

EPISODE 82

[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.

This week, we're joined by Rebecca Bellan, a transportation reporter at TechCrunch. Rebecca covers all things transportation for TechCrunch, including the tech and the people behind how people move throughout cities and how companies bring sustainable mobility to the world. Previously, she has held positions at Forbes, CityLab and The Atlantic. During the episode today, Rebecca talks about pitch subject lines, the annoyance of follow-ups, the uniqueness of writing about technology and more. Let's have a listen now.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:01:16] BB: Welcome, everyone to Coffee with a Journalist. I'm Beck Bamberger, the founder of OnePitch, also of BAM, which is an agency that represents all venture-backed, cool startups, blah, blah, blah. But you are not here for that, you are here to hear from another Rebecca who's actually drinking coffee in New Zealand. Wow! Rebecca Bellan is here. She's at TechCrunch as you guys heard. She's a transportation reporter. We got lots to talk about, fellow Rebecca. Thank you for being here.

[00:01:46] RB: Thanks for having me, Rebecca.

[00:01:48] BB: Yes! First, how did you get to New Zealand? Because it used to say New York City.

[00:01:54] RB: Yeah. My partner is from New Zealand, so yeah. We wanted to get out of the COVID hell scape. It was a whole thing. It was a whole thing to get here, but we made it.

[00:02:05] **BB:** Was this earlier, way earlier on?

[00:02:07] **RB:** This was just a few months ago. We just got in.

[00:02:09] **BB:** Oh! Did you have to quarantine for like two and a half weeks or something? Because I thought it was super strict.

[00:02:15] **RB:** Yeah.

[00:02:16] **BB:** Okay. So you did the whole thing?

[00:02:17] **RB:** It is super strict. Yeah. We were in a managed isolation facility for two weeks, an hour of yard time.

[00:02:22] **BB:** Wow!

[00:02:23] **RB:** But to be honest, it wasn't that different from being in my Queens apartment during quarantine.

[00:02:27] **BB:** Wait! An hour of yard time like a prison?

[00:02:30] **RB:** Pretty much. Actually, we don't do whole hour. It was really like a half hour, and then you could book as many as you wanted. But often, we just didn't necessarily go out because it'd be raining.

[00:02:41] **BB:** Oh! Wow! Yard time. How is the COVID situation there now by the way?

[00:02:47] **RB:** There is no community transmission. I think it's like 132 days now without it.

[00:02:52] **BB:** Oh! Fantastic.

[00:02:53] RB: It's nice, but it's also like — would they open up the country ever? Just in the — the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern is taking a pretty hard line about no COVID ever. That's a little scary for me when I want to think about visiting family.

[00:03:05] BB: Yeah. Wow! Just for reference, we're tapping this like mid-July here. Okay. Wow! Good thing I've been to New Zealand. All right. Rebecca, what does your inbox look like? Is it crazy with pitches in there? What would you say?

[00:03:20] RB: It is a shit show. It the pain of my existence. Yeah. I mean it's just a lot of pitches. A lot of spam recently, which is weird. I guess that comes from having your —

[00:03:31] BB: Random spam or like PR spam, where it's like, clearly, it's just a blast of a press release.

[00:03:36] RB: No, I get that as well. But this is like definitely random spam. People saying that they can help me with my website. I'm just like, "Ugh!":

[00:03:42] BB: Really?

[00:03:43] RB: I guess that comes from having your email public. I don't know. Yeah, lots of companies, a lot of people that I've already connected with, letting me know something new in with their company. But yeah, just a lot of people letting me know that there is a new product. This company has new funding, introducing this advanced simulation system, stuff like that. Strategic collaborations, yeah.

[00:04:08] BB: Yes. Do you have a way in which you organize at all, like labeling? Are you a master leader or you just let it like let it ride type of person?

