

ERIN + JAMES

A CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER



Deviant canine captures hearts of hypocrites

By ERIN SPRADLIN



The year we both quit our jobs

By ERIN SPRADLIN and JAMES CARLSON

When James was a kid, he used his family's computer to design and print a banner that he hung on his bedroom wall with a quote from the movie *Braveheart*: "Every man dies. Not every man really lives." Yes, James was an intense child, but damn if that anti-semitic Mel Gibson wasn't on to something. If real estate is living, then we're *really* living.

The I-quit-my-job paragraph of this newsletter has traditionally been reserved for Erin, but after a sushi dinner in March, we decided the best course of action was for James to quit his job. He did so the next day. And, realizing that she also thought working for someone else had sucked since at least 2004, Erin put in her notice mid-May. Some people were supportive. Some were polite but very weirded out. And, some people were a touch rude. The latter of which buoyed our decision the most because we both understood/respected where they were coming from and didn't care at all.

So, what has our first year in full-time real estate been like? There's definitely been a fatalistic undercurrent of "God, we hope this doesn't fall apart." More than a few pleasant surprises at how much we've enjoyed the people we've met in the field. A few disagreements on outfits. A couple smug comments on Keller Williams' advertising. Some heavy sighing and distressed temple rubbing. And, yes, more than a few self-congratulating happy hours.

But most days, we wake up feeling happy and a sense of, in the words of William Wallace, *Freeeeeeeeee-doooooommm!*

After a lifetime of being critical of overzealous dog owners, it was surprising to find myself taking breaks in the day for "Mommy Cuddles" with Zoey. Even more surprising was my fast adoption of extremely annoying behaviors like sharing dog photos and videos, telling inane dog stories and taking no greater joy out of life than watching our Zoey Bear rip across the dog park.

And, yes, she is perfect, even if she refuses to call James by his proper name, preferring to call him Boyfriend Justin or Jims when she's being generous. And, no, it wasn't nice last week when she pointed out his thinning hair or told me that he smells funny after he drinks protein shakes, but I know they dig each other because I always catch her staring at him and he's always telling her how much he loves her.

In other words, I never knew I could love a dog this much, and, yes, we're exactly as unbearable as anyone else fresh in love. Ruh-roh.

By the numbers
2017 in real estate

20 deals closed

30 Airbnb laws reports written

7 Airbnb videos filmed for Bigger Pockets

500 students taught at classes

Awesome hair and a thyroid condition

By ERIN SPRADLIN

One day in July, we walked out of the ridiculously hip RINO offices of BiggerPockets, gave each other the side eye and agreed that we thought our pitch maybe, probably went pretty well?? It felt too good to be true, so we hedged on our enthusiasm, but two months later, our first video collaboration launched and six more followed before the year's end.



On a high level, the YouTube commenters have assessed James' hair as "pretty sweet" and diagnosed the prominence of my eyes as "probably a thyroid issue." Some weeks we see the video thumbnail and are pumped. Other weeks it's a surprise to learn that a face (much less, *our* faces) can look that stupid.

It's been wild, and fun, and humbling, and awesome for our business. We couldn't be happier about the partnership and will continue to bust out content for as long as they'll have us.



New Hobbies! (Waking at 6 a.m. isn't one of them)

By ERIN SPRADLIN

Given that my hobby is politics, and that my political bent in the current age requires me to deliver insufferable monologues about the rapidly approaching end to mankind -- and Merry Christmas to you too! -- we decided this year to focus our energies on some new hobbies.

For starters, I took up fasting once a week and learned that it is both really uncomfortable and a great way for a person with extremely limited discipline to keep their weight in check

We also took up pickleball, which is tennis but on a shorter court with a wiffle ball and a graphite paddle. The games are shorter, but the desire to curse yourself for your physical and moral failings remains the same.

I never thought cooking could be as satisfying as having the local stoner sub shop deliver a sandwich two hours late and with half the actual order, but then I discovered heavy whipping cream, vegetable broth, red pepper flakes and salt. Yum!

And finally, cross country became a thing this year. I love it because it's a sport that finally allows me to enjoy the mountains in the winter. James is less enthused, but that's probably because he doesn't like activities at which he's not the best.

