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Beck Bamberger: ... sure it's working. It's working. We're just going to go just like this. I used to put it on a stand. Too many people bumped it off the stand and shit.

Dave Ingram: I can imagine.

Beck Bamberger: Yep. Now it's handheld.

Dave Ingram: If your hand gets tired-

Beck Bamberger: No, I just like to control. It's good.

Dave Ingram: Okay.

Beck Bamberger: This is as sound quality proof as we can possibly get. Here we go.

Dave Ingram: Perfect. I'm ready.

Beck Bamberger: All right. Dave Ingram. Yes. All right. We're going to be starting here, so, guys, get ready.

David Ingram has a knack for tirelessly digging through complicated stories, we hear, David. This is what we've heard. Your focus is on technology and how, as you'd like to say it, it is currently changing the world. We need to identify and exactly explain that, but we will. That's why we're here.

Other than your love for technology, you're a runner, you're a cyclist, you're a bluegrass enthusiast.

Dave Ingram: This is all true.

Beck Bamberger: This is all true. This is on your Twitter too, so we know it's legit. It's true. It's on Twitter.

Dave Ingram: Everything on Twitter is true.

Beck Bamberger: This is true. Yep. As what we've heard, you're open to new ideas, and topics, and pitches in general. We're going to see how you like to best get those pieces and pitches, without annoying the hell out of you, which is what publicists can do.

Dave Ingram: No. Do they do that? I am a little inundated with pitches, so ...

Beck Bamberger: Okay. We're going to talk about that.

Dave Ingram: We'll put that out there.

Beck Bamberger: Actually, why don't we just start with that? Can you tell us about how your inbox looks on a day to day? Tell us, if you want, at 6:00 AM, what does it look like? 6:00 PM, what does it look like? What does it look like on Sunday? Is it filled with pitches on Sunday?

Dave Ingram: It's filled all the time. I try to manage it the best I can. Some days are better than others. Frankly, the number of pitches that I've gotten, and I think a lot of other tech reporters would say this, has really gotten out of hand for the amount of time we have, and where tech journalism is going.

I used to work for this editor who ... He's an excellent editor. This was back when I worked at the Charlotte Observer. He was a former White House reporter for the Wall Street Journal. He used to say that, "If it's in a press release, it's by definition not news." Which, that is probably not what a lot of people want to hear, and I think that's a little extreme, but ...

Beck Bamberger: A bit, but I get it. Because who else has that press release? Would be my question.

Dave Ingram: Exactly. So much of journalism now is getting away from the commoditized news, the same story everyone has. No one wants to write that story, and, frankly, no one wants to read or edit that story. I think, as journalists, we're all increasingly looking for the original stories based on original reporting. Which, that's the harder story to do for sure, but I think that's where the past of journalism and the future of journalism is.

Beck Bamberger: Is that via exclusives and via scoops that no one else is sending out, would you say?

Dave Ingram: Yeah. Absolutely. That's a huge part of it. Those ideas can come internally or they can come externally, but, having exclusives, that's one of the main things that reporters are looking for.

Beck Bamberger: If you saw that in your inbox, the subject line "exclusive", you're more apt to open that than "Press-release ... Tech release product"?

Dave Ingram: It's hard for me to give advice about how to write that kind of thing, because I've never been in that side of the business. It is difficult for me to say, "Here's what you should do." Going back to your original, question ... I think I currently have, I'll just say, scores of unread emails that I hope to get to-

Beck Bamberger: More than a dozen?

Dave Ingram: More than a dozen.

Beck Bamberger: More than a hundred?

Dave Ingram: Yeah. More than a hundred.

Beck Bamberger: Okay.

Dave Ingram: I hope to get that down to a more manageable number by the end of tonight.

Beck Bamberger: Is that your routine, too, to get it to as close to zero as you can end of day? How do you manage that?

