

**EPISODE 88**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:09] ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to this weeks' episode of Coffee with a Journalist, brought to you by OnePitch. The guests in our show include some of the most notable journalists from the top US-based publications, who cover topics including technology, life sound 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.

Our guest today is Shayla Love. A senior staff writer for feature stories advice. Shayla covers stories about science, health, and the mind. Prior device, she was a news reporting intern at Stat News, as well as a features intern for The Washington Post. During the episode, Shayla shares specifics about her beaten coverage, how she keeps pitches and trending news on her radar, her favorite exercise activity, and more. Let's listen in now.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:01:03] BB:** Welcome everyone. It is Coffee with a Journalist. Sometimes we actually drink coffee on here, as many of you know, but oftentimes not, especially when we have East Coast people most of which are in Brooklyn or New York City, which we have today. But real quick, I'm Beck Bamberger. I run Bam, which is an agency that works with all venture backed crazy technology companies for the world. Then I also made OnePitch happen. OnePitch, as you all know helps journalists with publicists, and we're here to end the bitching about pitching as we have to do that in our roles as comms marketing folks as we know. With me today, not drinking coffee, but definitely water to keep everything going, Shayla Love, she's a senior reporter over at Vice. Welcome, Miss Shayla.

**[00:01:49] SL:** Thank you so much for having me.

**[00:01:50] BB:** Yeah, we're excited. We're going to jump into your inbox in just a second, but as you are Senior Reporter, sometimes I think people can get confused or think, oh, let me just pitch anything under the sun. So we'll talk about that in a second, but tell us a little bit about the focus area you have.

**[00:02:08] SL:** Sure, sure. That's a great point, because almost every reporter that I know and that I work with has a narrow focus of things that they write about. We call these beats. So my beats are focused on health, science, psychology, mental health, and all of this fuzzy areas where those things overlap. So in practice that means I write a lot about feelings, emotions, how people are feeling, but also the study of those feelings that I write about psychedelics quite a bit, I write about the intersections of philosophy and mental health, history and mental health. So all of those interdisciplinary areas that regard the mind is basically my beat.

**[00:02:47] BB:** I like it. Including, I'm looking at a couple here, but you have something on just the LSD, something about masks with how people look different. There's Ooh, I feel yours is a particular area where you go down a rabbit hole like 20 articles later, you're like, "Wow, I've learned a lot." So that's great. How is your inbox? How do you keep it clean or not? Actually.

**[00:03:09] SL:** Yeah, so I am an inbox zero person.

**[00:03:12] BB:** Okay.

**[00:03:13] SL:** Which means that I don't like to have a bunch of unread emails around all the time. This means I'm an obsessive delete, because I do get a lot of PR pitches, a lot of them are irrelevant to the topics that I write about. I'm just somebody who can't have that read number on the email app. I can't see that it makes me crazy. I'm somebody who really is constantly pruning my inbox. I use a lot of filters to make sure that the things that I'm looking for can be seen immediately when I want them to be.

**[00:03:45] BB:** Wow, so you're on the other side of the spectrum today. I also recorded with Rebecca Jennings who's at box and she is the crown winner. 70,000 unread emails or something that I even forgot the number of – but wow. So then you have the opposite side of the spectrum where it's ruthless get to zero. How often does it get to zero by the way?

**[00:04:03] SL:** So right now I just pulled it up. Right now, I have two unread emails.

**[00:04:07] BB:** Two.

**[00:04:08] SL:** Which came in within the last three minutes.

**[00:04:11] BB:** Okay.

**[00:04:12] SL:** I do get a lot of emails every day. I wish I could present this as something noble, but instead it just really irritates me to have a bunch of emails. So it's really almost a flaw that I must always be in there pruning, like it's an obsessive gardener always trimming the hedges. So right now, I have two. One is like an internal email and then one is it looks a press release thing. I'll probably delete both of them.

