

Visualisation and Storytelling

Assignment- 1

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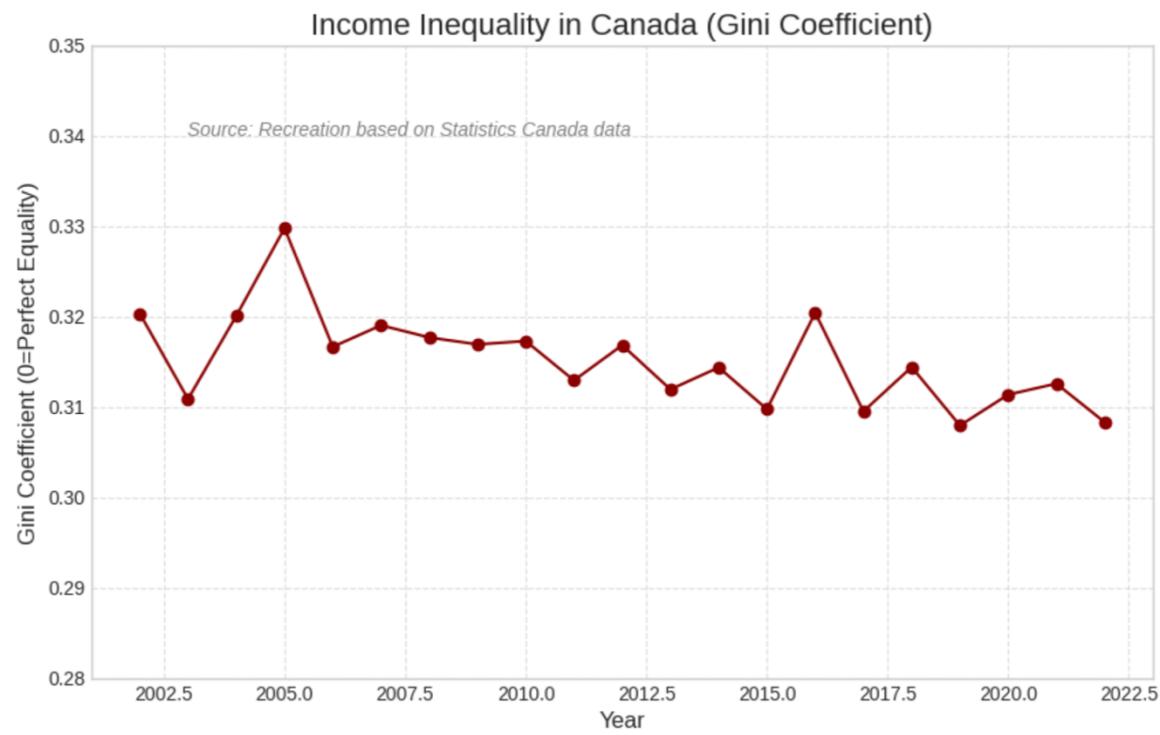
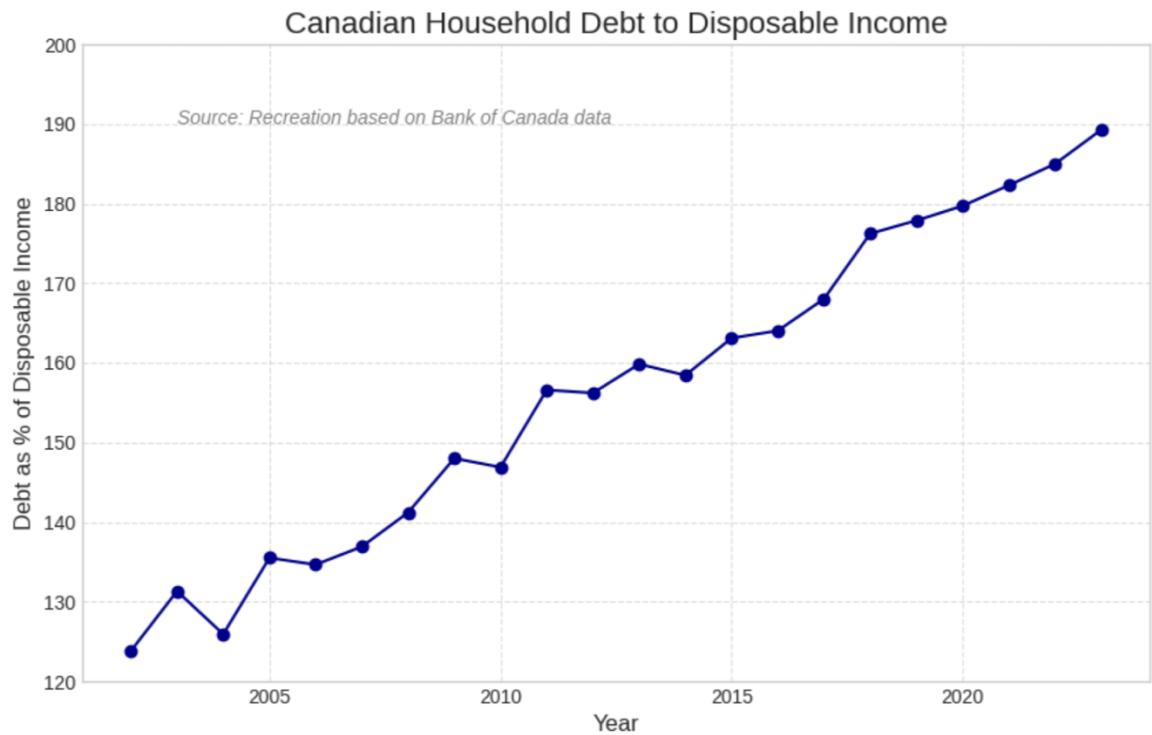
The central theme of this project is the financial choices and lifestyle balance in the age of affordability concerns. In today's economy many people believe high income equals success, however the reality is that high earners often sacrifice personal time and peace of mind, which can result in burnout. The purpose is to highlight how two individuals can live very different lives based on their financial habits, priorities and habits. The theme is highly relevant because affordability, lifestyle, social pressure and debt are pressing issues for all of us. By focusing on characters, I aim to create an emotionally resonant story that encourages audience to reflect on their own financial habits.

