowed to work remotely no matter how” and it was just this blunt. It was like a statement that the recruiter read me. “You are not allowed to work remotely no matter how bad Covid is, no matter how many people have died, even if you are sick and have Covid, you must come to the office.”

K: Yes.

C: I was like, that is not a company I want to work for. Who’s, like, hearing that and going “sign me up”?

K: Yeah – I don’t see how they fill that position.

C: I don’t, either. So, I just… the variety of choices that

K: We have a friend who’s recovering from cancer and is going into the office.

C: Yes.

K: And like – they’re – they literally are recovering from cancer.

C: Yes.

K: Like, they literally have just had their immune system ravaged.

C: Chemotherapy, radiation

K: They can’t drink tap water.

C: Yes.

K: Like, they have to drink bottled water. They can’t drink anything that’s not prepackaged. You can’t – like, everything has to be hermetically sealed before they can eat it, but they’re going back into the office. And I’m like, “how does this make sense?” You’re putting this person’s life at risk. Like, well, either that or they can be fired. And I’m like, “okay.” They have a family to support. I get it.

C: Yeah.

K: Like, you know. So… there’s that.

C: And we saw

K: I don’t agree with it, but there’s that.

C: No. And we saw people doing that in California when we were there, too. Because the community college that we went to – which we’re open about the fact that we met at community college. We love it and all that.

K: Yeah. We were just tweeting about it a couple of weeks ago.

C: Yeah. Probably tweeting about it yesterday. I tweet about it on the regular.

K: Yeah. We love De Anza. We love being… alumni

C: Alumni.

K: Of De Anza College. Awesome. If you live in Northern California, and you have the opportunity to go to De Anza College, go to De Anza College. Fabulous staff. Fabulous support. Fabulous education. And go to the counseling center, and they have – De Anza has agreements with UCs. With the entire UC system. And so, they really helped Chad with – prepare his applications so that he would look favorable for UC Berkeley. So

C: Yeah, I did something called the “I get C” which is a standardized transfer to the UCs. Which lets you in as a junior – you don’t have to take any undergrad – any freshman and sophomore classes.

K: Yeah. So, it’s one of the best community colleges in the United States.

C: Yeah. The California system. Because all the California community colleges have the “I get C” and such, so… that’s good stuff. But they tenured their professors, so not all places do, but they didn’t use adjuncts. They used professors who were on tenure tracks, and so to punish tenured professors, they would schedule them for a nighttime class and an early morning class.

K: Yeah. So, there is some pettiness everywhere you go.

C: Right. Right. And I just think, like, why be so petty? But, you know, I get why

K: How does this have to do – what does this have to do with working remotely?

C: Well, working remotely, some of the places were saying you can work remotely, but you have to be available from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm for example – to use a completely random example that only happens to match my previous job. And… the company

K: At your previous job, you had to be available from… any hour that your former boss was awake.

C: Yes. Yes.

K: Because no lie, on midnight on a Saturday, you got a phone call saying that they have broken out in shingles – because they were stressed out about something – and you guys worked from midnight until 6 am. And then they’re like, “oh, we’ll give you an easement so that this doesn’t count as overtime because I don’t want to pay you for this time on a Saturday. I don’t want to pay for waking you up at midnight. I don’t want to pay for having you work from midnight to 6 am. I don’t want to pay you for that.”

C: Yes.

K: “But we’ll give you time in lieu.” And then you worked 60 hours for 3 consecutive weeks until I had to put down, and I’m like, “this is making you sick. They’re like literally working you to death. This does not work.” Because you’re not getting paid for it.

C: Yeah.

K: You’re not getting bonuses for it.

C: Yeah.

K: You’re not getting time in lieu. To me, that’s thievery.

C: I agree.

K: That’s stealing.

C: I agree, and it’s very common.

K: Yeah.

C: Wage theft is the largest – by amount – type of theft in the United States.

K: What is?

C: Wage theft.

K: What? Wage theft?

C: Yeah. Not paying people for their overtime or illegally taking part of tips for tipped positions and that kind of thing.

K: Yeah. Yeah.

C: The company I’m working for now – working remotely – I was able to say, “look. I don’t do… nights. I don’t do weekends. I’m just”

K: My mic just fell over.