Dave Ingram: A lot of it is, you scroll your inbox and see, "Has my editor emailed me this morning? Is there another name that I recognize that has emailed me this morning?"

Email's tough, because a lot of times I feel like, as a journalist, I could either do my work or I could read email. Email is not work. The email is what's stopping you from doing work. For me, the work is interviewing people, researching a company, or researching a question I'm trying to solve for a story. Preparing for interviews, the actual writing of stories. Email is none of those things.

Beck Bamberger: Yeah. But, question, is there a kernel of where the work could start ever in your inbox? In other words, a scoop, a little sprinkle, a little hint, a tip, a something? Anything?

Dave Ingram: I wouldn't rule it out, for sure. Yes, there are a lot of times when I will open an email and say, "That could be the kernel of a story," although usually I'll have four other stories I'm working on at the same time. I will save that email in a folder and come back to it later, or note it in a "works in progress" file or something.

Beck Bamberger: You do some filing of your emails to probably help the ... Okay.

Dave Ingram: Yeah. I do do some filing. I'm not sure it helps, but ... Because the filing doesn't work unless you actually go back. I think every Microsoft Outlook user will tell you that the search function on Microsoft Outlook is not what we wish it were. I'm just tearing email apart right now. I'm sorry.

Beck Bamberger: No, that's fine. Have you ever had someone pitch you otherwise that's been effective? Do you like to get DMs? Do you like to get a text message? Is there any other way, or is it still, it's an email?

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Dave Ingram: If I'm going to get a pitch, I'd prefer it by email.

Beck Bamberger: That's what everyone says, yeah. Keeps it contained. Contain the virus. It's all there.

Dave Ingram: I wouldn't say that, but ... Twitter DMs or something, or LinkedIn messages, when I get those I'm thinking, "This is someone at a company who wants to go outside official channels and tell me something they're not supposed to." That is vastly more useful than most of the pitches I get.

Beck Bamberger: That's a signal for you of information that could be very ripe?

Dave Ingram: Yeah. When I open a Twitter DM and it's just a pitch ...

Beck Bamberger: You're pissed?

Dave Ingram: Kind of, yeah.

Beck Bamberger: Yeah. Okay. Noted. Publicists. Okay. Then, to calm the inbox down, do you have any pattern? Do you try to get it like, "Okay, when it's 8:00 at night it better be to zero," or, "It's Friday afternoon. That thing is down." Or do you just keep that thing running? I've talked to some people, they're like, "There's 4,000 emails in there right now. I could tell you."

Dave Ingram: I don't have nearly that many unread emails, but I try not to stress about it. I think I used to stress about it, and used to really want to have an inbox zero or close to it. Again, it goes back to ... That's not the final product. You measure yourself and others measure you by the stories you produce, and getting to inbox zero doesn't help you with that directly.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. You're on the "no inbox zero" camp.

Dave Ingram: Yeah, I'm in the "don't stress about it" camp. Stress the important things, like ...

Beck Bamberger: The story?

Dave Ingram: Yeah.

Beck Bamberger: The best story.

Dave Ingram: "How am I going to get the CEO to talk to me?" "How am I going to find a whistleblower who will expose the latest corruption in your favorite tech company?"

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Beck Bamberger: Yes. let's talk about that, then. According to your LinkedIn, you're talking about and writing about for NBC News Digital, which you've been about a year and a half at currently.

Dave Ingram: Yeah.

Beck Bamberger: Yeah?

Dave Ingram: Yeah.

Beck Bamberger: Right. About the way Silicon Valley is "changing the world". Very aspirational of you, Dave. What would you say to that?

Dave Ingram: Thank you.

Beck Bamberger: How do we define changing the world?

Dave Ingram: It's really hard to imagine what the world was like back before the internet, but it is so different in so many ways, right? The fact that we all have a high power computer in our pockets and bags that we can use to call up information from anywhere and access any number of services, whether it's banking, or transportation, or you name it ... Of course, it's broader than that. It's where we go to work. It is the homes we live in, the financial products we buy.