This data story will be told through character driven storytelling combined with supporting data visualisations. Instead of overwhelming with numbers, the approach will use narrative comparisons, side by side charts and related images. The story will be structured in a way that allows the reader to compare the lives of Jim and Jack, with each section focusing on a different aspect of their financial well-being.

Iteration 1

My initial idea was to focus on the growing issue of personal debt and how it reflects broader economic and social pressures today. In recent years, more individuals and families are finding themselves burdened by increasing levels of debt from credit cards and student loans to mortgages and personal lines of credit. Despite steady employment or even higher incomes, many people struggle to manage expenses due to rising costs of living, housing, and education.

This trend reveals how debt has become a normalized part of modern life, often serving as a tool to maintain lifestyles. The project would explore how financial stress impacts mental health, relationships, and long-term financial stability. It could also highlight generational differences such as how younger adults face debt earlier in life compared to previous generations and examine the societal factors that contribute to this growing dependence on borrowed money.

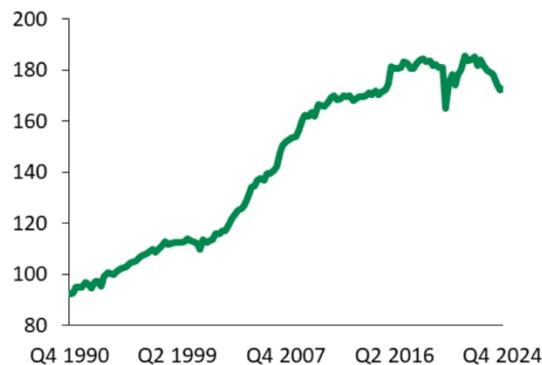


Graph 1

Household Indebtedness Worsened Slightly in Q4 2024

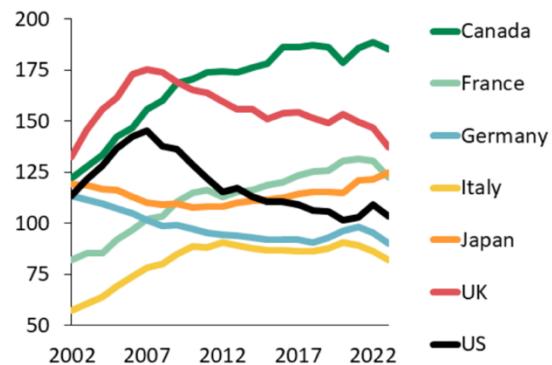
Household debt – Canada

% of disposable income



Household debt – G7

% of net disposable income



Note: Household debt to disposable income measures may differ slightly due to slight differences in definitions.

