

**EPISODE 85**

[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.

We have a very special episode for our listeners today. Joining us on Coffee With a Journalist is Carlo Versano and Jill Wagner from Cheddar. Carlo was a Senior Writer and Producer and Jill is an Anchor for Cheddar's Daily News. Together, they also co-host the daily podcast Need2Know, which features all the news, analysis and unnecessary commentary you need to start the day. During the show, Carlo and Jill give us the inside scoop about their pitching preferences, what it's like to work for a digital and broadcast outlet, and more. Let's hear from Carlo and Jill now.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:01:12] BB:** Welcome, everyone. This is Coffee with a Journalist. I'm Beck Bamberger, founder of OnePitch, the platform that's helping you pitch journalists better and faster and easier and not bug the crap out of them. That's why we're here on this show today. Also, Bam, which is an agency that represents all these crazy startups. Thank you for being here. Today, we've got a bit of a dual interview. We've never done this before. I'm a little nervous, you guys. Carlo Versano, Senior Writer, Producer at Cheddar and Jill Wagner, who's an Anchor at Cheddar. We have talent, producer. Oh, my goodness. Thank you both for being here. I'm like, "How's it going to go? I don't even know."

**[00:01:53] CV:** Well, we're about to find it. Yes, that's it.

**[00:01:57] BB:** We're going to find out.

**[00:01:58] CV:** It's great to be here, Beck. We're excited about this.

**[00:02:00] JW:** Yes. Thank you for having us.

**[00:02:02] BB:** You guys do your own podcast, so you've also got that. I mean, man, the show level here just keeps going up and up. I do love it. Well, let's get first into, we heard your backgrounds, we got the bios and what you guys cover, but may we start at inboxes? They might be quite different, because Jill, you're on the talent side. I wonder if you get pitches. How are your inboxes? Carlo, how about you start?

**[00:02:27] CV:** Well, my inbox is a disaster as it often is. I have not been good about inbox zero, or anything approaching that.

**[00:02:34] BB:** No one is.

**[00:02:36] CV:** Yeah. Exactly.

**[00:02:36] BB:** Don't worry.

**[00:02:37] CV:** I mean, I would say, I was thinking about this a little bit ago. I would say, I'm probably getting about a 100 emails a day right now, which isn't that much, I think in the news business, at least. I think a lot of that is – Slack has displaced that as at least, at Cheddar, the main place where we do our communication. I would ballpark that I get about a 100 emails a day. I would say 85 to 90 of them are some version of either PR pitches, or I got signed up for some list that I just never have figured out how to get off.

**[00:03:07] BB:** Oh, dang.

**[00:03:08] CV:** I would say, seven, eight, maybe up to 10-some days are listener feedback from the podcast that Jill and I do, which we respond –

**[00:03:14] BB:** Oh. Need to now, which we heard.

**[00:03:16] CV:** Yes. We respond to those, all of them. At least, we attempt to. Then I would say, a handful. Only a couple of them are work-related matters that actually need responses.

Because again, Slack is really where that's taking place these days. That's probably why my inbox, I don't even pay as close attention to it as I may have in previous jobs.

**[00:03:37] BB:** Jill, what about you? Are you getting pitches in there?

**[00:03:40] JW:** Yeah, I get a ton of pitches, but I tend to either – I make very instinctual decisions about the pitches. I either usually erase them, or read them and reply, or forward them. My inbox is not horrible. It actually is clear at the moment, dare I say.

**[00:04:00] BB:** It's so interesting. I've done maybe 70 of these recordings to hear about inboxes, and some people have 200,000 unread, some people are down to two open, some are filing with the color system, that's all elaborate and stuff. It's quite all over the place. Now question, though, are the pitches for the podcast? Are they in general for Cheddar and getting on a segment?

