



slack

VARIETY PACK

Episode 2: Escape From The Office

Female Announce: You are listening to the Snack ...

Male: Variety Pack.

Female Announce: A collection of stories about work ...

Male: Life, and everything in between.

Female Announce: Brought to you by Slack. If you don't know what Slack is, head over to Slack.com and change your working life forever. On this episode, living the dream and getting Internet famous in paradise.

Male: Had so much fun I can't believe what just happened and watched wales jumping right in front of me.

Female Announce: The visual microphone, explained.

Male: It lets us look at objects in the world and then recover vibrations from them and turn anything that we can see into a microphone.

Female Announce: Are coffee shops the future of the workplace?

Male: We've made our office look and feel exactly like a coffee shop.

Female Announce: But first, a brief history of the podcast.

Male: Slack Variety Pack? Cool. Okay.

Female: Making work less worky.

Male: I have seen lots of articles which say it's a podcast or play on demand cast or something like that. Or they say that it was invented by apple branding agency whereas in fact it was written by a slightly hairy journalist with a couple of minutes left until the newspaper went off stand and I had to stretch and ask [inaudible 00:01:16].

Ben Hammersley: My name is Ben Hammersley, I'm a writer and consultant and speaker about the Internet and I'm here with my 7 month old daughter, Ripley, you might hear in the background. I invented the word podcast.

It was in an article in the Guardian, the newspaper in the UK which I wrote for at the time and it was an article about this new phenomenon in 2004 of the automatically downloading audio program that you could subscribe to using an RSS reader. I wrote it very late one afternoon and it

was coming up close to a deadline. If you've ever written for newspapers you'll know that the final deadline on a newspaper, it's an extraordinarily hard deadline. You literally cannot go past that deadline. I managed to get a piece in pretty early on in the afternoon and then I got an email from one of the copy editors with about 5 or 10 minutes to go before the papers off stone where they said, "The article is about 20 words short and we don't have time to redesign the page or anything so can you write us an extra couple of sentences, please?" To make sure the article fit the page, effectively.

I had a few minutes to do it so I just pulled out a nonsense sentence, threw it into the middle of it, "But what shall we this phenomenon?" Then I made up 3 or 4 silly words and then the last one was podcast. That went into the paper and I didn't really think anything more about it.

6 or 8 months later I had an email from the Oxford English dictionary saying, "In this article you wrote for the Guardian, where did you get this word 'podcast'?" I had to tell them that I had made it up. I felt slightly ashamed about that fact.

When the dictionary says, "Where did you find this word?" And to say that you made it up seems somewhat presumptuous but they said that was the case as well because they hadn't found any previous citations of it and congratulations, it was 2004 word of the year. I think it's a perfectly cromulent word.

That was it, you don't get a certificate, you don't get any acknowledgement from [inaudible 00:03:54] or anything like that. Now what happens is I speak a lot a conferences and corporate events all around the world about different things and it's one of the lines that people like to introduce me by. "[inaudible 00:04:08] or blah blah blah, and he invented the word podcast. For certain types of audience and certain people that always gets a big "Woo" from the crowd.

Everybody thought that audio was dying and in fact we found it to be completely the opposite. Podcasting is the perfect medium for the modern age.

Male:

Welcome to the part of this podcast where we teach you how to make your podcast sound like all the other really popular podcasts. The first thing you want to focus on is how you sound. You don't want to sound like a reporter, you want to sound like a regular person. Use the word "like" like a lot. And you want to take pauses. Pauses that feel like they may go on too long.

Right about now you're going to want to change the music. This is a different piece of music, it's not intrusive, it's atmospheric. You might even say it's generic. It's an audio signal that tells our audience to get ready because you're about to tell them something pretty important and pretty emotional.

Fred: I'm the first interview subject, I am wandering around on a sidewalk and I'm poorly miked.

Male: That is how you introduce people in your story. It's important to remember that you only want to use their first name. That was Fred.

Fred: You're going to want to record me for about 3 hours but this 15 seconds is going to be the only usable piece of tape to support the story you want to tell.

Male: To legitimize your story you have to call an expert.

Expert: Hi, I'm the expert and I'm about to say a bunch of things that are going to go over your head but it will make me sound very smart and you have to trust me.

Male: At this point let your audience just sit in their emotions. When that's done it's time to check in with your sponsors. Music like this tells the audience that you're no longer a journalist you're now a paid spokesperson.

Sponsor: Hey, I'm the sponsor, I'm a 23 year old kid who's the founder of some company that delivers baskets full of web sites to your front door or some Twitter e-commerce bullsh**.

Male: Now that you've told your story it's time to wrap up your podcast. The best way of doing that is with the credits.