Statistics Canada, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
and Desjardins Economic Studies

Iteration 2

I realized that this approach might be too abstract and too broad to explain. To make the story more engaging, I decided to create two characters Jim and Jack who have different ideologies. This allows the reader to connect with the story on a more emotional level.

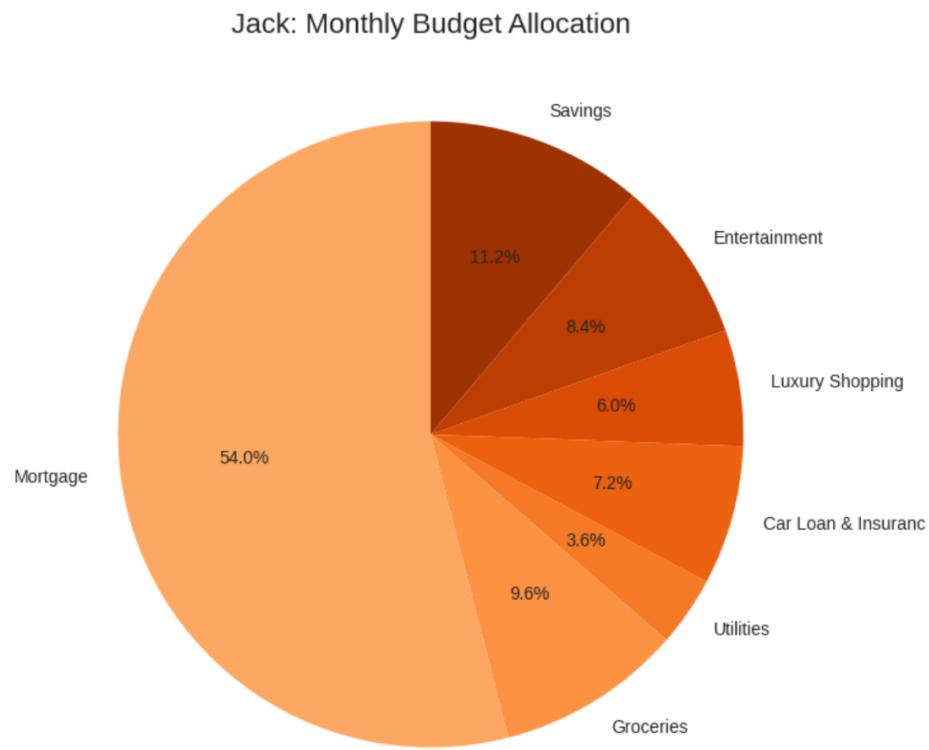
When I fixated on this idea, I went to Canva to brainstorm ideas and which specific area I need to focus



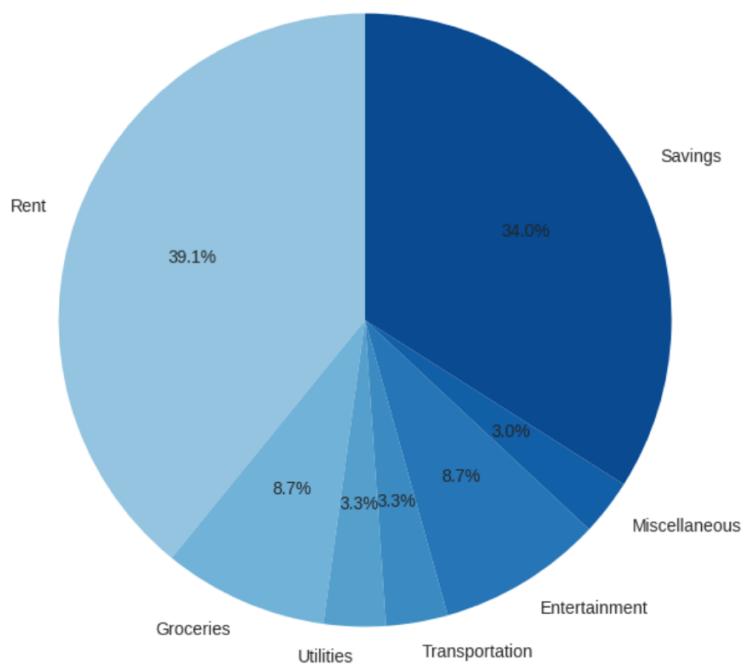
Iteration 3:

