

## Transcript

**Episode Title: “Taking a Career Break & Pursuing IVF in Singapore” with Roxanna**

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**ROXANNA** [00:00:00]

I will say this in Singapore, I've never met anyone, young taxi drivers who complain about politics. And that's interesting to me. You can go to any like, in the UK and you sit in a taxi. And if the taxi drivers willing to talk to you, they'll talk to you about Brexit. And they'll talk to you about immigration, you know, and sometimes our opinions are trash. But they will say them, right. Over here. I've never heard anyone complain. And I can see why. Singaporeans for the most part are really good lives.

**CHRISTINE** [00:00:39] Hey, everyone, welcome back to *Flourish In The Foreign*, the podcast that elevates and affirms the voices and stories of Black women living and thriving abroad. This podcast centers Black women, while also exploring living abroad, as a pathway to wellness. And wellness can be financial, professional, spiritual, mental, emotional, or physical wellness. The women that I interview for this podcast share subtly or explicitly how living abroad has transformed their lives. And I hope through their sharing of their stories. It inspires you, dear listener, to make the leap abroad and to intentionally cultivate a life well-lived, whatever that means to you. I am Christine Job. I am the host of this podcast. And I am a Black American woman living and thriving here in Spain. So welcome to *Flourish In The Foreign*. If you're new, welcome back. If you have always been writing with the podcast, I appreciate you. And as I said before, I am the host of this podcast, but I'm also the editor, the creator, the social media manager, and website developer of this podcast. It truly is a one-woman show. And let me just be frank y'all, I don't want it to always be a one-woman show. It is a lot, a lot of work. It's a passion of mine, and it is a labor of love. But labor nonetheless. And honestly, as I'm thinking about taking *Flourish In The Foreign* into 2021, I definitely want to be able to bring on help to help edit the podcast or in some kind of pre-production role, because it is a lot of work y'all. It is. I don't know if you guys know, but I'll tell you a little bit about it. I first find all of the guests through research, YouTube, Facebook, you know, just internet stalking, I then email all the guests, do that back and forth followup. And then I have a pre-interview with all the guests to make sure that we're all on the same page about what the podcast is about. And then after that, I record with the guests for about 90 minutes, sometimes more. Then I edit the podcast down by myself to a one-hour show. I do all of the audio grams of social media, all of the... Just management of this podcast myself. It is a labor of love, but it is labor nonetheless. Yes, I said it twice. And so I'm really asking for all of you who love and enjoy this podcast to please support this podcast. There are a number of ways for you to support this podcast. So let's get into it. The first way you can support this podcast is by becoming a Patreon supporter of this podcast. Just go to [ww patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com). Slash flourish foreign and become a Patreon supporter today, you can become a Patreon supporter at whatever monthly amount you want to contribute. And I encourage you to do so I am in the process of reworking the Patreon. So this is the perfect time.

If you've been on the fence. Or maybe you're like, "I want to become a Patreon supporter, but I don't like any of your benefits." That's fine. That's fair. Let me know what benefits you want to see. Let me know what benefits would make it worth your while to commit to monthly supporting this podcast because I'm probably going to do it. Yeah. So help me, help you, help me is what I'm saying. So if you've been thinking about becoming a Patreon you're like, "I would, but I don't know." Let me know what it would take for you to support this podcast on a monthly ongoing basis. And we can work something out. Yes, we can. The second way to support this podcast is by Cash Apping the podcast. Yes, you can Cash App the podcast at \$flourishforeign. And Cash App is basically like a tip jar. If this podcast has been transformative for you, inspirational for you, if it has allowed you to connect with women all over the world, either literally or just by listening to the podcast. If it has just become part of your routine, and you love it, and you appreciate it. Please tip the podcast. Any amount is deeply, deeply appreciated. And Cash App is perfect if you are not quite ready to make a monthly commitment to supporting *Flourish In The Foreign*. That is alright, just remember \$flourishforeign via Cash App. Now the third way, which is a new way to support this here podcast is I have created an Amazon wishlist for *Flourish In The Foreign*. It is full of different types of gear for the podcast. And I have to be honest with you guys, as I told you before, this is a one-woman show, but also, this production is super duper lean. All right, yeah, I am a resourceful lady. Okay, I record my voiceover for this podcast via an iPhone. Yes, I do, I do. All of the editing, I do all of these things. And I really tried to keep the cost of the podcast quite low. Because at first, I really didn't know if this would resonate with anyone or if anyone would listen. But I think it's safe to say that *Flourish In The Foreign* is now tested, tried, and true. It is a hit, it is resonating with so many of you. And now I really do want to improve the quality of the sound and the audio in the production of this podcast. So you'll find on the Amazon wishlist different items, you'll find mics, mic stands. And you'll actually find a tripod and ring light on there as well. If you follow *Flourish In The Foreign* on Instagram, you know that I do a lot of Instagram lives, I'm going to be doing a lot more, tons more actually. And if you watch some of them, you notice that my rinky-dink tripod, I don't know I guess the iPhone is too heavy for it usually falls and it's ridiculous. And I end up holding the iPhone halfway through the Instagram live. And so to have a better quality Instagram live session for y'all. And I am in the process of editing some YouTube videos for you all as well. If this appeals to you, you want to purchase an item that will help the production of this podcast, and this Instagram live and everything that goes into it. You can do that as well. The link to the Amazon wishlist is in the bio across all social media channels. And it's also on the *Flourish In The Foreign* website. So you can do that as well. The fourth way you can support flourish the foreign is by placing an ad or sponsoring an entire episode of this here podcast. Simply go to the podcast website [www.flourishintheforeign.com/contact](http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/contact) drop me a line and I will send you over the rate sheet for placing an ad and sponsoring an entire episode of this podcast. It's a great way if you have an organization that's in alignment with the message of this podcast to help you get in front of an incredible audience of women and people who are ambitious, internationally-minded, and people who are just looking to live their best life or ever they want. If this sounds like you, your organization or business, please get in touch. The fifth way to support the podcast is of course by sharing the podcast with your friends, your family, your social media networks. I always say it because it's true. Your personal recommendation your stamp of approval is worth way more than any marketing I could possibly do. So, again, help the podcast out and if you love the