[00:04:18] RB: I do try to label. I set up labels when I first started at TechCrunch that I hate and I really just — it's a project that I want to fix and label things based on the type of transportation that we're talking about, like micro mobility versus electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, delivery, what have you. But right now, I have it based on like — I have labels for like if it's a company reaching out, if it's fundraising, if it's a pitch. Let's see. If it's something I think will go

well for Extra Crunch, which is our subscriber platform, if it's something I think would go well in the newsletter, if its government related and if it's just sources.

[00:04:53] BB: That's a lot of labels.

[00:04:54] RB: Yeah, so I need the color coding. It's important to me.

[00:04:57] BB: So you do color coding?

[00:04:59] RB: Of course, yes. Otherwise, my brain will not handle all this.

[00:05:02] BB: Exactly. I was just talking with someone who has 200 or something ridiculous things. I'm like, "Wait a second! You can't have that color coded." She's like, "No, not at all. It's a whole other thing." Anyway, my goodness. Everyone has a thing and that's what I love about this. Volume wise, when you see these pitches come in, are you scanning the subject line to deduce if you want to open it or how you kind of trash things or label it or whatever?

[00:05:29] RB: Usually, I scan the subject line if it's something that's — like for example, I have one right now that says, "Forget EV range anxiety. Gas vehicles are up to 20 times more likely to run out of gas, blah, blah, blah." That is not something I would immediately click on because that's more of a feature, and that means, I have time to get to it. I might open it when I have time and then just like label it as a source for a potential story in the future. But then, if I have something from a company that I cover a lot, I'll open that first.

[00:05:59] BB: Your favorites, I'm sure.

[00:06:01] RB: Well, I don't pick favorites. Actually, I do. If there's like a good number, if you're telling me you raised 250 million, I'm opening that.

[00:06:07] BB: Yep.

[00:06:09] RB: Get to the point.

[00:06:11] BB: Get to the point and get it to the point in the subject line even better hopefully. Okay. That is helpful. How do you then — when you're looking at these sources find them? Do you just do a search in your inbox? If you're like, "Oh! What was that company that was doing that one thing and they had a CTO that was that? Now I need him for a story four and a half months after I originally got the pitch." Like some people magically find that one pitch or something, I'm like, "Wow!" But they use the inbox like a search box, like a Google.

[00:06:42] RB: Yeah, I do that sometimes. Often, I can just go into my labeled sources, my coded system. But I also will — I don't know, it's weird. I actually write a study about this that people remember. They don't necessarily remember the facts, but they remember where they put the facts. If you're like arranging your desktop, you don't know exactly what's inside each folder, but you know where you put things on your desktop. Often, I can kind of figure out — I can remember enough of a little slice of what it was to be able to use the search bar.

[00:07:10] BB: Oh, good. Okay. I don't know what study that is that you're referring to, but sounds —

[00:07:15] RB: [Crosstalk 00:07:15].

[00:07:16] BB: No, no. We're good. Well for stories, Rebecca, that you get that are those feature pieces, someone who's clearly teeing you up for this piece and it's clearly a pitch and they want to highlight their client, I'm sure. But for maybe broader range ones that aren't news breaking. I know you do cover a lot of the stuff that is — it's kind of news breaking, but you have one here for example about Columbus, Ohio being a smart city. How do you come about just story ideas?

[00:07:46] RB: I guess it's just what I'm interested in, right? I have a lot on the back burner for Extra Crunch or just like more in depth features that obviously, I have to cover a lot of breaking news and funding announcements and things like that. When I have more time, I can go into them. My background, I covered — I've done a bit of writing for CityLab, which was part of The Atlantic when I was working there and now it's part of Bloomberg. I'm just interested in how cities function. Like that for example, I was just curious about all the smart tech that went into Columbus. It seemed a little lackluster, personally when you compare it to something like any

smart city in China or — look at Woven City that Toyota is creating in Japan, which is total prototype of the future. It's incredible.

[00:08:30] BB: How did you know about Ohio? Did you see it somewhere? Was this from a pitch?

[00:08:35] RB: I think it was like a mass press release thing that thing was over because it started in 2016.

