

Jered Martin:

Welcome to Coffee with a Journalist, a podcast featuring the tech industry's most well-known tech journalists. We uncover the real person behind the real stories you love to read. We discuss their beat and news coverage, what their inbox looks like, and a whole lot more. I'm Jered Martin, the co-founder and chief operations officer at One Pitch. Our host for the show is Beck Bamberger, the co-founder of One Pitch, CEO of BAM Communications, and a current journalist.

Jered Martin:

On today's episode, we have Brenda Stolyar, tech reporter at Mashable. Brenda gives us an inside look into the pitches she receives and the ones she likes, her love for reading, her favorite TV show, and more. Let's dive into today's episode featuring Brenda Stolyar from Mashable.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Hey, everyone. Today on Coffee With a Journalist, we have Brenda Stolyar who is at Mashable right now, the head of all the product reviews, the consumer products you see previously at PC Mag. She's here today to chat about all the things pitching, storytelling, journalism, the future of, et cetera. Hello, Brenda. Thank you for being here.

Brenda Stolyar:

Thank you for having me.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Are you drinking coffee right now?

Brenda Stolyar:

I am. I am, actually.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Me, too. This is perfect. One of the few times we've actually had the coffee happening on this podcast, to tell you the truth.

Brenda Stolyar:

Oh, perfect.

Rebecca Bamberger:

There have been many other drinks. First off, you're new at Mashable. You came from PC Mag before, same parent company, but congrats on the new position as of earlier this year.

Brenda Stolyar:

Thank you very much.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yay on that. How are you adjusting to that role, even though I know it's the same parent company?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, it's funny, actually. I basically just had to move across the hall, essentially.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Easy.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah. I was familiar with the Mashable team prior to that, but it's been really fun. Whenever people ask, I always describe it as I feel like I found my team and my home.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Ah, that's great.

Brenda Stolyar:

Because everyone is so similar in terms of humor and creativity, so it's fun. Yeah, I remember when I logged onto the one of the Slack channels and they were sending tweets that I would normally send to like my friends. I was like, "Oh, okay. They get it."

Rebecca Bamberger:

"These are my people." Yeah, yeah.

Brenda Stolyar:

We're good.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Excellent. That must be so comforting. How many people are there in the New York office?

Brenda Stolyar:

Oh, god, on the Mashable team, I'm so bad with estimates. I'm going to say there's like 50 of us, perhaps?

Rebecca Bamberger:

Oh, that's a lot.

Brenda Stolyar:

We're all scattered across. We have a team in California, we also have the Australia team, so we have a bunch of people

Rebecca Bamberger:

All over the place. Global team. Well, why don't we get in first to how you come up with your stories? Where do you get the kernel of, "Okay this is definitely a product I need to review"? Is it just ...? Or, for you, is it more like, "Yeah, I'm sussing out what's given to me via pitches and I go with that. I know my

Samsung, Apple people and wait for that"? Because you obviously cover that. How does it work for you in terms of how you come up with the piece you're going to write?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, there's always the standard procedure of we always are going to cover the flagship phones. Samsung comes out with a major phone, Apple comes out with a major phone, then there's no question, yeah, we're definitely covering it. The cool thing about being at Mashable specifically is that we don't have to cover it from the same standpoint as a lot of other publications do in the sense of, "This is a standard review." We have the ability to cover it from a unique standpoint. It's funny because it definitely took me longer to write reviews at other publications, but at this one, when I realized it's because it's just I can throw in just my stream of consciousness in a way.

Rebecca Bamberger:

That must be very freeing.

Brenda Stolyar:

Oh, it totally is. Even when there's things that I think my editor's going to take out because it's like either too, I don't know, snarky or out of the blue, it stays in most of time.

Rebecca Bamberger:

It stays? Oh. Well, you have found your people then, I would say, where you let that persona come out. That's good.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, for sure.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Then obviously, okay, you have the flagship ones. Do you, though, for smaller, lesser-known companies, are you relying on pitches? Are you relying on the Slack channel? Where are you finding and unearthing the next Apples and Samsungs of the world, if at all?