**[00:04:23] JW:** Everything.

**[00:04:26] BB:** Everything. All of the above.

**[00:04:27] CV:** Yeah. There's definitely a range. I mean, Jill and I will get specific podcast pitches. I try and respond to those, because I appreciate that wasn't just a mass email that I was on, but that person specifically thought of us. Even though our podcast isn't really – we don't really do many guest interviews. It's really a news of the day podcast. Still, there have been some good pitches that way.

The majority of them are, I think, for Cheddar segments. Some of them, a large segment of the ones I get at least, are just – they just feel they must have gone out to 10,000 people. They're just very much like, “Dear journalist.”

**[00:05:01] BB:** Dear blank.

**[00:05:01] CV:** Yes. This person is in town to do this thing. Would you like to talk to them?

**[00:05:07] BB:** What will get you to respond to a pitch, specifically to be on a segment? Because a lot of times, we have more reporters and editors of text-based outlets here. We rarely are having more the TV outlets. What would you guys say?

**[00:05:25] JW:** It's funny, because I actually – I was trying to think about what are the pitches I tend to respond to. I hate to even admit this, but I tend to respond when somebody I feel like, has taken a little bit of extra time to say, “Oh, I went to Michigan for my undergrad and I grew up on Long Island.” Occasionally, someone will do a little research, or try to do personal connection. Or like “Oh, I am a Jericho alum. Not your year, but I just wanted to reach out. I think, I have a great guest for you.” I will respond to all of those, even if I don't want to walk the person. I actually just appreciate the little bit of effort that it's not just somebody who as Carlo was saying, hit send to a 1,000 people. That usually gets my attention, if not a great subject line. Usually, that's what will do it for me.

**[00:06:15] CV:** Yeah. I would agree with Jill on that. I probably have missed some of those, because I frankly – we're getting so many of them. I mean, it would be a full-time job to even go through all the pitches we get, I think at this point, which I'm sure is how it is for most media organizations. It's just a barrage.

Yes, I will definitely respond to anybody who's like, “Hey, I heard you on the podcast talk about this. This could be a good guest.” As Jill was saying, any personal thing. Also, like Jill was also saying, really good subject lines. Because at least for me, I'm not really getting to these probably, until the end of the day, when I'm trying to really just plow through my inbox, so I can get to a place of feeling good about logging off for the night. I say, you're looking at three, maybe five seconds to get me interested, I would say. It's so weird to talk like this, because it makes me feel I'm some – I'm the Sultan of Brunei up here, deciding what gets determined.

**[00:07:17] BB:** That you are in a way like media. I know.

**[00:07:19] CV:** I always feel bad. I have friends in this industry. I know how hard it is. I know how discouraging it must be to send out pitches that may be really good and may be perfect for something and you just don't hear back. I do think that spending the time on a really good subject line straight. I mean, people talk about how nobody reads a newspaper article past the

lead with the second paragraph, that's especially true, I think, with any pitch. It's like, if I'm looking at it, and it's a full page, I'm only going to get to that first paragraph, unless it's so captivating, that it stops me in my tracks.

**[00:07:55] BB:** We just did our AMA, which is our ask me anything last week. We had four panelists, four journalists on. Man, they were four sentences, max. That needs to be the pitch. Four, tops. I don't want any more. I don't want any more. If it's exclusive, that's where I need to say, "Exclusive" in the headline, subject. That's it. I mean, it was like, "Okay, wow. Yup."

**[00:08:16] CV:** One of the things you look for as a Booker, as a producer, especially for television, and especially for a business news operation like Cheddar, is who's available to talk about this pitch? Is it the CEO? It's the CEO, who these networks want to hear from, regardless of whether you're talking about Google, or whether you're talking about some tiny little – some startup. If you can offer the CEO, that is always going to get you leaps and bounds ahead of someone who's just like, "Hey, I can offer you this press person to give you more info."

