

EPISODE 78

[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 from the top US-based publications who cover topics including technology, lifestyle and culture, health, science, consumer products, and business news. We discuss their role, the types of stories they cover, what their inbox looks like, and how they connect with sources.

Joining us today is Kendall Baker, a sports editor for Axios. Kendall writes the daily Axios' sports newsletter and he covers the stats and stories driving the conversation. He's also the former founder of Sports Internet, which was acquired by Axios in 2019. During the episode, Kendall shares about his love of playing and following sports, some of the ways he compiles the sports newsletter at Axios, why he appreciates personal notes from sources and more. Let's dive in to the episode now.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:01:21] BB: Welcome, everyone. This is Coffee with a Journalist. I'm Beck Bamberger, founder of OnePitch, also of BAM, our agency that works with all the venture-back, crazy startups that exist in the world, which is super exciting. Live from DC, we just talked about it because I just came back from there as well. Kendall Baker, on from Axios. We are excited to have you here, Kendall and I cannot wait to talk about DC, and sports and everything. Thank you for being here.

[00:01:50] KB: I appreciate it.

[00:01:52] BB: You are — now, Kendall, this is a little on for us. We don't usually have a sports person of any sort on here. How did you get into the sports?

[00:02:01] KB: Yeah. Well, I'm honored. I've been a sports fan and athlete my whole life. I grew up playing as a kid, kind of every sport over the sun. In high school, only because I had too.

Narrowed that down to basketball, soccer, lacrosse. I ended up playing lacrosse in college. Then out of school, I started having sports media at Bleacher Report briefly and then moved over to ESPN. When I was at ESPN, I kind of had this kind of epiphany is weird, because it's exactly what I ended up doing. I just thought there should be a sports newsletter weirdly enough. That kind of sent me on a journey to actually get out of sports media, but stay in media and just kind of figure out how to start a company and kind of what I did. But I basically been in sports media or just media since graduating.

[00:02:47] BB: Excellent. We like to talk about inboxes and how absurd they can get busy. But you're an editor, so sometimes that is a little bit different with what's going on in terms of pitches. How's your inbox? What does it look like?

[00:03:02] KB: My inbox, I've always been super as organized as you kind of be as somebody who sends a newsletter from his email. Therefore, every reply — I have a ton of email coming in every day. It's kind of over the years gotten harder and harder to manage, because I'm getting hundreds of replies from readers. I was getting a ton of pitches. It's definitely become increasingly challenging kind of over time. I've had to adapt to that volume and kind of develop new ways to keep my system somewhat organized.

I do my best to keep things in what I would call swath. Reply from a reader is obviously much different than somebody pitching me, which is obviously also much different from a co-worker email me. I have filters as I can I have in there to kind of keep things visually for me to knock out.

[00:03:50] BB: Oh! So filters. I mean, people have very basic filters on the show, like a flag. That's about it. Do you have some sophisticated filtering system?

[00:03:58] KB: Somewhat.

[00:03:59] BB: Okay. Tell us.

[00:04:00] KB: For instance, I mean, this is just kind of very specific to what I do, but I had mentioned, reader replies, the way I'm able to get those to all come into one place is basically a

custom filter that has — the subject line is, RE: Axios Sports, which is the name of my newsletter. Any email that's coming in that is someone replying to my newsletter is filtered. That's kind of how I do that. Then the other ones are pretty simple. If it's from axios.com email, it gets filtered in the team. Then I have kind of automated filters to kind of hopefully filter out important versus not important. We got a bunch of things working and it's not perfect but it kind of gets what I need my attention on up the top of my view is great.

[00:04:44] BB: I have to say, it's quite sophisticated out of all the boxes I heard on here, my goodness.

[00:04:49] KB: Yeah. Well, it's necessary when your whole life essentially is email, you got to have some organization and realize — especially, as the newsletter continuous to grow, it becomes harder and harder. But I've always been very committed to replying to my readers, because I think it's just such a great experience on their end to respond to a newsletter and then author gets back to you. Every time, people are like, "Oh my gosh! Thanks for replying." I really try to make that a priority and if I didn't have this, those would kind of get lost and I wouldn't be able to maintain those relationships and that's important to me.

