

The Beijing Office

by

G.T. Lee

1. Prologue

Gem still remembers the first day she started at Potts & Crouch's Beijing Representative Office. It was nothing like any of the offices she'd worked at in Australia.

Working for a national firm in Brisbane was not something Gem ever had expected to be doing. Her mother had been a legal secretary all her working life, and had succeeded in drilling into Gem's head that being of Chinese origin and being able to speak fluent Mandarin meant eventually starting a law firm with Mum, one that specialised in conveyancing and serving an exclusive group of clients from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong that had followed Mum around for the last ten years.

But the problem was that, at university, Gem found property law mind-numbingly boring. She often sat in the lecture hall frantically jotting notes as Professor Ravi droned on about the latest amendments to the Land Act, all the while thinking she'd rather be in a criminal law lecture. She grew up devouring every Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys novel she could get her hands on. But she studied law because:

- 1) Mum said her grades were good enough to get into law school in the best university in Queensland, so why should Gem want to study modern history and English literature? ("What are you going to do with an Arts degree, *bar?* Don't argue with me, study law, graduate with honours, get qualified and open a law firm with me! You hear?")
- 2) It was not in Gem's nature to argue with her mother.
- 3) Gem naively thought that practicing law involved some degree of detective work, so she could fulfil her childhood dream of following in Nancy Drew's footsteps. (Boy, was she ever wrong about that.)
- 4) Gem thought that lawyers made a lot of money, so she would be able to retire by 40. (Wrong again.)

Law school was uneventful. Gem passed all her exams with flying colours but didn't manage to get high distinctions in the subjects that mattered, like corporate law and tax law.

Gem dutifully applied for all the jobs advertised on the notice boards at the University of Queensland Law School office, even applying to law firms in towns she'd never visited in her life, like Gympie and Bundaberg. She received a grand total of zero requests for interviews from the 124 applications she sent out. This was the first big blow to the ego she'd experienced in her life. Gem experienced her first bout of depression.

Dad, trying to make conversation with Gem while she's pretending to watch the Australian Open, "Daughter, why are you watching TV when you should be applying for more jobs?"

"*Ba*, I applied to every law firm in Australia already. No one wants me."

"That's because you're so lazy, watching TV all the time."

Gem, raising her voice, "*Ba*, didn't you hear me? No one wants to hire me!"

"How can that be? You already have a law degree. When I graduated from Nanyang University in Singapore, every timber company in Sabah wanted to hire me! I was hot stuff! You are lazy and stupid, that's what you are."

Gem knew better than to continue this conversation with her father. The last 'conversation' had gone south at lightning speed, with her father recounting all the sacrifices he'd made for the family and the lack of appreciation he received from his children.

So she nodded along to the rhythm of her father's rant with her eyes fixed resolutely on the TV. Once you block out the content of his rant, his voice was actually quite soothing . . .

Right before Christmas, Mum told Gem about a job opening at N&H, a medium-sized Queensland firm, which was looking for a Mandarin-speaking lawyer. Gem applied, was called in for an interview, and got the job. It took all of 10 days. Gem shed tears of joy when she received the letter in the mail, offering her a full-time position as solicitor at N&H on an annual salary of \$40,000. Dad was so proud of Gem, he took a picture of her business card and sent pictures of it to her aunts and uncles in Sabah.

Thus Gem began her career working as a lawyer in N&H. It was nothing like *Ally McBeal*, *Law & Order* or any of the American sitcoms about life in a law firm. For as far back as Gem could remember, there had been 20 boxes of documents in her office, and on top of them were files for her eclectic mix of clients from China, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. She trudged along, enthusiastically doing whatever was handed to her by the partners, and after two years distinguished herself as the office expert on spouse visas. Yes, she became the legal gun for ladies who married Australians so they could leave their developing countries behind and live a life of comfort in the country of their dreams.

One of Gem's best clients was a 70-year-old man whom the receptionists in the office called Mitch the Sleaze. He was onto his fourth marriage, to Meena, a lady in her mid-30s from Micronesia, who he claims had won a dozen local beauty pageants and loved him unconditionally. Why was he Gem's best client? He said the same thing about his last two wives, both from

Micronesia, and the Department of Immigration granted them both spouse visas to live in Australia.