**[00:04:37] BB:** I'm on your page. I'm the same. I'm constantly in there. Clip, clip, clipping away, because a lot of it is junk and then a lot of I don't have to do anything about it. Yeah, I feel you on that. Are there ever pitches you receive that you respond to?

**[00:04:50] SL:** Yes.

**[00:04:51] BB:** Okay.

**[00:04:52] SL:** It is rare, but I will say the ones that I've responded to our press people or comms people, sometimes academic in institutions who know my work really, really well. They either know I've written about the subject before and this is a follow up to a piece that I've written before or it's regarding, let's say, a scientist whose work I've written about before, and it's new work of theirs. Those have been the few instances in which it's been like, "Oh, I'm so happy to know about this." I'm going to respond right away. I want to write about it, because it's like telling me something that I would have written about if I had come across it on my own. So it does happen.

**[00:05:28] BB:** Then for filing, because you mentioned that just a second ago with keeping your inbox all nice, improved. Do you go back and search things from six and a half months ago? A pitch, that you're like, "Oh, yeah, that thing."

**[00:05:39] SL:** Oh, yeah, definitely. So because I keep my inbox so clean. I think that's one of the benefits of doing so, because everything that's in my inbox is something that I want to be there and that I might want to look at later on. I don't have to – when I search for like, let's say, Psilocybin, which is the psychedelic ingredient, and mushrooms. I'm not going to get a bunch of like nonsense. It's going to be everything about psilocybin that was important to me, so that I can go back and look at it if I need to.

**[00:06:07] BB:** A lot of people do that, by the way. Use their own inboxes or personal Google of sorts for finding the sources, for finding stuff. Many people have told me on this show that, yeah, something from eight and a half months ago, they dig up and go, “Oh, hey, by the way, I'm doing something now. Can I use that or you think?” I think that's great. We've also talked on here, oh, maybe people should use tags and their pitches. So they have it at the bottom, but anyway, that's another story or thought on that. What inspires you to do a story?

**[00:06:37] SL:** Yeah, so I'm a features writer, which means that generally I'm not writing news. I don't write about –

**[00:06:42] BB:** Yeah, you're not breaking.

**[00:06:43] SL:** Yeah. I'm not writing about the fact that something just happened. I'm usually synthesizing a lot of different ideas together or it's a topic that I think is really important for people who are interested in that field to know about. So for me, a story idea is really kind of this coming together of many different things happening in a way where I'm like, oh, there's a bigger picture here. A good example, might be my psychedelic coverage. There is a big for profit industry popping up with psychedelics. A lot of psychedelic patents are being filed. This is something that I've been writing about quite extensively.

So for me, I can't write a news article every single time there's a new psychedelic patent filed, there's like 1000s of them. Also, that'd be very boring story. There are like news feeds for information like that. For me, I can synthesize a bunch of different events where patents are being challenged, where people are asking questions about patents all into one story that has an overarching theme. So for me, it's always about finding that overarching theme, and like that

narrative within a bunch of events that are happening out in the world. That's how I think about the framework for a story that I'm going to approach.

**[00:07:55] BB:** Do you ever find too, I've heard this from people that they'll just be looking at their inbox and in a week, weeks' time there will be six emails, six pitches that are about something that's the on this particular topic. They'll go, oh, ha, maybe there's a trend going? Or maybe there's something here and that the collective of the pitches informs an interest, if that makes sense. Do you ever find that? Does that happen at all? Are people sending you mushroom ideas?

**[00:08:24] SL:** Yeah, I mean, I since writing about psychedelics, I get a lot of psychedelic PR pictures. The tricky thing for me is that when they come from for profit companies, even though they're saying something really cool is happening. Of course, they're saying that about their own company. There's always something for me where it's like, it's not my job to be a publicist for somebody else.

**[00:08:45] BB:** Exactly.

**[00:08:46] SL:** I'm always trying to look underneath the promotional piece of it to think, what's the underlying thread there? So for me, it might be looking my inbox in me, wow, like five people are telling me that they are pushing through patents for psilocybin for obesity this week. That's whether or not that's great, or works or whatever is a side note, but I can think this is something a lot of companies are pursuing. So maybe that's a topic that I'll write about generally, if I'm seeing that a lot of people are doing that.