[00:05:24] BB: So you're one of the first people who's ever mentioned responding to readers and actually getting an influx of readers who want to engage with you in some way, shape or form. Usually, it's kind of a buried thing from a publicist like, "Oh! Loved your last article. Hey! Do you want to cover my client?" It's like that type of compliment in some way, shape or form, which is not — what's the percentage would you say of like reader engagement versus pitches versus all the other things happening.

[00:05:55] KB: I mean, pitches continue to grow. It's getting there, but I'd say, I still get more reader replies each day than pitches.

[00:06:01] BB: Really? That's amazing.

[00:06:05] KB: Yeah. I get probably 50 to 100 a day.

[00:06:07] BB: Wow! Of readers?

[00:06:09] KB: Yeah.

[00:06:09] BB: Man, you're popular, Kendall.

[00:06:12] KB: Well, listen. I mean, we have a half a million subscribers in sports, which is very casual and one of those things where people had very strong opinion. What I kind of love about it is, it's a great kind of space for debate because in many ways, what you're debating doesn't really matter. **[Inaudible 00:06:33]** but when you're debating, "Well, you said this is the thirds best player in the NBA and I actually know this guy." It's just kind of fun banter and I think it gives people a license to — I mean, I'll get paragraphs on paragraphs of people just clearly just needed to get this out and this is now outlet — and all of a sudden, the person who writes the newsletter they read respond back to them and they're like, "Great point." It's just a cool experience for them and it's a cool experience for me too to hear from you.

[00:07:00] BB: That is so neat. You're truly one of the only people on this entire thing I've done, 60 plus episodes of this who are like, "Oh! I spent a lot of time engaging with my —

[00:07:08] KB: It's a **[inaudible 00:07:08]**.

[00:07:10] BB: It is. Although, I have to say, you being in the position of sports is quite different than I write about cryptocurrency.

[00:07:16] KB: That's very true. But like I always say, regardless of what you write about, if you can and not everybody can. But if you can reply to somebody super quickly, then obviously, you know, it provides value, not just to get it out there but a valuable **[inaudible 00:07:32]**. Those readers turn into loyalists.

[00:07:37] BB: Oh my gosh! Right?

[00:07:39] KB: On one hand, they appreciate it. On the other hand, they now feel like they know you.

[00:07:45] BB: Their God has spoken to them, absolute.

[00:07:48] KB: Your name pops up in their email from that day on, they're like, "This is my friend. My friend is messaging me." It doesn't require that much effort. Like I said, it's kind of fun from my perspective. There's some work involved for sure, but I just think it's so cool that I'm able to kind of connect with people I otherwise never would be able to. It's just kind of good stuff.

[00:08:09] BB: I once had and I wouldn't say the name or anything, but the chief editor of the Wall Street Journal responds to me after I was like, "Hey! Great job on like doing this thing" or whatever and I almost like hit the floor. I'm like, "What?" It was an engaging note back. It was like, "Thanks." It was like a whole thing, "Oh, yeah! This is what we do with this." I was like floored. Now, every time I read the Wall Street Journal, which I read front to back every single day, it's just my business, I think of that.

[00:08:37] KB: I'd say, to give a comparison. Responding to emails I think is the same rule as newsletters. They both have **[inaudible 00:08:45]**. But there are so many people who don't respond to emails, that when somebody does, it's magical.

[00:08:51] BB: It's actually magical.

[00:08:52] KB: There are so many bad newsletters, that when there's a good newsletter, it's like magical. When you can do something well that most people don't do well, it has an exponential **[inaudible 00:09:03]**.

[00:09:05] BB: Oh man! Well, thank you for sharing that. So interesting. For your newsletter, by the way and there are many newsletters that now exist for journalists. Are you seeking pitches for that?

[00:09:14] KB: I don't see pitches. I get lots of pitches.

[00:09:17] BB: Sure, you do, yes.

[00:09:18] KB: But no, you don't really seek any of them.

[00:09:20] BB: Yeah, I got you. For most newsletter, I would find that that's not the case. Okay. For things that you are writing more in the long form, Kendall. So you just did an article for example on the Tokyo Olympics, you've done something about the NCAA model unraveling, you're talking about the — you're talking all this stuff. It is quite expansive the array of sports that you cover. Do you have a way in which you come up with the inspiration for these stories or are you typically reacting to the news that's happening?