Brenda Stolyar:

I do rely on pitches a lot, especially for the smaller companies that I normally wouldn't find just browsing through different other publications or even just social media and stuff. It's always nice to be able to get pitched something that falls under my category in terms of tech, something I don't have to squeeze in in a weird way that sort of relates but doesn't, so I always appreciate the pitches that are like, "Okay, this connects to your phone, this is a tech product," and it falls under my beat, which is either a phone or a wearable or anything fitness-related.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, I mean, it gets a little difficult because there are, unfortunately... Not unfortunately, I shouldn't say "unfortunately," but there are always tons of major products coming out that it gets hard to be able to take a break and cover more niche products, but every now and then, there's a bit of a lull in the review cycle and we get to jump on things that we weren't able to.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Got you. You're mentioning pitches and that you rely on pitches. Everyone who listens to this podcast likes to know: How do you organize and suss out pitches? We've talked to people who delete every single pitch they get and keep inbox zero. We have people who have said, "Oh, no," someone I just spoke to yesterday saves every single pitch she ever gets because she unearths them for a later time. What do you do with pitches and how does your inbox look?

Brenda Stolyar:

Okay, it's funny, my work inbox, I always have to keep it at a zero because for work, it bothers me. My personal inbox is like at a-hundred-thousand-plus emails, so it's like two completely different worlds. In terms of organization and stuff, I do read through all pitches that I get because I don't get that many each day that it's not as difficult to sit down, yeah, and actually read through them. But to save time, I've gotten into this habit of I already know if it's something I'm going to cover based on the first sentence or even the subject line.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Ah, so you're looking at just even the subject line, to know if it's legit or not?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, it's a bad habit sometimes because I'm sure there could be something I might miss out on, but I do make sure that I do read through it, but am I really sitting there and giving it my full attention as I would if, say, Apple email me and they're like, "We have this new thing. Do you want to review it"? In that case, I'd make sure that it's a priority that I answer and I coordinate that, but if it's something that isn't timely or isn't really that major, because we also have to take into account our audience and our traffic and whether this is something that our readers would even want to potentially purchase or read about.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Mm. Do you look at it from that lens of, "Is my reader going to want to purchase this and if no, forget it"?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, I mean, is it useful to their everyday life? Is it worthy of even my time to review, you know?

Rebecca Bamberger:

It has to even pass that hurdle.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, yeah. There's so many products out there that, while I wish I could review everything because everyone's out there making some pretty cool things, there's also the fact that there are certain products that we need in our everyday life that'll just make it a little bit easier, so they have to be able to work well and check off these boxes of is it worth their money? Is it worth their time? Is it worth having in their house or having on them every single day?

Rebecca Bamberger:

Then what do you do in the sense of you have this product, you're like, "Eh, it's kind of lame. I was planning to review it"? What do you do? Are you just like, "Eh, okay, I'm not going to post it. I'm not going to review anything," and blaze them? Or do you move forward? The reason I ask even further is because you're rather new in this particular role, so you don't have necessarily a reputation yet established of, "Oh, god, Brenda really roasts some things if she hates it," you know what I mean? How do you think of that?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, that definitely... Well, okay. If I have the product or if I'm going to review the product and I all of a sudden realize that it's not as cool, if it's really something that our readers might care about even if it's kind of lame, then that's where that weirdness in Mashable comes in where we have that opportunity to cover it from some crazy angle, that's even if they don't want to necessarily read a standard review of, "Here are the specs, here's how to use it. Does it perform well?" We can kind of take it from a different... Here, I'll give you an example.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah, yeah. What's an example?

Brenda Stolyar:

We reviewed a charging case for a phone and a lot of the times when we review, we want to compare these products to similar ones on the market that might be cheaper or worked better, but we didn't want to do a review that literally mimicked the charging case review that I already did because I'm essentially writing the exact same thing.

Brenda Stolyar:

It's funny because we actually never got around to this one, but maybe I will. This was right before things started getting crazy with the review period, but my editor was like, "Well, what if we reviewed it by having you watch hours and hours of a show on Netflix on your phone?"

Rebecca Bamberger:

Oh, see if it pans up, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah. When it comes down to these weird scenarios of it's useful, like a charging case is useful and somebody might not want to spend \$130 on one if they can purchase one for \$75, so yeah, you have this responsibility to your readers that you do still have to review it because they do want to know, "Is it worth it? Can I settle for this one instead of that one?"

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah, can I settle for that quality at that price? I mean, that's always the bargain.

Brenda Stolyar:

Right. It's a real-world experience where we're constantly watching Netflix on our phones most of the time, so that's an important use case to see if it holds up. It's also interesting. We take it from that standpoint of instead of doing a standard review, let's do something different.