This is where Mitch the Sleaze's story gets complicated. Micronesian wife No.1, whom he had known for a month before marrying, eloped with a younger man within a year of arriving in Brisbane. Micronesian wife No.2, whom he had known for a week, never shared Mitch's bed, let alone had sex with him. Mitch claims it was because of his hip replacement surgery (he was 66 then), but neighbours claimed they saw a Micronesian lady lying face down on the grass in front of the house, covered in dew, who had woken up when Mitch came out and dragged her back into the house. It was these same neighbours who tipped off DIMIA¹, which then came to arrest Micronesian wife No.2. The last Mitch heard, Micronesian wife No.2 had been deported and she had left happily, shouting that Brisbane was boring and nothing like Micronesia. They had been married for a grand total of two months.

Gem worked on the spouse visa applications for all of Mitch's Micronesian wives, including Meena. Since Mitch had exceeded the sponsorship limit for spouses in his lifetime, Meena's application had been promptly rejected by DIMIA. Mitch begged Gem to take Meena's application to the Migration Review Tribunal by getting on his knees in the reception area, grabbing Gem's hand, crying and creating a scene. The managing partner who walked by and saw the scene told Gem in no uncertain terms to deal with the situation "immediately" or else she would be fired "immediately". She reluctantly agreed to act for Meena and got Mitch back on his feet.

This turned out to be the turning point in Gem's life. See, Gem hated Mitch the Sleaze with a vengeance. Every time he was at reception, he terrorized the receptionists with his overbearing advances, including leaning over the reception counter while speaking to them. The receptionists had threatened to report Mitch's behaviour to the police as sexual harassment if Gem didn't put a leash on him. Gem didn't particularly enjoy her meetings with Mitch, which usually meant tangoing around the meeting table as Mitch kept moving forward and Gem moved backwards to avoid any spontaneous body contact. Not to mention his spit, which sprayed in all directions when he was declaring his love for Meena and decrying the stupidity of DIMIA for rejecting her spouse visa application. On top of it all, Mitch the Sleaze never paid the firm's invoices on time; Gem felt like she was drawing blood every time she chased him for payment. And each time, he would turn up at the office with a recycled envelope of cash to pay the overdue invoices, together with a stack of sexually explicit letters from Meena, which she sent

¹ Department of Immigration, Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs. The people who think they control the number of new migrants moving to Australia.

because she couldn't afford to call him on the only telephone available in her village. On more than one occasion, Gem had considered bringing a sexual harassment claim against N&H for making her read those letters.

Thank God Gem had other clients too. She was particularly fond of her Chinese clients, who were mostly filthy rich and loved seeing her. Gem's favourite client was Mrs Li, who owned a property development company in Shenzhen and was reported to be worth \$100 million.

Mrs Li called in on Gem one day on a legal matter and stayed a little longer to chat.

"Gem, you are so smart and linguistically talented. You speak English and Mandarin, and you read and write Chinese," said Mrs Li. "There is a huge need for bilingual lawyers like you in China. You should consider finding a job in China."

"You are so kind, Mrs Li," said Gem with a sweet smile. "I've never been to China before. I have no idea how I can find a job in China while in Brisbane."

"How do you think I built my business, Gem?" boasted Mrs Li with her hand on her heart. "I have contacts in the public and private sectors in Shenzhen, Beijing and Shanghai. Just give me your CV and I'll find you a job in China."

Gem thanked Mrs Li profusely and emailed Mrs Li a copy of her CV the next day.

Months went by and Gem didn't hear from Mrs Li. One day in summer, Gem had taken a sickie after one too many tequila shots at a colleague's leaving party the night before. She didn't hear her alarm go off nor the fifteen times her mobile rang. She woke up with a throbbing headache and was on her way to the kitchen when she saw the time (4pm in the afternoon) and frantically picked up her BlackBerry to check her emails. She groaned at the fifty unread messages, until she saw this.

From: Yan Li [liyan888@163.com]
To: Gem Chu [gchu@N&H.com.au]
Received: 20 November 2009, 10:55 am
Subject: Beijing job!

Dear Gem,

Are you ok? I called you on your mobile, you didn't pick up. I called you in the office, your secretary say you haven't come into the office whole day and your boss mad at you. What happened to you?!

Sorry for not contacting you so long. Many new construction going, my phone rings all day everyday. Even when I busy, I don't forget finding you job in China. China economy booming, so many opportunities for smart girl like Gem.