podcast, please share it across your social media. Screenshot the episode, tag *Flourish In The Foreign*. Tell your audience why you love this episode, why you love this podcast, and share it across all social media channels. It is so important and I deeply, deeply appreciate you. The sixth way to support flourish and foreign is of course, making sure that you're subscribed to the podcast. Yes, and that you have given the podcast, a five-star rating, and that you have left a review of the podcast. I love, love, love the reviews of this podcast. I am so humbled by all of the reviews of the podcast, and I'm going to read a review of the podcast today. This one is from S. Williams Brown. Refreshing approach to providing guidance on living abroad. This is a well-produced podcast on Black women living abroad. The facilitator provides a voiceover to summarize her guests experiences, the conversation is well-curated and edited. I'm looking forward to additional podcasts. Kudos, Christine Job. Thank you. Thank you so much S. Williams Brown, I appreciate you for writing that review. It means so so much to me. All right now, I just gave you all six ways to support *Flourish In The Foreign*. And I hope you have chosen at least one way to support this podcast today. On to the next episode.

**CHRISTINE** [00:11:41] This week's guest is Roxanna. And Roxanna's story of taking a bit of a sabbatical career break to live in Hong Kong and Singapore with her husband, she really discusses so many different aspects of living abroad, that sometimes just doesn't really get talked about. She also shares her experience embarking on an IVF journey while living in Singapore. And I believe her insights in really her candor is so incredibly valuable. But I'm gonna let her tell you all about it.

**ROXANNA** [00:12:26] My name is Roxy. I'm 30 years old, and I'm currently living in Singapore. So I was born in London. And I stayed in London until I was around seven. And then I moved to Jacksonville, Florida with my mom. And then at the age of 13. So I did, I think the first year of middle school, so some primary school and I know you don't call it primary school, up to the first year of middle school, and then I left back to live in London. And my husband and I moved then to Hong Kong. And now we're in Singapore. So we moved to Hong Kong in 2018. I consider Hong Kong to be really the first time I've lived abroad because I'm an adult here. And it was kind of my choice. I think that the inspiration for me traveling abroad actually came in my adult life from my sister, who was the first person to like abroad. So just in terms of my childhood, my family, the sort of diasporic attitude that a lot of Black preteens have where we have associations with the countries that we came from. So I know the situation is a bit different than it isn't for African Americans. But for a lot like Black British people, we usually have migrated from another part of the world. So whether that be Africa or Caribbean, many different parts of the Caribbean. So my mom's parents are going Guyanese-British, and my dad's parents were Jamaican and English. So the sort of international sense of being from somewhere else has always been there. But it was never treated as sort of an expat experience, more of a migration. So I would say the inspiration to be an expat abroad came from my experience as an adult. My sister moved to Hong Kong, about three years before I did. Before that she was living in Italy, and before that she was living in the Netherlands. So she was sort of the trailblazer for me living abroad. It's actually funny because she came back from Hong Kong. And then I moved to Hong Kong. And it was kind of like this passing ships kind of situation, which was quite funny because

we never lived in Asia together. But we have the same experiences. We can talk about the same sort of things that we've done, the places that we visited. So I would say she would be my inspiration from early she made me more confident about it.

**CHRISTINE** [00:14:48] I asked Roxy to tell me about her university experience, and if she had the opportunity to study abroad while in university.

**ROXANNA** [00:15:00] My university experience was interesting. I actually joined university late, I didn't join with the same age group as I could have. Because I worked for two years as a police officer and then decided to go back to university. I studied English literature, and creative writing, mainly creative writing. And I did have the opportunity to go abroad, I didn't take the opportunity. But our university was partnered with a university in Barbados, I did have the opportunity to go there. But I decided against it due to issues with relocating at the time. I kind of wish I did take that opportunity, I think everyone would. But it wasn't feasible at the time.

**CHRISTINE** [00:15:45] I asked Roxy to share more about her journey abroad, and how her and her husband really ended up leaving in Asia.

**ROXANNA** [00:15:55] I don't think I ever had the realization I wanted to live abroad. It wasn't a kind of ambition of mine, it just fell into our laps, I was working in law, I was doing what's called a training contract where you work for a certain period before you become fully qualified as a lawyer. So I kind of put that on hold, to move to Asia. I was working in the women's sector, what we call the women sector. So I've worked in domestic violence, trafficking, I've worked with women in prison. Basically, anything under the umbrella of violence against women, I've taken jobs in that field. Actually, just before I'd moved, I was working in housing. So I was working for a charity called Shelter where we basically give legal advice to tenants if they're having landlord and tenant disputes. And we also do work with people who are claiming social security benefits and things like that. So basically, I've always worked in the charity sector as a lawyer. So my husband came home once and he said, there's an opportunity in Hong Kong, and I dropped pretty much everything that I was doing, and moved to Hong Kong. So it wasn't like an ambition. It was a whirlwind. We had just started planning our wedding. When we got married, he left around a month after our wedding. And I stayed on the original plan was for me to stay and finish my training contract. And once I was qualified, officially, to go to Asia to join him. What ended up happening is I was able to put my qualifications on hold, so that I can actually come back and finish it. We were newlyweds, so we didn't want to be apart for too long. So that was good. And then I moved to Hong Kong, and I started working, doing some legal work in Hong Kong before deciding just to take a break from it all. And I became a creative writing teacher.