Rebecca Bamberger:

A little avant-garde. Gotcha. Ooh, that must be fun and also challenging because you got to be creative and thinking, "What's that different twist? If I've already reviewed 10 of these, how do I make it new and novel and compelling?" Do you have some favorite gadgets, by the way, that you'd love to share with everybody? What's your favorite right now? Any in particular?

Brenda Stolyar:

My favorite is typical, I'd say. My all-time favorite, and I think I'm realizing this more and more as I enter homes that don't have one, a Google Home or Google Home Mini. Yeah, it's just you don't realize how reliant you become on it, whether it's asking for the weather. There's random times where when I'm at my parents' house, I just want to randomly be like, "Hey, Google, what's the weather?" but I can't.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Oh, you catch yourself like, "Ah, dang."

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, yeah. I did that when I was also back in CES. I was in my hotel room and randomly was trying to talk to, in my head, I wanted to immediately say, "Hey, Google," and then I couldn't. I was like, "Wow, I have really become dependent, way more dependent on this thing than I thought." Yeah, I mean, in terms of why it's my favorite, it's just so simple. You can ask it questions, you can play music, podcasts. Yeah, it's just a cute little-

Rebecca Bamberger:

Do you have another favorite of sorts?

Brenda Stolyar:

... What is my other favorite? Wow. I guess I'm going to have to just say my iPhone.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah, can't live without it.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, we review so many, but yet there's still always those typical ones that we have. Yes, the staples, yep.

Rebecca Bamberger:

I hear you. Well, let's talk about, okay, we covered your inbox and what it looks like inside there. Oh, by the way, with all the pitches you get, do you ever delete? Do file? Do you folders? What do you ...? I know you get down to zero, as you said, but how do you organize, if anything?

Brenda Stolyar:

It depends on the situation. If I have, say, a conference coming up, whether that's CES or Mobile World Conference or EFA, then in that case, I will create folders for them. Whenever I got a pitch that's related

to being there, then I'll put it in that folder or I'll label it. When I know it's a major event that I cannot miss anything and I have to make sure that I'm on top of everything, I will organize them in that manner.

Brenda Stolyar:

Otherwise, though, I don't delete for sure because there's always a time where I'm having anxiety that'll have to refer back to something because there's always that scenario where they're like, "Did you get that email?" and I'm just like, "I don't know. Did I?" Then I'll have to go look. You need the receipts, let's just say that.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yes, yes. You need the receipts. I like that.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah. Yeah, I just really keep them in there in the main inbox unless there's something that really requires meticulous, like my full attention, I'd say.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). I like with the folders per the event, per the conference. Keeps it clean.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yes, very important. It's a lifesaver, for sure, especially because people still pitch you. That's another thing.

Rebecca Bamberger:

What?

Brenda Stolyar:

People still pitch you when there is a major conference going on. It's really important that certain things don't get lost amongst.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Ooh, what do you do with that where they're pitching you during, let's say, CES and it's not related to CES, but it's during that heavy time? It just goes into the regular box of sorts?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yes.

Rebecca Bamberger:

So, you don't do it. Yeah, mokay.

Brenda Stolyar:

Honestly, I'm [crosstalk 00:15:39]-

Rebecca Bamberger:

Because you're like, "Unrelated," yeah?

Brenda Stolyar:

... Yes, yes. I feel so bad. I mean, my brother, he has been in PR for, I don't even know, so long at this point.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Oh, he's on the other side? Okay, yeah.

Brenda Stolyar:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. I'm very conscious of all... Knowing the other side of it, I always take that into account. When it is CES, I think I'm a little bit more aggressive where I'm like, "Okay, literally cannot pay attention to this right now because things are so crazy." I think there's also the fact that like, thankfully most PR people are aware that...

Rebecca Bamberger:

That's going on, yeah, for you. Good, good. Well, let's do a little word association. I'm just going to give you a list and you're going to give me your first word.

Brenda Stolyar:

Oh, god. Okay.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Sometimes it's interesting. Let's see, let's see. Okay, ooh, drink.

Brenda Stolyar:

Oh, my gosh. Dr. Pepper.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Dr. Pepper? Do you drink Dr. Pepper?

Brenda Stolyar:

I do. I think I just associated it with that because I really only crave a Dr. Pepper when I eat pizza.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Okay, hobby.

Brenda Stolyar:

Reading. That's not a hobby, is it? No, that is a hobby.

Rebecca Bamberger:

That is a hobby for sure, for sure. Okay, okay. Apple.