**[00:09:14] BB:** Then do you again, because you get to be in the space of non-breaking news. You can go and do these, in depth rabbit holes of topics. Do you have a process that you do like, oh, my weekly Friday walk or, when I'm in the shower in the evenings, or I get my coffee and like, dang story ideas come to you in any way?

**[00:09:36] SL:** It's all of the above. I do try to take a walk every morning, even when I don't feel like it. I've forced myself out the door the way that I wake up. I think it just happens naturally. I try to read pretty widely. I try to listen to a lot of things. I've curated my Twitter following to be like

people who are doing in my opinion, really interesting work again, interdisciplinary in the fields of like, neuroscience, mental health, philosophy, psychology, stuff like that. I try to read the work of my peers, because sometimes fellow journalists write about really fascinating topics.

There's a little aside in some paragraph, and then that leads you down a rabbit hole, but I think you're right that to have all that stuff, be able to percolate and think on these larger themes and thinking about feature stories. You need down-time. You can't just be constantly frantically waiting for the story to appear. You need time walking around, you need time reading fiction, you need time letting things marinate and seeing the connection between different topics. I think that that downtime is super important ingredient. I always try to remind myself that when I'm doing that, if I'm feeling guilty about it, like I'm technically working right now, even if it looks like I'm walking around the park, I am working deep down.

**[00:10:44] BB:** Deep down at the subconscious level, it's the whole superior athlete or elite athlete thing where you must rest, you must rest to perform great. That's just how it is. I think, though, that our culture has not promoted that too much. Maybe it's changing. Do you think it is actually since you do cover health and wellness? What do you think?

**[00:11:03] SL:** So I just published a story today about leisure time.

**[00:11:08] BB:** Let's look it up.

**[00:11:09] SL:** Yeah.

**[00:11: 20] BB:** Now, how did this piece come about? Oh, it's the hammock piece yet, too much free time isn't actually bad for you. There we go.

**[00:11:15] SL:** This is a great backstory, because –

**[00:11:17] BB:** Let's talk about it.

**[00:11:18] SL:** The reason that the story came to be is for a combination of reasons. I saw the study in my morning scroll through of the press releases that were embargoed of studies that we're going to be coming out. I journalists have access to just the headline and the abstract of

studies that are going to be coming out. I saw this one that was framing it, like if you have more than five hours of free time it's actually bad for your well-being. I was like, oh, that doesn't sound good, because I feel everyone right now is talking about work life balance. COVID has really made us reimagine what a working life could be we're working from home, we have more flexibility. I always want to have more free time. I love my job, but I also think that get combat burnout, mental health, all this stuff.

**[00:12:04] BB:** Absolutely. Plus, also, what does it mean to for retired people?

**[00:12:06] SL:** Exactly. Or like, can I never go on vacation again? So I had a lot of questions. Then I looked up the actual study. I saw that the Senior author on the paper was – sometimes I call it my sources my friends, he's my source, he's very friendly, because we've talked a bunch of times before. He's a psychologist that studies how people perceive time and how it affects their mental health and their perceptions of themselves, etc. I was like, there's no way that this study is as simple as this, because my pal Hal Hershfield at UCLA. He wouldn't –

**[00:12:40] BB:** What? UCLA? Yup.

**[00:12:40] SL:** He wouldn't be involved in a study that just said over five hours is bad for you. So then I read the study, and it was actually way more interesting and complex than a lot of the other media articles that were being written about it. All the other headlines that I saw, were reflecting the same thing. Too much free time is bad for you. What the study actually said is that you can erase that effect if you use your free time in ways that are meaningful to you. It actually was inferring that as Americans, and in this culture of productivity, and business is so valued. We don't really know how to do leisure in meaningful ways to ourselves, or in social ways.