How we're going to

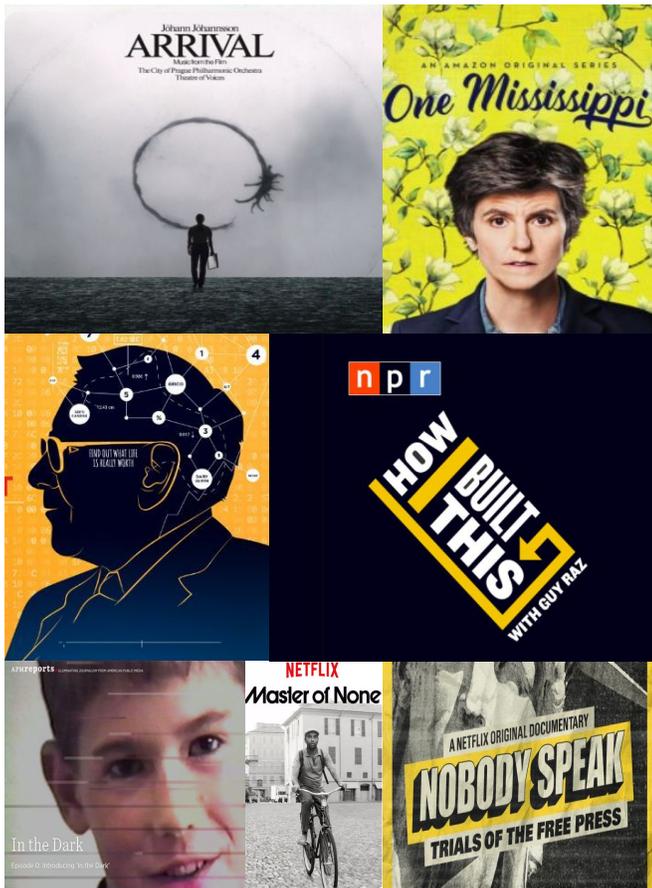
Win in 2018

JAMES

- Take 1st in a pickleball tournament
-
- Close 30 deals
-
- Write an Airbnb book
-
- Buy two properties
-
- Read 10 books

ERIN

- Complete a 3-day fast
-
- Coordinate a summer hut trip
-
- Write an Airbnb book
-
- Increase company revenue by 20%
-
- Host 1st Annual Bash



The year in bests

A sampling of our favorite media of 2017

By JAMES CARLSON and ERIN SPRADLIN

PODCASTS

How I Built This (James)

A podcast with particular resonance for us this year as we struck out on our own. This is pure nerd porn for the entrepreneur. Guy Raz -- in his best NPR, Ira Glass voice -- gives us a peek behind how the biggest companies began, grew and overtook the world. All through (sometimes) intimate long-form interviews with the founders.

In the Dark (Erin)

This podcast was similar to the Serial series, but actually good. I know. S-Town was good if weird, but this is better. Really sad + super depressing + profound questions about our law enforcement and sexual offenders = one very bingeable podcast.

SHOWS

One Mississippi, Seasons 1&2 (Erin)

The freshman season of this series was fantastic for its dry wit and unwillingness to reduce Southerners to a bunch of mouth breathers. The second season, though, broke before the Me Too wave, and is a thinly

veiled comment on the Louis CK situation, which is pretty interesting since he's an executive producer on the show.

Master of None, Season 2 (James)

Aziz Ansari deftly juggles a wide-range issues in his second season, from religion to sexual harassment to homophobia and acceptance. (If you watch just one episode, "Thanksgiving" is a gem.) And he has the audacity to attempt -- and successfully pull off -- a one-off vignette about the lives of everyday New Yorkers. Oh! And there's a subtle-but-touching love story woven in as well! And great music! I love this show!

DOCUMENTARIES

Becoming Warren Buffet (James)

A fascinating portrait of a billionaire who learns to open himself up to the world. The Oracle of Omaha is not a cold man early on, but he is a distant one, absorbed by numbers more than relationships. But his first wife (and maybe the star of the documentary) softens this former conservative, and by the end of the movie you're loving his kind heart and cheering as he gives away the bulk of his \$65 billion.

Nobody Speak (James)

Internet "news" site Gawker is bankrupted by a lawsuit ostensibly brought by Hulk Hogan. But secretly the suit is bankrolled by a conservative billionaire with an ax to grind against the website. It's the free press -- not the unsympathetic Gawker -- that is the true victim. You're not so much rooting for the sleazy journalism as you are rooting against the powerful who wield their wealth to undermine the fourth estate of democracy. In a time of Trump, it's a relevant message.

FILMS

Arrival (Erin)

This movie has all the ingredients needed for it to be an all time favorite: politics, linguistics, aliens, personal drama and sweeping world wide consequences. Someone get me a bottle of pinot grigio and set my phone to airplane mode.

NODS TO OTHER AWESOME MEDIA

- Seth Myers' A Closer Look segments (late night)
- Samantha Bee (late night)
- Bill Maher (late night)
- Pod Save America (podcast)
- Here I Am, Jonathan Safran Foer (book)
- MileIQ (app)

CAPTURED: 2017 in Photos