Beck Bamberger: You can't escape it, in my opinion. How are you not consumed in technology today?

Dave Ingram: Right. The hard questions there are often the personal questions. The personal stories that users can tell about, for example, their addiction to different services, whether it's social media or phones themselves. It is privacy violations, of people's faces being used to build facial recognition databases without their consent. It is the regulations that are under consideration and may be passed for online advertising, either in a political context or more broadly, for how our data is collected and used by ad tech firms. It's all of those things, which is a little daunting, but ...

Beck Bamberger: Does any of it keep you up at night?

Dave Ingram: I sleep pretty well at night, actually.

Beck Bamberger: Okay.

Dave Ingram: Yeah, I sleep pretty well.

- Beck Bamberger: You don't stress about the inbox, you don't stress about tech?
- Dave Ingram: I definitely stress about stories that I'm working on. Am I making the progress that I want to make? I'm always looking for ways to be more productive with my time. If I feel like I'm behind, then certainly that might keep me up at night. I feel like it's not usually the email or the little things, I hope.
- Beck Bamberger: Or the possible tech that's looking at your face and analyzing how your children are going to look.
- Dave Ingram: I don't have children, so that does help.
- Beck Bamberger: There you go. Cross that off.
- Dave Ingram: I think part of us who have thought about it have come to a sort of uncomfortable understanding that, barring a major change in the law, that there's only so much we can do to protect our privacy. That's not to say that the principle isn't important and that we shouldn't stop fighting on behalf of our privacy, but ...
- For me, when I'm reporting a story, and I'm on the road, and I need to file using my laptop, and I need a wifi network, and for whatever reason I can't use my phone ... I'm not really supposed to use those ...
- Beck Bamberger: Free hotspots?
- Dave Ingram: Free hotspots. I look for the ones that don't say "FBI van". Certain wifi hotspots I trust more than others. That's an example of where you're giving up a little bit of security and privacy by signing into a wifi network. I immediately sign into my VPN, though, so that helps, but still. We all make, I think, little compromises, even when we're aware of the privacy implications, for the sake of convenience. Until we have a stronger regulatory legal regime in place that can ...
- Beck Bamberger: Actually control it?
- Dave Ingram: Yeah. That we can use as leverage, then then that will probably continue to happen.
- Beck Bamberger: Talk to us about how you actually come up, and create, and then publish a story. Because I think this is little talked about just with journalists, of, how do you actually write a story? Where does it start from?

Okay. You got a pitch, let's say. You heard a little tip. What happens then? How long does this take? I know some investigative stories can be months and months in the works. What's a typical one for you, and how long is that actually taking?

Dave Ingram: It's hard to generalize, but ... Because I also do, I think, all kinds of different kinds of stories.

Beck Bamberger: You cover everything from Apple, social media, cars ...

Dave Ingram: Yeah. Also I do breaking news stories, where something will happen. Let's say the California attorney general is announcing a lawsuit. I was an old wire reporter, so I will get two to four paragraphs to my editor as quickly as possible, and we'll get a story up, and then we'll build it out over time. There's a sort of breaking news drill to that.

There are longer investigations that take months and months. Then there are in-between stories, where you want to spend a couple of days, maybe a week or two, reporting, probably, that story. That you get an idea and then you want to move on it pretty quickly.

I don't think there's really a secret to it. You draw up a list of people you want to talk to, either specific people or categories. You draw up a list of ... Actually, I've had the same routine since college.

Beck Bamberger: Let's break down this routine.

Dave Ingram: Since I was a reporter in college. This is probably a little embarrassing, but, actually-

Beck Bamberger: Who cares? Let's talk about it.

Dave Ingram: It worked for me back then, and it still works for me. I just write down a whole list of questions that I want to have answered by the end of my reporting.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. You're not done with the reporting until you got all those answers, right? More or less?

