

**EPISODE 140**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:09] ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist brought to you by OnePitch. The guests on our show include some of the most notable journalists who write about topics ranging from technology, to lifestyle and culture, health, and science. We discuss the types of stories they cover, their thoughts on exclusives and embargoes, their favorite pitches, and how they connect with sources. Head to [onepitch.co](https://onepitch.co) and look for the video page to learn more about our new video series, featuring journalists from the show.

This week on Coffee with a Journalist, we're joined by Nate DiCamillo from Quartz. Nate is an economics reporter at Quartz and previously reported for CoinDesk and American Banker. During the episode, Nate talks about his shifting coverage for Quartz versus CoinDesk, the specifics and importance of data that he looks for in pitches, the proper timeline for embargoes, and more. Let's hear from Nate now.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:01:11] BB:** Welcome, everyone. This is Coffee with a Journalist. Hopefully, you want to hear from a journalist today, and you want to get tips and insights about how best to pitch them and what stories they like because that's what we do here, to elaborate on and talk about PR, in general, and how to work better with our journalist friends.

I'm Beck Bamberger, and with us today is Nate DiCamilla. Wait, no, no, no. Wait, Nate. I got to start again.

**[00:01:37] ND:** Yes. It's okay.

**[00:01:37] BB:** Nate DiCamillo, right?

**[00:01:39] ND:** Yes, definitely.

**[00:01:39] BB:** Like armadillo, as you just mentioned. He's the economics reporter from Quartz. Man, it must be quite the time to be covering the economy, Nate. So welcome and thank you for being here.

**[00:01:51] ND:** Yeah. Thank you. I appreciate it.

**[00:01:53] BB:** Yes. Let's start first, Nate, with an overview of Quartz, just for folks who maybe aren't as familiar. How would you describe the coverage of Quartz?

**[00:02:02] ND:** Quartz is focused on the global economy. We have reporters all over the world, and we're very much a kind of data-focused publication. Yeah. It started about 10 years ago, spun off the Atlantic, and it's a pretty good group.

**[00:02:18] BB:** You used to be covering crypto and all that fun CoinDesk stuff, right?

**[00:02:22] ND:** Yeah. I was at CoinDesk covering crypto. A lot of the lenders before they went defunct was a big part of my beat there. Yeah.

**[00:02:30] BB:** Quite the different time now. Nate, how is your inbox now that you've been at Quartz for like about a year, almost a year coming up? We're almost filming this in or filming this – Taping this in October. So it's been a year. How's your inbox?

**[00:02:44] ND:** It's definitely better than it was when I was at CoinDesk. I mean, the amount of the crypto pitches you get. You won't believe that different kinds of like applications that people want to use blockchain for. So the ones I'm getting now are – It's much less. It's just also a mix of econ and some crypto that just some people have found me from my old beat.

**[00:03:10] BB:** Do they still assume or think, “Oh, you're writing crypto. So let me just keep everything updated with that.”

**[00:03:15] ND:** Yeah, and they're correct. Like I'll still write about regulation and crypto, but the main focus is econ.

**[00:03:21] BB:** Gotcha. Okay. So for those then wondering on the next question, “Oh, economics. That's so broad,” are we talking – What type of economics really gets you interested, Nate?

**[00:03:32] ND:** Yeah. So I primarily focus on US economics and anything that's like really indicative of the kind of like moment that we're in. So like the housing market is cratering. You have very tight labor market still. You have a lot of uncertainty about a recession and rapidly rising interest rates. So like a few things –

**[00:03:50] BB:** A few things.

**[00:03:51] ND:** Yeah. At the same time, this is also like a moment where I feel like a lot of people covering macro are realizing that like micro really matters. So much more talk about the supply chain than has ever happened before. Individual industry has its own kind of like story to tell about our kind of global economy and how it's working or not working.

**[00:04:14] BB:** This is not usually in my like story asking questions here, Nate. But how has it changed from your perspective in a year of writing, generally, for the economy? Any big changes you'd say to the point about supply chain?

**[00:04:27] ND:** Yeah. I think that a big – This is what a lot of people talk about and a lot of economists talk about is just massive shift from thinking that we would be able to resolve a lot of the problems in the supply chain and turn the economy like back on basically by mid-2022. There's just a bunch of assumptions that didn't like factor in like COVID becoming as transmissible as measles, in terms of just Omicrons. They are not going away.

Or like having a whole host of different kind of like COVID protocols across countries kind of having a zero COVID policy or Russia just saying to invade Ukraine. Like they're just one of the things with like – Sometimes, when you think about like economics, a lot of people will say like, “Oh, this is like – And this is like –”

**[00:05:21] BB:** A black swan event.

[00:05:23] **ND**: Yeah, yeah.