One of my friends in Beijing, Joe Chen, he partner in UK law firm Potts Crouch We know each other since studying Beida. He also studied Masters in Boston, work there for 2 years, and came back Beijing because this UK law firm give him partnership and pay him big salary. My friends say he make RMB 1 mil a month plus bonus just to have dinner with big boss from Coca Cola, Shell and Boeing. No wonder he return to Beijing!!

So, this Joe, he ask me if I know good lawyer, speak very good English and Chinese. I told him yes, and I sent him your CV. And he say when he can interview you on telephone. That's why I call you many times today. Please reply, then I know you not dead.

Very worried about you.

Yan Li

Managing Director

Shenzhen Shengli Construction Company Limited

Proud supporter of Guangzhou ASEAN Games 2016, and Greenpeace

Please only print this email on recyclable paper.

Gem had never heard of Potts Crouch. But that didn't stop her from pressing 'Reply' and typing at lightning speed:

From: Gem Chu [gchu@N&H.com.au]

To: Yan Li [liyan888@163.com]

Received: 20 November 2009, 4:21pm

Subject: Re: Beijing job!

Mrs Li,

It's so good to finally hear from you! Very sorry about not picking up your calls. I felt very sick today. I just woke up to check emails.

Thank you so much for remembering me for this job at this UK firm. I am free any time next week to do a telephone conference with Joe Chen, name the day and time. Looking forward to it!

Will call you later to discuss your Gold Coast mall project.

Kind regards,
Gem Chu
Associate
N&H Solicitors & Notaries
Brisbane, Queensland

Two weeks later, Gem did the interview with Joe Chen. She received an offer two weeks after that. On the same day, she received a letter from the Migration Review Tribunal, notifying her that her application to have Meena's spouse visa application reviewed had once again been unsuccessful. Gem heaved a sigh of relief she wouldn't have to handle the appeal as she'd tendered her resignation earlier that day.

2. Business in China

CHINA BUSINESS DAILY

W-Mark, Bonjour battle for CHC

By J.B. Marshall

Monday, February 21, 2010

CHC, a Taiwan-based mainland supermarket chain, has announced that all of its mainland China operations is now up for sale.

Our sources at CHC indicated that there are only two serious bidders for CHC's China operations: America's W-Mart and France's Bonjour. Both bidders are leaders in their own respective home markets.

W-Mart already has 200 stores in China, and has been pursuing an aggressive acquisition strategy to penetrate second- and third-tier cities. Bonjour, on the other hand, is looking to enter the Chinese market by acquiring CHC's 346 stores located in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and 25 other second- and third-tier cities in China. CHC claims its retail operations in China are easily worth US\$1 billion. The successful bidder for CHC will become the number one retailer in China.

Sources familiar with the bidding process said that both bidders have engaged advisors to commence the extensive due diligence process on CHC's stores and bid preparation.

The deadline for the submission of bids is sometime in mid-March. CHC has not indicated a preference, but it is rumoured that CHC will make its choice based primarily on the cash offered. Sources familiar with CHC have alluded to the possibility that CHC is selling its lucrative mainland business to meet the financial commitments created in the course of building its mainland business. CHC refused to comment on this point during yesterday's press conference.

Beijing has given high priority to boosting domestic consumption in a bid to reduce reliance on exports as the mainland's main economic engine. Demand is likely to get a further boost from the central government's adoption of a new tax code that effectively reduces consumers' tax burden.

China abolished restrictions on foreign companies operating in the domestic retail market in 2004, putting them on an equal footing with domestic rivals for the first time, according to agreements it made when it joined the World Trade Organization. In the last five years, an unprecedented number of foreign retail giants have entered China by either establishing wholly-owned supermarkets or buying out the stakes of their China joint venture partners, despite economic forecasts stating that China's economy is set to slow to single-digits within the next 12 months.

3. Orientation

To this day, Gem still can't decide what to think of her first day at work at Potts & Crouch. The HR lady, Shelly, had asked Gem to come in at 9:30am. Gem confirmed the time three times since she'd never known starting times later than 8:30am. Orientation had been relatively quick and painless, then Shelly had taken Gem around the office to meet everyone.

