

This is a transcription of the Yellow Jack Podcast, Episode 6.

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**Guest:**  
Grant Baldwin

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[00:00:00] Hi, I'm Robert Ouimet. This is the Yellow Jack podcast.

[00:00:09] This podcast is about everyday Canadians who have found themselves in self-isolation. They are the quiet heroes doing their bit to flatten the curve of controlling the spread of COVID-19. A lot of the people I've been talking with are in self-isolation because they flew back to Canada from a vacation or a job somewhere. Some are in self-isolation because there's a risk they were in contact with someone who may have had COVID-19 and are isolating as a way to avoid spreading the virus.

I mentioned the podcast on Facebook and the next day my friend Teri Snelgrove left me this voicemail message

[CLIP: Teri Snelgrove on Voice Mail:]

Hi it's Teri How are you guys doing? Holy cannoli weird.

[00:00:50] Anyway, I was I was looking at Facebook today and you know who I thought would be a guest. Filmmaker Grant Baldwin and his partner Jenny Rustemeyer and their 2 kids just came back from Costa Rica. They are seven days into their isolation.

And the other day they made a stop motion animated short called 2 meters, which was really well done. And then Grant made a fantastic "making of" mini-doc. Hilarious.

Ok,, I just wanted to put that bee in your bonnet, because I think they would be perfect guests for your show. Okay. They say, well,

[Voice over: Robert] Terry, thanks for that bee in the bonnet And I was able to connect with Grant and his home studio in Vancouver.

[00:01:44 Grant] We'd started to watch some of the Nick Park work, which is famous for Wallace and Grommet and now the spin off Shaun the Sheep. And and I was trying to explain to my son, you know, that's all done. You know, one picture at a time. And so he was really interested in that. And so I'm like, well, we can we can we have the stuff here and we can do that. So we decided to make a stop motion. So, you know, everyone pitched in like Jen made the little set. And then we just took the Play-Doh that we had and made characters. And, you know, my son just made his guy and I had no input on what he was making, let him come up with his own guy. And I made a character for my guy and we took turns animating and doing the photos. And it was a great experience. I mean, he did get pretty exhausted. He couldn't believe how long it took to move somebody, you know, a couple inches. But it was it was a good experience. I think he started to understand a little bit more about what I do from working with with me on that. And yeah, feedback's been really good. I mean, we didn't really have a script or anything. We just sort of started moving characters. And it's really short. It's a lot.

[00:02:56] It's a lovely little piece. I love it. I thought it was both fun and poignant and has a really important message in it. It's just a really nice little piece of well done.

[00:03:07] We made a silly behind the scenes documentary about the making of it as if it was some massive production. It's a bit of a parody.

[Robert] So now so with you and your wife, Jenny Rustemeyer, you have a film company and you're obviously, you know, working all the time. Suddenly now you're in a world where you can't go outside and even after your isolation ends, you're gonna be really restricted in what you can do. So how does that sort of fit at the moment for you? How are you guys feeling about that?

[00:03:39] Well, if this happened a year ago, it would have been devastating. But where we are right now, we're doing a five part television series on Search and Rescue Northshore, the volunteer search and rescue team here. And we were going on their calls, every single one of their calls for a one year. And but we're in and post we're finishing up the post-production on that show. So we're actually able to work from home, which is the timing where we're really, really lucky. It could have been really, really challenging for us if we had to stop shooting. But we're just add in that lucky position that we can work from home. And I just think about how many people are in that position where they just have no income coming in.

We talk about it every night. The way that we're approaching kind of helping people out is, you know, Trudeau wants to give people some a bit of money. But I really see that the biggest issue is, is small businesses, because they're the ones that are going to go bankrupt. You know, like if we could just somehow pause all rent, all mortgages and pause all interest for this time period, I think that could help everyone, because then those small businesses won't be paying for a building that they can't run a business. So. And that's that's my biggest worry is that author, all those medium and small businesses are going to be completely floored by this. And and and that's a lot of employment.

[00:05:16] Yeah. I mean it it is because it's so across the board. You know, I mean, everybody's affected. Every industry is affected. Anybody who's paying rent on an office is still paying rent on an office and there's no business, You don't know if you guys work out of your house. I work out of my house. So if I don't if I'm not working, I don't have the office overhead to maintain it. Right.

[00:05:36] Yeah. We're we're in that same position. You know, we did have an office when we're in production, but now we're in post we don't need it. So we shut that down. But yeah, exactly. It's it's, um. If we could just pause everything. I mean we we're actually landlords as well. We have rental property and I have no problem holding the rent as long as they can pause the interest on our mortgage. I mean I no problem. That just so. I just wish we could all agree on that.