Dave Ingram: Yeah, more or less.

Beck Bamberger: Then do you physically write down ... Is this happening on a notebook, piece of paper? Or this is ...

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Dave Ingram: I usually use my laptop.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. Then the names. Then you make a list also for that?

Dave Ingram: I make a list of the names, people I want to talk to.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. You go down the list.

Dave Ingram: I go down the list.

Beck Bamberger: Damn. Crossing them out?

Dave Ingram: It's a little methodical, I guess.

Beck Bamberger: Is it in order of importance, or is it just "these 10 people", all these same, equal distance? Or is it, "Okay, I got to talk to one and two first before I get to number ten"?

Dave Ingram: It's in the order of when they come to mind. As I'm brainstorming, either alone, or with a colleague, or with an editor, who do I want to talk to for a story? I will write down names of people in categories.

Beck Bamberger: Then, how do you go after those people? Cyber-stalk them? Look and see?

Dave Ingram: Everyone talks to NBC News.

Beck Bamberger: This is true. You pull that card? You hit them up and say, "Hey"?

Dave Ingram: I call them on their cell phone, and they ...

Beck Bamberger: You call them on their cell phone?

Dave Ingram: They speak to me immediately. No.

Beck Bamberger: I was going to say. I was like, "Damn, this is good privacy information."

Dave Ingram: It depends who it is. There are some people I speak to regularly who are regular sources that I can call or text.

Beck Bamberger: How do you become a regular source on your list? Good, viable information, always delivered?

Dave Ingram: Yeah, that's a good way. Things that other people don't know. Things that they're not supposed to tell me, but they do anyway.

Beck Bamberger: Juicy. How many of those people do you have? Dozens?

Dave Ingram: No comment.

Beck Bamberger: No comment. Okay. We don't know who's on the list of Dave's. Okay. All right. You got your sluice, you got your people, and you dig up the rest. Do you usually get blocked by PR people, or do they usually swoop in?

Dave Ingram: That sometimes happens, yeah. Especially if I'm contacting company employees outside the official channels, which everyone knows happens, and everyone knows sometimes you get sent to the communications department.

Beck Bamberger: Shoveled over to the PR people. When they happens, how do you feel? You're like, "Ah, shit"?

Dave Ingram: I don't take it personally. They're doing their job. As long as they understand I'm doing my job, as well. There've been a couple times where I was like, "I think this person's really going to talk to me."

Beck Bamberger: Then they got swooped?

Dave Ingram: Yeah. Actually I'm thinking of this one case in particular. I won't say the person or anything. This is someone I talked to before for stories, had been helpful. I sent them a message and said, "I wanted to talk about this subject." They said, "I'm not the right person, but I think I know someone who can help you out." I said, "Fantastic. Forward on my information, or I can call them. Whatever you think is best."

Maybe an hour or so later I get an email from the PR people.

Beck Bamberger: That's who they meant?

Dave Ingram: Yeah, that's who they meant [crosstalk 00:18:47].

Beck Bamberger: Oh, God. Lame.

Dave Ingram: They were not helpful. My expectations were raised and then crushed.

Beck Bamberger: Damn. You're thinking of one case? Someone's like, "Hey, I got somebody for you."

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Dave Ingram: "I know somebody who can help you."

Beck Bamberger: "I got somebody for you," it's the PR ...

Dave Ingram: It was the PR people. "Thanks."

Beck Bamberger: They're crossed off that list now.

Dave Ingram: Yeah.

Beck Bamberger: Crap.

Dave Ingram: They kind of are.

Beck Bamberger: What about ... What are you reading right now? What books? What do you consume?

Dave Ingram: One of my goals for 2019 was to read more books, and I have pretty much failed on that front.

Beck Bamberger: Damn. Okay.

Dave Ingram: I love books, but it has recently been hard to find time.