**CHRISTINE** [00:17:54]

I asked Roxy to talk about her experience living in Hong Kong,

**ROXANNA** [00:18:00] TThe similarities of Hong Kong and London, there are quite a lot of similarities. Hong Kong was under the British until quite recently. And there is a situation

happening, a political situation surrounding that now. When we were there, I was struck by the similarities of Hong Kong, actually. The food, the culture, obviously, the language to a certain degree, I feel like there was a lot that I could have learned if I was there for a bit longer. It's very different to Singapore, I would say, but more similar to London. Some of the things that we did find difficult is the size of the living space. Our flat was tiny, and it was not tiny compared to what other people are living in. And that is just kind of expected, everyone lives in kind of a small place. The amount of high-rise buildings in Hong Kong. It was It is something. The difference in housing poverty over there is really tough. Like there are people who live in cage homes. And those, depending on the context are the lucky ones because there are people that routinely live in McDonald's for example, that is something that you get in London. But the thing is in London, you're either homeless, or you live in some sort of housing standard. There is no situation where it would be okay to rent someone a cage to live in.

**CHRISTINE** [00:19:31] So I have to admit that I had no idea what cage homes were until Roxy mentioned it in our chat. So I asked her to break down what are cage homes?

**ROXANNA** [00:19:46] They call them cage homes, and there's varying degrees of how they look but essentially it's like enough for you to have a bed in, and some of them all metal bars. So if you Google them, I think there's a photographer who goes into them and shows you actually the size, but you are literally sleeping, you can see your feet at the end of your, of your space. And that is something that low standard of being able to rent someone a space like that. It's like, you know, the size of capsule hotels that are quite quirky. And people go to like places like Japan, and they live in them. Yeah, there are people that live like that in Hong Kong. And that low standard of living is not something that would be approved by the government in the UK. You can't rent someone, you know, a four by four home. If you go to Hong Kong, there are tours where you can go and you can see where the cage homes are. And that kind of thing is just not something that I think it should be commodified. You can't, I don't think you should go and take a tour to look up how certain people live. I just, it just seems gross and disruptive to me, I wouldn't do it. So the closest I would get to seeing these are the pictures that people with permission have allowed people in, journalists, photojournalists in. And so I've only seen pictures of them. And I know they exist because I did a little bit of refugee work. And I know that some refugees were living in this accommodation. And when I say those are the lucky ones, some refugees are living in, like worse accommodation than that, and don't actually have a roof over their heads. If you give people a bad option, they will have to take it. So the argument is, should these terrible options be available for them? There is definitely a remnant of how the British treated the local Hong Kongers and the local Chinese community. For example, Hong Kong is mountainous, and their houses on top of the hills. So you can say I live in the peak, for example, which means you live at the top of the mountain. And they are almost divided by class. So these cage homes and the sort of poor areas are at the bottom of the mountains. And the richer, the higher up the mountain you go, the richer the houses are, the nicer the houses are, and more expats. So the peak from places like that would be considered where lots of expats live, whereas at the bottom would be considered like local areas. And that is definitely a remnant of the British, how they set up the class and housing structure in Hong Kong. And you do definitely feel that. You definitely feel that there is a separation between expats and locals.

And expats will often call locals, locals and saying, you know, "He doesn't even speak English," or, you know, they get very frustrated with them, not recognizing that you shouldn't be disrespecting people like that.

**CHRISTINE** [00:22:41] I asked Roxy if there is a vibrant and prominent Black community in Hong Kong. And if she was a part of that community.

**ROXANNA** [00:22:51] I suppose, though there are a lot of Black people in Hong Kong. But I wasn't engaged with anyone that called themselves the Black community, or a community of Black people. I definitely am engaged with that in Singapore. But in Hong Kong, I wasn't. It was more a case of the British hanging out with people from the UK and South Africans hanging out with South Africans, that kind of thing. That's what it felt like more. You're more like the expat community or the local community. It was that divided that you can find something in common with expats, and something more in common with expats from your country, than, I ever found with just Black people. But in Singapore, it's a bit different.

**CHRISTINE** [00:23:37] I asked Roxy, how politics had affected her while she lived in Hong Kong, and how she thinks of Hong Kong today.

**ROXANNA** [00:23:46] I probably wouldn't return to Hong Kong at the moment due to the political situation. I support the local Hong Kongers who are fighting for their rights. But now is not the time I feel for me to be an expat there. At the time when I was living there, it was all fun. And I enjoyed, you know, going to bars, meeting new people. Something about Hong Kong, it's very, very easy to meet people and make friends. You know, people just really want to socialize. What I did find is that if you're an expat, you may not be fully engaged with the political climate. It's like that in Singapore, but Singapore actually has a barrier to you entering their political conversations. Whereas on Hong Kong, it seemed like the expats just were not interested in local politics or local issues. And I'm still engaged. I'm still part of, for example, online groups. And you will see expats complaining about the protests or I remember when the protests first started, and the expat groups... Because I got a dog when I was in Hong Kong and my whole life was revolving around my dog because in Hong Kong, like dogs are a huge thing. Like, there were three dogs, so I pause when I was on the street I was living in, that sort of thing. But I'm part of this Hong Kong dog group. And they were planning to protest, the use of tear gas. This was months ago, or maybe last year when the protests were at that their peak. They were planning a protest on the tear gas, because the tear gas was affecting their dogs. And I remember thinking, "This is crazy, you're not protesting that they're tear gassing people, you're protesting at the effects it's having on your dog." And that, to me signified kind of the divide, the political divide, and why I didn't really want to be a part of it anymore, I would go back to Hong Kong. But I would do things a lot differently. I think I would be more engaged with the local community. But it's not really my space to do that, which is why I probably wouldn't go back.