Male: You want to make sure that the credits are read by random people who helped make the show. Like me.

Female Person: Hi, I'm a person and I helped make this podcast.

Male Person: I'm another person and I also helped make this podcast.

Fred: Hello, this is Fred, I was featured earlier in the podcast, now I am in the credits.

Male: I feel like that's how you make a podcast.

Female: Slack. Have a great day at work today.

Female Announce: Big Picture time.

Male: Some people seem to have work and life all figured out. Clark Little quit his job of 17 years to get smashed by huge waves with his camera. His spectacular photos from inside breaking waves have changed his life and the lives of his 1.4 million Instagram followers. This is a story about how he turned his career into a day at the beach.

Clark Little: My name is Clark Little, I am an ocean photographer from the North Shore of Oahu. I love what I do and I honestly think people can feel that. I'm still tripping out on the whole social media thing, I can go on a shoot and push a button and reach over a million people.

Shore break photography is large amounts of water that break sometimes on dry sand close to shore. It actually is kind of dramatic, dangerous, scary yet beautiful. 8 years ago or 9 years ago I didn't have a camera so this has all happened pretty quick for me.

How I got started basically, my wife literally bought a picture of a shore break wave that somebody took at [inaudible 00:09:40] Bay from the beach and I said, "Wow, that's cool but honey, don't buy a picture, I'll go out there and I'll shoot one. I used to surf the short break, I'll go out there and I'll capture one." That inspired me to go out there and get the shot from inside the barrel.

I had this camera, point and shoot ... water housing. I started going out there and shooting one at a time, pictures of large shore break and people were going, "What is this guy doing out there?" They were tripping out because ... No one was doing it at that time. I started to see the results and people were like, "That's crazy, I've never seen that before."

I did a small exhibit, I started to print them, I started to sell them to a few galleries. Hawaiian Airlines did a feature and then Smithsonian ... I had some pictures up there. Then I was on the Today Show. I've traveled the world from Dubai to Brazil and done exhibits and met princes ... Really cool things have happened in my life and my career that I never ... Honestly. There was no plan, I just did what I loved and it just evolved, it truly did. Still to this day I trip out ... It's unreal.

I've been a little lucky but at the same time I've done the work. I don't sit around talking about it, I do it. I shoot a lot of pictures. A good day ... 2000?

To be honest with you if I get one epic shot or one keeper, I'm grateful, I'm happy. To share that moment whether it's fear, whether it's thrill, with people, they get a little zap of adrenaline just from looking at the picture. It all starts with just doing it, give it a shot. Go for it. I don't think there's a better time than right now to be able to share passion with people and get their work out all over the world.

I love being out there to capture it when it's perfect. It's not work. I am beyond stimulated. I have a headache sometimes because I had so much fun I can't believe what just happened. Watched waves jumping right in front of me. The thrills I've gotten the last few years ... I could wake up tomorrow and go, "Holy mackerel, that was the craziest, coolest dream. I wish it was real," and you know what? It is real.

- Male: If you want to actually see these amazing waves check out Clark's Instagram account @ClarkLittle.
- Female Announce: Slack. Love what you do.
- Female: Water cooler.
- Male: Confessions.
- Female: You call us with your true confessions from the workplace. It's discreet, it's anonymous. We're waiting for your call.
- Female: Water cooler.
- Male: Confessions.
- Male: My confession is that I have a very standard boring office job. There's nothing worse than trying to look busy 8 hours a day so I have developed a strategy to give myself an hour break every day in the office playing Candy Crush. The first element was that I had to get the cleaner's schedule. There's nothing worse than being in the middle of that Candy Crush game and having that person knocking on the door making sure that no one's there because they want to come in an clean. I got the office cleaner's schedule, I have then proceeded to book a standing meeting with another department. I set up my desk so it looks like I have gone to that meeting and I will then go to the bathroom. I will pick the

farthest stall so no one recognizes my shoes and I will sit on the toilet and I will just play Candy Crush.

If you spend an hour sitting on a toilet playing Candy Crush ... When I tried to get up one time my legs had actually fallen asleep and I crashed into the side of the stall. Anyways, it's a great solution. If you have a boring office job I recommend you try it.

Male: If you have a confession about something you did at your work place or your formal work place leave us a voice mail message at 415-992-7561. Seriously, put it in your phone right now, 415-992-7561.

Female Announce: Innovation Channel.

Female: Testing 1-2-3. Ahem. I am, at this very moment speaking to you through a microphone. This wonder of technology converts sound and air into an electrical signal. But did you know that microphones aren't the only thing to record sound? Take a look around you: That water bottle, that house plant, that candy wrapper ... All have the power of a microphone. This sound, for instance ... Was captured by a bag of chips.