C: It did. “I’m just a daytime person. I’m just a daytime guy.” And I get breaks during the day, so the whole thing of it is nice. But I think that – for people who

K: I’m bugging the mess out of Chad right now messing with my mic.

C: I think for people who are used to working in an office and the remote working is only temporary, they just think, “well, I just have more time because of my commute – I don’t have my commute.” Like, I have more time in the day, so I should work more in the day. And I think a lot of people are now discovering that you don’t actually work more in the day working at home because you have other things going on. And… like…

K: I find that I have more… mental clarity working from home.

C: Mhm.

K: Than I did – and I find that I have more peace of mind working from home. And… I’m amazed at… how… I don’t know – like, my boundaries are so much better

C: Yeah.

K: Working from home than they were working from an office. And my appointments run on time working from home.

C: Interesting.

K: And… they don’t run on time working from an office.

C: Yeah.

K: So, working from an office – most of – like, I’m really good with you do not get to start your appointment early.

C: Right.

K: I don’t answer the door. It’s locked until it’s time for that person’s appointment. Which is why I have a waiting room. But the after-appointment is really hard. And some people – the worst case was a person who was taking 20 minutes

C: Mhm.

K: And I had to tell them, “I’m sorry, but this is an hour and twenty minutes. This is not okay. We need to reign it in.” And then I had a client that was showing up 2 hours before their appointment, and that violates client confidentiality, and I would have to talk to them.

C: Yeah, and if somebody shows up 2 hours early for their remote appointment – like

K: They’re just at home.

C: They’re just at home for 2 hours with their device.

K: They can do that.

C: Yeah.

K: Yeah. So, I don’t know what I’m going to do about… this is the first time I’m talking about it publicly, but I’ve been thinking about it for about a month.

C: Yeah, you and I have been discussing it.

K: Yeah, I don’t know what to do – I’m so torn.

C: And I think you’re not alone in that. I think a lot of companies – especially a lot of solo practitioners – a lot of professionals are facing the same thing.

K: Yeah.

C: Of… “do I really need a public office>” Because I know in Japan, the virtual office is super popular. Where you just… pay a small monthly fee and have access to an office exactly when you want it, but don’t pay for having that office 24 hours a day.

K: Yeah.

C: You pay an additional hourly fee when you’re using it.

K: And so, for me, it would mean definitely not working with kids anymore.

C: Yeah.

K: Because you can’t do kids remote. Because I work with children as young as 18 months.

C: Yes.

K: And… so… it would mean definitely not doing kids.

C: Yeah.

K: I don’t know how I feel about that.

C: Yeah, you got your start there

K: I have to think about how I feel about a lot of things because it would mean like changing my website – it would mean a lot of changes. And I don’t know how I feel about that. So, I’m still thinking, and… yeah. I’m basically at the, “I don’t know how I feel about it.”

C: Yeah. And I’m still at the, “I’m going to keep working remote because the commute to Melbourne is just too much.”

K: (laughs) But what are they going to do with everybody else? I thought they were thinking about doing remote. I think your company has a lot of… good programs in place. Like, y ‘all are doing a book club right now.

C: Yeah.

K: What’s the book that you guys are doing?

C: We’ve done several. The one we’re doing right now is on How To Solve It – so, I’m running that one because it’s a math book, and I love it. And so, it’s just…

K: So, go on babe. Do a math ramble. I support it.

C: So, How To Solve It by George Polya is a book from the 1950s talking about general problem-solving methods for mathematics specifically. But… the method also applies to other types of problems, so the book club’s – I’ve got two groups, and one of them is very mathematically savvy and actually interested in the math part of it. And one of them is less mathematically confident and are interested in the general problem-solving aspects of it. So, we’re going through the book in different ways looking at how we can use these techniques to… solve problems. To define them and… figure out what they are and how to evaluate whether a solution is good and such.

I think as far as what people are going to do – I know that my team has discussed having everybody take one day at home every week for certain. Which it was kind of a custom to do that before. But now, they’re saying, “let’s put it in place that we just plan that everybody works from home on…” I think we were talking about Thursdays. But that there are certain days of the week that everybody works from home, and that’s just the plan. Because they’ve discovered that it’s not so horrible to meet remotely. Being on lockdown has been hard for them – not being able to get coffee – when they took lockdown off to where you could, like, go get takeout coffee, there was a lot of celebration. A lot of coffee emojis in the slack channels.