**[00:08:48] BB:** Oh. Wah, wah. Uh.

**[00:08:50] CV:** Even though, in a lot of ways, the press person is probably much more competent in terms of understanding what the stories, or whatever, but it's the CEO or bust in a lot of –

**[00:09:00] BB:** CEO or bust. Jill, same for you?

**[00:09:03] JW:** Yeah. I mean, I tend to think, if I'm giving someone advice on how to write a pitch, because I've had through the years have a lot of people say, "Oh, I want to book this person. I've worked at News 12, which is local to CBS." My mom will always say, "Oh, my friend thinks that she has this great story." I always do want to help. By the way, sometimes they are great stories.

My biggest piece of advice is that, I don't want to work to read your pitch. Give it to me on a silver platter. Tell me everything that I need to know. A lot of times, I wind up just forwarding the pitch. I'm the middleman, so I have figure out which producer is getting it. If I have to work to

understand the story, or understand the relevance, or figure out why it's timely, it's not going anywhere.

I think, the biggest piece of advice is just present it in a way that's just so over the top, easy to understand. It's not like, I'm so great. I'm so busy, and so many people are so busy. We just need that information in a way that we can digest it really quickly.

**[00:10:14] CV:** I mean, I think really, it's like when you apply for a job, right? You want to make that email that you're sending, that application you're sending is going into some cyber black hole somewhere. Maybe there's a human that one day is going to see it. Probably not, but maybe there is. You want to make that human's job, as Jill said, as absolutely easy as possible. I remember, I've heard from people in HR who are like, when we get covered letters, or resumes that are two or three pages long.

**[00:10:42] BB:** You're 24-years-old. Yeah. Those are my favorite.

**[00:10:43] CV:** Yeah, exactly. Especially in the days of the Internet. They're getting thousands of thousands of applications for jobs that in the old days, they may have only gotten five, or 10 for. I think, emails – I don't know how you guys used to do this in the old days, if you were just making cold calls or not. Because of the ease of email, I think, it's –

**[00:11:04] BB:** It's become the platform.

**[00:11:05] CV:** Yeah, exactly. You really want to stand out.

**[00:11:09] BB:** Do you want to see, by the way, again, not something we ask usually, but this is a unique situation. Do you want to see a link to, or any footage previously of let's say, that CEO being on camera?

**[00:11:22] CV:** Yeah. If it exists, yeah.

**[00:11:25] BB:** Yeah. Same for you, Jill? Yeah. Because then you know like, "All right, this person is a solid get."

**[00:11:31] CV:** Yeah, exactly. Again, that may be something maybe we don't see, but it's getting – If Jill or I forward a pitch to our bookers, or to a producer or something, they will read that pitch, and they will investigate it more than we have. They're the ones who are really going to want to see like, “Oh, who is the CEO? Have they been on before? Oh, they're really telegenic. They're really good on TV.” Yes. **[Inaudible 00:11:54]**.

**[00:11:55] BB:** Okay. Do well. All that good stuff. Got it. That's helpful. Okay, what does it take, and I'd love to hear from both of you on your perspectives, to make a great segment, that you go, “Wow, that two and a half minutes just was an ace. So glad we got that. It was amazing.” Jill, what would you say?

**[00:12:15] JW:** I think, personal stories are always just more interesting than facts and figures. As an anchor, and as a reporter, I can report a fact or figure, but I can't tell somebody's personal story as good as they can, as well as they can. A great interview with somebody who is genuine, authentic, and is themselves and is emotional in some capacity. Because I think that that is what connects with viewers. However you connect with somebody on a real level, that's what's going to stand out in an interview.

**[00:12:52] BB:** What about you?

**[00:12:54] CV:** Yeah, no. I mean, I completely agree. Then, the only other thing I would add to that is, if the guests can break news, then you've got – the network is then it's going to love you forever, right? If your CEO can come on Cheddar and say, “I'm ready to announce right now that we're going out of stealth, or we're about to launch this new product. Here it is. I'm holding it in my hand.” That is such a more dynamic thing than just telling the story. Obviously, that's hard to do, because you have to – maybe the investors want to have a different way of wanting a product launch to happen, or the marketing team has a whole strategy lined up. Anything that just makes the interview feel dynamic, to Jill's point.