**CHRISTINE** [00:25:48] I see the differences in living in Hong Kong, to Singapore.

**ROXANNA** [00:25:53] When I was in Hong Kong, and I told people we were moving to Singapore, the first thing that they said is Singapore is so boring. Everyone in Hong Kong will say that. So we were worried that we were going to be really, really bored. Because Hong Kong has got loads of bars, and loads of restaurants, and loads of nightlife, and Singapore just doesn't seem to be famous for that. When we got here, it's very clean. And you can feel like maybe is potentially boring. But that couldn't be further from the truth. When we got here, I think we go out more, we've got a better social life here, we've got more space, everything just seems to be a lot better. There are a lot more bars in Hong Kong, but they're of worse quality. The ones that are here in Singapore are better, but fewer, you know, quality over quantity.

**CHRISTINE** [00:26:40] I asked Roxy to give her opinion of the cost of living between London, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

**ROXANNA** [00:26:49] I'll say, in London, I think you are eating the food that you're used to eating right. So it's cheaper, all British produce is cheaper. When you're an expat abroad, if you want to eat locally, if you want to cook local dishes, then you can do it very cheaply. But if you are the kind of expat who likes the home comforts and wants to shop Western, then you will have that huge markup that you're not used to back home. There is there are shops in the UK that are very cheap. And brands are very cheap, that in Hong Kong and Singapore are just so expensive. And you know that there is a huge market for them. Sometimes the products that they sell here will have sort of the pricing pounds still on them to just know how much you've been marked up. I would say, in Hong Kong alcohol, if that's your thing, bars are very cheap. In Singapore, they're taxed. So if you're drinking and going out in Singapore, expect to pay a lot more money. In London, I think the drinking culture is such similar to Hong Kong, actually. But the drinking culture is such that you can find drinks a range of different ways, you know, you can spend a lot of money or a little bit of money. In terms of housing and rent, London, it's just crazy expensive. Most of the people that I know, are living with flatmates and things like that. Hong Kong, again, crazy expensive, and the size of the place is going to be tiny. Unless you've got loads of money to spend. In Singapore, the place that we're living in is a decent size. And it's not as expensive as the other two places. In terms of entertainment, so there are very few or at least before the COVID situation, in my experience very few artists and concerts and things happen in Asia, in Hong Kong and in Singapore. So when they do happen, you will spend money to go and see that person because you don't know when they're going to come back. Whereas in London, I think every artist goes so on. And so you take it for granted, you don't necessarily spend a lot of money to go out. Same with movies, that sort of thing. Like movies that come out in America and and looking at trailers. I don't know if they're going to come out in Singapore, I have to wait. Disney passes and in Singapore, for example. So we make do with Netflix and you can't get HBO and you can't get things like that. Local TV is inaccessible to us, or at least it was in Hong Kong because it's in Cantonese. So you're spending more money on home entertainment things. But in terms of cost, I think if I was to rank the most expensive place, I would say Hong Kong was more expensive. London I think was less expensive because I'm from there and I know where to get cheap stuff. And Singapore, it's quite moderate. spending less on living but spending more on going out.

**CHRISTINE** [00:29:44] I was really curious to learn about the Singaporean response to COVID. And so I asked Roxy to tell me about it and give me her impressions of the Singaporean response.

**ROXANNA** [00:29:58] So the response has been, compared to the US and the UK, exceptional. And I think everyone has pretty much recognized that from the beginning. We've been dealing with the COVID since January, so I think a couple of months before the rest of the world got it. And I think because we have the infrastructure of SARS and things like that, it's been brilliant. The issue is, there has been a second wave amongst the migrant worker communities who live in dormitories. And that has set us back into kind of a little bit more restriction. So at the beginning, there was no talk of lockdown, there were very few restrictions, people were taking your temperature, but it wasn't a big deal. But that second wave in the migrant dormitories caused a big panic, and now we're much more restricted. One of the things that I've noticed is that Singapore can more easily control its population. If there is a rule in Singapore, everyone follows it. Whereas in the UK, I know that they've had mask rules, they've had lockdown rules, they've had quarantine rules, and you'll find communities of people that just will not do it. And I don't know how many convictions there have been if there have been any. But in Singapore, for example, I think there have been on the news about four or five expat families who have had to just pack up and leave because they broke quarantine rules. Or they've been taking a picture having been drinking outside a restaurant when you're not supposed to be doing that. Or they visited people during quarantine and they weren't supposed to, and you just have to leave. So expats know what the consequences are of breaking the rules there. So we just don't do it. It's automatic. But that seems they've placed that fear, of kind of like, "Yeah, if you break the rules, you have to go." So we just don't break the rules. And I'm fine with that. But it is quite strict here. for good reason.

**CHRISTINE** [00:32:00] I asked Roxy, if she believed Singaporean politics affected her as an expert.

**ROXANNA** [00:32:07] I'm not sure if I can. I think it's quite sorry to be difficult. But I'm, I don't know what the rules are, on me speaking about the politics of Singapore being an expat here, I'd love to, but I don't know. I do know that...I will say this. In Singapore. I've never met anyone, young taxi drivers who complain about politics. And that's interesting to me, like in the UK, and you sit in a taxi. And if the taxi drivers willing to talk to you, they'll talk to you about Brexit. And they'll talk to you about immigration, you know, and sometimes their opinions are trash, but they will say them, right? Over here. I've never heard anyone complain. And I can see why Singapore and for the most part, really good lives. Their living experience here seems to be really good. Everyone seems to be in housing. Unemployment is really low, healthcare system is really good. So I don't I don't know where the politics would be difficult here. And plus, I don't know much about the Singaporean political system. One thing that I will say is, when I talk about the barrier, expats, businesses from outside of Singapore, are restricted in being able to have a voice in their politics. So, for example, if there's a protest, expats wouldn't be able to join, and the protest has to be restricted in a certain area. And you have to be Singaporean to go to this protest if they allow a protest, which I'm not sure they do.



