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STATEMENT: Temporary Suspension of International Travel

**TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL DURING PANDEMIC**

Thank you for taking the time to read this statement regarding my decision to temporarily suspend international travel during the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic. Though this decision should have been easy, it was a challenging emotional exercise. That said, I am confident it is the correct decision, rooted in compassion and personal responsibility. I hope to earn the chance to collaborate with my global partners through innovative announcing presentation via my recording studio in Boston. I will revisit this decision to temporarily suspend travel in December.

**FIRST, WHY? – THE CURRENT RISE IN CORONAVIRUS CASES AROUND THE WORLD**

On 9 October – in a SINGLE DAY – 350,766 new coronavirus cases were reported worldwide. Alarming, that is the largest one-day total of new cases since the pandemic began. The science and statistics are glaringly obvious – as global governments have eased travel restrictions and distancing-guidelines, the virus' spread continues to worsen and threaten the lives of millions.

Additionally, for political and socioeconomic reasons that are completely irrelevant to my decision, the United States never effectively limited the spread of the contagion. As a result, the U.S. remains the nation with the most cases of SARS-CoV-2 (currently 7.79 million) and most deaths (currently 215 thousand). In many regions, the virus continues to spread unchecked. As an American living this reality, it would be irresponsible of me to board a flight and potentially infect other passengers. It would be irresponsible to potentially infect colleagues and clients – putting both lives and events themselves in jeopardy.

## **TRUTH: MY CHANCES OF SURVIVAL ARE HIGH. BUT I REFUSE TO BE CAVALIER**

Yes, if I contract SARS-CoV-2, statistically I will most likely survive. That said, science does not completely understand the long-term effects after recovery. While most recover within a few weeks, the virus leaves its mark - scarring the lungs, damaging the heart and brain, increasing the risk of long-term health problems. For those reasons alone - like most, my aim is to avoid contracting the virus.

However, for me personally, there is something far more important than my own health: **Living life responsibly** – with compassion for those I love, and even those I have never met. This is the foremost reason I have intently followed the guidelines of the world's foremost epidemiologists since the coronavirus pandemic began. I am determined not to inadvertently spread this virus to others.

## **SCIENCE SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED BECAUSE IT IS INCONVENIENT**

The fact is, science has delivered proven results, slowing the pandemic's spread in areas where citizens trusted the guidance of infectious disease experts. Advice like:

- Social distancing guidelines
- Wearing masks
- Disciplined hand and face hygiene
- Avoiding enclosed spaces where humans are exposed to aerosolized breath
- Staying home and limiting unnecessary travel
- Testing regularly
- Robust and cooperative contact-tracing

While these guidelines have proven effective, there are still more questions than answers about the virus itself - mainly due to the fact that the virus is *novel* and not even a year old. We need more time to study the virus and the patients afflicted.

Because of this limited understanding, many have turned to history to try and predict the virus' future impact. After studying past pandemics, in my humble and unscientific opinion – even if an effective vaccine is produced – eradicating the **threat** of this virus will ultimately require a level of “herd immunity.”

In other words, like with plagues of lore and the Spanish flu (where roughly 50-million perished), it is a game of evolutionary survival of the fittest. Those who survive will develop antibodies that recognize the virus' signature. They will carry on. Meanwhile millions with a different genetic makeup or compromised immune systems will fall victim to COVID-19's insidious symptoms.

### **BUT EVEN IF HERD IMMUNITY IS A GIVEN, WE STILL NEED TO BE DISCIPLINED**

Some will ask: “If herd immunity is inevitable, then why don't we all just contract the virus today? Whoever lives, lives. Whoever dies, dies.” Answer: That is not human compassion.

To preserve as many human lives as possible, as a global community we need to ensure that establishing “herd immunity” is a slow process. Through individual responsibility, we must do everything in our power to avoid inadvertently spreading the virus to others. Because when the virus spreads rapidly, it completely overwhelms the global health care system. People needlessly die because of lacking capacity to handle each individual illness. Put another way, many who would normally survive with proper treatment – will not survive due to a lack of available care. Remember Bergamo. Remember New York.