Potts & Crouch's Beijing office was located on the 28th floor of the Mandarin Centre, right smack in the middle of the CBD. Shelly told Gem that all law firms wanted a space in the Mandarin Centre because of its excellent *fengshui*, supposedly a major contributing factor in the growth of Potts & Crouch's business in China. After Joe Chen secured the lease on this auspiciously numbered floor by calling in a favour from a college friend working in the Beijing mayor's office, he paid an exorbitant amount of money to fly in a *fengshui* master from a monastery in Sichuan to advise on how best to renovate the space. The floor-to-ceiling glass walls and doors (for maximum circulation of prosperity), the positioning of Joe's office (for the promotion of his career and manhood), open plan seating (for optimal cooperation between colleagues) and the beige colour scheme (for stress relief) were the result of hours of consultation with the *fengshui* master. All the lawyers and legal assistants sat with their backs to each other but never to the walls or the doors.

Gem's first impression of the office was how empty it seemed. Shelly explained that most of the staff were still away for the Spring Festival holidays. Gem later realized that she meant Chinese New Year.

Joe wasn't in his office when they stopped by; his secretary, Cream, said she would call Gem when he returned. Cream was an unusually good-looking Chinese lady, gifted with all the assets most Asian women lacked: an hourglass figure, large round eyes, double eyelids, a button nose, a small mouth with full lips, and waist-length, luscious jet-black hair. That day, she flaunted her curves in a body-hugging dress that looked like it ended right under her panty line and a pair of Christian Dior booties. Gem had to ask Cream to spell her name, as she couldn't quite believe anyone in the world would want to be called by a noun describing a food/beauty product. After Cream spelt her name with pride and a twinkle in her eye, there was an awkward pause as Gem tried frantically to work out what to say to her next.

"So, Cream ... why did you choose this English name?" Gem asked in Mandarin.

"Oh! I love Michael Jackson, and my favourite song of his is called Cream! Of course it's easy to pronounce and spell, and no one else in the office has it!" explained Cream in Mandarin, swelling with smugness for claiming a Western song as her own.

Gem was just about to point out that Cream was a Prince song when Shelly whisked her away to her new office. Shelly introduced Gem to Huang Shan, the associate with whom she'd be sharing an office.

"Joe thinks it's a good idea for you to sit with Huang Shan, as he's one of the most experienced associates in the office," explained Shelly as she led Gem to her desk. "You can ask him any questions about Chinese law. He'll know the answer."

'So this is what ass-licking in China sounds like,' thought Gem after hearing this.

"Hi, I'm Huang Shan. You must be my new officemate, Gem," said Shan in Mandarin, standing up to shake Gem's hand.

"Yes I'm Gem; nice to meet you," said Gem, holding out her hand. It took Gem a while to realise her hand was still out, not having felt Shan's light, distracted handshake.

Shan smiled with his mouth but not with his eyes, and asked her a few perfunctory questions before saying he had to get some urgent work done.

Gem decided she didn't like her new officemate enough to make further effort and decided to settle in at her desk.

The resident IT guy, Bing, was sitting at her desk, setting up her computer. He showed her how to use the firm's software. Gem liked Bing immediately. He looked like the dozens of Chinese men she'd met in Beijing – shorter than her, skinny but not scrawny with a squarish face, pigeon eyes and a flattish nose. He spoke Beijinger Mandarin in a singsong, teasing manner and never answered any of Gem's questions directly.

"So how do I find precedents on the intranet?" Gem was barely masking her confusion at Potts & Crouch's complex intranet site.

"Well that depends on what precedents you're looking for, how long ago it was created and the author of the precedent," Bing said. "No one in this office uses the standard precedent. These bloody lawyers all prefer to format their agreements differently to 'improve the document.'" He rolled his eyes while waving his hand at Gem's computer screen. "You people have no consideration for the poor sods like me who have to keep track of the hundreds of precedents on the firm's system. *Kao!*²"

Gem couldn't help but laugh as Bing continued his spiel. She only realised after he left the office that she still had no idea how to find precedents on the intranet.

Gem had just found the precedents folders, when Desmond barged into the room.

"You must be the new girl, right?" he barked.

² "Shit" in Chinese, a means to express dissatisfaction, and anger.

“Yes ...” replied Gem tentatively. She remembered Shelly introducing Desmond as a newly promoted senior associate. Desmond was on the phone the entire two minutes they were in his office, and did not acknowledge their presence. He looked to be the same age as Gem, but with permanent furrows in his forehead, a dark complexion, pigeon eyes, high cheekbones and a pouty mouth. Gem thought he only needed the word ‘Ass’ carved onto his forehead for his image to be complete.