Abe Davis is a computer science PhD student at MIT and a speaker at this year's TED conference. We contacted him at his lab in Boston to explain what he calls the visual microphone.

Abe Davis: Visual microphone is this project where we're looking at really tiny motions that happen in video and when I say very tiny motions I'm actually talking about motions that are too small for us to see.

Female: Here's the low-down. When sound hits an object it causes that object to vibrate.

Abe Davis: The objects that we see are being moved by sound waves. If you record this in a video these very tiny motions actually contain the information that tells you what sounds are happening around an object.

Female: In Abe's first experiment he takes high speed video of a potted plant while a nearby loudspeaker plays the notes to Mary Had A Little Lamb. Even when Abe played the video in slow motion, the vibrations caused by the music are so subtle that they move the plant's leaves by less than 1/100th of a pixel making the plant appear still to the naked eye. Despite that, he was still able to recover this sound ...

Abe Davis: Essentially what this lets us to is look at objects in the world and then recover vibrations from them and return anything we can see into a microphone from a distance. In general the things that work the best are going to be things that move very readily with the air around them. Light things.

Female: In Abe's next experiment, he recovered live human speech from high speed video from a bag of chips lying on the ground.

Abe Davis: There are 2 reasons for that. 1 is because a bag of chips is this light object that does move very easily with the air around it.

Female: Crunch.

Abe Davis: 2 because when I was working on this project I ate a lot of chips and so we had it handy.

Female: To make things a little more challenging Abe put the camera outside behind a soundproof window. This is what Abe recorded next to the bag of chips using a cell phone.

Abe Davis: Maybe I can only pick up on the tone of people's voices but that might be enough, for instance, how many people are in a room, or to tell the gender of a speaker. A lot of people, when they see this work, their mind immediately goes to surveillance. If you look at the examples that we've shown it's pretty easy to see why that is. It's not hard to imagine how you'd use this to spy on somebody.

Female: Surveillance may be the most obvious outcome of the visual microphone but Abe's got a better idea.

Abe Davis: The more exciting applications of this have to do with our ability to form an image of how things vibrate in our environment. Now that we have a new way to get this information and a way that's very passive so we don't have to interfere with the environment, in a way that uses this technology that's so common ... That really opens up new possibilities. Personally, I think that some of the most exciting applications of this are probably things that we haven't even thought of.

Female: And that's the visual microphone. Before we say good bye to Abe Davis we thought we should reveal one more secret, the secret of Abe's undercover career as a rap artist. Science by day, hip hop by night.

Abe Davis: I had secretly been on my own making rap music for a few years so I decided to make a song for this event at the Cambridge Science Festival.

Female: Think 2 chip bags and a microphone.

Abe Davis: I think it's very important for me to have a creative outlet just to keep me sane. [phonetic 00:19:45] "Done the numbers and the data's conclusive. I've thought about it a lot. Super sexy science, it's good to be a scientist. I apply my mind with the sexiest hypothesis. [inaudible 00:20:01] catalyst. I'm going to take it to my lab and break it down like this. Our chemistry is so strong it's getting hard to miss ..."

Female Announce: Office channel.

Male: If you've spent any time in a coffee shop you'll notice a healthy dose of people working away on their laptops. These are not people who have just popped in for a quick coffee, they appear to be working there all day long. We were curious about these people so we hit a coffee shop to find out who they are and what they're doing in there.

Male: First off, tell me what you do for a living.

Male: I am a visual designer.

Female: I work customer support for a music web site.

Male: I do real estate.

Female: I'm a nursing student.

Male: I work as a graphic designer.

Male: Why do you choose to come and work in a coffee shop?

Male: Because I have a laptop and all of my work stuff is on that and I can work wherever I want.

Female: Just love the energy of being in a coffee shop and obviously being around good coffee.

Male: I don't want to be on a field every single day dressed in a suit. That's horrible.

Male: Would you say you're pretty productive in a coffee shop?

Female: Definitely. More productive than I would be at home, for sure.

Male: So much more productive, especially if I disable the wifi which I have not done.

Male: It's nice to get out of the office. I find I have actually more focus on work than I would at work which is a weird thing to say.

Male: If you had your choice would you say that you'd prefer to work in a coffee shop?

Female: Oh yeah, definitely.

Male: My entire life is geared around staying away from an office environment.

Male: Turns out, people like using a coffee shop as their office. We tried to imagine what it would be like if an office turned itself into a coffee shop.