Beck Bamberger: What would you aspirationally like to read?

Dave Ingram: I'd like to read more novels. I know I get a lot of tech-related books that I will read parts of, or sometimes all of them. I've got a novel sitting on my sofa right now that is barely begun.

Beck Bamberger: Which one? Would you say?

Dave Ingram: Cryptonomicon by Neal Stephenson. I've read other-

Beck Bamberger: Sci-fi?

Dave Ingram: It's sci-fi.

Beck Bamberger: Love sci-fi. Great.

Dave Ingram: I'm fairly new to sci-fi. Some people get into it when they're really young, and they read everything.

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Beck Bamberger: I was reading Michael Crichton from early days, original Jurassic Park. Oh, my God.

Dave Ingram: Actually I think I've read all the Michael Crichton way back in the day.

Beck Bamberger: Airframe. That's my favorite.

Dave Ingram: Andromeda Strain, and all the ...

Beck Bamberger: That is sci-fi, Dave. Come on.

Dave Ingram: That is sci-fi. I feel like he was a crossover hit.

Beck Bamberger: He was, because ...

Dave Ingram: Because of Jurassic Park.

Beck Bamberger: Yes, and it wasn't extraterrestrial, always in space. I think people think of sci-fi in that dimension sometimes, of, "Oh, my gosh, it's interplanetary war." I'm like, "No, that is just one specific field in the sci-fi genre. Anyway. Okay.

Dave Ingram: At some point, a few years ago, this friend of mine gave me another Neal Stephenson book to read because he thought it would be relevant to tech reporting. This was Seveneves, if you've read it.

Beck Bamberger: I have heard of that. Did you like it? Did you love it?

Dave Ingram: I did. I really did. I loved it.

Beck Bamberger: I haven't read that, but I know that that's quite a popular one.

Dave Ingram: I decided I was going to read a lot more Neal Stephenson, and sort of got interrupted along the way.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. More sci-fi in 2020?

Dave Ingram: I think so. It seems like a good year for sci-fi.

Beck Bamberger: It does, because it's merging to actual real ...

Dave Ingram: I think we all need a little escapism from time to time.

Beck Bamberger: Yeah.

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Dave Ingram: I think there is a connection there. I think sci-fi is popular in the tech community. It's funny, actually Neal Stephenson used to work at Jeff Bezos's space company. You can kind of see-

Beck Bamberger: Coincidence.

Dave Ingram: Just, some of the images that come out of ... Is it Blue Origin, the name of the ...

Beck Bamberger: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Dave Ingram: The images that come out of there, of their ideas for space exploration and living seem very similar to things that were in Seveneves, for example.

Beck Bamberger: Exactly. That's why I love ...

Dave Ingram: That's the inside story.

Beck Bamberger: That is the inside story. That's why you have sci-fi. Then I think the reason techies love it so much is there's a line that can be blurred when it comes actual nonfiction. That's the world where we try to live in, is, these fanciful ideas, the things that couldn't exist, actually then do exist because of technology and innovation, and all these things.

Dave Ingram: The science isn't so unbelievable.

Beck Bamberger: Exactly.

Dave Ingram: A lot of it is there, it's just a matter of, can it be done at scale and with a reasonable cost?

Beck Bamberger: I like your sci-fi aspirations, Dave.

Dave Ingram: Thank you.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. We're going to play a little word association game now for a minute.

Dave Ingram: [crosstalk 00:22:56]

Beck Bamberger: You're going to love it. I know you're blind as a bat right now because you don't have your glasses on, so you don't even see this list. Can you see this list? No.

Dave Ingram: No.

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Beck Bamberger: Perfect.

Dave Ingram: What is it? You want one word? What do you want?

Beck Bamberger: One word. I'm going to give you one word, and then you're going to tell me immediately the first word that comes to your mind. Are you ready? There's 12 words.

Dave Ingram: Yes, I'm ready.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. First word, food.