That can even go down to visuals, right? I mean, I think that especially in these days where everyone's on Zoom. I don't actually know the answer to this, but if you just present the visual in a way that makes you want to stop and watch, as if maybe you're sitting outside in – I think, we

have a set outside of the New York Stock Exchange that I think is really dynamic, because there's people walking by back and forth. It feels really energetic, and it feels really present. As opposed to an anchor sitting in front of a green screen or something. That's harder to do, if it's a guest segment, and they're coming from their office or whatever.

Anything you can do to gussy it up, and make it look a little different. Because I think, what a lot of people forget, especially with television news is that, a lot of people are watching TV news, like you watch a show on HBO. It's either on in the background, it's on your desk TV, especially with business news, right? It's on a TV in the lobby. It's on TV in your office. You want to be able to actually – Trump knew this better than anybody else. You want to be able to have that presence that people who are just seeing it out of the corner of their eye are like, “I want to watch and see what this is all about.”

**[00:14:47] BB:** There's so many juicy little insight here. Now, one other question though, for you, Carlo, but maybe also Jill. Do you want to know ahead of time that there is something that they want to break? Do you want the CEO to be like, “Hey, by the way, Carlo, we want to drop this piece in it.” You want to have a heads up. Jill, you too, I imagine?

**[00:15:03] JW:** Yes.

**[00:15:04] BB:** Okay. Okay. Perfect. Yeah. You're not just going to be like, “Oh, surprise.”

**[00:15:08] CV:** I mean, that could be cool too. I mean, it's always good, that way we can prep elements. We can have the banners on the TV ready to go, something like that.

**[00:15:16] BB:** Yeah, you're good. You're lower thirds ready. No one's typing furiously back there. Yup. I hear you.

**[00:15:20] JW:** Also, sometimes you don't know if it is news, because there's so many new outlets. Unless, you Google it and you've read every article. Before a guest comes on, I usually – the last thing I do is actually go on Twitter and just check out their last few tweets, and make sure there's nothing I'm missing. Yeah, I think a heads up is always good.

**[00:15:44] CV:** I think, making it really putting it out there, like Jill was saying about making it over the top obviously, like saying, “Jill, I am Carlo Versano, CEO of XYZ company and I am here to tell you this. I haven't told anybody else. This is happening. We're about to launch this product, and I'm telling you, Cheddar, first.”

**[00:16:05] BB:** Yes, make it clear. Make it strong. Yeah. Then you get on the edge of your seat, you're like, “Oh, God. What is it?”

**[00:16:10] CV:** Yeah. What is this thing. Now I'm watching something.

**[00:16:13] BB:** Yeah. I love it.

[MESSAGE]

**[00:16:15] 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 journalist to pitch your news to. Sign up for your free account today.

Now, back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[00:16:39] BB:** Ooh, that's good. Okay, so I have a few fill in the blanks. I'm going to go back and forth with you two. How about that? Jill, you'll be first. Then Carlo, you could do the next fill in the blank and let's see what you – You could plus one the person before. How about that? If you're like, “Yeah, I agree. I agree.” Okay, so Jill, I'll start with you. My favorite sources always –

**[00:17:00] JW:** Are honest. Yes.

**[00:17:03] BB:** The most annoying sources always, Carlo?

[00:17:07] **CV:** Are dishonest.

[00:17:10] **BB:** There you go. Okay, Jill. You'll get a response from me if –

[00:17:16] **JW:** Flattery will get you everywhere.

[00:17:18] **BB:** Oh, great help. You'll never get a response from me if, Carlo?

[00:17:24] **CV:** You call me Carlos in the subject line, which happens all the time. I don't care how good that pitch is, I'm not going to respond.

[00:17:32] **BB:** Yeah. I think, it's the number one pet peeve. It's a universal thing. Misspelled names.

[00:17:36] **CV:** I get it. I'm sure I do it to people, too.

[00:17:42] **BB:** It's a turn off.

[00:17:42] **CV:** Yeah. Baseline stuff.

