

The Rise of the Outrageously Long Commute

Miriam Kreinin Souccar, Quartz

3-4 minutes

Data are relatively sparse, but nevertheless compelling. One [study](#) on relocation trends in the U.S. from the National Bureau of Economic Research found that the rate of interstate relocations for jobs in 2013 had dropped 51 percent from its average between 1948 and 1971.

Another [study](#) conducted this year by the market research firm Barna Group found that nearly 60 percent of adults never plan to move, and out of the adults who did move, 42 percent moved for family, while just 28 percent relocated for a job. And this isn't just an American phenomenon. "Relocation is a problem for people," said Ellen Galinsky, the president of the Families and Work Institute in New York, which is currently studying this issue. "Men in particular are putting more value on being a good parent, not just a provider, and in some sense that might mean not moving their kids."

In many cases, the commuters aren't just doing it for their kids' stability, but also because of their spouse's career. Erik Church lives in Toronto, but works in Vancouver, more than 2,000 miles away, where he is the chief operating officer of O2E Brands, the company that owns *1-800-GOT-JUNK?*. He

took the job four years ago, but decided to commute, not only for his nine-year-old daughter, but also because his wife's medical practice was established in Toronto.

He now takes a five-hour flight to Vancouver every Sunday night or Monday morning and leaves on Thursdays at 5:00pm. If his daughter has a school recital, he will fly there in one day, catch the recital, and fly back again. His daughter once told her teacher that her dad worked at the airport.

"I promised my colleagues I will never use my commute as a reason for why I can't make a meeting," said Church, who has regularly scheduled Facetime appointments with his daughter every day. "Just because I choose to live this way won't affect them."

Christine Silvers took a high-profile job in May as the chief medical officer of HealthReveal, a Manhattan-based healthcare-technology company, on the condition that she could stay in her hometown outside of Boston.

Though she mostly telecommutes, two or three times a week Silvers wakes up at 3:30am to catch either the train or shuttle to New York, heads to the office, and takes the 6:00pm train home, arriving at 10:00pm. The long days are grueling, but this way she doesn't have to uproot her three kids, or leave a town she calls home.

"I wouldn't want to pull my kids out of their school or their friendships," Silvers said. "We are very rooted in the area."

Some executives are choosing insane schedules to have the family life they want. Lior Krolewicz started an online marketing consulting firm in Los Angeles in 2011. But a year later, he and his wife decided to start a family, something they

wanted to do in Israel.

Now Krolewicz runs his company, Yael Consulting, from an office in a seaside town just north of Tel Aviv, but keeps the exact same hours as if he were still in LA, where his clients are. At 7:00pm he leaves home for his office, eats lunch at midnight, then finishes his workday around 7:00am Israel time. He takes his two daughters to pre-school and goes to sleep.