Dave Ingram: Drinks.

Beck Bamberger: Next.

Dave Ingram: Sorry, that was [inaudible 00:23:19]. This is the warm up part.

Beck Bamberger: This is the warm up. Okay. The next one is drink.

Dave Ingram: The first ... Food, but ...

Beck Bamberger: That's crappy. Okay. Let's keep going. Hobby.

Dave Ingram: Running.

Beck Bamberger: Book.

Dave Ingram: Neal Stephenson.

Beck Bamberger: Marathon.

Dave Ingram: Finisher.

Beck Bamberger: Brick workout.

Dave Ingram: I don't know what that is. Wait, brick, B-R-I-C?

Beck Bamberger: Yeah. Is this one that you supposedly do? That's what it has on the paper.

Dave Ingram: Brick workout?

Beck Bamberger: Okay. How about let's just go to "workout".

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Dave Ingram: What is that? That's an acronym for something. What is it?

Beck Bamberger: I don't know. I'm just reading the paper.

Dave Ingram: I don't know.

Beck Bamberger: I don't know. Scratch that from the record, [Jared 00:24:06]. We don't know what that is. All right. We have no answer for that. Okay. How about fake news?

Dave Ingram: Drunk.

Beck Bamberger: Apple.

Dave Ingram: Pear.

Beck Bamberger: Facebook.

Dave Ingram: Twitter.

Beck Bamberger: Disrupt.

Dave Ingram: Ugh. Is that a word?

Beck Bamberger: Yeah, we'll use that. High tech.

Dave Ingram: I once ... No.

Beck Bamberger: One word.

Dave Ingram: I wish.

Beck Bamberger: Journalism.

Dave Ingram: Sources.

Beck Bamberger: Pitch.

Dave Ingram: Email.

Beck Bamberger: Inbox.

Dave Ingram: Full.

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Beck Bamberger: Damn. Okay. That is the conclusion of our wordplay.

Dave Ingram: Okay.

Beck Bamberger: That was pretty good. We don't know what brick workout is, but we'll get back to that. Funny you said ... Not maybe funny, but "pear" to "apple". Usually people will will say "iPhone", or "iPods". That Apple. Okay.

Dave Ingram: Or the Beatles.

Beck Bamberger: Or the Beatles. Stretch, but I can see that.

Dave Ingram: You think so?

Beck Bamberger: Yeah, I think so.

Dave Ingram: I just randomly was recently reading up about the old litigation history between Apple Computer and the Beatles.

Beck Bamberger: And? Yeah.

Dave Ingram: I'd forgotten that whole story. It's one of those weird ... Were Apple Computer and the Beatles really suing each other for decades? It's all very strange in retrospect.

Beck Bamberger: Can I tell you, I'm trying to have a moment here of understanding how they even crossed over in the same decade.

Dave Ingram: In the '60s, the Beatles set up their own company to handle their recordings and concert revenue, or ... Probably post-concerts revenue, but all their business. It was called Apple.

Beck Bamberger: Really?

Dave Ingram: It was called Apple Corps, as a pun. Whatever, three years later or something, Steve Jobs and crew, and Steve Wozniak, come along. They create Apple Computer, now known as Apple Inc. I forget exactly when the litigation began, but it was in the '70s or '80s, I think. It came to some sort of settlement that they could both coexist as long as Apple Computer didn't get into the music business, which then-

Beck Bamberger: That went out the door.

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Dave Ingram: Then they did, and there was more litigation.

Beck Bamberger: This is a good little piece of history in the tech world.

Dave Ingram: It's an odd little piece of history. IP litigation is not the sexiest topic, but when it involves the Beatles and what is now the world's largest company, or number two, one or two ... Yeah, that's pretty interesting.

Beck Bamberger: Fascinating. Now we learned a little bit. You could have said "Beatles" to that answer, yeah. Damn.