[00:06:06] I think that, you know, I I guess what I'm seeing is that because things are changing so rapidly, you know, this is where we are today. You know, I don't know where we're going to be a week from now in terms of those economic moves and the things that are in place now that may or may not really work. It seems inevitable that the sort of shift in the economy is going to be profound enough that we're gonna have to find some new ways of doing a lot of things.

[00:06:33] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. You know, the other thing I kind of was battling with since this started was that how how useless my job is to society. And I've been feeling this way for a week about, you know, I you know, I start really valuing truck drivers, value service people, and especially that I've always really valued the food production business. But man like, who cares? Documentary filmmaker. But then someone posted something today like, well, everybody's stuck inside. They're watching art and things like this podcast are

there. This is where they have time to do all this now. And so we're helping people get through this as well. So maybe feel a little bit better.

[00:07:21 Robert] It should make you feel better because I think that, you know, it's super important, I think in any of these situations that we have people who can tell the stories of what's going on and who can see the stories of what's going on. Maybe with a different eye, you know, that's all we need, all of that. We still need all of those things. And they're all really still important.

[00:07:39 Grant] Yeah, there's I mean, this made some some good side effects from this in terms of people have been reaching out to each other more to check on people more. And if we had if I had a friend come visit and he he stayed out in the yard and had a beer at city rain and, you know, through the window or whatever. It's been nice. And then we had we played a game, a board game last night online with a bunch of friends in the states and you know, some of them in New York and pretty freaked out. And I think everyone really needed that that sort of that connection. And it's something we probably wouldn't have done if if we weren't forced into this. So it was nice to to have that moment.

[00:08:20 Robert] Yeah, I live I live in North Van. I live not far from the Capilano sorry, the Cleveland down. So I walk up there every day pretty much. And, you know, this neighborhood is, you know, a lot of working couples or working professionals. You walk up and down, you don't see anybody outside. You know, if it isn't three o'clock when the kids are coming up from school, you don't see anybody on the street. And now, you know, as I walk up this, it's about a mile from where I live. You know, I'm seeing families sitting out on the steps, you know, playing badminton or whatever there is they're doing. They're actually altogether they're, you know, talking. They're doing stuff together. And I'm seeing people walking with their dogs and stuff. So there is a really interesting community side effect that I hope, you know, we can hang on to some of that when things go back to whatever normal is going to be.

[00:09:06 Grant] Yeah, I do like that, too. You know, at seven o'clock we go outside a bank heights bank. We we actually bring out the snare drum. Oh, nice. And we get pretty loud. And that's really neat, too. And those are some things I'm going to miss from this. But, you know, I I would be really interesting to see what what comes out of this in the end, what we take away and what things we hold on to.

[00:09:34 Robert] So so you got super organized in order to deal with your self-isolation for you and your family. And that's a pretty big chore. So congrats for doing that. What's been the biggest surprise or what's been the biggest challenge so far?

[00:09:49 Grant] Well, it's the hardest part. It's the kids. Both of us trying to get work done. Like, you know, Jen finding time to catch up on anything. So we've just basically accepted that we're probably delivering our project late at this point. We're just we're running at. Half efficiency right now. And also I one of the biggest takeaways is those people that home-school new appreciation for for the amount of energy that takes, right. Well, you know, you could check in with me in three weeks and see how we're doing. I mean, we feel like we're organized now and it's going well. But who knows? It might start falling apart.

[00:10:31 Robert] Right. Well, I do think that the thing I've noticed, I'm finding that anything I'm I'm doing in the community is going to take twice as long as it did before, simply because either the staff are able to only deal with so many people. Whatever the reason is and the reasons are different in different places, but everything is taking a lot longer. So

I'm sort of kind of putting myself in that holiday mode where it's like, okay, I'm just going out now. I'm going to go to the grocery store and I may take me two hours and it doesn't matter because I can't make it go any faster.

[00:11:01 Grant] Yeah. I'm really curious about the world out there. Going to see it again. We were basically can go next sets or are we a week away. Next Saturday we can go out and I can go get groceries and things like that. And I'm curious to see what what's open out there and what's closed. And but I am looking forward to going for a bike ride with the kids for sure. But it's all a bit surreal and it's so unknown where we're going. And so I'm really just trying to go with the flow as much as we can.

[00:11:33] Grant Baldwin He, along with his partner, Jenny Rustemeyer, are in self-isolation with their budding filmmaker children who are 2 and 6 years old.

[00:11:48] If you visit the Web site, you'll be able to see the animated short "2 meters" along with the documentary "Making of" film. There are some other links there as well. There's a way for you to contact me if you'd like to be a guest on the podcast. The website is [www.podcasthouse.ca/yellowjack](http://www.podcasthouse.ca/yellowjack).

That's it for this episode. Stay safe then stay apart. I guess. I'm Robert Ouimet in Vancouver. Thanks for listening.