Brenda Stolyar:



iPhone.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Samsung.

Brenda Stolyar:

Galaxy.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Smart home.

Brenda Stolyar:

Google.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Wearables.

Brenda Stolyar:

Fitbit.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Internet of things.

Brenda Stolyar:

Is wifi a word?

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah, it is. Yeah. Voice assistance.

Brenda Stolyar:

Alexa.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Foldable screen.

Brenda Stolyar:

Samsung.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Journalism.

Brenda Stolyar:

Mashable.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Pitch.

Brenda Stolyar:

Product.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Inbox.

Brenda Stolyar:

Gmail.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Okay. Oh, I love it. Okay, speaking of reading is one of your hobbies, I'm assuming, are you reading anything that you love right now? What do you read just in general to get a pulse on the world?

Brenda Stolyar:

Growing up, my family has always been into movies. That was always their bonding. I think it's because I'm younger. I'm six years younger than my brother, so he was always able to watch...

Rebecca Bamberger:

Older movies, yeah.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, mm-hmm (affirmative), so I would read. That was my big thing and apparently that's why I have glasses now because no one in my family wears glasses.

Rebecca Bamberger:

You read so much that you ha you got yourself to glasses?

Brenda Stolyar:

Literally, I had to get glasses in the fifth grade. The fifth grade. I was really young. My parents were so concerned because my brother has 20/20 vision, my parents have 20/20 vision, no one in my family has ever had to-

Rebecca Bamberger:

Uh-huh (affirmative), they're like, "What happened?"

Brenda Stolyar:

... Yeah. Well, one year, I think I was in high school and my doctor was like... Well, my dad, every single time, without fail, every time he goes, if he were to go to the eye doctor with me, he would always ask the doctor why this happened because he still doesn't understand until finally, one eye doctor was like, "Well, did she read a lot as a kid?" My dad was like, "Yeah, all the time." The doctor said that most

children who are near-sighted, there's been studies, I guess, that have shown that they've read a lot of books as a kid.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Wow. I have never heard of that, that you've read so much you had to... That's pretty cool, though. You're like, "I'm so nerdy I got these glasses because of it." Speaking of reading, yes, what are you right now reading?

Brenda Stolyar:

This is the thing, though, is I used to read so much and then life happened and I don't read as much as I do, although I was on a kick a few months back. I was reading... It's one of Reese Witherspoon's recommendations because I love her and I will read anything she recommends. I'm going to pull up my Goodreads, actually.

Brenda Stolyar:

Oh, actually, one of the ones I've read, I'm not sure if you've heard of, I mean, you probably have, but Erin Lee Carr, her book is called *All That You Leave Behind*. That's what I've recently read. She was the daughter of David Carr, The New York Times journalist. She wrote a really great memoir about her relationship with him, so that was an interesting one. *Emergency Contact*, not sure if you heard of that one. But I must say my favorite book so far that I've read recently is Busy Phillips' *This Will Only Hurt a Little*.

Rebecca Bamberger:

*This Will Only Hurt a Little*, I have heard of that.

Brenda Stolyar:

She's one of my favorite celebrities.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Do you do any movies or do you have anything you love otherwise storytelling, even your favorite Netflix?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, I definitely started to finally get into movies once I got a little older now I think I prefer it a little sometimes over books. Yeah, in terms of Netflix, I mean, we talked about this before this started, but *Schitt's Creek* is currently my all-time favorite. Let's see. What else am I currently watching on Netflix? Oh, I'm actually watching *Hunters* on Amazon Prime at the moment.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Ooh, do you like it?

Brenda Stolyar:

I do. I know there was a little bit of controversy, but I think the way that it is filmed, like the cinematography and the style, this sort of comic-book-style is very, very unique to a historical type of show. Yeah, I'm liking it so far. I have to keep up, but that's currently, I'd say, what I'm watching.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Then back to the reading thing, just to get a pulse on what's happening in tech gadgets or just tech in general, do you read any other outlets at all?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yes.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Or you scanning Reddit, anything?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, I definitely go through. I have my little filters on Google News, so every morning I scan through the different publications that I am subscribed to or checked into. I definitely read through all of the major ones, I'd say. You have The Verge and Gadget, Tech Crunch, Wired, just to make sure that I am keeping up with the major announcements or the major products because that's also another thing that's very common in our industry is we're very aligned in covering the same things, obviously, in our different voices.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah, you got to make sure it's distinct, so yeah, you got to read what the competitors are doing, I imagine.