[00:08:41] BB: Yeah.

[00:08:42] RB: I was like, "Oh! It's over. Okay. Let me just kind of — I want to see which companies were the ones that were involved in this.

[00:08:48] BB: They have a cute little photo of this little bus thing moving around. It looks neat. Okay, Columbus.

[00:08:54] RB: The autonomous shuttle. It didn't stick around. It's not sticking around. I don't think Columbus was ready for autonomous.

[00:09:00] BB: Uh-oh! Okay. All right. Cross Columbus off your list for travel when you're adventuring post pandemic times. Okay. I have a fill in the blank part now, Rebecca. Let's see what we go. My favorite sources always —

[00:09:15] RB: Give me good tips, text me the tips.

[00:09:19] BB: Text you? Oh! We rarely hear someone saying text me.

[00:09:23] RB: I mean, I don't everyone texting me, but like certain big companies. They're kind of in the thick of it and I need to know something, like I hate when I have an established source and then I just get the press release on the day and I'm just like, "Excuse me?"

[00:09:37] BB: The hell?

[00:09:37] RB: Why didn't you call me? Why didn't you tell me? I thought we had this worked out?

[00:09:41] BB: What are they saying when you mention that or is it like —

[00:09:44] RB: Yeah, I'll respond to the press release and say something like, "Yeah. I maybe don't have time to cover this now. It would have been great to hear beforehand that this was on the menu for the week."

[00:09:55] BB: Yeah. Well then, maybe that answers this next one. The most annoying sources always — Tell you at the last minute.

[00:10:02] RB: What do they do? I have to think about that. Yeah, I guess tell you at the last minute or just keep hitting you up when you're trying to ignore them.

[00:10:11] BB: Mm-hmm. You'll get a response from me if —

[00:10:14] RB: Like don't hit me with a trend, like hit me with the facts in the subject line. I want to see numbers. I want to see what is exactly about — I don't want to hear — oh, sorry! I actually remember what my most annoying sources do.

[00:10:27] BB: Oh! Okay. Let's go back. Yes, go.

[00:10:29] RB: My most annoying sources. I know that they have a reason for this. No one's ever really explained it to me, but when they say, "Will you agree to the embargo?" Then I can send you the thing. It's like, sometimes I don't get the email before — like it's like within a few hours, the embargo — just fucking send it to me. I'm not here trying to screw you over and share your news about your fucking e-scooter before like the world knows about — like before you're ready to talk about it. It's not that serious.

[00:10:58] BB: I totally hear what you're saying because I don't get it myself. I'm wondering, did something happen in the PR industry where people are like, "You know what you guys,

everyone is blowing the embargoes.” I know on occasion, someone will be burned, but like, why is this the thing?

[00:11:16] RB: I don't know. But that other company is just saying, “Here's the press release. The embargo time is XYZ.” So I just like pick one, I don't know.

[00:11:25] BB: Yeah, frustrating. Okay. You can follow up with me if —

[00:11:31] RB: If it's pressing. If this is time sensitive and I haven't responded.

[00:11:39] BB: Okay. Like one time?

[00:11:41] RB: Ones is probably enough.

[00:11:43] BB: It would be a huge help if —

[00:11:45] RB: I guess, again, like the secrecy behind a lot of stuff is just really annoying. Like I had someone reach out. There was a story going out last Monday, the Monday after the 4th of July, July 5th. Everyone's away. I'm the only one on my team. It was coming out in Europe. It was a big car company coming out in Europe. I wouldn't have been around or awake during the time that they were making this announcement, having the meeting and they were like, “I can't tell you a single thing, not even off the record. They'll kill me if I say a word.” I'm just like, “Who's going to — what? Just tell me so I can cover this. I swear, I'm not going to — I don't care about **[inaudible 00:12:26]**.” It's just bizarre.

[00:12:30] BB: I think it's funny when it's overinflated by a publicist and you're like, “No, it's the e-scooter, it's fine. We don't need to —”

[00:12:38] RB: It's really fine, like we're not curing cancer here. If we were, we should be sharing that information, of course.