[00:17:44] **BB:** Yup. Okay, Jill, you can follow up with me if –

[00:17:49] **JW:** You can always follow up with me, actually.

[00:17:53] **BB:** 10 times? 11 times?

[00:17:55] **JW:** Oh, yeah. Twice, three times.

[00:17:59] **BB:** Okay. Twice. Three is the word. Okay. Carlo, it would be a huge help if you –

[00:18:06] **CV:** If you told me exactly who you're offering as the guest early.

[00:18:12] **BB:** What do you get, like vague ones? Like, "Hey, I have somebody."

**[00:18:16] CV:** Yeah, I get some of that. I get a lot of like – Well, I understand the embargo thing. I was going to say, a lot of people say, “Would you agree to the embargo first?” I understand that's where you have to do that. It all goes back to Jill's point, whatever makes anything easiest on me as possible.

**[00:18:33] BB:** Yeah. Easy. There you go. Okay, Jill, the best compliment I received about my work was?

**[00:18:41] JW:** That's a tough one. I did a story when I was at News 12, where I went to the concentration camps. I went to Auschwitz and Birkenau. Somebody told me that it was the best Holocaust coverage that they've literally ever seen, and that they wanted to use it in a classroom as part of a curriculum. That, I think, was the biggest compliment I've ever gotten about my work.

**[00:19:09] BB:** Yeah. I love that. That is. Carlo, do you want to have one, too?

**[00:19:14] CV:** Well, it's not going to be able to compete with that. I guess, I would say, we get – Jill and I's podcast, I need to know, we get a lot of – we have a very engaged audience and we go back and forth with them a lot. We got one yesterday that I thought was really good. It was an American living in France. She was just talking about how she loves to listen to us every morning, because it reminds her of home and what she's missing, the news at home and just our banter back and forth, makes her feel she's just listening in on two friends. That stuff, I just love to hear, because that's the exact thing that we're going for in our podcast really like a casual conversation between friends and the news business, as opposed with Voice of God, kind of –

**[00:19:56] BB:** NPR. Yeah.

**[00:19:58] CV:** Yeah, exactly, exactly. Whenever we get emails like that, it really makes me so happy, because it's like, “Okay, we're doing something that's actually, people are actually responding to in the way we want.”

[00:20:07] **BB**: That's good. One piece of advice for aspiring journalists is, Jill?

[00:20:12] **JW**: Try not to go into a story with too much of an idea of what that story is. Truth is stranger than fiction. I always found that, especially as a reporter, we always have these ideas, and the producer would send you out and be like, "Get me this sat. This is what I want for my [inaudible 00:20:28]." Let's just see what's out there. Maybe the rumors aren't shocked about what happened, or whatever it may be. That would be the story. I think, try to just tell the truth and actually, let the storyteller itself.

[00:20:46] **CV**: Yeah, that's really good advice. I second that.

[00:20:49] **BB**: I hear that in research, too. I'm in a PhD program. They've been hammering that of like, you can't go in thinking, "This is the null hypothesis. This is the bypothesis." Then you have all the bias swoop in and everything. I mean, sometimes you don't find a correlation or whatever the hell you're researching and it is what it is. Okay. Carlo, the last best thing I ate or cooked was?

[00:21:11] **CV**: Oh, man. Well, I'm out here on the North Fork of Long Island, and we just got these pies that they make at a snack bar over here. Lemon meringue pie, chocolate cream pie, and I have one of those – slice of each last night and it was superb.

[00:21:24] **BB**: That sounds fabulous. Jill, quarantine has taught me?

[00:21:30] **JW**: To slow down a little, and to not always say yes to everything.

[00:21:36] **BB**: Damn straight. Then Carlo, my perfect Sunday is?

[00:21:40] **BB**: My perfect Sunday used to be, probably hanging out with my buddies, maybe watching the game. I have a newborn daughter, so now it is spending time with little Francesca and my wife, Becky, and just doing whatever the day brings us.