We think of leisure as just vegging out in front of the TV, because we're all so burned out, and we barely have any free time. But if you use your free time to really cultivate your own interest and do things that are meaningful to you, that negative relationship of like the five hour cap goes away. It was really a lesson in how to use our free time in the best way possible and for well-being, which is something that if we strive to one day have a four day workweek or universal basic income, or any of those things we're going to have to learn how to do that.

That's how the story came to be. It was a reflection of I saw the press release. I saw my source that I talked to before. I saw the other media coverage of it, it didn't feel on the nose to me. So then I went into it was quite a long story about 3000 words, not only the study's findings –

**[00:13:58] BB:** Yeah, it is long. I love it.

**[00:14:00] SL:** And how nuance they are, but also about this relationship that Americans have with leisure and how the desire to pin an optimal number reveals how messed up we are about leisure time in the first place to like try to find the perfect number of free time.

**[00:14:16] BB:** Wow, good for you. Digging in. I mean, I know this is this is what journalists do, but like to go, like wait a second, wait a second, because there's so many – I mean like this PhD course and if anything is taught me about this it is that, I'll never just look at some report or a study, because that's only probably not the whole story. It can be researched can be manipulated, stats can be manipulated, findings and headlines and everything can be manipulated, and you got to dig in there. I love how you did that. So interesting. Oh, that was great. So go back real quick. You originally you just you were scrolling in your inbox and you saw it. That's how it came out. It was a press release. So it came from a pitch, but that wasn't the whole thing huh? Interesting.

**[00:15:00] SL:** Exactly. So in this case the press release was written probably by either the journal or maybe a PR person at UCLA, potentially by it all comes – it's packaged in your Rico alert, which is where science journalists get emails about studies that are coming up, but we first read the press release.

**[00:15:16] BB:** Yep. Love it. That was a good story about that. Thank you for sharing.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[00:15:23] ANNOUNCER:** Today's interview, we'll continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious to see the unique ways OnePitch helps PR professionals and marketers pitch journalists? Head to [onepitch.co](https://onepitch.co) to learn about our new OnePitch score, and

see how easy it is to find the right journalists to pitch your news to. Sign up for your free account today. Now, back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:15:47] **BB:** Okay, so we are going to play a little fill in the blank portion here and just tell us the answer. Whatever you feel –

[00:15:55] **SL:** All right –

[00:15:55] **BB:** It's appropriate. So here we go. My favorite sources always?

[00:16:00] **SL:** People who are very excited about their work.

[00:16:04] **BB:** Yep. The most annoying sources, always?

[00:16:08] **SL:** People who think everyone is stupider than them.

[00:16:12] **BB:** How does it come across, as well?

[00:16:16] **SL:** I think in that something that I always – that I sometimes say to sources is that part of my job as a journalist and advice. We have a lay audience, which just means that our readers aren't necessarily academics, like they're not scientists, they're not doing research. Part of my job is to tell a story about the work that's going on around them and communicate it in a way that's really accessible. That's my job as the translator, but I think it's really helpful to me, when the researchers themselves are able to talk about their work in a really down to earth way.

It's actually very rare, but occasionally somebody will really be resistant in doing that. It'll be this thing where like no, it's for the scientists. I just feel like that kind of science in psychology. It's for everybody. I think anybody can understand it.

[00:17:02] **BB:** Absolutely.

[00:17:03] **SL:** That thing of it, just like, it's for us. I've only encountered it a couple times, but I don't like that.

[00:17:09] **BB:** Yeah, research is holier than now. You're not an academic. Yeah, no, no, no, no. Okay. You'll get a response from me, if?

[00:17:19] **SL:** You've read my work, and you've personalized your email to me.

[00:17:23] **BB:** You'll never get a response from me, if?

[00:17:26] **SL:** If you send me an email about something I've never written about in my whole life or it's something where you're trying to get me to push a product.

[00:17:37] **BB:** Oh, yeah. Do you get a lot of product pushing emails?

[00:17:39] **SL:** So many.

[00:17:41] **BB:** Oh, wow.