**CHRISTINE** [00:33:40] I asked Roxy if she felt like British politics still affect her while living in Asia?

**ROXANNA** [00:33:47] Yes, and no, I think I've missed most of the backlash from Brexit. Because when it happened, we left. And most expats here do not care about Brexit, as much as people living in the UK for obvious reasons. So that is the biggest political issue in the country, or at least it was before I left. And we have been largely shielded from it. One of the reasons why we want to go back to the UK is because being apolitical is not something that we are used to. Me and my husband are very political people with a lot of ideas. We have a lot of opinions. And we felt that we need to go back to the UK to be part of those conversations. But it will take me a while when I go there to kind of get back into the flow of things.

**CHRISTINE** [00:34:33] I wanted to know more about Roxy's experience being Black in Asia.

**ROXANNA** [00:34:39] So when you've been here for a while you stop wondering how people are going to treat you. When you've been in Asia for a while you realize that they don't have the same type of racism that you're used to back home. I feel like the issue is, back home in the UK, people have a long history of hating Black people, and not wanting Black people in their space. They don't consider us to be indigenous to the UK. That is a word that was said, you know, a generation ago about indigenous Brits, basically white Brits. They consider us foreigners in our own country. And that hatred spills on so much of racism that happens day to day. Whereas when you come to Asia, they just treat you like an expat, they understand that you're gonna go, you're not living there for a long time. You're not taking anything from them, we don't use local schools we have to pay for our own health care. So you are treated like an expat. Whereas in the UK, they resent having to treat you like a fellow citizen, or that your home is there. So that kind of white supremacy that you're dealing with, and that kind of racism that you're dealing with, just doesn't happen here. You're either a tourist, or an expat. And I think that makes a huge difference in how you're treated. The microaggressions feel less painful, coming from people in this part of the world in Asia. For example, if I'm back home, and someone starts touching my hair on the Tube, I mean, that is just completely unacceptable. And they would get, you know, told. But in Asia, it happens out of pure curiosity. Sometimes we want to take pictures with you, I have a video that my husband took of us in Macau, and huge crowd of mainland Chinese people just crowded us and they were handing me that baby and they wanted to take pictures. I mean, that is something that we've never experienced back home. It's pure curiosity. When I went to Cuba, for example, I experienced a lot of the same things. People mostly thought I was a Cuban prostitute, because I'm with this white guy who's my husband. And that's just the dynamic that they saw. So I was treated awfully until I spoke English, just depends on where you go. But in terms of the experience of being a Black woman here, you would experience racism, but its just different.

**CHRISTINE** [00:37:15] I always ask my guests about if there is a Black community, in their city or in their country. And I always ask them to describe what it's like. If it's vibrant, or what's going on with it. And I asked Roxy the same, and her response really illuminated something we've

discussed on this podcast, but not really when it comes to like Black expat community dynamics, and that his Blackness is not monolithic. And that becomes prominent when Black community is made up of many different members of the diaspora. And I asked her to talk a little bit more about that.

**ROXANNA** [00:38:02] It's mainly just a WhatsApp group that I used to be in, and a brunch that they used to have before COVID struck. So they would, you know, go out to dinner, have brunch, and we'd all get together. We are all Black. But we have so many different experiences with Blacks from Africa, or Blacks from France, or Blacks from America, the UK. So you find that when you get everyone together, with race just being the only thing you have in common, and you have so many different opinions and experiences of things, it can get quite hostile. There's a lot of arguments, there's a lot of debates, and sometimes I just, I cannot be bothered with it. So I did exit the group because of that. Apart from that, it's very welcoming. And when you first come here, and you're Black, and you want to get to know people who are in the same boat as you, it's great. But when you've been here for a little while, I kind of like thought, "I didn't really want to just hang out with one type of people." I've got so many Black friends, the majority of my friends in Singapore are Black. But I'm less a part of the huge community of Black people. We know we're not a monolith when we're back home. So when we're back home, for example, if you're from the UK, you might hang out with other Caribbeans and understand that you're all Caribbean, and you're different from people from Brazil, or Africa, you just have a different culture. And even within the Caribbean, I might hang out with Jamaicans and understand, you know, the culture there. But people from Barbados, completely different. We can separate ourselves. When we're put in Asia, it feels like we're all Black. We're all treated as one Black monolith. And then when you're in the group, you remember that we're all so different. And I think some of it is dominant... That like what people consider the dominant Black experience, can sometimes make you feel like you're being overshadowed. I'll give you an example. We were playing a game once, and it was called Black Card Revoked. I don't know if you've ever heard of that game or played it. But it was asking things like, how long does the church services last? When do they officially finish? And it's like, the joke is that all Black people in America who have been to Black church know that they go on for a very long time. Or it was asking questions about Martin the TV show. Like, I know the answers to all of these, partly because I grew up for a while in Florida, and partly because a lot of it is stuff you watch on TV, but we're playing this game with people from the UK, people from Africa. And it was like you're calling it Black card revoked. It's at a Black event. But it's really not targeted at any other people apart from Black Americans. And that's one thing that it just doesn't work. Or, for example, we had an event where everyone was playing spades. And everyone's like, "This is a Black game, unless you're black, you don't know to play spades." And I've never heard of spades. And it's really funny, because my husband who's white was there, and he was like, "Oh, my granddad taught me how to play this." He's Cornish, you know, he's like, "Oh, we don't call it space. We call it this game. But I know exactly how to play." And these kinds of things. Now I get it. When I'm with British people. I talk about grime music, I talk about living in South London, you know, I can have these experiences. But as a monolith, it was just too much. And it caused tension, someone in the WhatsApp group would say something, another person would disagree, there would be conflict. And it just, it was obviously arising from the fact that we're so different. And I would say the

same thing about being in a British WhatsApp group or a British group. I don't think it's enough to have just one thing in common. I think, to be a part of a group or a community, you have to have a few things in common or a common objective. So if the group was a climbing group, your common objective is to go climbing. But if your group is 'we are just British,' there's no objective there. It's just we're expected to get along because we're Brits, or we're expected to get along, because we're Black. And that for me, just doesn't work. And I've seen so many examples of groups where it's just conflict. And people want to be a part of it so much that they don't want to rock the boat. And then, you know, people can't say things because it's against the group culture.