[00:21:58] **BB**: Yeah. Oh, that's nice. How many weeks? How many months?

[00:22:00] **CV:** She's nine weeks yesterday.

[00:22:03] **BB:** Nine weeks, and you're here with us on this podcast? Oh, my God.

[00:22:07] **CV:** Man's got to work.

[00:22:09] **BB:** God. Wow. Okay. Wow. See the stakes have gotten even higher. Okay. Okay, now for both of you, both of you, before we get to our little mad lib part, which I do love and the future journalism, what are you reading, watching, consuming? Anything you got? This is where I get all my recommendations.

[00:22:26] **CV:** Oh, yeah. Jill and I do this all the time on the pod. We got plenty of stuff. Jill, you want to go?

[00:22:31] **JW:** I'm currently watching Manifest on Netflix.

[00:22:35] **BB:** Is it good?

[00:22:36] **JW:** Yeah, it's very good. It's a little out there, but I like it. I am reading – Wait, hold on, you're going to do a cut for me, because I need to Google it. I'm currently reading *The Housewives: The Real Story Behind The Real Housewives*.

[00:22:54] **BB:** Oh, God. How is it?

[00:22:56] **JW:** It actually was lent to me by one of our other anchors, Baker Machado at Cheddar. We both just love Housewives. It's my guilty pleasure. That is what I'm currently reading.

[00:23:09] **BB:** Hey, I'll take it. We got some fans of Housewives over at Bam, too. I should recommend that. Oh, gosh. It has a lot of reviews, too. People do love it. Okay, Carlo. What about you? Anything you got? Some you're reading, viewing?

**[00:23:23] CV:** Yes. Well, I'm reading this book that's a little more depressing than that, but it's called *Ministry for the Future*. It's by an author named Kim Stanley Robinson. It's sci-fi, which isn't really a thing, actually. Yeah. This tells the story of a near future, like the climate catastrophe, via fictionalized eyewitness accounts. It's a novel, but it feels really real and journalistic. It's actually optimistic. It's optimistic about technology, human adaptability. I highly recommend that book, *The Ministry for the Future*.

I'm watching *The Wire*, actually, on HBO, on the recommendation of Jill, who's been badgering me for two or three years now about watching it. I respect everything that she recommends. I started it. We just started season two. It's phenomenal. She said it would be.

**[00:24:10] BB:** Con drama. Okay. Okay. God, HBO does a lot of great stuff, too.

**[00:24:13] CV:** Yeah, they do. Well, the other I'm watching on HBO right now is *The White Lotus*, which we were talking about on the pod the other day, which is this dark comedy. It's very good. I recommend that, too.

**[00:24:22] BB:** Okay. Ooh, these are so good. Ah, so I love all this. Yeah. *Ministry for the Future*. It was just saying on its little – What was it saying on the intro here? One of Barack Obama's favorite books of 2020.

**[00:24:34] CV:** Oh, is it? Okay, cool.

**[00:24:36] BB:** Hell, yeah. Yeah. Masterpiece of the imagination. Using fictional eyewitness accounts. Sounds like journalism, but also in the future. Awesome. Well, that's cool. Thanks for those. Switching a little bit, maybe it is a dire topic. Carlo, why don't you start with what you feel the future of journalism looks like?

**[00:24:56] CV:** It does feel a little dire at the moment. I admit that. Yeah, I was thinking about this, and something Jill and I talked about in our off time just as journalists and people who've been in this business on different sides, on TV, now in audio and streaming, we both worked at the broadcast networks before. I think, that I predicted there's going to be this big move away from distribution on social media.

We're in this place right now, where it feels we're still letting Facebook and Google call the shots, about what is and isn't news. What happens there is a journalist aim for maximum virality, what's going to be shared on Facebook, what's going to move the needle on Google. I just don't think that that's a sustainable business model long-term. I think that social media is still going to be important. I think that Twitter in particular, which is the news businesses assignment desk, has a particular value.