Okay. Now, bigger question. What is the future of journalism? Are you bullish? Are you bearish? What do we have?

Dave Ingram: It's going to be different, for sure. I hate to say it, but I'm bearish on many parts of journalism. Not journalism itself, but the media in terms of the economic model, because ... I used to work in newspapers, daily newspapers, in North Carolina. They aren't doing well economically.

I worked for a newspaper owned by McClatchy, which is a publicly traded newspaper chain, that has said that they're going to run out of cash in 2020 and they need to look at other options. As we see Facebook and Google's revenue growing year over year by 20-ish percent, McClatchy, my old employer, it's losing money. Sorry, its revenue is going down year over year.

Then you have places like NBC Universal, NBC News, which actually is a fantastic place for a lot of us to be right now. There are a lot of former newspaper people. I'm bullish on NBC News. I think our company has the backing to produce great journalism for years to come in the foreseeable future. But, the broader ecosystem, I'm just worried about. If newspapers are ... People are forgetting even what newspapers are. [crosstalk 00:28:49]

Beck Bamberger: I still read the newspaper every day, by the way, just to-

Dave Ingram: In print?

Beck Bamberger: Wall Street Journal, yeah. Back to back.

Dave Ingram: Thank you.

Beck Bamberger: Thank you.

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Dave Ingram: The Journal's a great paper. There are several great national papers now. But what about our local papers? What is the future of those? A lot of national outlets including NBC, we're doing quite well. I think we'll continue to do quite well.

But local news ... When you asked your question, my mind first went to the local news. I'm more than a little worried about the future of that.

Beck Bamberger: Understandably.

Dave Ingram: I frankly don't know what the answer is. You can raise only so much money from subscriptions unless you raise the price. You could raise only so much money from subscriptions, given the price point you could really charge. The advertising revenue is not there in the way it used to be.

Beck Bamberger: Damn.

Dave Ingram: Sorry.

Beck Bamberger: No. I guess you're not going back to a local paper.

Dave Ingram: Never say never.

Beck Bamberger: Okay.

Dave Ingram: It does help when billionaires decide to spend their money on newspapers.

Beck Bamberger: That's true.

Dave Ingram: That's happened in LA. It's happened in Washington DC. It hasn't happened in San Francisco yet, but ...

Beck Bamberger: It seems like a ripe town for that to happen in.

Dave Ingram: It does. Will newspaper chains even exist in five years, or will they get broken up and each local newspaper is owned by a local wealthy person?

Beck Bamberger: Yeah. Maybe.

Dave Ingram: Not exactly the ideal situation necessarily, but it's ...

Beck Bamberger: Maybe one vertical, or one way.

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Dave Ingram: Yeah. One model. Philanthropy-ish.

Beck Bamberger: Philanthropicous, yes.

Okay. We're going to go now into a hopefully fun catchphrase ending point, here. I'm going to give you ... Have you ever played Mad Libs?

Dave Ingram: Yeah. It's been years.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. It's going to be like that, but it's going to be a journalist one.

Dave Ingram: I played that a lot as a kid.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. You're going to love this. First thing, I'm going to give you what we need to say. Okay. First thing is catch phrase. What's a catch phrase?

Dave Ingram: A catch phrase for journalism, or just ...

Beck Bamberger: No, just in general.

Dave Ingram: Just in general?

Beck Bamberger: Just in general, and then I'm going to read you your Mad Lib here in just a second.

Dave Ingram: That is ... I started now remembering how this works. Catch phrase. Building a bridge to the 21st century.

Beck Bamberger: Okay.

Dave Ingram: How's that for an oldie?

Beck Bamberger: That's good. Yeah. Who used that?

Dave Ingram: That was somebody's campaign theme in the '90s.

Beck Bamberger: It was?

Dave Ingram: Was that Bill Clinton in '96?

Beck Bamberger: Damn, maybe that was.