**CHRISTINE** [00:42:33] So Roxy has had an incredible, interesting and impactful career before coming to Asia. And even though she was on somewhat of a career break, she has found many different ways to be professionally fulfilled, and also creatively fulfilled. She has become a DJ. So I asked her, how did she become a DJ?

**ROXANNA** [00:43:01] It started really, because I needed an emotional outlet from some of the difficulties of working in the charity sector in London. So I mentioned before, I've worked with people who were trafficked, I worked as a police officer. So I'd seen awful things. And I never really had a creative outlet. I did, for period, have a creative outlet and writing. But I found when I'm left alone to write, I write about, you know, the stuff that I'd seen or the stuff that I've been involved in. So when I came to Singapore, I just wanted to do something that was completely neutral and completely creative. And completely different from what I was doing in London, because I will go back to London, and I will work in the same environment that was working before. That will happen. But this is kind of like my breathing space. And I think everyone needs that when they work in this kind of sector. I've always wanted to play music, and my dad's actually a DJ. So I started doing it as a hobby. And then that slowly evolved in me working into bars. One of the bar managers saw me and she asked if I wanted a residency, this is employees only. And I felt great. And I've been working there ever since and I book, gigs all over, at least I did before COVID. Hopefully things will pick up, but we're not looking like that's going to happen anytime soon.

**CHRISTINE** [00:44:25] As you guys know, I always ask my guests depending on their relationship status, how is dating in one country or city? Or if they're married, how has living abroad affected their marriage? I asked Roxy, how living abroad had affected their marriage. She talks about how embarking on an IVF journey has been the biggest stressor on her marriage.

**ROXANNA** [00:44:56] I will disclose that me and my husband actually going for infertility treatments, we're doing IVF in Singapore. And we started this journey in Hong Kong, although we never sought treatment in Hong Kong. So that has been our biggest connection to any kind of difficulties being abroad. And I will say this, Singapore is brilliant. In terms of the medical treatment that we've received here, it's been great. It's been one of the best parts about making the decision to move here. Because I know that in the UK, although we would have paid to go private, the National Health Service do IVF. And it would have been a long journey, a lot of

people that I have spoken to who have gone through it, the waiting times and the expense. And the difficulty has put a real strain on their relationships over here. And I think the fact that we're in Singapore, and we're able to go through this really difficult period means that, it's meant that Singapore in a sense, and the structures it has here, have saved our marriage and made us more resilient. I'm not sure if we could have done this if it wasn't for living in Singapore. So dealing with infertility here, you always think about the option of adopting. The UK is the only country that Singapore doesn't allow to adopt. So the UK doesn't recognize Singaporean adoptions. And as such, Singapore will not allow British couples to adopt here. So super stressful on the other side of things, right. Because if we wanted to adopt, we wouldn't be able to while we lived here. We'd have to go back home or move to another country. That's quite stressful. So that puts a bit more pressure on the whole infertility stuff. But yeah, this is the big thing in our marriage. So anything moving abroad, or having to deal with, like other currencies or other food is just, you know, eclipsed by the fact that we're also dealing with infertility. It's a really difficult question to answer without mentioning. Can you imagine being Black and living in Asia, and going through infertility treatments, and they have to explain to you, "Oh, well, I don't know if you know much about infertility, but you create these embryos. And if they're successful, and you have any leftover, you can choose to donate them to other women." And it's really funny, watching the doctor kind of say that to you knowing full well that no woman is gonna choose to have a baby that's a completely different race to them. There aren't that many Black women who needs their embryos in Singapore. So it's really funny to have these conversations. And on the flip side, them saying, "Well, embryo adoption is available to you." And it's like, "Oh, I'm not sure if it would be." Yeah, I wouldn't mind. But, you know, is a Singaporean woman going to allow her embryos to be birthed by a mixed-race couple who wants to go back to the UK. It's really funny. So in the infertility world, race is a huge conversation that's just started because of the protests. So online, on the forums, people are talking about race. Certain things are, you know, quite apparent when you're doing it in a country where everyone is pretty much a different race to you. And I say pretty much because there were 200 people in the WhatsApp group I mentioned. And I don't know how many of them are infertile. It's not something that people talk about. I'm talking about it now. Because I think it's important to talk about. I'm trying to normalize talking about it.

**CHRISTINE** [00:48:27] And so I asked Roxy, what her experience has been with the Singaporean healthcare system, and how it compares to the UK's NHS.

**ROXANNA** [00:48:38] So in the UK, we have the National Health Service. I don't know how much you know about the National Health Service. But when I read articles about America, saying, "Oh, we can't have people" like, that's crazy that you have to pay for it. I don't know if you saw the video of like they interviewed British people about Americans and how much they spend on their medication. And we were like, "That's crazy. You have to pay for an ambulance, really?" So there's a video that went viral in the UK where they were like, "Yeah, you have to pay this much for the ambulance service." And you're like, what? But we love our NHS, I think people have described as a religion, that we love the fact that if you are sick, you will get treated without having to pay for it. One of the downsides of that is unless you pay privately, for certain things, you can wait a long time for discretionary or things that they consider to be discretionary

treatment. IVF being one of them. So if I was doing IVF, back in the UK, I think it would have a really big strain on my marriage having to wait maybe two years or three years to get on the NHS. We're fortunate enough that we would probably pay for it privately. But I still think it would be you know, three, four months waiting. In Singapore. As soon as your cycle starts. You can contact them that day, and you can get seen by a doctor, if I have any issues that I need treating, and it's even if it's discretionary, you can find a doctor to see you that day. I can walk off the street into a doctor's office pay a certain amount of money and be seen. It's so readily available and so easy. And it's so smooth over here, although you have to pay for it. So I'm definitely not advocating for having to pay for your own medical care, because I love the NHS, and I think taking care of people is the most important thing. But if I was going to have to pay for it anyway, which I would in the UK for it to be done in any reasonable amount of time. Doing it here is just incredible. They're so so efficient.

