



# Rising from Rejection

How WordPress Helped Me Re-enter Society Again

Justin Kopepasah · @kopepasah · WCUS 2023

“Ball and chain wapuu” created by Jiwon Lee & designed by Sheila Bravo





# Rising from Rejection

## How WordPress Helped Me Re-enter Society Again

Justin Kopepasah · @kopepasah · WCUS 2023

“Ball and chain wapuu” created by Jiwon Lee & designed by Sheila Bravo



2008

**PARALYZED BY AN  
OVERWHELMING FEAR  
OF BEING DISCOVERED**

**LIKE A NEVER ENDING MAZE  
SOCIETY CLOSED ITS DOORS  
MANY NEVER TO BE REOPENED AGAIN**

# My Career by the Numbers

## Filled with Rejection, after Rejection, after Rejection

- ▶ Roughly 600 job applications submitted.
- ▶ 100s of Interviews and “next stage” approvals
  - ▶ Most rejected at the Background Check stage.
- ▶ 17 companies sent official offer letters, all signed.
  - ▶ 13 of which rejected after post-offer background check.
- ▶ Started working at 2 companies, and let go after background check.
  - ▶ One of these occurred earlier this year.

**A LIFE SHROUDED  
BY A CONSTANT  
FEAR OF REJECTION**

**IF EXISTS:  
REJECT**



**100 MILLION WITH  
CRIMINAL RECORDS**

**24 MILLION WITH  
FELONY CONVICTIONS**

# FINDING WORK OUTSIDE THE US

- ▶ Quickly found work from Korean and Australian companies.
- ▶ Saw me for who I had become, not what I did in my past.
- ▶ Able to build WordPress relationships and speak at WordCamps around Asia.

**PERPETUAL PUNISHMENT**

**VS**

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

**UNKNOWN CAREER  
PATHS THAT  
PERPETUATE ALIENATION**



**DIVERSITY  
EQUITY  
INCLUSION  
BELONGING**



**WORDPRESS & ITS  
AMAZING COMMUNITY  
GAVE ME HOPE ❤️**