John Clipton: My name is John Clipton and I a senior partner at Miller, Clipton, Davis. We are a full-service here in Denver, Colorado. After learning that most people prefer to work alone in coffee shops we decided it was time to make a dramatic change to our office environment. We got rid of everything. We no longer have cubicles and desks and offices with doors, instead we've made our office look and feel exactly like a coffee shop. From the cake pops in the pastry cabinet right down to our employees having to purchase a coffee before receiving the wifi password. We've really left no stone unturned.

Male: One large chai tea latte for David at the bar.

John Clipton: In fact, we've even changed the name of the company. We're no longer called Miller, Clifton, Davis. Our firm is now called the Bean Counters ... With emphasis on the word "bean" because every good coffee shop, as you know, has a pun in its name.

Sure, there's been a bit of a learning curve with our employees. It's the small things like having to ask for a key every time you need to use the restroom.

Female: Does anyone know where the key to the women's rest room is? It's not on the hook.

John Clijton: I think I'm most proud of our coffee. In many ways even more so than our accounting. We do have a young CA that, in my opinion, makes the best Americano misto in the city.

Male: Sorry guys, we're going to have to get you to move, we're setting up a stage here. We have an acoustic guitar performance tonight.

John Clijton: The decision to turn our office into a coffee shop is the best thing that we've ever done. Productivity's gone way up and our slam poetry Wednesday's aren't bad, either.

Male: I've got a completed tax return on the bar for Penelope?

Female: You're cappuccino.

Female Announce: Channel change. Street smart.

Tina: All right, when I say creative, you say morning. Creative ...

Crowd: Morning.

Tina: Creative.

Crowd: Morning.

Female: When I say ...

Male: Tina Roth Eisenburg is a designer and prolific entrepreneur whose passion, smarts and spirit make her one of the most respected and beloved digital mavens out there. Have you ever attended a Creative Mornings event in your city? That's because of Tina. Put a Tattly temporary tattoo on your arm? That was Tina. Checked into Co-Working Space Studiomates? That was Tina. Downloaded calendar app To Do? Tina. Discovered a great new product on design blog Swissmiss? Yeah, Tina. We caught up with her on the streets of New York city to glean some of her wisdom. Here, she tells us about putting business problems on their heads.

Tina: In Creative Mornings the chapter we run here in New York City, our wait list has been growing over the years. At this point, our wait list, every month for the event, is about 800 people long. Which is an amazing problem to have but at the same time it pains me that there's 800 that can't get together. We can't accommodate because we're already at a 500 people event every month.

I looked at my team and said, let's flip this. Let's turn this problem on its head and at the same time I really missed the small, intimate events we had at the very beginning that could be held at a design studio. We combined these 2 things and started a new thing called Field Trips. It's an experiment here in New York. Basically, on Monday is the sign up for our events and then on Tuesday morning if you ended up wait listed you're going to get an email that says, "Hey, you're on the wait list and that's awesome because here are all these events happening at the same time at companies around the city."

Just to give you an idea last week IDO hosted an event in creative listening. Square Space had a ping pong tournament, Skillshare had a typography class, Holski had a manifesto ... It was so cool, there was like 9 or 10 workshops that individuals or companies offered at the same time as the main event that was only accessible to people on the wait list.

These moments when we can figure out ... Take a problem and flip it on its head and turn it into something good is when I get really excited.

Female Announce: Creative Mornings takes place in 115 cities across the world. Chances are there's an event happening near you. Go to CreativeMornings.com for more.

That wraps up episode 2 of the Slack Variety Pack. A podcast about work, life, and everything in between. Next episode: Here's what's coming up on the next episode of Slack Variety Pack. OK-GO is experimenting with a unique way to release their albums.

Male: In a vile of water about the size of my thumb, let's say, there would be several trillion copies of our album.

Female Announce: Almost every office has: The guy who wears shorts every day of the year.

Male: It's almost become part of my identity, in a way, to be the shorts guy.

Female Announce: A visit to every work conference, ever.

Female: Name tags.

Male: Lanyards.

Female: Slide shows.

Male: A DJ set at 11 in the morning.

Female Announce: That's all coming up at the next episode of the Slack Variety Pack. The details: The stories you've just heard are available at [SoundCloud.com/slackvarietypack](https://soundcloud.com/slackvarietypack) so you can share your favorites. Subscribe to the entire series at [iTunes.com/slackvarietypack](https://itunes.com/slackvarietypack). Let us know what you think of this episode using the hash tag [#slackvarietypack](https://twitter.com/slackhq). Our web site is slash.com/varietypack and our Twitter handle is [@slackhq](https://twitter.com/slackhq). If you've got a story for Water Cooler Confessions or any other idea for our podcast leave us a voice mail at 415-992-7561. Thank you for listening.

Male: Slack.

Female: Making work less worky.