The more desperate the media gets in, I think chasing readers, I think the worse the content gets, it's a race to the bottom. It almost starts to resemble our political dysfunctions in this country. All that is to say, I think that the key in the future is going to be you got to meet people where they are, whether that's a podcast, or a newsletter, or maybe it's a YouTube channel. I think, those modes of distribution are really going to see a second coming in the future. They already are. It's also going to be a niche or scale, right? You're either going to be the New York Times and the Washington Post, or The Wall Street Journal, and you're going to be able to have a subscription basis of millions of people that can fund expense of investigative journalism and the stuff that went Pulitzers.

Or you're going to be a niche publication, and you're going to do really hard-hitting stuff in a specific vertical, or a specific region, or for specific issue. I just think about all these sub-stack newsletters that I subscribe, too, which can become – You talk about something that I've been reading. I probably have 30 tabs open right now on the computer of newsletters from the past couple weeks that I just haven't gotten to yet. I just think that it's a cleaner experience. I mean, I don't know if you've tried to read an article on a newspaper website recently, if you don't subscribe to that newspaper. It's basically impossible.

**[00:27:11] BB:** It is. Too many pop-ups. Too many things. It's like, "Oh, my God."

**[00:27:14] CV:** It's pop-ups. It's paywalls. They've got banner ads from 2007. I've always had this personal theory that the way to fix that is micropayments, this idea that maybe you pay 25 cents to read this article. Maybe I don't want to subscribe to the Denver Post. I don't live in Denver, but that's a great newspaper. Every once in a while, they do good journalism that I do

want to read. How do I consume that? That's a question that nobody has figured out. When somebody does, I think they're probably going to make a lot of money.

Yeah. I don't know if that's a good answer to that question. It feels like, things are short changing. I think that the newsletter in the podcast space in particular is especially appealing right now.

**[00:27:52] BB:** Jill, what would you add? Or do you agree?

**[00:27:56] JW:** I agree with what Carlo said, in terms of just a negative, I-fear-agenda-driven journalism. Then, I guess that one thing that – When I was mentioning that my advice to aspiring journalists is just try to find the truth and let that be the story, is that I do feel on both the right and the left, we're just – there's just so much more agenda-driven articles and journalism happening. What gives me a little bit of hope, though, and I agree with everything Carlo said, is I think that technology as much as social media has, I think, been a detriment in a lot of ways, like we used to, when I worked at NBC on their assignment desk, we cater to at that time to the nightly news. That was the broadcast of record. Everything was just vetted and fact-checked. It's a different time right now. Everybody's just trying to be first on social media.

**[00:28:52] BB:** Yup. Break at first. Yup.

**[00:28:55] JW:** I think that eventually, the pendulum will swing in a different direction. I think, everything ultimately figures itself out. The one thing that's cool about technology is that we now have little cameras that we carry everywhere. Technology is getting so much better. Live shots that seemed impossible, even three or four years ago, are doable now. We have access to so many different things that we just didn't simply have access to even a few years ago. I think that that's really cool. I'm curious to just see how that's going to impact the industry.

**[00:29:30] CV:** That's a really good point that I think a lot of people don't really understand about television. Back in the day, and the day being, even like Jill said, five years ago, if you wanted to –

**[00:29:39] BB:** Five years ago.

**[00:29:41] CV:** If you wanted to send a report, or somewhere, that's going to require a producer, it's going to require at least one camera guy and audio guy. It can require a satellite truck. If they're going into some natural disaster zone, they're going to have to build their own satellite. It's extremely expensive. Now, you could send Jill and her iPhone and maybe a booster, and she could do to hit. The way that that has gotten so much cheaper to the point is, there's a lot that can be done there. It's not just the gatekeepers of NBC, CBS and ABC that are going to make the calls on what is a big story anymore.