[00:17:42] **SL:** I have never pitch –

[00:17:44] **BB:** I know, I'm like, nothing is on your entire anything of any products –

[00:17:49] **SL:** I think when you write about health in any capacity, it opens you up to that, just because there are so many health products out there, but those goes straight to the spam box for me.

[00:17:59] **BB:** You can follow up with me, if?

[00:18:02] **SL:** If I've responded to you once and said I'm interested and then forgot to follow up again.

[00:18:09] **BB:** The best compliment I received about my work was?

**[00:18:14] SL:** I got a very nice email today that said that my leisure story captured the nuance really well. To me, that's always one of the nicest comments to hear, because I think anything having to do with human health and psychology is so complicated. So for me to be able to capture the nuance and still have it be a really compelling story is one of my favorite compliments, so yeah.

**[00:18:41] BB:** My favorite stories to write about are?

**[00:18:44] SL:** My favorite stories are ones that combine different fields. I've lately been very interested in philosophy, but I love when there's, let's say, experiments done on a philosophical topic which is called experimental philosophy or sometimes psychology can touch on philosophical topics. I love when there's this interdisciplinary thing where there's this idea that exists in the other field and then another field is like let's test that or let's work with that. I love the overlaps. Those are always my favorite stories.

**[00:19:19] BB:** My Favorites hobby is?

**[00:19:22] SL:** My favorite hobby is, I would say, reading fiction, if that counts as a hobby, I think that counts. I didn't read fiction for a while and I definitely started again in the past couple of years. I love it a lot. I also, very much love yoga.

**[00:19:38] BB:** Oh, nice. Real quick on the fiction thing, is that because at least this is was for me, that it almost felt guilty, like you shouldn't be reading fake stories that didn't happen, because that's just silliness?

**[00:19:51] SL:** Yeah, I think also, when I started really working full time as a journalist, there was just so many nonfiction books out there that felt related to my work that I wanted to read and yeah, like you said it felt like, I only have so many hours of good reading time per day. Exactly. Am I going to read this like new really important nonfiction science book or I'm going to read a piece of fiction and – I feel really happy to be at the place where shaking that off and I'm reading predominantly fiction for fun now, though I still read a lot of journals and articles online.

[00:20:23] **BB:** That sounds some good study for somebody. Just the joys, well not the joy of why read? What does it do for your brain? What creativity does it spur? If you sit in fiction and you read 20 minutes a day fiction, ups your creativity to fold or whatever one of these types of things. I don't know. I'd be curious to say. Okay, the last song I listened to was?

[00:20:46] **SL:** Oh, that's a tough one. I lately just listened to the Spotify. Discover weekly playlists.

[00:20:54] **BB:** Oh, yeah, that's always good.

[00:20:55] **SL:** But then I don't know the names of any of the songs or the artists, because I just listened as I'm walking. Then –

[00:21:01] **BB:** That's totally fine. Yeah.

[00:21:02] **SL:** Then when the week changes in the playlist renews sometimes I'm like, man I'm never going to get that song again, because it just disappears into the void.

[00:21:12] **BB:** Yes, sometimes that happens, but that is a good list to just reference, because then you're like, what is the world listening to right now? I hate to hear all the stuff. Okay. My favorite fall recipe or food is?

[00:21:24] **SL:** My favorite fall recipe is, I think this was a viral recipe last year. I can't remember but it's very good. It's basically just like a kale chick pea curry stew. I make this all the time, last year. I'm going to start making it again, just like a bunch of kale leaves and chickpeas and coconut milk and curry powder and onions and you just put it in a pot and put the lid on it and then come back and eat it with rice. Delicious.

[00:21:51] **BB:** Sounds good. Pumpkin Spice is?

[00:21:54] **SL:** Pumpkin spice is good.

[00:21:56] **BB:** Okay.

[00:21:57] **SL:** Pumpkin spice is good.

[00:21:57] **BB:** We do have some fans here. We do have some fans.