Brenda Stolyar:

Right, right, which gets interesting when there is so much out there and you're like, "How do they have that much time in a day? I don't understand."

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah.

Brenda Stolyar:

But we're also a very tight-knit community, I'd say. I have a lot of great friends who are also in tech, so it makes it at least a little fun and competitive sometimes, yeah. Then I also, actually, in college was very interested in the arts and entertainment world in terms of journalism, so I really started with this different angle to tech, I'd say, in terms of the lifestyle lens. I definitely still read a lot of different lifestyle publications, whether that's Elle magazine or Marie Claire.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah, because you were at Elle magazine, you were at Marie Claire as intern, so you have that base, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Stolyar:

Yes. I originally thought I wanted to be in beauty and fashion, but...

Rebecca Bamberger:

Wow, look at that pivot. We definitely have to talk about that. Where'd you go, "Oh, you know what? How about tech instead?"

Brenda Stolyar:

I graduated at an interesting time from college.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yes.

Brenda Stolyar:

It was really when BuzzFeed started to take off and they were changing the landscape in terms of these listicle-type articles.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, that used to be quite the thing for them, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenda Stolyar:

Everybody adopted that because they realized it was a great way to drive traffic, but then also advertisers, and then we got into this whole commerce game, but yeah, I had to realize that it wasn't fulfilling for me personally because it was just like I was writing what everybody else was writing in a way, which I know can kind of be said for the tech world as well, but I feel like with the tech world I was, it's more fulfilling in the sense that I'm helping somebody make a choice. I'm helping someone really know what is behind the product and how it actually works as opposed to going online and reading customer reviews or something.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, I just felt like for me, I couldn't really write any more about lipstick shades and fashion. It didn't feel like I was getting my voice out there and like I was really walking away at the end of the day feeling like I helped someone, but I know that that really changed a lot because I think fashion and beauty and tech are actually intersecting now.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yes, more than ever, I'd say.

Brenda Stolyar:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). It makes me really happy because at the time, I think everybody was just a little confused. We've definitely changed from that world. I think it was just a transition period.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Speaking of that, one of our last questions we like to ask is: What does the future of journalism look like in your view? I know you haven't been in journalism for oh, three-and-a-half decades or something, or we have folks who've really seen the pivot and the change over times, but for you being a younger journalist here, yeah, what do you think?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah, I think we're seeing a lot of journalists becoming the face of the actual publications. I think with social media playing such a huge role in our coverage, we're seeing that it's not just the journalists' written work, it's a lot of who they are as a person and how they inject that into their work. As you mentioned before, there's a lot of people that are known for roasting certain products and being really harsh.

Brenda Stolyar:

I think the future of journalism is really shifting to social media, I must say. I think we're really allowing journalists to become, I know this is going to sound so weird, but in a way, become their work. We're becoming more personable, I guess you can say. It's less of just what we're doing on paper and a lot of who we are as people, which I'm not sure if any of that makes sense, but a lot of journalists are now, you'll see a person and associate them with their publication.

Rebecca Bamberger:

I think that's quite true. I think what you're saying is there's definitely personalities and the author's now finally being more face-forward than ever before, whereas, I mean, five years ago, 10 years ago, you didn't really know who the person was writing the piece, let's say. Definitely 10 years ago, it was just like, oh, that name you see, and now, it's tremendously more different. You're much more out there as the reporter and there's way more, I would say, stages and places for you to be that you lead and now, we have all these authors coming out from the journalism sphere writing and expanding upon the story that they covered and all this other stuff. There's like a celebrity-ness to journalism, I think, that's happening that I've never seen before.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah. We are now able to take these products. If they don't have an embargo, have people follow along with us, ask us anything on Twitter, follow the photography journey on their Instagram of how well the camera works. We're getting a lot into this idea of, I would say, a closer relationship with our readers in the sense that they have this easy way to connect to us and this easy way to ask us questions so that we can help them outside of the scope of, "Here, go read my review if you want to know that," you know? It's more of they are allowed to ask us these questions and they are allowed to interact with us.