[00:05:24] **BB**: Everything's a black swan now. It's full of black swans. Yeah.

[00:05:27] **ND**: Yeah. It's a time for black swans to happen.

[00:05:30] **BB**: Yeah. I'd say so. I have to nerd out a little bit because I'm in – I was an econ major and graduated with economics degree. So I love some econ. So this is totally my jam. Okay. So Nate, you said your inbox is better than what it was when you were at CoinDesk. How do you organize the pitches that come to you, if at all?

[00:05:51] **ND**: A lot of times, I have probably a little bit of a bias towards anyone that is sharing economists who's like recently published research on something that I'm very interested in and anything where someone has sent me an interesting data set, where it's like very clear where this is coming from, for one, and like what the sample sizes of the data, how the data compared to like official statistics. If your data is inflation data, is it like – How often does it track CPI? How correlated is it to like other official indicators?

That stuff is like really high on my list when it comes in. The rest, if it's like unclear where this data is coming from, what the sample size is, or like what it correlates to, what it means, or if it's just like kind of there's this trend, and we have this expert who's going to speak on that trend, but they really shouldn't be speaking on this trend because like they don't have like – They're not really involved in this or they're just, I don't know, a random executive that has an opinion on this thing, without doing a lot of research.

Or it's a little bit harder for me because just as much as like I do care about like telling stories on the micro scale and getting examples of individual companies that are illustrating like broad trends. Because I'm so focused on macro, there's like a desire to also like get experts who are able to talk macro, and we're a little bit steeped in research. Or to get data that somehow like they actually understand or it can relate to something else that I understand.

**[00:07:32] BB:** So are you saying you get just too many pitches of people saying, “Oh, I have a thought leader who can comment generally about the world.”? Is that some of what you get, and there's no qualifications?

**[00:07:45] ND:** Yeah, yeah. Then that really needs to like – Yeah. That's where I wish that –

**[00:07:50a] BB:** That's a struggle.

**[00:07:51] ND:** Yeah. It is a struggle, and I wish public relations professionals, whether they're in-house or an agency, would look at the person that they're representing and be like, “Okay,” and kind of like talk to them a little bit more about what their qualifications are and then figure out more of like how those qualifications might serve a journalist on their beat.

**[00:08:13] BB:** Okay. So for you, what's a good pitch? What maybe three elements does it have?

**[00:08:19] ND:** I mean, if it's a pitch for a source, definitely kind of like what their qualifications are up top. What maybe is – Especially like any research that they've done is really valuable, as well as kind of like how they might provide an angle that's a little bit more interesting than like just, generally, there's a problem. Like there's inflation or there's this and there's that. We know basically kind of like what the biggest pain points are in the economy. So kind of like how are you kind of breaking that down.

If you're not – If it's not an economist and someone specifically within an industry, like tell me what that industry is going through is –

**[00:09:00] BB:** How it's relevant.

**[00:09:01] ND:** Yeah. How it's relevant to the kind of global economy, which is what I'm trying to do every day. So if you already told me, then you've helped me out a little bit. So then if it's data, especially like a lot of pitches I'll get is on data. If that –

**[00:09:17] BB:** That's already like out there.

**[00:09:20] ND:** Yeah. It's often like private data that a company is producing. Or like our company does X, and so we can tell you about this like so. Give me kind of like – Okay, so how many customers are you collecting this data from? Or transactions are you collecting this data from? Then like does that data, when you like work with it regularly, does it correlate to like government indicators at all? Like when we – Because government indicators are like super broad. They captured a ton of data, and then they get revised a bunch.

So at the end of all those revisions and everything, when you look at your data and the government data, like how well did your data like kind of predict what was going to happen? It's stuff that I'm like very interested. So like also tell me what the correlation is. It would help.

**[00:10:03] BB:** Yeah. Okay. Do you have an example of that recently? You don't have to like name who it was but just to paint the picture a little bit.

**[00:10:11] ND:** Yeah. I'm trying to think of –

**[00:10:13] BB:** It's okay if you don't too. Or we could look back.

[BREAK]

**[00:10:17] ANNOUNCER:** Today's interview will continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious to see the unique ways OnePitch helps PR professionals and marketers pitch journalists? Head to [onepitch.co](https://onepitch.co) to learn about our new OnePitch score and see how easy it is to find the right journalists to pitch your news to. Sign up for your free account today. Now, back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW RESUMED]

**[00:10:41] BB:** Oh, yeah. Okay. Then for you, Nate, I'm thinking that exclusives or embargoes wouldn't be too – Well, maybe embargoes. What's your thoughts on exclusive or embargoes?