**[00:30:16] BB:** God. I came from TV, too, where those huge cameras that you could hardly lift – You're just like, "Oh, my God." Those days are done. Yeah. Well, we will see. Well, lastly, to end hopefully, on a fun, positive maybe true, no, who knows, we never know how these go. We've got our little mad libs part. What I'll do for this is I'll go back and forth between you two. You both create in a dual way, a fabulous little mad lib and we'll see how it ends up. Does that sound good?

**[00:30:45] CV:** It's a throwback to my childhood. Yeah.

**[00:30:47] BB:** Yeah, exactly. Then it's fun reading back and then you hear good things. Well, we'll see. Okay, but Jill, I'll start with you. What's an emotion? I'm going to type it out. Any emotion.

**[00:30:57] JW:** Fear.

**[00:30:59] BB:** Fear. Carlo, an adjective.

**[00:31:01] CV:** Legendary.

**[00:31:03] BB:** Legendary. Jill, another adjective.

**[00:31:07] JW:** Lovely.

**[00:31:08] BB:** Lovely. Carlo, a greeting.

[00:31:13] **CV:** Aloha.

[00:31:15] **BB:** I love that. Jill, a verb.

[00:31:19] **JW:** Run.

[00:31:21] **BB:** Carlo, a noun.

[00:31:24] **CV:** Daddy.

[00:31:25] **BB:** Daddy? There you go. Jill, an adjective.

[00:31:32] **JW:** Gigantic.

[00:31:34] **BB:** Gigantic. Okay, Carlo, a PR term or phrase.

[00:31:40] **CV:** Just wanted to check in here.

[00:31:43] **BB:** Just wanted to check in. Yeah. Jill, a part of a pitch.

[00:31:49] **JW:** Exclusive.

[00:31:51] **BB:** Exclusive. Carlo, a length of time.

[00:31:56] **CV:** One minute.

[00:31:58] **BB:** One minute. Jill, a real person.

[00:32:01] **JW:** Carlo Versano.

[00:32:07] **BB:** And Carlo, an emotion.

**[00:32:08] CV:** Passionate.

**[00:32:09] BB:** Passionate. Okay, here we go. I think this is going to be a fun one. Okay. When we think of the future of journalism, we feel fear. The pitches we receive have gone from legendary to lovely. If we receive a pitch and it starts with aloha, we run. When we write stories about daddies, we get gigantic. Our favorite pitches include just wanting to check in and exclusives. We normally take about one minute to respond to our emails. You know what, if it's Carlo Versano, we will respond immediately to one another. If you do get a response from either of us, you should know that we are very passionate about you. I kind of like it.

**[00:32:52] BB:** It works, in a weird way. That's pretty good.

**[00:32:58] BB:** Carlo, Jill, this was so fun. Thanks for hopping on here. Carlo, new dad. Jill, out of New York. Well, both of you are in New York, of course. This was fun. I loved it. Thanks for being on as fellow podcasters as well. Do you want to plug your podcast, by the way?

**[00:33:12] CV:** Absolutely. Yeah. It's called Cheddar's Need2Know. The number two. You can put that into any of your pod catchers, and you will get it. It's about 15, 20 minutes, every weekday. Jill and I record it at 6:30 in the morning. Just news of the day, a little bit of commentary, where our heads are at about stuff. We just talk. We talked, like we're two friends, which we are and just at the bar after work.

**[00:33:36] BB:** The news. About the news. Exactly.

**[00:33:38] CV:** Yeah, about the news. No agenda. Sometimes we're wrong about stuff. We were happy to correct ourselves, but just a little bit behind the scenes, I think, look at how the sausage gets made.

**[00:33:50] BB:** Yes. I love it. Well, thank you both so much again. I'll be listening to that right now. Actually, tomorrow. I had it teed up for today, too. I did enjoy.

**[00:33:58] JW:** Thank you so much for having us.

[00:34:01] **BB:** Thank you, too. Have a good one.

[00:34:03] **CV:** Thank you, Beck.

[00:34:03] **JW:** Bye.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:34:05] ANNOUNCER:** Thanks for tuning in to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, featuring Carlo Versano and Jill Wagner from Cheddar. 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.

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[END]