The dataset used for this project is a thoughtfully constructed blend of official data and realistic estimates designed to illustrate the financial lives of Jim and Jack. Their housing expenses were anchored using average rent and mortgage figures specific to Toronto's market. Broader economic indicators, such as typical income levels and national financial trends, were drawn from Statistics Canada to ensure authenticity and relevance. To portray their lifestyles, additional researched estimates were incorporated for detailed expenses. This included modeling the monthly cost gap between regularly cooking at home and frequently relying on takeout, as well as estimating spending on transportation and luxury goods. The approach began with verified government data to define credible income and major costs, followed by detailed budgeting to capture how each character's daily decisions shape their financial outcomes. All of the graphs were generated using Matplotlib within Google Colab.

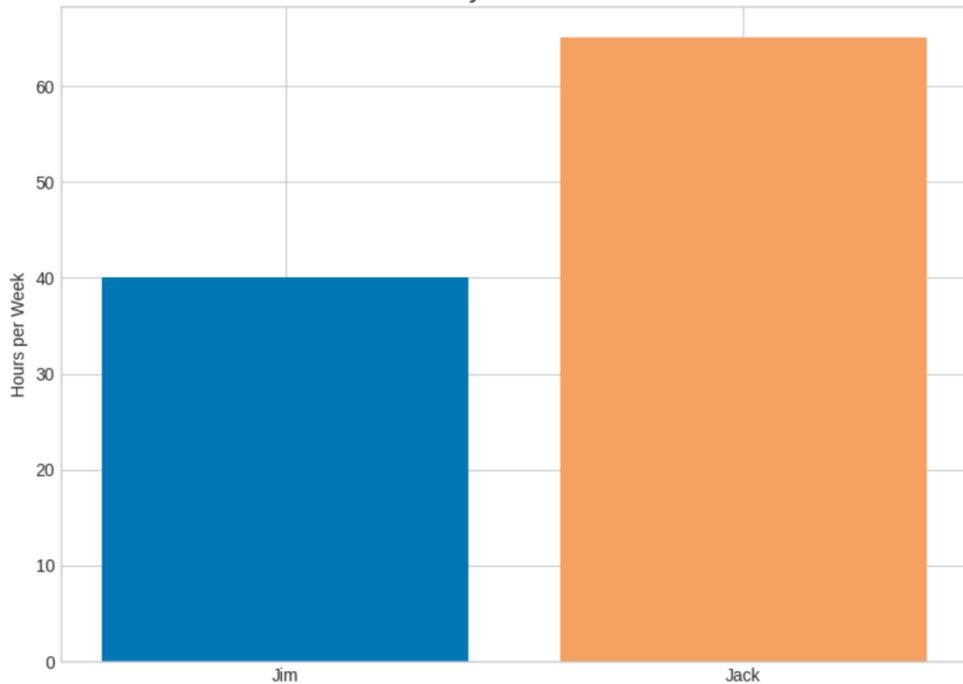
Monthly Budget allocations



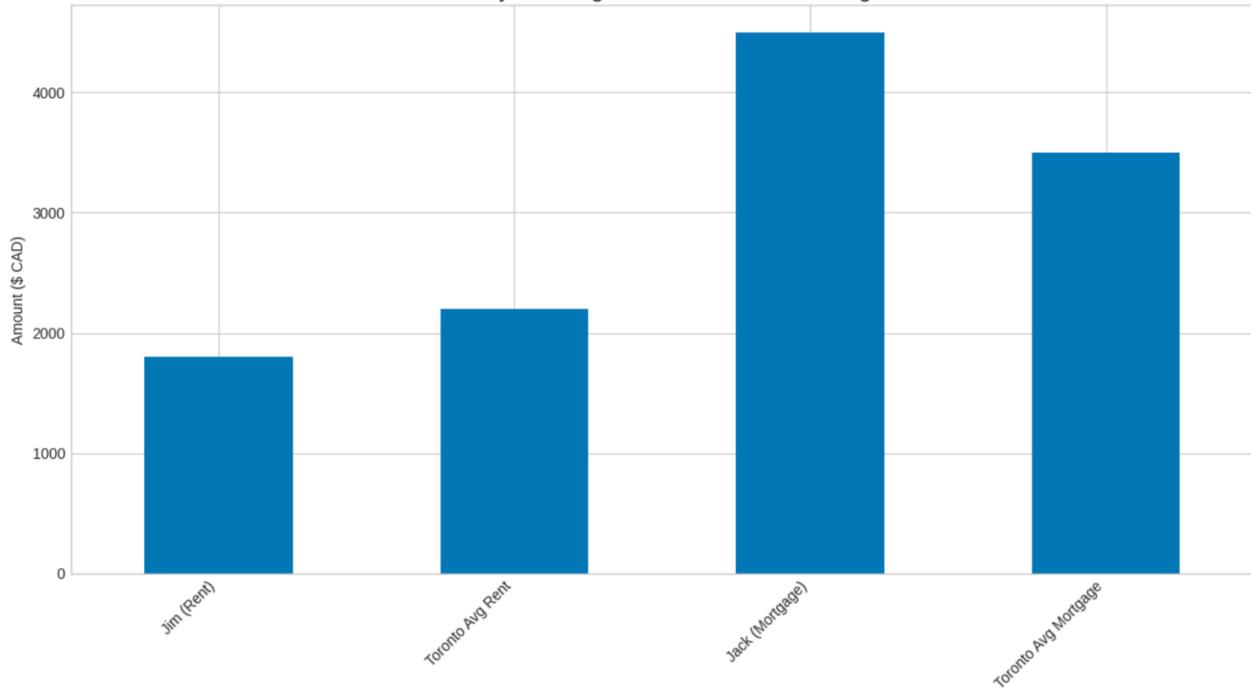
Jim: Monthly Budget Allocation



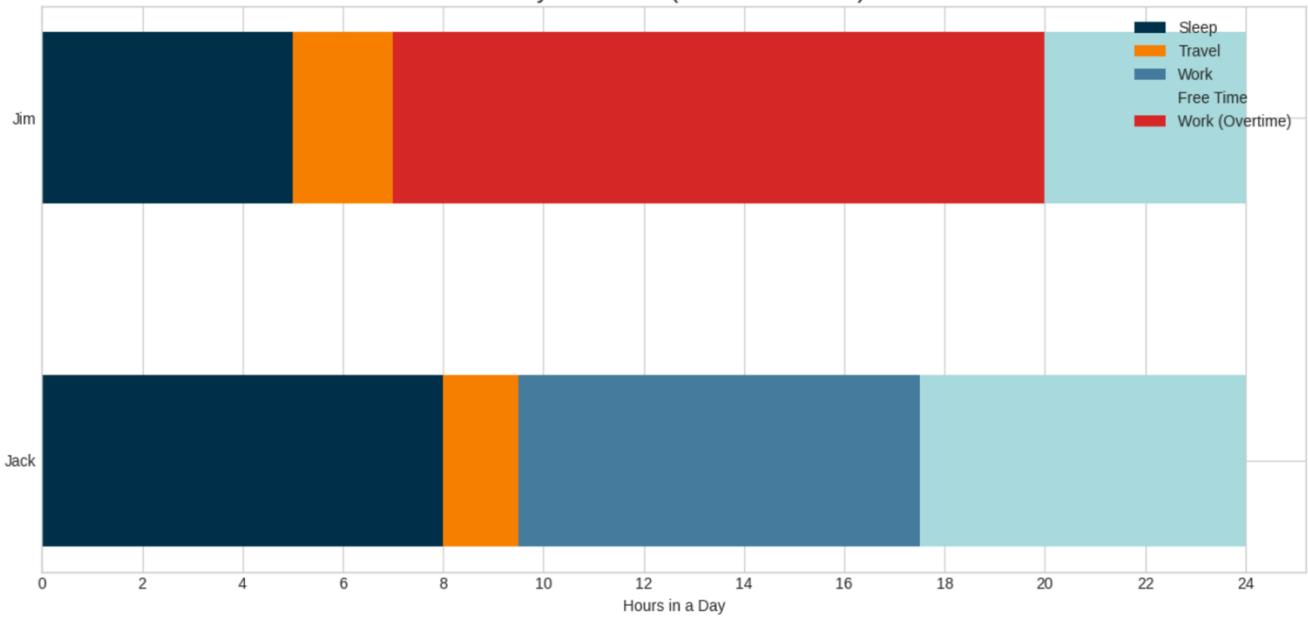
Weekly Work Hours



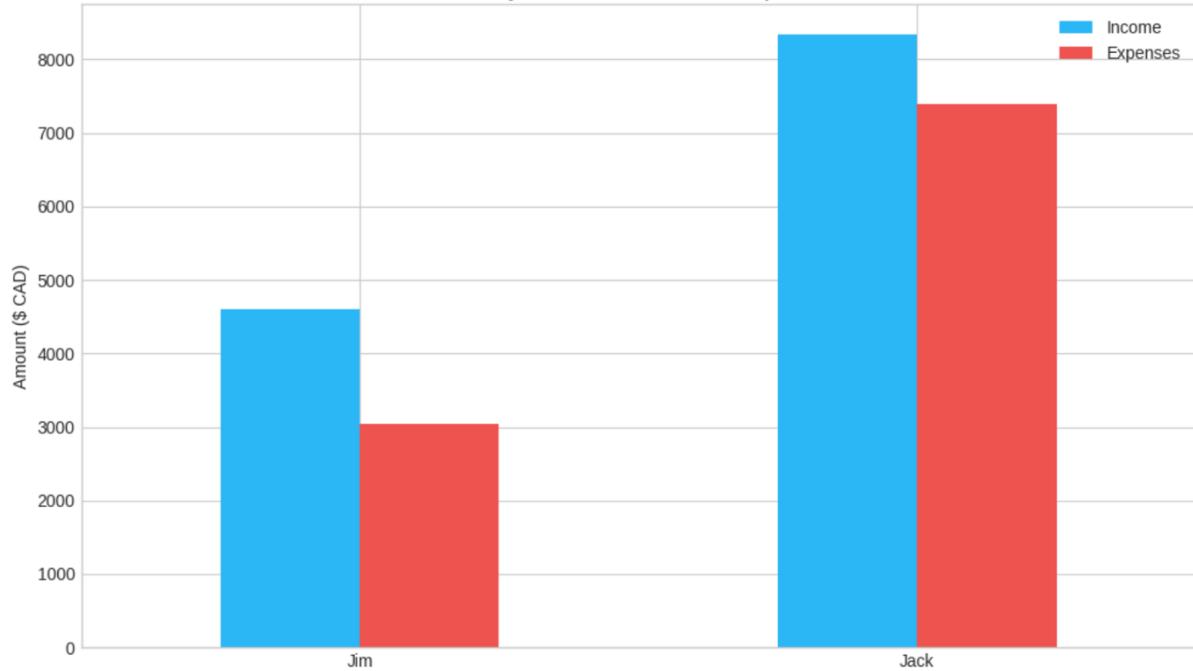
Monthly Housing Costs vs. Toronto Averages



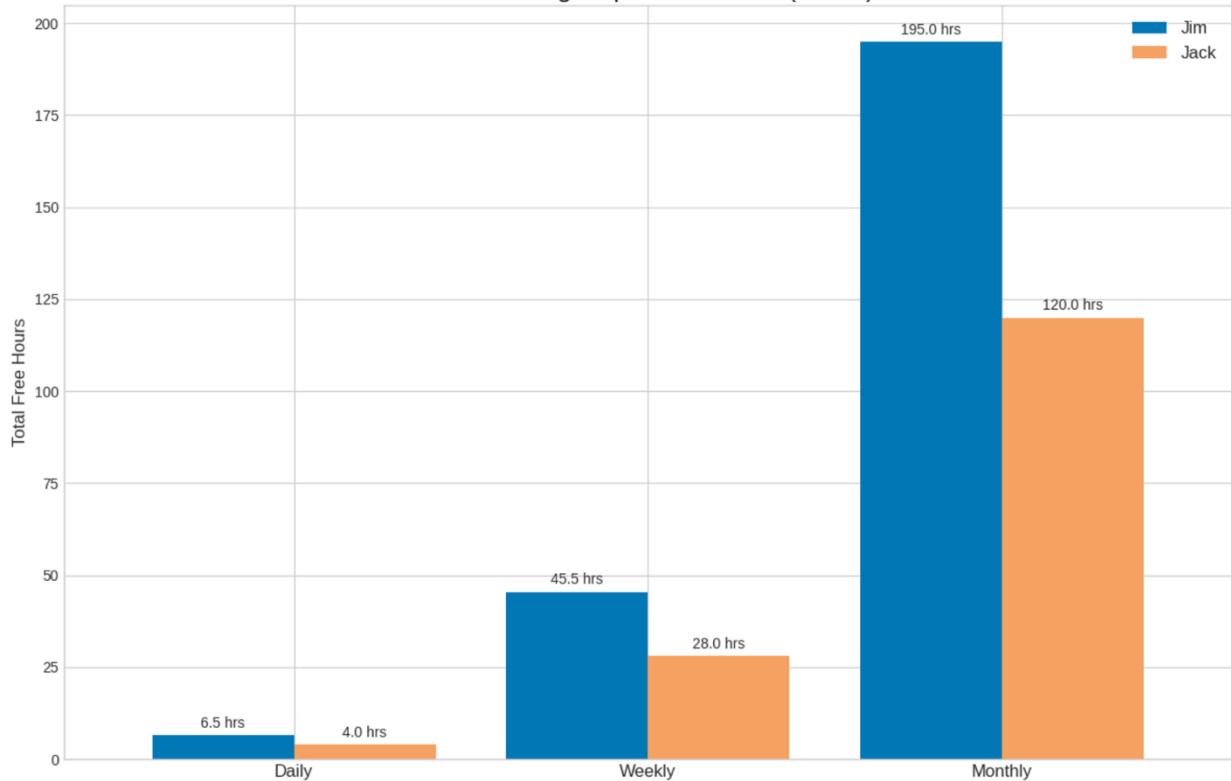
A Day in the Life (with Travel Time)