[00:12:44] BB: Okay. The best compliment I received about my work was —

[00:12:49] **RB**: Like from a PR person?

[00:12:51] **BB**: No, any person.

[00:12:52] **RB**: Anyone? From my mom?

[00:12:53] **BB**: Yeah. Well, maybe minus moms because they're usually the biggest fans.

[00:12:57] **RB**: My mother's never read my work.

[00:12:59] **BB**: What?

[00:13:00] **RB**: I don't think she reads my TechCrunch work, it would bore her to pieces. I don't know. I don't normally believe people when they —

[00:13:08] **BB**: Really? Because you think it's [crosstalk 00:13:10]?

[00:13:11] **RB**: Well definitely, when it's PR people and they're like, "I read your thing when you were at Forbes and that was really great." I'm like, "You just Google search me and yeah, you just like came up with something." I don't really believe that. But I think that I'll trust my editor and she says that I have a good narrative flow. I only trust people's compliments when it comes along with criticism. To go uncriticized is to go betrayed

[BREAK]

[00:13:36] **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]

[00:14:00] BB: My favorite stories to write about are —

[00:14:02] RB: Something that connects to real-world impact. Like when you're writing about startups, and funding and new tech. A lot of it gets lost in just like the quick news, right? But one of the reasons I love tech writing or writing about tech is that, it will have an effect on our daily lives. It already does. I like to be able to look into — yeah, just connect it back to like, "What does this mean for the average person?" Then aside from that, I do like to get a bit — I like the chance to get a little bit technical, like when I'm writing about autonomous vehicles or just software on vehicles in general. Or not even vehicles, just anything related to transportation, what I'm writing about. I find it fascinating to see how they train their ML models and what kind of sensors they're using, and how it all gets narrowed down in the brain of the computer and spits out an answer, right?

[00:14:56] BB: My one thing I would suggest people know more about is —

[00:15:02] RB: That's so vague.

[00:15:04] BB: It is. Sometimes I'll tee it up, it's like know about you. What people should know about me. You can interpret that either way you like.

[00:15:12] RB: The first thing that came to my mind, which is just what I'm going to go with has nothing to do with me or transport. I think people should know more about consciousness and freewill.

[00:15:25] BB: Yes. Broad but enticing.

[00:15:29] RB: Yes. Well, I think that if people are more aware — let's just say, I think people should know more about how the brain functions, because we are just all code. I think it would just make us all really forgiving of ourselves and of others to understand how people's biology and the circumstances in their life make them who they are today that don't necessarily have the free will to make decisions. That sounds weird. But if you know what I'm talking about, you know what I'm talking about. If you don't, maybe look into it and it might make you more compassionate.

[00:16:00] BB: Indeed. I think we are only a miniscule of understanding how the human brain works and what a field of expiration for anybody who's studying that and looking at brains. Mind-boggling. Which then leads to the question of course, like, okay, what do you exactly have to freeze? Like my deep freeze when I'm 130 and I'm going to get buried at that place or frozen in the place. They have this place in Arizona. Anyway, that place where they just like freeze your head or whatever. I think you just need your head. You don't need to have the whole body. This is a tangent, but Rebecca, I think it's important to mention. You just got to freeze the head, maybe you'll come back in like 2570. Who knows?

[00:16:40] RB: Yeah, it's worth trying.

[00:16:41] BB: Why not? You're dead anyway. That's how I look at it. Okay. The last best thing I ate or cooked was —

[00:16:50] RB: The last best thing I cooked was falafel. I make my own falafel. It's my father's recipe. He's Arab, Christian, Israeli. It's a whole other thing.

[00:16:58] BB: Oh! That sound fabulous.

[00:17:00] RB: Yeah, it is the best falafel. It is crunch, you know what I mean? It's like, it's got the goods so I whip it out every now and again to impress people.