[00:09:53] KB: That's a great question. I think my job is very much a balance of those two things and it's something I'm very aware of, balancing those two things. Because it's easy to fall into a trap of being too responsive and — I'm not saying it's a bad thing, but I don't necessarily want to have a newsletter that's basically every morning like, "Here's what happened yesterday" and always kind of looking back. We're always kind of just regurgitating information. I also want to be looking forward. I also want to be connecting dots. I also want to be zooming out, all these kinds of verbs you can use to kind of bring a new perspective to the story.

A lot of times, something that maybe, "I'm about to put in to like a round up. It's like, "This happened yesterday. I stopped and realized, "Wait a second! That happened also, I remember from two weeks ago, this happened. Those are kind of related. How are they related?" Now all of a sudden, you had a more ever green bigger picture story that you maybe would have missed and would have just kind of shared a news nugget. Now all of a sudden, you have what we would call, a one big thing, kind of this deeper look. It really is a balance of the two and it's kind of an art of figuring out, "Do we save this for something bigger or do we just kind of report that this happened?"

[00:11:02] BB: Do you ever have the times you're doing your walk; you're doing whatever you're doing and you're like, "Oh! Damn! I should do the story on that"?

[00:11:09] KB: Oh, of course, constantly. The cool thing about sports and I'm sure there's plenty of journalist out there who are super involved with what they're reporting. Two, but I think, there's something about sports. I mean, when I'm off, I'm watching sports. On the weekends, I'm watching sports.

[00:11:25] BB: You are in it for life.

[00:11:26] KB: When I'm out with my friends, I'm talking sports. Yeah, the amount of inspiration is just kind of constant.

[00:11:33] BB: It's your life, yeah. That's cool.

[00:11:35] KB: Social media, like Sports Twitter for example is just a gold mine of content. If you follow the right people, you have the right feed there. You kind of scroll through on meme or like a random tweet or just kind of send you off into a rabbit hole and then you end up with a story idea. There's just so much content being created around sports every day.

[00:11:55] BB: Does that blow your mind? I mean, how big the world of sport there are in any way, shape or form? Or you're just like, "Wow!"

[00:12:03] KB: Oh, yeah! Well, I mean, an event in many ways, it's a blessing for me because we, as you said, very expansive. We cover literally everything. I mean, most people who cover sports are covering a league, or a sport, maybe a couple of leagues. I cover everything, even read a section of the news, they're called the Ultra, which is specifically for really weird sports. We intentionally get as far out there as we can. It's great because I've been doing this for years and there's not been a single day where it was like, "We don't have enough." It's always, "We have too much." That's a better place to be when you have too much and you get to cut, versus like, "It's the 11th hour and we do not have a top story. This is not good." It's always the opposite.

That, I'm just thankful for, that there is so much happening in sports all the time. One thing I've noticed are, news that are covered sports and sports business, which opens lots of sports business.

[00:13:00] BB: That's a whole other thing.

[00:13:02] KB: It opens up a whole another — just the — the amount of things I'm choosing for me to write about is kind of endless and I love it.

[00:13:08] BB: It's freaking cool. I have to say, just because I'm not so much a sports person, but I respect it. Like you kind of think, "Oh! That's kind of silly." Like fashion, "That's silly." No. When you kind of like really study what, let's say, fashion is about or home décor is about or sports or things, it's tied too so many levels of just the human condition in the case of sports competing, and team work and what you learn. I mean, my mom made me do a sport in high school. Made me. Both me and my sister, whether I wanted to or not, which I loved. Which is a testament to, you get a lot of the sports on like how to function as a human. That's just what I take away from that.

[00:13:52] KB: Sports is in, again, I think this is true for many things. But sports in particular I'd say is one of those kinds of verticals, whatever you want to call it. That touches a lot of other things. I end up doing last stories with Media Reporter, Sara Fischer because many of the most interesting stories and media, whether it's streaming. Like sports is at the forefront of that. In many way, linear TV is still alive because of live sports. Technology is often at the forefront, social issues. I mean, sports really do touch everything. In many ways, sport is kind of just part of our —

[00:14:25] BB: It's kind of the beacon. Yeah.

