

Working from Home by Jodie Russian-Red

10:00

Dear (Employee Name Goes Here)

This is just an email to say, as your employer, how much we appreciate your unique contribution to this organisation during these unimaginable times. We hope yesterday's 'Working From Home Wellbeing Webinar' helped you to become happier, healthier employees. To help you on your way, here is the condensed version of the PowerPoint presentation on desk-based stretching exercises. Also attached to this email, in PDF format, are the instructions for how to make your own laptop-raiser at home using three standard-sized boxes of wine. Special thanks go to Yvonne in HR for that suggestion.

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

10:08

Dear Colleagues

Yesterday I brought a loaf of bread on site with me, but then I forgot to bring it home in the evening. Under current restrictions, it's not feasible for me to return to the office to collect it. I'm therefore offering this bread to fellow colleagues who may still be working on site. The bread is in a carrier bag in my pigeonhole labelled with a Post-it that says: 'Geoff's Lunch - Do Not Touch'.

10:16

Sent on Behalf of the Senior Operations Administrative Team

RE: Update on Geoff's previous email:

In the bag was a Medium Sliced Granary, of which I'm going to use a few slices for my lunch for the remainder of the week – it is, however, a full-sized loaf which I won't finish so if you would like to split it, please email me – this will be on a first-come, first-served basis as we can't allocate any more administrative time to this. If you are planning on taking any slices, ensure you use the disposable latex gloves and anti-bac spray, provided.

10:31

Hello lover

I am Sabrina. Husband is out for a month. Fancy no strings attached fun? My great, fabulous body can be for you. Believe me! [Click here for photos, NOW!](#)

11:04

To: My dear associate Recipients

Firstly please. This letter is not a hoax mail and I urge you to treat it serious. My late father was a highly reputable businessman in the Economic capital of (West African Island).

It is sad to say that he passed away mysteriously in France.

Before his death, he deposited the sum of TWENTY EIGHT MILLION, FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND AND SIX HUNDRED UNITED STATES DOLLARS in a security account.

Now I need an overseas account where I can transfer the funds. It is sincere I desire your humble assistance and will financially reward you generously if you help me.

Respond urgently with your full bank account details.

11:05

The following email was undeliverable.

REASON: The recipient's email address does not exist.

Dear Bob

I was going to hand-write you a letter, on really good quality paper using the Parker pen from the top drawer that dads would ban kids from doing their homework with. I was going to find a fancy envelope to put it in and bring it to the undertakers myself.

But then, because of the whole lockdown thing, I was stuck in Durham. So instead, I'm writing you this email. Because since you never touched a computer in your life, I imagine this will end up wherever the words of that handwritten letter would've ended up. Somewhere in the mysterious ether of not here-ness.

I got the taxi to Durham train station, and the driver asked "So, what's YOUR reason for being out of the house today?". And I told him I was on my way to a funeral. "Aw God!", he said. "This bloody virus! It's just rubbish, innit pet?".

I made the journey awkward by saying that in actual fact, I was looking forward to it. I'd already told him I was living temporarily in a kind of contractor's flat for writers and artists, and so he looked at me in the rear view with narrowing eyes, maybe suspecting I was someone who doesn't take life seriously enough. But the thing is – while I've been locked in Durham – I've also been locked out of Hull.

Maybe seeming even more disrespectful was that I was wearing what was undeniably a going OUT-out dress. Almost nightclub-esque. With rhinestone

encrusted tights and a red beret to hide my uncut hair. Funeral clothes weren't on my packing list for my work flat. But then, I know you'd find it funny.

When I last spoke to you, you handed me one of your final paintings. Titled 'The Rebel'. Ten bland-faced men stood wearing grey trousers and black coats. One man standing in the middle of them all, wearing red. You tapped your finger on the man in the middle and told me to keep it.

And strangely, I was looking forward to it. The head of our sprawling and loyal family has died. We'd all be coming together, maybe for the very last time. AND in the middle of a year where we haven't seen each other at all.

I arrived in Hull the night before. I wanted to soak up the God-awful smell of what mums always insist is 'cocoa factories'. The next morning, I tried to brush all the dog's white hairs off my tights, and we got in the car to drive to the funeral. And just like nanna's all those years before – it was another surreally, sunny day.

But when we arrived, it was so distinctly UNLIKE nanna's funeral years before. There were no hugs, no handshakes, no visible expression behind the masks. No real: "Hiya, how's your mam?!". Just socially-distanced sedateness.