“Joe asked for you and Shan to come with me to his office immediately for a meeting. We’ve just been engaged by Bonjour to work on their bid for CHC.”

Gem, Shan and Desmond filed into Joe’s office with their pads and pens. Joe was on a conference call with some men speaking heavily French-accented English. He gestured for them all to sit down.

“The due diligence for CHC’s stores will require me to put every lawyer in the office full time on this project. We’ve looked at the online data-room today and there’s one thousand five hundred and eighty documents to review just in the real estate section. I suspect there’s more in the corporate section since CHC opened a holding company for each store.” Joe put heavy emphasis on the words “one thousand” and “documents”.

“I understand, Joe, but it has to be done. Our shareholders in France need it,” a baritone voice boomed from the telephone speaker. “We won’t ask for an estimate of fees at this point in time since we don’t know how much work is involved yet.”

“It’s great that you agree with me, Pierre,” Joe said with a big smile. “Let me introduce you to the core team who will be working on this project.” He then introduced Shan, Gem and Desmond to Pierre and his team. The call ended with a list of follow-up tasks to be completed by Potts & Crouch and Bonjour.

Joseph turned to Gem, looking quite pleased. “Welcome to Beijing! Now for the bad news. You’ve just been put on the biggest project this year. We’ve been asked to conduct due diligence on all of CHC’s mainland companies and stores, which total about 800 entities. Our deadline is unfortunately only two weeks away, so everyone working on this project will have to work every day until we send out the bid letter to CHC. Any questions?”

Gem was still busy writing notes when Joe finished his spiel, and it took her 10 seconds to work out that he was asking her a question. Before she could respond, Desmond eagerly piped up, “Leave this to me, Joe. I will send an email to every associate and legal assistant in this office and gather them for a meeting to allocate the work for this project. I’m not sure what Gem can contribute to this project since she doesn’t read Chinese.”

Gem interrupted, “I can read Chinese, thank you very much.” Inside, Gem was fuming. Who does this guy think I am, a pushover?

“Actually, since this is a labour intensive project,” said Joe, “I want all three of you to lead the due diligence work on different parts of the material. Desmond, you will be in charge of real estate, Gem will be in charge of corporate and Shan will be in charge of all remaining parts.”

The three took more notes as Joe droned on with instructions before leaving his room. Desmond was visibly upset at Joe’s decision to split the project into three. He thought he should get the whole pie since he was the senior guy. Why is this bitch from Australia leading a significant section on her own? Joe can’t possibly be interested in her sexually; she’s too tall and big and plain!

Meanwhile, Gem was very pleased with being assigned such a high profile project on her first day at work. Having worked for numerous Chinese clients in the past, she was confident that she’d be able to pick out the main issues in the corporate materials – with a little guidance from her team of legal assistants, of course. She frowned when she realised she couldn’t remember the names of any of the Chinese colleagues she met briefly this morning. Why don’t they all have English names?

Shan turned out to be the winner, because he’d already looked at the materials and was confident he wouldn’t be spending his weekends in the office, like the other two suckers. Most importantly, he wouldn’t be working under Desmond. The last project they had collaborated on had turned into a Desmond show, where Desmond put Shan down in front of the client and took credit for all the work Shan had done. When he confronted Desmond, Desmond ignored him. Shan resented Joe for promoting Desmond instead of him, especially since he’d been at the firm two years longer than Desmond. Shan didn’t review a single document because he resigned four days later to join an American law firm, which offered him double the salary and the title of Senior Associate.

4. Updates from Beijing

From: Lingling Chu [mrschu@yahoo.com]
To: Gem [gem.chu@gmail.com']>
Date: 7 March 2010, 7:31am
Subject: (none)

Gem:

Have you arrived in Beijing? How come you haven't called home to tell us how you are? Dad and I watched weather forecast in Beijing last night, and it's -13 degrees there! You better buy the thickest jacket you can find, so you don't freeze to death.

I still don't know why you want to move to Beijing when you have good job in Brisbane. Do you remember Auntie Rachel? She travels to Beijing regularly to buy stock for her shop in Brisbane, and she told me Beijing is crowded, dirty and polluted. She couldn't understand why you chose to move to Beijing to work too. Sigh ...