[00:14:26] KB: It just kind of touches everything, particularly now that athletes themselves are in many cases, the most famous celebrities on the planet.

[00:14:34] BB: Yeah. It's global, it's universal. Obviously, we have the Olympics. We know about that. But there's no like, "Well, in America, they do this thing called sports." Like, no.

[00:14:43] KB: European soccer championship are on right now, which is just so cool to see —

[00:14:46] BB: The biggest, yeah.

[00:14:47] KB: — countries playing other countries. American who love — I mean, it's soccer in particular.

[00:14:51] **BB:** I love it.

[BREAK]

[00:14:53] **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 to learn about our new OnePitch score and see how easy it is to find the right journalist to pitch your news to. Sign up for your free account today. Now, back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW RESUMED]

[00:15:17] **BB:** Well, Kendall, I have a fill in the blank section here, so let's talk about that. I will give you the phrase and you could fill it in. Does that sound good?

[00:15:23] **KB:** Sounds good.

[00:15:24] **BB:** Great. My favorite sources always —

[00:15:28] **KB:** Do you mean publication sources or people?

[00:15:31] **BB:** More like publicist, or maybe you have readers who are filling you with good, juicy stuff. I don't know.

[00:15:36] **KB:** I would say my favorite source always have a personal note somewhere in there. When they're contacting me, there's some type of not strictly business.

[00:15:46] **BB:** Oh! So you like that, like in pitches?

[00:15:49] **KB:** I like it when it's not forced and it's —

[00:15:52] **BB:** Yeah.

[00:15:52] **KB:** Yeah. Because that's obviously very easy to tell. I mean, you can just tell when somebody either on one hand set this to clearly 20 people. You can just tell. Any time there's like — I can just tell when somebody is being very real with me and there's a level of human respect there.

[00:16:12] **BB:** The most annoying sources always?

[00:16:15] **KB:** Follow-up too many times.

[00:16:17] **BB:** How many is too many?

[00:16:20] **KB:** Four.

[00:16:20] **BB:** That's a lot.

[00:16:21] **KB:** Yeah.

[00:16:21] **BB:** Yeah.

[00:16:23] **KB:** You'd be surprised.

[00:16:24] **BB:** Yeah. I've heard horrendous stories here. You'll get a response from me if —

[00:16:30] **KB:** Effectively explain to me why this benefits me or helps me.

[00:16:36] **BB:** You can follow up with me if —

[00:16:39] **KB:** I tell you; you can't follow up.

[00:16:43] **BB:** Yeah, definitely. The best compliment I ever received about my work was —

[00:16:49] **KB:** Again, sports being as magical as it is. Plenty of stories from readers, the value that this newsletter brings in your lives. But I think the coolest are, when I hear from parents

saying that this newsletter has helped them connect with their kids. It's usually moms with their sons or dads with their son.

[00:17:04] BB: Oh, really?

[00:17:05] KB: Yeah, it cool. It's really, really cool.

[00:17:07] BB: That is magical. My favorite stories to write about are — obviously sports, but like what?

[00:17:15] KB: I'd say either human interest stories, which of course just produces tons of or sports media. I'm really just personally really interested in the future watching sports.

[00:17:30] BB: Okay. How is it shown? How does the consumer get the sports — to watch?

[00:17:36] KB: How betting's integrated. In sports leagues, from a financial perspective revolve around the live game and how people consume those games is changing rapidly and so as the business around it. So it's just really interesting.

[00:17:50] BB: One thing I think people should know more about me is —

[00:17:50] KB: This is my second newsletter stent.

[00:17:57] BB: Your second? What was the first? From Bleacher Report?

[00:18:00] KB: No. When I got at sports media, I say media, to learn how to actually start a media business. I ended up writing about tech and kind of entrepreneurship for a company called The Hustle, which is a blog and I ended up starting the daily newsletter there, which then became the whole business, and it's one of the biggest ones now. But most people think of me as a sports journalist and specifically a sports journalist with a newsletter. But my first newsletter experience was actually writing about startups.