Monthly Income vs. Total Expenses



The Growing Gap in Free Time (Hours)



Morning Routine: Peace vs. Haste

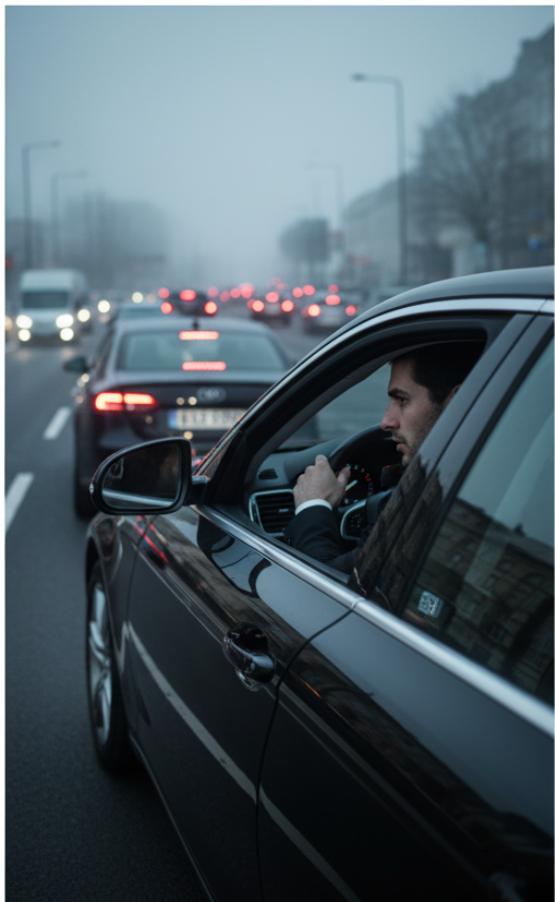
Jim's Peaceful Start



Jack's Rushed Beginning



Jim's Calm Commute



DAILY COMMUTE: PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

Jim's Home-Quick Takeout



EATING HABITS: HEALTHY EXPENSIVE CONVENIENCE

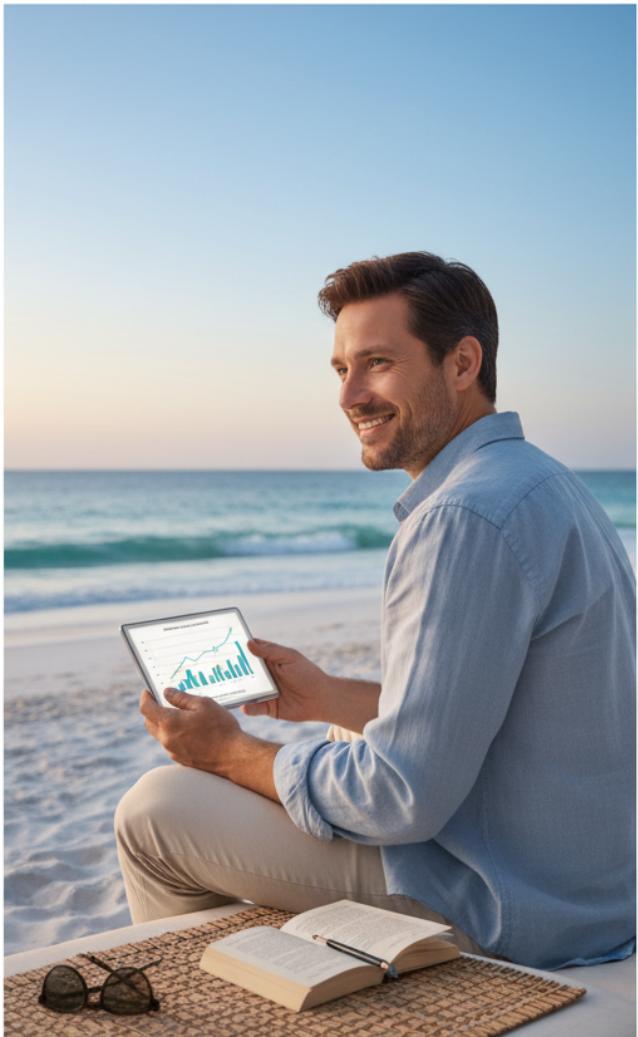
Jim's Warm Community



Jack's Professional Network



Jim's Freedom of Mind



Jack's Burden: Trapped by Luxury



FINANCIAL FREEDOM: LIVING RICH VS. BEING FREE

Weekend Activity: Simple Joy vs. Driven Ambition

Jim's Fulfilling Hobby



Jack's Ambitious Weekend



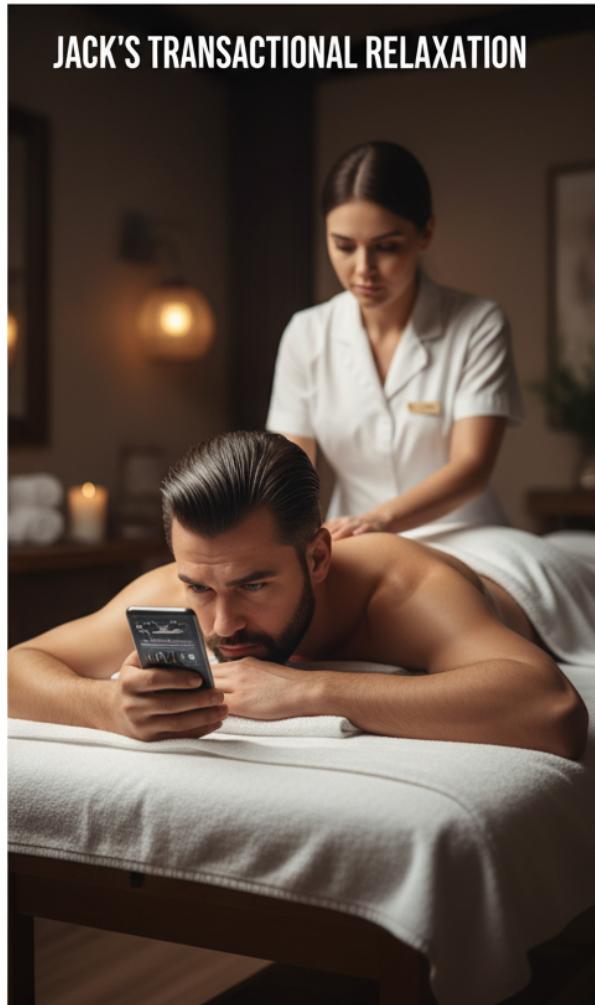
WEEKEND: NOURISHING PASSION VS. PROFESSIONAL PURUIT

Self-Care & Relaxation

JIM'S PEACEFUL REFLECTION



JACK'S TRANSACTIONAL RELAXATION



SELF-CARE & RELAXATION: INNER PEACE VS. EXTERNAL DEMANDS

Jim: Calm & Organized



Jack: Stressed & Overphlemled



MANAGING FINANCES: PEACE VS. PRESSURE

This storyboard highlights how financial choices affect not only wealth but also well-being, health and peace of mind. The visualization of Jim's scenarios serves as an achievable goal. The audience should find out that true financial security comes from lowering their wants, not just increasing their income.

The intended audience is young professionals who are easily influenced by what they see others buying. As this group often struggles with decisions about lifestyle, debt and savings. They possess a foundation data literacy but require the story to be explicitly relevant to their lives. My goal is for them to stop and ask themselves, "Am I working Jack's exhausting hours just to keep up with my neighbours?". This story leaves with a question What are you trading your peace for?