[00:22:00] **SL:** It's weirdly politicized, but it's good –

[00:22:04] **BB:** It's like pumpkin spice vaccines same area, same area. I don't understand. My perfect Sunday is?

[00:22:13] **SL:** my perfect Sunday is, going to a yoga class in person or IPS with a friend and then having a very long breakfast afterwards.

[00:22:23] **BB:** Sounds good. Is coffee included in that?

[00:22:26] **SL:** So I actually don't drink coffee, coffee.

[00:22:27] **BB:** You're not a coffee person, okay.

[00:22:28] **SL:** I know that is sacrilege to the title of the podcast, but there would be Matcha involved.

[00:22:32] **BB:** There we go. We'll take that. Quarantine has taught me?

[00:22:36] **SL:** Quarantine has taught me how to slow down.

[00:22:39] **BB:** Yes.

[00:22:40] **SL:** Before COVID, I travelled a lot. It was just a time period where I wanted to be traveling. I was applying to a lot of different fellowships and conferences and I was basically going somewhere once a month. I loved it. I think it was great. I haven't gone anywhere in over a year and at first it made me really claustrophobic and now I feel really grateful that I was able to just be still and try doing that. I think it was really beneficial.

[00:23:07] **BB:** I think a lot of people have realized that, for myself I have fully accepted that I will never get on the 6:30am flight to San Francisco from San Diego on a Tuesday ever again. Wish I would do two three times a month. No, that time is done.

[00:23:21] **SL:** Yeah, it kind of wild when you look back and think how – I think about some of the travel like layovers and things I did, and I just think how did I do that? I can't imagine –

[00:23:31] **BB:** Insane, right? Insane. It's weird how you get these realizations with the hard stop and the hard pause on everything, but some of these are the benefits. Okay, Shayla, what are you speaking of all about fiction you love, reading, watching, we'll take listening, we'll take any storytelling format, we want to know, what do you got?

[00:23:55] **SL:** So the book that I'm reading now is called, *Mating*, it is a novel from 1991. It won the National Book Award in 1991. It's beautifully written. I mean, the writing is just blowing me away. I love it so much. It is about a unnamed female anthropologist who is in Africa. She went there to do her PhD project on how women's health was affected by the seasonal cycles in the food that women ate.

Then she found when she got there that her subject was basically non-existent because they ate almost westernized food. Their diets weren't according to the seasons. Then she just starts basically wandering aimlessly through Africa, as a woman in the 1980s until she meets this very famous American scholar who has created a matriarchal utopian society and Africa as an experiment.

[00:24:52] **BB:** Now, tell us who's the author, because God, if you look on Audible for the title, *Mating*, there's going to be some interesting titles that come that are not related to this. Tell us again the author.

[00:25:02] **SL:** Yes, his name is Norman Rush.

[00:25:05] **BB:** Oh, Norman Rush, okay, it is the first thing okay. It's a 20 hour – oh, okay.

**[00:25:09] SL:** It's really good. I'm about three quarters through it right now what I find really impressive is that, so the protagonist is a woman. Obviously, the author's a man, I feel like he, from my perspective, he really gets into the female headspace really well, like sometimes it can be annoying to read a female protagonist written by a man. I'm not sensing that in this case, either. It's a really, I think it's a really funny book. I think it's really smart. It's really intellectual. I saw negative Amazon review that said, somebody you had to look up so many of the words in the dictionary as you're reading.

**[00:25:43] BB:** Yeah, probably not your book.

**[00:25:45] SL:** It's definitely like, it's a very verbose book, but the writing is so beautiful. It's so specific, so detailed, and this matriarchal society. She just arrived, this is the place that she just arrived here. It's this social experiment of what it would be like to let women own land and let women run a city and it's just beautiful. I love it so much. I'm reading that. I also am reading a piece of nonfiction, which is that I'm re-reading, Janet Malcolm's, *Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession*.

**[00:26:15] BB:** Oh, wait. Okay, wait, we're going too fast, because I – oh, wait, let me put my – Okay, add to wishlist. Okay. Let's go back to that one. Okay, that one's a minute. Okay, say it again.