[00:18:29] **BB:** There you go. So you've been in newsletters for a while. The last best thing I ate or cooked was —

[00:18:34] **KB:** The last best thing I ate was Indian food last night.

[00:18:38] **BB:** Oh! Was it good?

[00:18:39] **KB:** It's great.

[00:18:40] **BB:** I love some good Indian food. Quarantine has taught me —

[00:18:44] **KB:** Whoa! Quarantine has taught me how much I took socializing with friends for granted.

[00:18:50] **BB:** Oh, yeah. My perfect Sunday is —

[00:18:53] **KB:** NFL RedZone in the fall.

[00:18:56] **BB:** Nice! You knew the answer to that.

[00:18:58] **KB:** You know what NFL RedZone is?

[00:19:00] **BB:** I believe it's like the front-row seat to be able to watch a game.

[00:19:05] **KB:** No. It's a network that is eight straight hours of commercial for — every Sunday, there's like —

[00:19:14] **BB:** Oh my God! I definitely do not know this.

[00:19:15] **KB:** All the 14 NFL game is on for like a six-hour span. This is all of those games with no commercials. It's basically going between games just trying to show you the most important play. It's just literally football for eight hours with no breaks. If you're interested in football — Yeah.

[00:19:36] **BB:** Wow! You are so in your element with this career. It is amazing.

[00:19:42] **KB:** I have a fantasy team, right. It's one of those things where I say to myself, "How are there people out there who don't enjoy this?"

[00:19:51] **BB:** You are in it. You are in it for life. You cannot never write about sports.

[00:19:56] **KB:** I kind of agree with you.

[00:19:58] **BB:** Yeah, that's freaking cool. That is just great. Okay. That concludes our little fill in the blank part. Now, I'm super curious about what you're going to say about this. I always like to ask, what are you reading, watching, consuming, listening? I mean, we will take anything because we're not just getting out of this pandemic-type thing. What would you say?

[00:20:17] **KB:** Well, I will say and this is not usually the case or at least not recently, because I've been kind of slacking in my Netflix consumption. Only because I just sort watching this weekend and I was kind of blown away by how much I enjoyed it. I don't remember the title now, but it's a new docuseries on Netflix about basically like the history of pop music.

[00:20:36] **BB:** Mm-hmm. I love a good documentary.

[00:20:38] **KB:** Yeah, it's like a six-part.

[00:20:40] **BB:** Okay. It's called *This is Pop*.

[00:20:44] **KB:** *This is Pop*, that's it, yeah.

[00:20:45] **BB:** That's it?

[00:20:46] **KB:** Yep.

[00:20:46] BB: Wow! Uncover the real stories behind your favorite pop songs as this docuseries charts the impact of the festival scene, Auto-Tune, boy bands and more. Seriously, this was great?

[00:20:57] KB: It's great. Like I was going in with pretty low expectations, and then it just kind of blew me — maybe because I didn't know a lot of the stuff. Also, you can't get much more of a nostalgic than playing some Backstreet Boys or Britney Spears for me.

[00:21:13] BB: God! I know.

[00:21:15] KB: Or in 1991. I mean, that just —

[00:21:16] BB: Are you an elder millennial by the way?

[00:21:18] KB: I'm not quite an elder millennial, but I'm like definitely — I'm probably right in the middle.

[00:21:22] BB: Your heart crumbling though, yeah. You think 1997 was 10 years ago.

[00:21:28] KB: Yeah. Like the 2000s didn't happen. I don't know.

[00:21:32] BB: I think of the '90s, I'm like, "Oh, yeah! 10 years ago." I'm like, "Oh shit!" Oh man! Anything else? That's a good tip. I'm going to actually put that down.

[00:21:40] KB: I have been slacking but I watched a few. I mean, I'm usually really up to date on — I watch any good documentary I get my hands on. I'm trying to remember the last **[inaudible 00:21:50]**.

[00:21:52] BB: Did you watch the octopus' teacher?

[00:21:53] KB: Yeah.

[00:21:54] BB: God!

[00:21:55] **KB:** I really enjoyed that, but —

[00:21:56] **BB:** It's weird.

[00:21:58] **KB:** My reaction to that was, that was really cool and then all positive things. Then the next day, I just remember waking up to be like, "That was weird."