[00:10:52] **ND:** So here I have a ton of comments based on my like crypto reporting days because –

[00:10:58] **BB:** Tell us. Tell us everything.

[00:11:00] **ND:** Yeah, very scoopy.

[00:11:01] **BB:** Very scoopy?

[00:11:02] **ND:** Yes. So this was – CoinDesk –

[00:11:07] **BB:** Yeah. Get the scoops.

[00:11:09] **ND:** They kind of try to be like the Bloomberg of crypto in a way. But the thing is that like PR professionals in the crypto industry specifically, I feel like some of them were just like amazing and did not struggle with this at all. But like the majority would struggle with this kind of like offering an embargo and a really short timeline being like, “Here's a press release. And by the way, this is embargoed for like 24 hours from now.”

The problem with that, especially when you're covering like a nascent space like crypto, is like, okay, so you have this company news. In order for me to write about it, because I'm not like – My function in life is not to like turn over things for companies, to turn over –

[00:11:53] **BB:** Yeah. It's not. No.

[00:11:55] **ND:** My function is to go and try to understand kind of – Especially in a more business reporting role, like what your company is doing, what it means within the history of this industry, and then also kind of like what it means for your company going forward or the industry going forward. So in order to do that, like often you have to go and talk to analysts within the industry or competitors or other people about like kind of whatever the development is. If you say like, “Here's a 24-hour notice for a press release,” it doesn't really give a journalist time to kind of like dig into these things.

I remember working on a story where I was like – If I recall correctly, it was kind of like negotiating for a longer lead time on it with the PR person, just because it had to do with the companies kind of connecting to nuclear micro reactors. That is just like something that I was like, “I need some physicists to tell me what is going on here?” Because this is way above whatever I –

**[00:13:01] BB:** This is way above, way above.

**[00:13:04] ND:** Tokenomics or blockchain. Now, we’re talking about a different beat. Is this actually going to work in this? Stuff like that, especially if you want your company to get a lot of press and for people to understand what your company that you're representing does. Definitely, kind of embargoes that are very quick and like short notice don't help or don't make reporters want to actually write about that company. It just makes us feel pressed.

**[00:13:30] BB:** So no quick turn on the embargoes with someone like you have to offer is the main takeaway, I'd say, from that.

**[00:13:37] ND:** Yeah. The companies are like – Talk to the companies that you're representing because they know what products and what developments they have in the pipeline. They have their meetings to try and plan these things out. So if you can get multiple days or longer, it's incredibly helpful for –

**[00:13:54] BB:** It's far better. Yes, yes. Good. Now, for those who go, “Oh. Well, Nate, I wasn't in the crypto world before or anything like that. But, oh, I represent maybe this big global entity that has some economic data that you might find interesting.” How does one ever at this point, especially in this post-COVID or whatever thing we want to call this, make a relationship with you?

**[00:14:17] ND:** Yeah. I think you can look at a lot of stuff that I've published in the past or that I'm publishing now and kind of see the kind of data that I'm putting into stories in the form of charts and be like, “Okay, this is the type of stuff that Nate is looking for.” That's pretty good indicator, but also very open to like introductory interviews with folks who have like a deep understanding of their individual industries.

That's – I'm often – Myself looking for new interviews with economists. So if you have an economist on staff, that's like fantastic. But also, I find myself like kind of wishing a little bit more that I – Because when I was at CoinDesk coming crypto or American Banker writing about financial technology, there was a lot of times I found it really helpful to understand those industries just by talking to the executives in them. So if you have any executives there or currently, again, supply chains and energy –

**[00:15:19] BB:** Those are your people.

**[00:15:20] ND:** Yeah. Semiconductors, anything. So those –

**[00:15:22] BB:** Send me your nerds, basically.

**[00:15:24] ND:** Yes. Send me your nerds.

**[00:15:25] BB:** All right.

**[00:15:26] ND:** That is excellent. Yeah.

**[00:15:28] BB:** Send the nerds. Excellent. Okay. For you, Nate, I want to play a little fill in the blank section. Then we can kind of wrap up your thoughts on the future of journalism and all these good things. Okay. So I'm going to give you a statement, and you're going to fill in the blank. Does that sound good?

**[00:15:43] ND:** That sounds great.

**[00:15:44] BB:** Here we go. My favorite sources always –

**[00:15:47] ND:** Are economists.

**[00:15:49] BB:** There we go. You'll never get a response from me if –

[00:15:53] **ND**: I don't get the point within the first paragraph of your email.