[00:17:09] BB: Quarantine has taught me —

[00:17:11] RB: Quarantine has taught me that your mind is the most important thing to understand.

[00:17:20] BB: My perfect Sunday is —

[00:17:24] RB: Well, that changes depending on where I am. But now that I'm in New Zealand —

[00:17:26] **BB:** I know. Now, what is it?

[00:17:28] **RB:** I mean, it used to be going for bagels, reading New York Times, doing the crossword puzzle.

[00:17:32] **BB:** I know.

[00:17:34] **RB:** I miss bagels. I miss my everything bagels.

[00:17:37] **BB:** What's your favorite spot in New York City?

[00:17:40] **RB:** It depends where I am. While I was on the Upper East Side for a little bit, Tal Bagels is really good. Ess-a-Bagel in midtown, that's pretty good. Who doesn't love Russ & Daughters, just for the smoked fish? I don't even care about their bagels. I don't even taste their bagels. I'm just there for the fish. Oh God! I miss it so much.

[00:17:56] **BB:** I'm in New York right now, so I wrote this down. Excellent.

[00:17:59] **RB:** Get after — you surely have been to Russ & Daughters. Surely. There's two. There's a café that's like adorable and they make really good martinis. Then of course, there's the original one and then there's like dried fruit and bakery stuff, and it's just old school and shit. I love it.

[00:18:12] **BB:** Only in New York, right?

[00:18:14] **RB:** Only in New York. But in New Zealand, I have a garden. Like I just came to this house and there was already kind of garden stuff happening. I just like spruce it up and now I'm planting my own thing, so I'm like gardening. I have a million pot plants. I'm really nesting.

[00:18:28] **BB:** Wow! From New York City to gardening in New Zealand.

[00:18:35] **RB:** I live right next to a mountain. It's not really a mountain. It's like a hill, but I live right next to it. I like to walk up the mountain and take a view of the city and all the other

mountains, because I guess this is like a volcanic — it used to be a bunch of volcanoes, so you get to the top of one mountain and you can just see a bunch around Auckland. Coffee at my partner's grandma's house or his oma. It's really wholesome. It's getting really fucking wholesome over here. Yeah.

[00:19:00] BB: Oh! I love it. Gosh! Okay. Rebecca, we like to also ask people, what are you reading, or watching or listening to? We'll take frankly anything; just where do you get other stories that you like?

[00:19:14] RB: Well, I don't always read stories about my beat when I'm not on my beat, because I'm constantly doing that, right? It's like, "Get out of my face." I'm re-watching *Homeland*, because I only saw the first two seasons, so I want to catch up because I heard it ended really well. I'm reading a book called *Middlesex*. I think it's won some serious awards. I can't find it right now. It's about this person of great descent in the 1960s in Detroit. They're hermaphrodite and the reason behind that is because of basically incest in the family. But it's told in such an interesting, interesting way. It really weaves in — I love stories like weaves into history well. It's not a historical fiction or anything, but it does kind of tie —

[00:20:01] BB: I'm looking at it right now and it's an international bestseller. It's won the Pulitzer Prize. I mean, my God!

[00:20:06] RB: That's one. Yeah, it's great. I always have like one fiction alongside like a couple of nonfictions. I've got *The Body Keeps the Score* and *Sapiens*.

[00:20:17] BB: Yes. How did you like that? How did you like *The Body Keeps the Score*. It's been on my list forever, so I have not started it, but I like the cover and I'm like, "Okay." I like the topic. I just haven't gone to it.

[00:20:25] RB: With any nonfiction book and I'm sure other people can relate to this. I get engrossed for a couple of days, then I put it down, don't touch it for a month.

[00:20:34] BB: Yeah. Then you're like, "Shit! What did I read? What was it?" Yeah.