**[00:26:24] SL:** So it's called, *Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession*, and it's by Janet Malcolm, who is an amazing nonfiction writer and journalist. This is essentially a piece of very long journalism. It's about psychoanalysis and the infighting in psychoanalysis, the different theories that people use, just the practice of psychoanalysis in general. I'm r-reading it, a friend of mine was reading it for the first time. I read it for the first time many years ago and wanted to pick it up again. I think it's a wonderful example of how a journalist can enter into something and really try to have a critical take on it while being fair to all the people that they're talking to and just being really curious, while at the same time raising important questions about a field in general.

[00:27:11] **BB:** I like it. Good ones. Thanks, Shayla. This is why I love this show, because you get to hear all the good stuff. Okay. Kind of a hard pivot, but we'll see what happens. What do you think is the future of journalism?

[00:27:25] **SL:** Oh, man. I worry about this a lot. I mean, who isn't worrying about this right now, especially if you're in journalism over the last year, journalism is so important. As a health writer, and as I know many people who report on health and science, you would think that even during a pandemic, with the last presidential election, even the last four years with President Trump, like journalism and accountability is so important. Every person who lives their day to day life knows you consume so much journalism media. You're always reading articles, or watching the news or listening to podcasts. Yet, somehow, media corporations can't figure out how to make money and they're just keeping layoffs and journalists are so undervalued and underpaid.

So this is something I think about a lot, at Vice, we've had several layoffs in the past three, four years. There's been a major layoffs at the company, every year that I've worked there. I've been luckily unaffected, but I've seen some of my very close friends get laid off. I always think why is this happening when this is something we all need that we consume so much. I think that some real creativity and innovation needs to happen just on the business model side of it.

Unfortunately, that is not my skill set, right? I'm a writer, I'm a researcher, I'm a reporter. I think somebody needs to figure out how to just make this something that's more stable, so that the people who want to do this work can just do it. On the business side, those are my concerns. But just on a personal level, I think that the journalists that I see who are thriving, and doing the best work and are also the happiest are the ones who've just embraced authenticity and are writing about the things that truly fascinate them and that they love.

I work on motherboard, which is the tech desk. At Vice, everybody who writes there is writing about things that they would be reading and probably writing about anyway, right? So nobody's being forced to go after these topics, like that leisure study. If I wasn't a journalist advice, writing about it, I would be at dinner tonight with friends and unable to shut up about it. So I think that just letting people embrace her interest and embrace her authenticity. That's really the way that everybody resonates with that.

So I think just allowing people to do that in some business model that values that and lets people do it. Then I think that gets you away from just being a slave to the content machine, because nobody cares about being forced to write articles that nobody reads, because there's not a lot of depth to them, right. I think that people want stuff that people are genuinely interested about and care about.

**[00:29:57] BB:** That goes into this notion when people have said, “Oh, you know, this I will make the article.” I'm like, “Yeah, for like a 200 word breaking news thing.” Okay, but not this 3000 word piece that brings in context and culture and quit. How are we ever going to get to that, with the machine writing that? I'm really hard pressed to believe that.

**[00:30:18] SL:** Yeah. I even think for breaking news writing. I have many colleagues who write news and that's a skill unto itself and yet still, they bring that level of authenticity and interest and expertise in context, because for example, my colleague Carter Sherman, who writes a lot about abortion at Vice News, she could write a 200 word news story about something that happened, but that's building on the years of expertise that she has covered in that area.

**[00:30:42] BB:** All the context.

**[00:30:43] SL:** All the context, right. That's invisible, right? You can't see it immediately, but it's built into anything she writes on that topic. I think expertise, Authenticity, enthusiasm, those are how I see journalism, progressing into the future, like we need to maintain those. It's just really whether the executives can get their act together and like make money. I saw Wall Street Journal –

**[00:31:08] BB:** Get the money part. Yeah.

**[00:31:09] SL:** I saw Wall Street Journal article that said the median salary for journalists was \$39,000.

**[00:31:15] BB:** No, how is that possible?

[00:31:17] **SL**: See, this is like, I don't know. I don't know, because it's something that I think everybody gets too much value from.