### **LET'S AVOID PUTTING MONEY AND POWER OVER HUMAN LIFE**

As restrictions have slowly lifted since May – against the hopeful guidance of many epidemiologists and infectious disease experts – case counts are back on the climb; specifically in regions where humans do not adhere to suggested precautions and guidelines. To make matters worse, in several nation states, high-ranking government leaders discredit science and encourage citizens to ignore the threat – to continue living life as if there were no pandemic. The goal is obvious: To mitigate the devastating financial impact on each nation's economy. Money and power over human life.

Many of these leaders argue that ultimately, collapsing economies will be far more deadly than the virus itself. I would argue that those leaders lazily underestimate the power of human ingenuity. Yes, it is impossible for some industries to survive these global shutdowns - but this is not a time to encourage death to maintain the status quo. Now is the time to reinvent how we live, interact, conduct commerce, and engage in business - with hope that these adjustments made to save lives are temporary.

Idealistically speaking, now is the time for humanity to think completely outside the box, and compassionately come together to solve our inequities beyond the pandemic itself.

### **TRAVELING INTERNATIONALLY FOR BUSINESS DURING A PANDEMIC**

A significant aspect of my business involves traveling internationally to:

- Champion the accomplishments and careers of professional athletes
- Add excitement and fan engagement at professional sporting events
- Collaborate with fellow creatives to develop engaging content for industry

Based on my thoughts above regarding SARS-CoV-2, I have come to the decision that now is not the time to be selfishly cavalier in order to maintain my own individual financial status quo.

Obviously, this decision will create fiscal challenges personally - but I am far more willing to tackle those financial burdens through individual ingenuity – than I am to potentially put others' lives at risk by traveling to destinations from the global leader in coronavirus cases, the United States.

These are the facts:

- Over 215,000 Americans have died from SARS-CoV-2 in just 6-months
- Over 1,080,000 have perished worldwide
- Over 20% of the world's coronavirus cases are in the United States
- Over 21% of the world's deaths have been U.S. citizens

Despite my militant efforts, following infectious disease mitigation guidelines over the past 6-months, by virtue of living in the United States I am a high-risk threat to others with whom I come in contact on the international stage. It would crush my soul to learn that I traveled as a contagious, asymptomatic carrier of SARS-CoV-2 and contributed to its spread.

My hope is that this international travel hiatus will be short lived. When global coronavirus cases significantly drop - when science has a more precise understanding of SARS-CoV-2 and how to responsibly mitigate its spread - when a reliable vaccine has proven its effectiveness - I will be better equipped to understand and accept the risks, and will again conduct my craft in person.

I plan on revisiting this difficult decision again in mid-December.

### **OPPORTUNITY TO USE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO SLOW THE SPREAD**

Meanwhile, like millions around the world – for now, I will lean-in to technology. Most of my global event and industry partners know that I am fully equipped to provide presentation expertise through my recording studio in Boston. I sincerely hope most will choose to proactively innovate during this unusual time, limiting the number of people working on-site and competing inside indoor venues.

Thanks to the internet and the increase in capacity of online sharing services, I can still provide announcing services from my studio, without being on-site. For example, at professional sporting events, my announcer role does not require live presentation - especially with limited or zero fans. Most viewers are watching on television or online. Player introductions and career biographies can be **recorded** and played-back inside these venues, delivering the same effect as live announce. That equals one less person who could potentially contribute to a local coronavirus outbreak – and delivers the same impact as announcing live.

### **THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING**

As an announcer, emcee and voice talent, I am very fortunate to have established so many rewarding relationships globally. During this difficult time, it is easy to feel like I am letting these partners down by not

physically being there. However, this moment in history is bigger than each event or each recording session.

This moment in history calls on every human to make informed, compassionate, responsible decisions to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all our brothers and sisters – fathers and mothers – grandparents – complete strangers. Let us not be cavalier, thinking only of ourselves.

Additionally, my decision is my own. I do not negatively judge others who choose to embrace the potential risks of international travel as the pandemic continues to worsen. My humble hope is that those who do travel take every possible, scientifically proven precaution to limit the spread of this deadly virus. To every human who falls ill, I wish a speedy and full recovery, without any long-term health problems.

Stay safe. Stay healthy. Wear a mask. Limit your exposure to others, especially indoors. Practice diligent hygiene. This virus highlights one significant reality: All our lives depend specifically on the individual choices you make every day. Please...make informed choices.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A'.