Anyway, call or write soon so we know you are still alive ah.

Love,
Mum

From: Gem [gem.chu@gmail.com]
To: Lingling Chu [mrschu@yahoo.com]
Date: Saturday 14 March 2012, 8:02pm
Subject: Re: Barely alive
Attachment: Snow in Beijing.jpg

Hi Mum,

Sorry for not writing sooner. I was put in charge of this huge project immediately after I arrived. I've been working till 11pm every night since then. My boss said I could leave earlier if I wanted to today, but it's already 8pm now, and I still have to review 10 documents. It's unlikely I will leave the office much earlier than yesterday. Sigh.

Because I've been working so hard, I haven't been outdoors much. The firm put me up in a serviced apartment right next to the office, so I literally walk to work in five minutes all indoors. But you are right, I will buy a down jacket when I have a chance to leave the office when the shops are open. My colleagues saw my woollen coat from Brisbane and suggested I wear it during autumn. ☹️

Actually, I like most of my colleagues at this firm, except for this senior associate, Desmond. He is arrogant, self-absorbed and a complete control freak. The lawyer who used to share an office with me recently left because he hated Desmond, and didn't want to work on another project with him. Unfortunately now I have to work with Desmond, and I can understand why my officemate left the firm. I asked Desmond a question about China corporate law, and he pretended he didn't hear anything I said. Then my boss came to speak to him, and he was all attentive and responsive. I've met some creepy lawyers in my life, but this guy takes the trophy.

Oh oh ... you're gonna love this, Mum. My boss's secretary is called 'Cream'. I once heard her answer the phone like this: "Potts & Crouch, Cream speaking." I LOL right then and there, and everyone in the office looked up from their desks for a moment trying to figure out what the joke was. BTW, did you give your bosses shoulder massages when you were working in Trust Solicitors? Every time I've walked past my boss' office, she's in there either giving him a shoulder or chest massage. I never saw this back in Brisbane. How I wish my secretary would give me a shoulder massage once in a while ...

I was introduced to a new legal assistant who introduced herself as 'Alien'. I asked her: Alien, as in extra-terrestrial? She said yes! I'll tell you more of the insane English names I've heard in Beijing when I call you. Hopefully soon. Really depends on when we finish the report.

Here's a picture of snow I took outside of my office window.

I walked out of the apartment just to touch the snow yesterday morning. The snow was so thick and heavy. I wished I could have a snowfight with someone. ☹️ I doubt I will ever meet a man working these hours. I do miss you and Ba a lot ...

I've been called into a meeting by Des the Pest. I'll try to call you and Ba next week.

Love,

Gem

From: Janice Preston [jpres@gmail.com]
To: Gem [gem.chu@gmail.com]
Date: 10 March 2010, 10:03 am
Subject: Update please!

Gem,

Did you get my last email? Or are you too busy working for partnership already?

Updates pls!!!

Xoxo, Jan

Sent from my Iphone. Typos are normal.

From: Gem [gem.chu@gmail.com]
To: Janice Preston [jpres@gmail.com]
Date: Sunday 15 March 2010, 11:05 pm
Subject: Re: Update please!

My dearest Jan,

I've been meaning to reply to your emails but I've been working round the clock since I landed in Beijing. I've been put on this crazy acquisition and the French client wants everything done yesterday. I'm still at the office writing this email to you. I'm waiting for some colleagues to send me their finished work. Gr... Arrghhh....

It's been bloody snowing every week since I got to Beijing. I liked it until I slipped and fell on ice this morning. I have a huge bruise on my thigh, it was black the last time I checked.

I haven't had much time to do much else in Beijing apart from working in the office. I've been working here for a couple weeks but I already find it sometimes frustrating dealing with the locals. We all look Chinese, but I definitely don't think Chinese. In fact, I'm still trying to figure out what goes through their minds.

I thought it'd be easier to make partner here in Beijing. But the more I see in P&C, the more I think I'm wrong. The two senior associates I work with regularly pretty much camp outside the managing partner's office, ready at a moment's notice to go see him. I'm still trying to get my head around that.

Not waiting for the work to come in. My brain is fried, need sleep. How's baby Ryan doing? Send me pictures when you get a chance. I miss you both so much.

Xoxo, Gem

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