K: Yeah, and then, too, there were a lot of joggers.

C: Yes. Joggers and

K: I was surprised by how many joggers there were.

C: Joggers, bicyclers, and surfers.

K: Joggers, surfers, and what?

C: And bicyclists.

K: Ah, yeah.

C: At the company. So, one of the offices is right on the beach. I haven’t been to either one, but a lot of surfers at that office.

K: How did you enjoy the remote whatchamajigga?

C: Yeah, so there’s an annual conference that’s usually in person. We had planned to go, then we canceled our plans, and we’re bummed. And then… the whole conference got canceled in person because it wouldn’t have been legal, so that went online. And that was fun. It was interesting to do it online. Talk about that – probably a whole episode worth – but I think not today.

K: No. You don’t talk a whole episode worth of anything.

C: Oh.

K: Every time you promise some that you’re going to do a whole episode worth of something, you never do it. So, why do you keep breaking your promises? Maybe that should be a whole episode: Chad and the promises he does not keep.

C: Maybe it should be.

K: Maybe we should have – go through the transcripts and just like control F – I don’t know what we would do.

C: Yeah.

K: Like, I don’t know what the control F would be to find all the different things Chad has promised to talk about that he has not.

C: Control F lies, control F damn lies

K: (laughs) You know, something that I do wanna say that’s kind of chapping my hide? Al Franken.

C: Yeah?

K: Yeah. It’s too soon. He did not make – he did not suffer enough. He has not come back apologetic. He’s come back full strength who he was before. No chagrin. No apology. And you don’t get to be… a mass-groper and then just come back as if you never broke anybody. Like, that’s not cool.

C: That’s not cool. So, I think maybe I should read up on this because I didn’t know about him doing the comeback. And we could talk next time about celebrities who are trying to come back too quick.

K: Yeah, and he’s one of them.

C: Yeah.

K: And… ew. Just ew. And no.

C: So if we remember, and if we’re still interested, that will be our next topic.

K: No, it won’t be.

C: (laughs)

K: I don’t know enough celebrities to say that about, and I’ve said all I had to say about it.

C: That’s why I’d have to look it up. Okay.

K: So, don’t try to jam me up into your whole little circle of ring of promising to talk about things and then not talking about them.

C: You’re saying it’s too soon to set a topic.

K: Yeah.

C: Okay.

K: Like, I don’t – I have no idea who I will be next week.

C: Oh, this is a good point.

K: Yeah. Don’t – don’t make me over. Don’t jam me up.

C: Okay.

K: So, on those happy notes – those happy thoughts – we have a whole bunch of exciting stuff going on with Cinnabar Moth, and if you’re interested in that kind of thing, then you can follow us on over to the Patreon. We’re actually going to be talking about book 2

C: Yeah.

K: Because we’re actually working on book 2, so that’s super exciting. So, we’re not going to be talking about Not My Ruckus. We’re going to be talking about Gracie & Zeus Live the Dream, which is the second book we’re working on with Cinnabar Moth. And… yeah. So, if you wanna hear about that, follow us on over to Patreon. Thank you for listening to us every week. We do check it out on Castos, and we see that our numbers are strong. Oh my gosh, and I meant to say thank you. I meant to say it last week, and I keep spacing it. Thank y’all so, so much. We have made it into the top 30 for PlayerFM podcasts about Japan.

C: Woohoo.

K: Yeah. For 2020, so I’m super excited about that. You all are so awesome. We love our Musick Notes, and it’s because y’all come in and listen every single week, and you know I’m super excited by how I’m saying y’all. We just love y’all so much and thank you. And I was super excited. I wasn’t – okay, I was totally googling it.

C: (laughs)

K: But I wasn’t expecting it. I was just like googling – I googled the podcast to see where it’s at with stuff, and I wasn’t expecting that. It was a huge surprise. So, thank you so, so much. WE love y’all so much. And really – we appreciate every single listen. Thank you for giving us your precious time and energy and… yeah. Thanks. We appreciate it. So, we hope to – we hope y’all come back net week and follow us on over to the Patreon and hear what we’ve got going on with Gracie & Zeus Live the Dream.

C: Yeah. Talk to you then.

K: Bye.

C: Bye.