11:15

Dear User 926

We acknowledge your query

"Hi, I am trying to process a payment using the remote requesting feature, but I have not done this before. Could you please advise me on how to do it? Many Thanks, Jodie"

We aim to answer your query within 24 hours

11:21

Dear User 926

Thank you for your query "Hi, I am trying to process a payment using the remote requesting feature, but I have not done this before. Could you please advise me on how to do it? Many Thanks, Jodie"

I have considered your request and make the following suggestions:

Hi, you just do it the normal way

Kind Regards

IT Services

- We appreciate your feedback. Please fill in our online survey and let us know your thoughts on the service you received.-

11:22

Dear User 926

We acknowledge your query “Hi, but I’ve never done it before. What is the normal way?”

We aim to answer your query within 24 hours

11:23

The following email was undeliverable.

REASON: The email address does not exist.

Dear Bob

I know it was a pretty enviable way to go, all in all. Surrounded by a lifetime of your own paintings, sculptures, notebooks. I just wish it weren’t during lockdown. Instead of a socially distanced, face-masked, in and out surreal crem ceremony, we should’ve had a giant, alcohol-fused wake at The Dart pub on Longhill. With a giant bowl of Hula Hoops of suspiciously, unidentifiable flavour. We should’ve piled back to your house for everyone to sit and talk and eat petrol station pork pies while I try and avoid anyone asking “Why h’ant you got kids yet then, Jode?”. And experience those melancholic moments of dried up conversation to breathe in a few silent seconds of seriously smoke-filled air before someone rubs their hands together and says...”Ooooh, it’s CAWLD in ‘ere, innit?!”.

But we didn’t. We couldn’t. And though literally everything’s different in the entire world – emails go back and forth as though nothing’s changed. Andy in Procurement Department is still wearing his lanyard to sit in his garden shed for Zoom meetings. And as always – I am still trying to figure out the meaning of life in between A Place in the Sun and the takeaway guy knocking on the door.

11:24

Dear User 926

Thank you for your query “Hi, I’ve never done it before. What is the normal way?”

I have considered your request and make the following suggestions:

Hi Jodie, you just send it through to the Remote Request email address.

Kind Regards

IT Services

- We appreciate your feedback. Please fill in our online survey and let us know your thoughts on the service you received.-

11:31

Dear User 926

We acknowledge your query "Ok, can you tell me what the Remote Request email address is?"

We aim to answer your query within 24 hours

11:45

Dear User 926

Thank you for your query "Ok, can you tell me what the Remote Request email address is?"

I have considered your request and make the following suggestions:

Hi Jodie, it's just the normal Remote Request email address.

Kind Regards

IT Services

- We appreciate your feedback. Please fill in our online survey and let us know your thoughts on the service you received.-

11:59

The following email was undeliverable.

REASON: The email address does not exist.

Dear Bob

I used to think 'Home' was where your stuff is. Well Bob, all your stuff, a lifetime of artwork, is now dispersed across about 50 different family members' living rooms, including mine in Durham. My boyfriend read something that said people are either 'somewhere' people or 'anywhere' people. You'd think I was an anywhere person, what with me moving around flats, different cities, different jobs. When I was a teenager, I was desperate to leave Hull. Or 'escape', as I described it. So why have I been coming back every other month for 15 years? Spending all my wages on train fares. Taxis from station when I was flush with cash. Getting a cheap train to Barton and WALKING to Hull, when I wasn't. I think I get it now. Home isn't really where you've put your stuff. It's where your family is. Or was.

12:01

This email is saved for you in the DRAFT folder:

The Northern service to Doncaster is bleak
I feel weak, I just want to speak
To anyone who will understand me
I'm full of my own life-choice doubt
I'm emotionally hollowed out.
My train crawls by
The new build Help to Buys
What I've convinced myself are cosy, perfect, shoebox lives
And I feel I've nothing left to cry
Just to wonder someday I'll ever have that elusive, instinctive will
To have Love, Live, Laugh on my windowsill.
At Hull station, I watch a girl lift up her foot and wrap it around her friend's leg
And I wished that was me,
Just acting so normal and feeling so free

12:04

Dear Jodie

There is a really bad smell in my office. I think it would be best if you come to my office and smell it yourself, I'm sure you will know more about these things than me. Shall we schedule a Zoom meeting to discuss it further? I don't know what it is and it's difficult to describe but it's sort of like a big, shitake mushroom exploded in there, if that helps?

With best wishes in these strange-smelling times.

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