**CHRISTINE** [00:50:38] I asked Roxie to share some advice for anyone that is embarking on an IVF journey.

**ROXANNA** [00:50:45] I would say no matter who your doctor is, what their accolades is, always be your own advocate. I have read some research, and I'm not a scientist, I'm not a doctor. And anyone who's doing IVF has probably read lots of research papers. There are certain tests for which Black women are not in the norm, because of the fact that Black women. So sometimes you have to get your doctors to all the tests that they wouldn't routinely order. You know, just do your own research, always be your own advocate, don't give everything to your doctors. In saying that. Dr. Google sometimes is the worst. So you don't have to constantly, constantly be online Googling things, because that is the temptation. The next thing is I've been trying to conceive for a long time. But I've tried, and I always advocate to treat everything like a clean slate. So if you've been doing something for a year, and it's not worked, and the doctor or you have discovered, this might be diagnosis, or this might be the reason, then treat that as the first day. You know, everything is a clean slate, every step is a different step. The next thing is, keep yourself super busy. Because IVF is long. It's a long process. I think I'm quite lucky in that I'm not so emotionally attached to the idea of having children. I'm doing it because I want to have children. But there are people in this community in the infertility community who have real struggles with the idea of being childless. I find it sometimes quite difficult to connect with people in the IVF community online, particularly obviously, these are faceless people. But things like "Oh, we should abolish Mother's Day because it makes us feel insecure about the fact that we're not mothers," or, you know, "we should abolish pregnancy jokes on April Fool's Day, this is horrible," I get it, I understand those feelings, but I don't. So, you know, they really helped me, I'm being quite negative about groups. Maybe I'm just not a person who likes groups.

**CHRISTINE** [00:52:53] I asked Roxy, where she saw her and her family in the foreseeable future.

**ROXANNA** [00:52:59] So I actually we won't be moving back together, I'll be moving back. And he'll be staying here. And this was the plan before COVID. At the moment, it doesn't look like that is a viable option. Because we would never be able to see each other, I wouldn't be able to

get back into Singapore if I left. So we're kind of putting that on hold. This was a plan that we had, like a year ago. And it's like, you can't put your career on hold for a long time. You know, if we're unsuccessful with our IVF journey, then the plan was for me to go back to the UK so that I can put us on the adoption register. And we were going to adopt. Because that's just what we want to do anyway, regardless of whether we're successful having children, we have always known that we were going to be adopters. So that was the plan. But that's kind of been put on hold because COVID would mean I wouldn't be able to see him. It's really hard to plan anything nowadays, right? Because I honestly don't know if they're gonna have a second wave. I don't know what the UK is going to look like. I don't even know if there is an actual career for me to go back to because unemployment seems to be a big issue now. And, you know, people aren't leaving their jobs. People aren't hiring, especially the charity sector. You know, I work in a sector where funding is already really restrictive. And right now, I think a lot of contracts and a lot of funding will be really difficult. So I don't know if what I planned in January is even possible now.

**CHRISTINE** [00:54:24] I always ask my guests about wellness. And I do that because I really believe that as Black women, we don't talk about wellness nearly enough. And we also have to know that we can define wellness in whatever way we want. It does not have to be just bath bombs and crystals, though those are awesome. And so I asked Roxy about her personal definition of wellness, and how living abroad has influenced that definition.

**ROXANNA** [00:55:00] I have started acupuncture, which is related to the infertility, but has been really relaxing. It's a great part of my routine now. In terms of wellness, I think the whole trip for me over here was a wellness trip. I feel like I become an adult in being abroad. And I feel like what comes with being an adult is understanding when things are toxic. And when you need to let go of things. I don't think that I did that when I was in my young 20s. I don't think I let go of toxic things or toxic people, or toxic situations. Even a job, if I was in a job and I hated going to work and I was crying every evening or something like that happened, I didn't have the ability or strength to just quit. Now I think I would be much more able to recognize when something isn't working and leave. What wellness means to me is having the confidence to understand when you don't need to be in a situation anymore. And I think that takes a long time to develop. And that's what I'm starting to develop. So it's a constant journey of understanding that. I completely want to normalize finding yourself at any age. So there is a UK hero, who is like the COVID hero. His name is Captain Tom, I think he's in his 90s. So to raise money for NHS, he decided in his old age to walk across his garden for some period of time and he ended up raising several million. He's called Captain Tom because he was a war veteran. And in this time, he's raised so much money, and he raised everyone's spirits. And in his 90s, he has gone up a rank in the army, he has got a knighthood from the queen. So he's become Sir Captain Tom. And he's raised all this money. And I was telling my husband, I was saying, you know, he has reached his peak in his 90s. And he's done something amazing in his 90s. He's much more important than a lot of 30 under 30s in his 90s. And that should be what we're thinking about. There is no limit, there's no age to finding yourself and finding wellness and making these decisions. I want to go back to the UK and I want to be a huge...A top lawyer in my field. But I might find that I'm actually just a really, really good dog groomer. Finding yourself, and finding what really makes you happy it's a whole holistic approach to wellness, you know. something that I'm recognized

as toxic is constantly comparing myself to others based on my age. I've been doing that since I was 20. Since I was 16. I've always thought "Oh, there are 16 year olds in the newspaper who have just invented this or just started this business." Whatever age I've always been, I've always thought I was too old to have achieved anything. And only now do I think, "Okay, you taking this career break, you kind of slowing things down. But you have so much time to do an amazing thing or to do what you find to be an amazing thing." It's been a really hard lesson that I'm still teaching myself.

**CHRISTINE** [00:58:12] Wow, thank you so much, Roxy, for sharing your story. For your candor and your insights. A truly wonderful update to this story is that since Roxy and I recorded, the IVF has been successful, and her and her husband are expecting in May. If you want to keep up with Roxy, you can via social media.