[00:15:58] **BB**: Oh, first paragraph. Generous I'd say. You can follow up with me if –

[00:16:03] **ND**: If I respond. Because the thing is the constant like kind of like, “I want to bump this up to the top of your inbox.” It just lowers pretty much the chance, yeah, that I will respond. So –

[00:16:15] **BB**: The appropriate amount of lead time for a story is –

[00:16:20] **ND**: The perfect amount of lead time for a story is at least 48 hours, if not more.

[00:16:26] **BB**: Okay. Okay. And my favorite stories to write are –

[00:16:30] **ND**: My favorite stories to write are about supply side economics.

[00:16:35] **BB**: Supply side economics. By the way, for the non-econ nerds listening the sphere here, what is supply chain economics, supply side?

[00:16:47] **ND**: Yeah. It has to do with like which country is producing potash or which country is exporting oil or metals or anything that – In terms of like what is – Like are the ports functioning? What is the backup? What is the price of lumber? So anything to do related to like kind of shortages within the economy and how we can incentivize companies to invest in structures and equipment that will allow us to create more supply.

Or it can be also like labor market. Labor's an issue with supply. Like you need a supply of workers. So like what things are getting workers back into the labor force? How are we increasing productivity? Those things are all related to supply because I feel like a lot of – When people think about inflation, they just think, “Oh, there's too much money in the system chasing too little goods and services.” In this case, like the main pain point is that there is too little goods and services that we tried to turn on our global economy after shutting it down. It turns out, it's much harder to turn back on than we thought it would.

[00:18:04] **BB:** Oh, way harder. Yeah. Just to touch. Nate, besides writing about the economy and globally what's happening, do you have any like fun things outside of work that you enjoy?

[00:18:14] **ND:** I really love swimming.

[00:18:16] **BB:** Oh, nice.

[00:18:17] **ND:** Yeah. I've been swimming since I was five years old, and I keep doing that now on a team here in New York. I'm trying to think. I've just started to learn how to box. That's –

[00:18:27] **BB:** Hey.

[00:18:28] **ND:** Then I really enjoy finding a new speakeasy in New York to go to. Those are kind of like my favorite when I'm going to go out with friends or go on a date or something. I love to try a new speakeasy.

[00:18:44] **BB:** Okay. Is there any real speakeasy, though, anymore? Can we just have an honest conversation about this? You know what I'm saying?

[00:18:52] **ND:** They're gone. They're –

[00:18:53] **BB:** They're not because it's not a speakeasy if I know about it, and it says on your website, you're speakeasy. All right.

[00:18:59] **ND:** Basically, speakeasy now is like cool like cocktail place with low lighting. That's my vibe. The arrows speakeasy is over. I mean, they used to really – Some speakeasies in New York, I think, do try to keep the vibe as much and make it word of mouth. But more and more, it's very easy to find these things on Google.

[00:19:23] **BB:** Okay. I'm glad we clarified that for a second. Okay.

[00:19:25] **ND:** Yeah, yeah. Fact check. Yeah.

[00:19:26] **BB:** It's just a little fact check there. Nate, what do you think the future of journalism is?

[00:19:33] **ND:** I don't know. I think journalism is going to go through a lot rougher of a time, and there's going to be a lot more newsrooms closing before new ones open, though, just like the rest of America's institutions would love to see if it can weather the next 10 to 20 years.

[00:19:51] **BB:** Yeah. Not optimistic, I'd say, from you.

[00:19:53] **ND:** No.

[00:19:54] **BB:** No. That's okay. Well, Nate, you have a job. You're at Quartz. You're covering the beast that is the economy, globally. So I think that is pretty secure, and it's definitely needed journalism. Thank you for being on here today.

[00:20:08] **ND:** Thank you for inviting me. I enjoyed chatting with you, Beck.

[00:20:10] **BB:** I enjoyed it too. I hope everyone knows that Nate is not interested in anything more crypto scoopy. I love that word. Send him stuff. Send him nerds. Send him nerds.

[00:20:21] **ND:** Yes. Send me nerds.

[00:20:23] **BB:** Thank you so much, Nate. Nate DiCamillo, economics reporter at Quartz. Thanks for being here, Nate. Appreciate you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:20:30] **ANNOUNCER:** Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, featuring Nate DiCamillo from Quartz. To learn more about the latest tools on OnePitch and to subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter, head to our website at [onepitch.co](https://onepitch.co). We'll see you all next week with even more insights about the journalists you want to learn more about. Until then, start great stories.

[END]