[00:22:07] **BB:** It's weird.

[00:22:08] **KB:** Yeah, the guy was just a little —

[00:22:09] **BB:** There's a whole other story going on in there that was not disclosed in my opinion.

[00:22:14] **KB:** There were a few moments there where I was like getting a little emotional. I was like —

[00:22:18] **BB:** I know. About the freaking octopus.

[00:22:19] **KB:** You're connecting with — but yeah.

[00:22:23] **BB:** I know. Ugh! God!

[00:22:26] **KB:** If somebody says, "Should I watch it?" I'd say, "Absolutely."

[00:22:28] **BB:** Yeah. Did you ever watch — okay, if you want to tear jerk. Did you ever watch *Crip Camp*?

[00:22:33] **KB:** I did, yes. Yes.

[00:22:38] **BB:** Oh God!

[00:22:38] **KB**: Great movie.

[00:22:38] **BB**: I saw that in Sundance. It's amazing. Yes. Okay.

[00:22:43] **KB**: [Inaudible 00:22:44] *The Last Dance*?

[00:22:46] **BB**: No. *The Last Dance*. Okay.

[00:22:50] **KB**: It's a docuseries. It came out last —

[00:22:52] **BB**: Yeah, Netflix, okay.

[00:22:54] **KB**: About Michael Jordan.

[00:22:54] **BB**: Oh! I remember seeing this and I was like, "Oh! I don't need to watch something about Michael Jordan." Is it fantastic?

[00:22:59] **KB**: I mean, it's good as it gets.

[00:23:01] **BB**: Ugh!

[00:23:03] **KB**: We did a top 50 sports documentary list and I think we had this one on number four.

[00:23:08] **BB**: Oh! Wow! What was number one?

[00:23:10] **KB**: *Hoop Dreams*.

[00:23:11] **BB**: *Hoop Dreams*.

[00:23:12] **KB**: My favorite movie of all time.

[00:23:14] **BB:** Wow! Okay. I'm writing *Hoop Dreams*. This is why I love this podcast because I get all my —

[00:23:19] **KB:** *Hoop Dreams* is so great. It's essentially the elevator pitch and the synopsis is — it's a documentary, it basically tells a story of two inner-city kids who are extremely into basketball. It's like documenting their lives and they just end up going in completely different paths, and it's just really interesting to see kind of how their lives take shape and how they're impacted by things. It's a really good movie.

[00:23:49] **BB:** Putting it on the list. I love it. Kendall, what do you think is the future of journalism?

[00:23:56] **KB:** I think the future of journalism is. If I could put it into one word, community.

[00:24:02] **BB:** Have not heard that. Please expand.

[00:24:04] **KB:** I think that it's one future of journalism. I don't think — journalism as a whole should be entirely from the community values. What we're seeing, even with things like newsletters is, you're having this kind of — there's almost the split where a lot of legacy publishers are the ones breaking news and are the one where people are doing, what I call **[inaudible 00:24:26]** reporting, which is breaking news, which is reporting new information. Bringing new information to light. Then you have this entire other swath, which is made up of a lot of younger digital media companies that haven't broken a story ever. But their whole focus is, "Well, we take the news and we deliver it to our audience because we know what our audience likes. By the way, we also have a Facebook group that **[inaudible 00:24:49]**. We also have a newsletter" and they would respond.

There's just a lot of younger digital media companies and just independent writers that are more focused on creating content for their readers and kind of treating it like a community.

[00:25:03] **BB:** Do you think that's specific to sports?

[00:25:05] **KB:** No, absolutely not.

[00:25:07] BB: Interesting.

[00:25:08] KB: I think you've seen. Some of them are — I'll keep using newsletter as an example. Some of the more — I mentioned the hustle, which I use to write. The whole mile there is basically, get the biggest tech startup kind of entrepreneur news of the day, regurgitate that in a way that they know that their readers will consume and enjoy. It's very communal. Same thing with — Morning Brew is another newsletter.

[00:25:32] BB: Mm-hmm. Absolutely.

[00:25:33] KB: If the New York Times and these other publications weren't creating news, these publications wouldn't have anything to write about. Their job is to take that news and package it for their community. It's interesting to watch as there's so much news out there. It's just becoming more of more about how do you leverage it and how do you deliver it to your readers.