**ROXANNA** [00:58:39] I'm mostly on Instagram, please add me on Instagram. So that is @roxie.le.fox

**CHRISTINE** [00:58:47] All right. That was this week's episode. I hope you enjoyed it. If you aren't following the podcast on social media, what are you doing? What are you doing? definitely follow the podcast @flourishforeign across all social media channels. That is Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. As I mentioned earlier on Instagram, that is where the podcast is most active. And it's where I have the Instagram lives. I go live either by myself or with past podcast guests. And we get to just have frank conversations and really have a good kiki you know. The podcast is a different kind of vibe to it. Some have said NPR-like, not sure if that's a compliment or not, but I'm going to take it that way. But on Instagram is where we really have just really honest and vulnerable conversations and it's where are we kiki. So if that is interesting to you, be sure to follow *Flourish In The Foreign* on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/flourishforeign](http://www.instagram.com/flourishforeign). And truly, about every week I have at least one Instagram live. So definitely tune in. If you are new or maybe if you've missed some of the Instagram lives, they are all stored on the Instagram page. There are several, tap in. All right? And if you have been inspired by this podcast and you're thinking, how are you going to make your move abroad, and you want to make that move intentionally, I'm speaking at a summit called Awakening Lightworker Virtual Summit. So exciting. I'm going to be speaking about living overseas, creating the life of your dreams. I'm really going to talk about what you need to do to mentally prepare yourself, emotionally prepare yourself. And if you've been listening to the podcast for a while, if you've been checking out the Instagram lives, you know, I'm a big advocate on being intentional with going abroad. And really using it as a time and space for you to cultivate a life that is well lived in whatever terms that means for you. I'm going to talk about my story about how I did it. I'm going to talk about visioning and journaling and meditation. And manifestation is really great, because these are all my favorite topics, actually. And it's really things that I utilized in my journey to go abroad. And to not just go abroad, y'all know what I say, I don't say just go abroad, stay abroad, but to flourish abroad. These are the techniques and this is my story. So if you're interested in hearing about that, check out the Awakening Lightworker Virtual Summit. The link to this summit is in the podcast bio section across all social media channels. And of course, on the resource page of the *Flourish In The Foreign* web site, check it

out. And let me know what you think. Because you know, I've been speaking on a wide variety of topics these past two months. So this one's different for me. And I'm excited, I'm excited to share. So check it out. Also, if you are ready to move abroad, you know you're ready to move abroad, but you are interested in leveraging your talents and your expertise into a viable and sustainable online business that will make you professionally fulfilled, financially abundant, whatever that means to you, while you're pursuing a thriving life abroad. Go ahead and hit me up. I am still taking on some clients for my 12-week sprint. If you guys don't know, the 12-week, Sprint is something I have truly done, I think probably most of my life, but it's definitely something I have done with my clients over the years, to help them to create businesses or products, services, and get them launched. And to tell you the truth, my 12-week Sprint is not for the faint of heart. We don't gab, we don't do like the hypotheticals, is not hypothesizing about business, we create business, and we make money, because you don't have a business unless you make money. So that is what my 12-week sprint is and I have amazing, amazing clients that just are so dope. And I'm so happy to work with them. They are just the best, and I'm still taking on some clients. So if you are wanting to pivot your business, or scale your business so that you can take it abroad, hit me up, my calendar is still open for free discovery calls and I'm still taking on clients for my 12-week sprint. But that is not always going to be the case. Alright, so don't be a Johnny come lately. Don't do it. Don't do it if you are ready to enter into 2021 not with a hope and a wish of going abroad but with a plan and a business. Okay, someone's saying executable someone's making money, less talk. You can find out more information in book your free chat with me on my website, [www.christinejob.com](http://www.christinejob.com). Again, it is on the website of *Flourish In The Foreign* and it's also in the bios across all social media channels. Get at me. Also, if you are interested in podcasting, you're a newbie or you're thinking about starting a podcast and you're thinking you need some support either to start the podcast, or to grow the reach of the podcast, or to monetize the podcast, you'll definitely want to become a member of the WOC Insiders Podcast Membership. Now, I've talked about this membership many times before on the show. But there has been a new development, the membership is actually going to close its doors in December, I believe it's December 15. It's going to close its doors for about three to four months. And they're really doing something super cool. They're creating different tracks. So if you're a newbie, they have a track for you. If you're trying to grow your reach, they have a track for you. If you're a more advanced podcaster, and you're trying to monetize and create products off your podcast, they have a track for you. And so that's why they're closing their doors. So if you are wanting to start a podcast or you want to get more serious with your podcast, now or in 2021, you want to become a WOC Insiders Podcaster Member today. Do not wait, they're closing the doors, you're gonna have to wait till spring. So if you're really trying to launch the podcast, if you're really trying to be serious if your podcast, go ahead and join and join me and all the other dope, dope women who are in the membership. You can do so via the *Flourish In The Foreign* affiliate link, which is at no extra cost to you, but is another way to support this podcast, you can find that link on our website, [www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources](http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources). And again, in the bio section across all social media channels, there's a link and it has a whole page of all the things I talked about, you'll find it there. Okay. So join me, join all the cool women there if you're serious, because if not, you're gonna miss out. And that's gonna be sad for you. Thank you to Zachary Higgs who produce the music of this podcast. If you're interested in having custom music for your next project. You'll definitely want to hit him up. I'll leave all of his



information in the show notes. All right, that is it for this week. Have an amazing week. be intentional, this is your life. So be an active participant in the cultivation of this one life that you have. Okay. All right. See you next week.

**CHRISTINE** [01:07:49] On the next episode of *Flourish In The Foreign*:

**NEXT EPISODE SPEAKER** [01:07:52] I really believe that when you're about to make big, big moves, you got to be careful with who you share that news with. Because a lot of people will project their own fears and their own anxieties on to you.