[00:20:38] RB: Yeah. But then — I'm reading that alongside *Sapiens*. I think that it's — again, I'm talking a lot about the mind, but I really think that reading those alongside each other is interesting because it makes you look back at yourself and your own mind, thinking about what we can control, what we can't, how much is in our genetics. *Sapiens* talks a lot about genetics versus shaped by experiences as that happened to us. It's really interesting to — as someone who's gone through childhood trauma, it's interesting to kind of understand what's happening in my brain when I'm having reactions to things or what's happening in brains of people around me when they're reacting to stress or trauma. I'm finding it really enlightening.

[00:21:16] BB: Is that a way — normally, we don't get into things this deep, Rebecca, but is this a way you studying how the brain works part of your processing of your past? Would you say?

[00:21:27] RB: Yeah, I think so. It's in part a lot of that and it's it also in part — I am sick of the politics and culture wars and stuff that's happening around me, which maybe — I don't know. Someone would say it's probably a privilege thing to say, I don't know. It feels really intangible to me. It feels — in *Sapiens*, they talk about, everything is a myth, everything is a story. Money is a story that we all tell ourselves so that we as a giant society can cooperate and understand one thing or follow the same rules. Religion is a story.

It feels to me that when you look at things through that lens, everything is a bit of a story and therefore, it matters less in a weird existential way. I'm just getting like an **[inaudible 00:22:12]** feeling after the past four years, I think. What does seem intangible to me is consciousness and — I should have been a neuroscientist. I wish I could go back to school and do that.

[00:22:22] BB: Maybe a career pivot.

[00:22:24] RB: Maybe one day.

[00:22:25] BB: One day.

[00:22:27] RB: There's important work to be done reporting on transportation [crosstalk 00:22:29].

[00:22:29] **BB:** There it is. That is true.

[00:22:32] **RB:** If there's time for it, it's now.

[00:22:34] **BB:** That's also true. Thank you for enlightening us with so many lovely book choices and so forth. Big question. What would you say is the future of journalism? Speaking of future things.

[00:22:45] **RB:** Future of journalism. I think this is already happened, but I don't think there's necessarily much of a desire to be fully impartial a lot of the time. I remember sitting in a room with some journalists from The Atlantic and there's a conversation around our journalists are activists. A lot of people were like, "Yes, a hundred percent, we're activist." I don't know. That didn't sit super well with me necessarily.

[00:23:08] **BB:** What do they mean?

[00:23:11] **RB:** Well, it's like, it's the journalist's job to sway the public to believe, I don't know, the right thing. I think that facts, like hard facts are really important and that maybe sounds really old school and patriarchal. But I think the hard facts are really important — if you present the truth, I mean, what is the truth? But if you present things with enough facts, then if you are writing about something that has like an activists tilt to it, I don't know, like you're going to — people will come away with what you're trying to convince them of any way, right? Like show don't tell. I don't know.

I think, yeah. I think that journalism will just become more personalized. There's the whole Substack thing, people are paying the writers that they love, which is again great for the writer, but it's more personalized, more individualized. It doesn't have the fact checking even of a publication to back it up. It's more up-ed style. I also think that my job will definitely be taken over by robot within my lifetime, like something that is plugged into the newswire and can spit out a breaking news article faster and with better context than I possibly could because it can search the web in like two seconds. We're already seeing tech that does this start to emerge. Yeah. I think we'll see a lot more multimedia. People may be experiencing it, experiencing news, AR VR, who knows. I'm a little skeptical about that.

I know a lot of newsrooms have tried to like hook the next generation by getting on TikTok and Snapchat, which I think is like so dumb. I don't know. I don't think it works. Just don't think it works. The person who's on TikTok and Snapchat is not there to read the fucking news.

[00:24:52] BB: It's probably not that yet. Although, we say that and then it's like, "Wait! You go to Facebook and that's 80% of Americans consumption of news." Those stats where they say —

[00:25:02] RB: Don't even get me started on Facebook, the devils. Oh, good Lord!

[00:25:07] BB: We don't have time today. We do not have time, Rebecca. Let's pivot to something more fun, which is the ending mad libs, which I love so much. Sometimes they're very accurate, sometimes they're just silly. It kind of depends. We'll see what we get. Are you ready?