Dave Ingram: Bill Clinton's 1996 campaign motto.

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Beck Bamberger:       Lame. Okay.

Dave Ingram:            He won.

Beck Bamberger:       I mean, yeah, something worked. Okay. Something that makes journalists cringe.

Dave Ingram:            Bad pitches.

Beck Bamberger:       Bad pitches? Yes. Okay. I'm writing these down. Then, how about a quote empowering PR or journalism buzzword?

Dave Ingram:            They're just too many. Artificial intelligence.

Beck Bamberger:       Yeah. That's a good one. Okay. Then, adjective.

Dave Ingram:            Slowly. No, that's an adverb. You want an adjective.

Beck Bamberger:       Like "pretty".

Dave Ingram:            That's a boring one.

Beck Bamberger:       That is a boring one. That's a very bland one. Bland. There you go.

Dave Ingram:            Bland.

Beck Bamberger:       Okay. Bland. I kind of always liked the word "bland". I wish it had a sexier definition. Anyway. Part of a pitch.

Dave Ingram:            Like a PR pitch?

Beck Bamberger:       Yeah.

Dave Ingram:            The headline.

Beck Bamberger:       Headline. Okay. Few more. Another adjective.

Dave Ingram:            Colorful.

Beck Bamberger:       Colorful, good. Then another part of a pitch.

Dave Ingram:            Phone number.

Beck Bamberger:       Okay. This'll be interesting. Okay. Amount of time.

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Dave Ingram: 72 hours.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. 72 hours. Plural noun.

Dave Ingram: Horses.

Beck Bamberger: Horses. I love it.

Dave Ingram: I'm doing the first thing that comes to your-

Beck Bamberger: No, I love it. That's how you ... Yeah. Emotion.

Dave Ingram: Happiness.

Beck Bamberger: I love those. Horses and happiness. Dave ... Topic.

Dave Ingram: North Carolina politics.

Beck Bamberger: What?

Dave Ingram: That was my first real [crosstalk 00:33:53] as a reporter.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. All right. North Carolina politics.

Dave Ingram: They're really fascinating, by the way.

Beck Bamberger: Okay. Verb-ing, so like "jumping".

Dave Ingram: Spilling. [crosstalk 00:34:06]

Beck Bamberger: As in what we're trying not to do on the computer right now. Okay. Then a verb without the "ing", like "run".

Dave Ingram: Cycle.

Beck Bamberger: Cycle. Okay. Are you ready? I'm going to read it back to you.

Dave Ingram: Yes.

Beck Bamberger: Here we go.

Dave Ingram: I'm ready.

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Beck Bamberger: Okay.

Dave Ingram: Am I allowed to laugh?

Beck Bamberger: Yeah, no, please allow all laughter to happen. Okay. Here it is.

To me, tech journalism is building a bridge to the 21st century. It consists of bad pitches and AI on the daily. If a pitch has a bland headline, I will absolutely respond to it. However, if a pitch has a colorful phone number, you can expect no reply for me. No 777, or whatever those 666 numbers. Okay.

If 72 hours goes by and you don't see an email back from me, you can assume that I am not happy about it. The best stories always have horses and are usually about North Carolina politics. The best way to reach me is spilling it to me, but you can also cycle to me.

Okay. Get creative out there.

Dave Ingram: I have a new LinkedIn bio.

Beck Bamberger: Perfect. I love it. Thank you, Dave. Thanks for hanging out with us today.

Dave Ingram: My pleasure.

Beck Bamberger: I don't know what the future of journalism looks like, but I hope it has horses.

Dave Ingram: I've written at least story about horses.

Beck Bamberger: Really.

Dave Ingram: I am optimistic I will write at least one more, because ... Yeah.

Beck Bamberger: Horses and happiness.

Dave Ingram: Because I'm sure that if there's not a company that is planning to disrupt the horse business, I'm sure there is one coming down the line. I hope I will get that pitch.