[00:25:54] BB: Then how do you make them feel really special when you respond. Yeah, for sure. Okay. We've come, Kendall, to the part of the mad lib, which is super fun. I'm going to give you the proxy and we're going to fill in the world and then I will ready you back the whole little paragraph and we'll see if it's super accurate, maybe not accurate, it could be just fun. We'll kind of see. It's always a surprise. I'll tell you that. Let's do it. First word, emotion. Any emotion?

[00:26:23] KB: Sad.

[00:26:24] BB: What's an adjective?

[00:26:26] KB: Bright.

[00:26:27] BB: Bright. Another adjective?

[00:26:31] KB: Dry.

[00:26:31] BB: Dry, okay. What is a greeting, any greeting?

[00:26:36] **KB**: Howdy?

[00:26:37] **BB**: I love that one. A verb?

[00:26:38] **KB**: Exercise.

[00:26:41] **BB**: Exercise. A noun?

[00:26:43] **KB**: Football.

[00:26:45] **BB**: Football. An adjective?

[00:26:48] **KB**: Smart.

[00:26:49] **BB**: A cringe-worthy PR term or phrase like, “Just following up for the 15th time.”

[00:26:55] **KB**: Per my last email or per my something. I mean, when you use a per.

[00:27:03] **BB**: [Inaudible 00:27:04]. Okay.

[00:27:07] **KB**: If you need one, “Per my last email” I think is the —

[00:27:09] **BB**: That’s the scorcher for sure. Part of a pitch?

[00:27:13] **KB**: What’s that?

[00:27:14] **BB**: What’s a part of a pitch? Like subject line, or closing or —

[00:27:19] **KB**: Yeah, subject line.

[00:27:20] **BB**: All right. We’ll go with that. Length of time?

[00:27:23] **KB:** Year.

[00:27:24] **BB:** Year. A person ideally alive?

[00:27:27] **KB:** Tom Brady.

[00:27:28] **BB:** Tom Brady. Even I know that one. Then lastly, an emotion.

[00:27:34] **KB:** Shocked.

[00:27:35] **BB:** Shocked. Great. Okay, Kendall, here we go. When I think of the future of journalism, I feel sad. The pitches I receive have gone from bright to dry. If I receive a pitch that starts with, “Howdy?” I exercise. When I write stories on football, I get smart. My favorite pitches include any use of “Per my last email” and very specific subject lines. I normally take around a year to respond to my emails, but if it’s Tom Brady, I will respond immediately. If you do get a response back from me, you should know that I’m very shocked for you. I love it.

[00:28:12] **KB:** There’s some truth there.

[00:28:14] **BB:** There is. You know what —

[00:28:15] **KB:** Absolute. I will absolutely respond to Tom Brady.

[00:28:18] **BB:** See. Exactly. Exactly. If you’d be shocked to the response, hey, that’s also true. They always have some evidence of accuracy, absolutely.

[00:28:27] **KB:** And I am a little bit sad about journalism, so we won’t get into that [inaudible 00:28:31]. But yeah, there we go.

[00:28:32] **BB:** There you go. Kendall, this has been absolutely a delight. You have been fun. I am so happy you are living, breathing and existing in the entire world of sports day in and day, what a dream. I think that’s really where at.

[00:28:47] KB: Appreciate it. Yeah, this is great, very fun. I have never experienced a mad lib. If I ever do a podcast, this seems like, I might have to borrow this because it's a great —

[00:28:56] BB: Perfect. Thank you. See, what a compliment to me. I love it. But also, you, because you're fun and this is a lot of fun and it goes both ways,

[00:29:04] KB: Yeah. Well, thank you again.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:29:09] ANNOUNCER: Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, featuring Kendall Baker from Axios. If you enjoy listening to our show, make sure to subscribe on iTunes, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and anywhere else you listen to podcasts. If you have a moment, please leave us a review to share your thoughts about the show and today's guest. To learn more about the latest tools on OnePitch and to subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter, head to our website at onepitch.co. We'll see you all next week with a brand-new guest and even more insights about the journalists you want to learn more about. Until then, start great stories.

[END]