[00:31:23] **BB**: Oh, yeah. America, we have problems. It's like teachers. So anyway, that is a whole other rabbit hole to get down into. Thank you for sharing. I hope people are making more than the with all that expertise. Well, on a different note, Shayla, we're going to play our madlibs part. This is now the time for just the one word that you get to slot in and then we'll re-read or we'll read it, and we'll see how accurate it is. Sometimes it's just fun and silly. Sometimes it's shockingly accurate. Who knows what we'll get, so let's see.

How about an emotion to start off one emotion?

[00:31:57] **SL**: Envy.

[00:31:58] **BB**: Envy. An adjective.

[00:32:01] **SL**: Spiky.

[00:32:02] **BB**: I like these, this is good. Another adjective.

[00:32:06] **SL**: Sinewy.

[00:32:07] **BB**: Sinewy. We're getting on it today. Okay. A greeting of any kind.

[00:32:14] **SL**: Welcome.

[00:32:15] **BB**: Welcome. A verb.

[00:32:17] **SL**: Jaunt.

[00:32:18] **BB**: Jaunt. Okay. A noun.

[00:32:21] **SL**: Piano.

[00:32:23] **BB:** An adjective.

[00:32:24] **SL:** Course.

[00:32:26] **BB:** Course. A cringe worthy PR term or phrase.

[00:32:32] **SL:** Should I look at my inbox?

[00:32:34] **BB:** Yeah, look real quick.

[00:32:35] **SL:** To find one.

[00:32:36] **BB:** Yeah, pick out your favorite of the day.

[00:32:38] **SL:** Groundbreaking.

[00:32:39] **BB:** Oh, God. Horrible. A part of a pitch.

[00:32:45] **SL:** Gifting opportunity.

[00:32:48] **BB:** Gifting opportunity.

[00:32:49] **SL:** It's two words, but –

[00:32:50] **BB:** Yup, no, we'll take it. A length of time.

[00:32:54] **SL:** Three weeks.

[00:32:55] **BB:** Three weeks. A real person, preferably alive.

[00:33:00] **SL:** Anybody?

[00:33:02] **BB:** Anybody, your mom, Obama, anything?

[00:33:05] **SL:** I'll pick my editor, Tim Marchman.

[00:33:08] **BB:** Tim Marchman. Sounds like a nice guy. An emotion.

[00:33:13] **SL:** Sadness.

[00:33:14] **BB:** Sadness. Okay. Shayla, are you ready? Here we go.

[00:33:17] **SL:** Yes, I'm ready.

[00:33:18] **BB:** Let's do it. When I think of the future of journalism, I feel envious. The pitches I receive have gone from spiky to sinewy. If I receive a pitch that starts with, welcome. I jaunt. When I write stories on pianos, I get a little course. My favorite pitches include groundbreaking phrases and gifting opportunities galore. I normally take around three weeks to respond with my emails, but if it's my editor, I will respond immediately. If you do get a response back from me, you should know I am very sad for you.

[00:33:52] **SL:** Well, I do respond –

[00:33:53] **BB:** I like it.

[00:33:54] **SL:** I do respond to my editor's emails immediately.

[00:33:57] **BB:** There you go. See accuracy is high on this one, perhaps, perhaps. I love it. Shayla, thank you, for your lovely book recommendations, this juicy 3000 plus word piece on leisure time which now I got to read front to back here. So I'll be doing that for the next 10 minutes. I love it. It's been great having you here.

[00:34:18] **SL:** Thank you so much for having me. It's great to talk.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:34:21] ANNOUNCER:** Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with the Journalists featuring Shayla Love from Vice. 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 guests. To learn more about the latest tools on OnePitch and to subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter, headrow website at [onepitch.co](http://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]