[00:25:23] RB: I'm ready.

[00:25:24] BB: Okay. What is an emotion?

[00:25:26] RB: Sadness.

[00:25:27] BB: Sadness. Perfect. And adjective?

[00:25:31] RB: Funny.

[00:25:33] BB: Funny. Another adjective?

[00:25:35] RB: Joyful.

[00:25:36] BB: Joyful. Okay. A greeting of any kind?

[00:25:41] RB: Kiaora, which is a greeting here. It's Kiaora.

[00:25:48] **BB**: Kiaora. I kind of like — it sounds like Toyota, but Kiota. Okay.

[00:25:53] **RB**: It's with an R, Kiaora.

[00:25:56] **BB**: Oh gosh!

[00:25:56] **RB**: Kiaora, sorry.

[00:25:58] **BB**: Okay. Kiaora. Okay. Got it. A verb?

[00:26:02] **RB**: Running.

[00:26:04] **BB**: Running.

[00:26:05] **RB**: Or run.

[00:26:06] **BB**: Yeah, run. A noun?

[00:26:08] **RB**: Bottle.

[00:26:09] **BB**: And a adjective?

[00:26:11] **RB**: Sweaty.

[00:26:13] **BB**: Mm-hmm. Got it. That's me in New York this week. Perfect. Cringe-worthy PR term or phrase?

[00:26:21] **RB**: The world's leading company. World's leading fucking —

[00:26:26] **BB**: All right. World's leading. I'll put in that fucking as well. World's leading fucking — there you go. All right. And part of a pitch?

[00:26:37] **RB**: What do people day to me? Would you be interested in an interview with?

[00:26:40] BB: Ugh! Would you be interested in an interview with this most boring person? Yeah. Okay. Then length of time.

[00:26:52] RB: An hour.

[00:26:53] BB: One hour. Name of a person preferably alive?

[00:26:56] RB: Michelle Obama.

[00:26:58] BB: Then an emotion?

[00:27:00] RB: Satisfied.

[00:27:01] BB: Satisfied. Perfect. All right, Rebecca, here we go. When I think of the future of journalism, I feel sadness. The pitches I received have gone from funny to joyful. If I receive a pitch that starts with Kiaora, I run. When I write stories on bottles, I get sweaty. My favorite pitches include, "World leading fucking whatever" and a very specific, "Would you be interested in interviewing my client." I normally take around an hour to respond, but if it's Michelle Obama, I will respond immediately. If you do get a response from me, you should know that I'm very satisfied for you. I love it.

[00:27:40] RB: Some of it's true. I would definitely open an email from Michelle Obama.

[00:27:44] BB: Oh my God! Wouldn't you? You think it'd be spam though. She doesn't have her own email.

[00:27:48] RB: I know.

[00:27:50] BB: She can't. I would imagine, right?

[00:27:51] RB: It would be from her press agent and that's fine too.

[00:27:55] **BB:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

[00:27:56] **RB:** I literally in my mind just curtsied, which is what I did when I saw Obama's portrait at the — what is it called? The Smithsonian? The National whatever, the National Gallery.

[00:28:07] **BB:** You curtsied. Ah! I would do the same. I was just in D.C. and I didn't go to it., but they weren't open yet.

[00:28:11] **RB:** It's beautiful. It's so nice. It's so cool. That's a very good portrait.

[00:28:16] **BB:** Fabulous. Rebecca, thank you for being on today all the way from New Zealand. What a treat.

[00:28:22] **RB:** Yes. Thank you for having me. This was fun.

[00:28:24] **BB:** This was super fun. Wonderful. As we know, pitch Rebecca transportation stuff, but also possibly neuroscience material from her future endeavors. There you go.

[00:28:37] **RB:** There you go. Yeah, it would actually. Please do.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:28:41] **ANNOUNCER:** Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, featuring Rebecca Bellan from TechCrunch. 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]