Brenda Stolyar:

I think on the other end of it, I think we're also seeing, I'm going to say, more digestible content. I think that's an important one as well in terms of just really getting to the core of what people want to know rather than spending 5,000 words on a review or even on a story because our attention spans are small.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yes, yes, have shifted just a bit, yes.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah. I think in the future, we're probably going to see people realizing that A, they don't have to go by the standard review template or story template. They can really be unique with it and cover what they want to cover. I think that's the beauty of the Internet is even if you don't cover it fully in this review, you can do a one-off story or even just cover one feature of it that's super important. Yeah, I think in the future, we're going to get less, I don't want to say "scared," but we're going to be more enthusiastic, I guess, to go against what the typical standard format of journalism is.

Rebecca Bamberger:

I can't wait. Sounds nice, right?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah. I mean, I'm excited.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Well, and Mashable has already done that and pivoted notably in the last couple of years, too, with how they've evolved. I have to give credit to the outlets, too, and the fashion ones, to your point, too, that have gotten much more, I don't know, culturally aware and much more broader in their coverage instead of, "Let's review these 19 lipsticks."

Brenda Stolyar:

Exactly.

Rebecca Bamberger:

There's a lot more covered, yeah. I think that's a nice trajectory that those are going on.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yep.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Well, Brenda, the last thing we're going to do here is a fun little mad lib. If you haven't played before, I'm just going to feed you the words and then I will read it back to you what we come up with here. The first thing is just a catchphrase, just any phrase of sorts.

Brenda Stolyar:

Wait, can you give me an example? Then I'll think of one.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah, like "The early bird gets the worm," that's a super dated one, or, "Ew, David," for your show.

Brenda Stolyar:

Can I say, "Ew, David?"

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yeah, let's do it. Let's do it. Just so people know, if you're not familiar with the reference, that's from Schitt's Creek, which is a show on Amazon, very popular. Yes. Okay. Okay, then what's a journalist scare phrase?

Brenda Stolyar:

I'm going to say "Don't break the embargo."

Rebecca Bamberger:

Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative), mm-hmm (affirmative). Then what's an empowering journalism buzzword?

Brenda Stolyar:

Ooh. I'm going to say "high engagement."

Rebecca Bamberger:

Okay. What about an adjective?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yellow?

Rebecca Bamberger:

Yellow? Okay, great. Yes, yes. Then part of a pitch?

Brenda Stolyar:

Part of a pitch? Specs.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Specs? There you go. All right, another adjective.

Brenda Stolyar:

I'm just going to do another color. Let's say pink.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Then another part of a pitch? That's the last time on that, just so you know.

Brenda Stolyar:

Signature.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Okay, yes. Amount of time?

Brenda Stolyar:

Let's say a week.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Okay. Adjective?

Brenda Stolyar:

Can I say a number? Let's do eight.



Rebecca Bamberger:

Then what about singular noun?

Brenda Stolyar:

Can we do my name?

Rebecca Bamberger:

Sure. Then what about a topic?

Brenda Stolyar:

A topic? Tech.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Then a verb that ends in "ing"?

Brenda Stolyar:

Talking.

Rebecca Bamberger:

A verb, just a verb?

Brenda Stolyar:

Run.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Run, okay. Are you ready?

Brenda Stolyar:

Yes.

Rebecca Bamberger:

To me, tech journalism is "Ew, David." It consists of "Don't break the embargo" and high engagement on the daily. If a pitch has any yellow specs, I will absolutely respond to it. However, if a pitch has a pink signature, you can expect no reply from me. If a week goes by and you don't see an email back from me, you can just assume I am not eight about it. The best stories always have Brenda and usually are about tech. The best way to reach me is by talking to me, but you can also run to me.

Brenda Stolyar:

I really like that. I think that very much describes me.

Rebecca Bamberger:

It's perfect. It's funny how people have said like, "Oh, can you please send that paragraph over to me?" That's actually rather accurate. Yeah, so we have a lot of fun with that.

Brenda Stolyar:

So funny.

Rebecca Bamberger:

Well, Brenda, thank you so much for being on with us today and our coffees.

Brenda Stolyar:

Thank you for having me. This was so fun.

Rebecca Bamberger:

This was fun. Thank you so much.

Brenda Stolyar:

Yeah.

Jered Martin:

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, featuring Brenda Stolyar from Mashable. The goal of our show is to give you an in-depth look into the tech industry's most well-known and coveted journalists. We hope you found today's episode insightful. If you haven't already, make sure to subscribe to our show on iTunes, Spotify, and everywhere else you enjoy listening to podcasts. We'll see you next week with an all-new guest and even more insights. Until then, let's quit bitching about pitching and start great stories.