

[Jered Martin:](#) Welcome to our very first episode of Coffee with a Journalist, and it's a podcast that's just that: we've got coffee; we've got journalists; we've got lots of good conversation.

[Jered Martin:](#) I'm Jered Martin. I'm the co-founder and COO at OnePitch.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) And I'm Beck Bamberger. I'm also the co-founder of OnePitch, the CEO of Ban Communications, and your host for today's podcast, talking to Kerry Flynn from Digiday.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) I love this conversation with Kerry. If you guys have not heard her before, she's an absolute delight, full of energy, and she also did nothing in her undergrad related to journalism.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) She actually studied at Harvard, very fancy, and had a degree in environmental science and public policy. So she doesn't use that necessarily in her day to day of her journalism job now, but it's an interesting way she's incorporated her background into her day to day job now. Let's take a listen.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Kerry, thank you for being here.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Thanks for having me.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) It's Coffee with a Journalist, and you are actually drinking coffee.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I love coffee, especially, what time is it? Is it, like, you have it on [DT 00:01:08]. [crosstalk 00:01:08]

[Beck Bamberger:](#) I have PT time. It's my California time.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Got it. [crosstalk 00:01:12]. Well, in New York, it's 3:00 p.m. which is round two of coffee for me.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Round two?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) For sure. I need morning coffee, afternoon coffee, sometimes a night coffee.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Does it keep you awake ... wait. First off, this is Kerry Flynn. She's at Digiday. We're going to talk about media and all things good related to that.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) And maybe why you hate publicists and other things, but we'll see where we go.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Don't put words in my mouth.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) No, I'm not, Kerry, I'm not. Let's just dive in.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) How many coffees do you average-drink a day?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) It depends on the day. For instance, I went to bed at 9:00 p.m. last night and woke up at 8:00 a.m., so I feel really-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Luxury.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... refreshed because I woke up before 4:00 a.m. four days in a row. I feel like I'm like a bear sometimes, and I have to hibernate.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kerry Flynn:](#) If not, those 4:00 a.m. days, I was surviving on coffee. That's the thing. It's a drug. It's caffeine.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Today, because I slept so much, it's a two-coffee day.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Two-coffee. All right. Were you drinking coffee way back at Harvard?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) That's when you started. That's what you started.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) We're going to get into the coffee.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) We need the scoop, yes.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) One of my best friends growing up, she started drinking coffee probably when she was like 12. Me, I didn't like coffee, but before college, she was like, "Here, you're going to have to start to learn to like coffee because in college, like that's what everyone does."

[Beck Bamberger:](#) That's what they do.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) In high school, my friend would take me to Dunkin' Donuts, I'm from Massachusetts, and she got me start drinking lattes, which at Dunkin' is essentially sugar.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And then slowly but surely, I got to black coffee.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Oh, that's-

[Kerry Flynn:](#) As I'm drinking today.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) ... it's just black.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) So that's my story-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Not for me.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... on how I became a coffee addict because my best friend-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Oh.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... told me that I would have to have it to survive in college. So, yes it-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Did it work?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yup. I drink a lot of it. Then I got into Red Bull, am still a fan of Red Bull.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Sugar-free or regular?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) The regular. [crosstalk 00:03:01]. Sugar-free is horrible.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Oh, I never. I don't drink any of it, so-

[Kerry Flynn:](#) That's the worst. Red Bull has a horrible after taste that you get used to. Sugar-free, you never get used to.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Ew.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) It's just like ...

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Wow. Okay.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) That's my personal preference.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Obviously, Red Bull does not sponsor this, so we can shit on those brands.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I'm actually going to a Red Bull event tonight.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Oh, God. I hope you get some Red Bull then. The regular.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Me, too.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) First off, you do not have the traditional path, you were studying environmental science and public policy. How did you then end up in the media? You had some internships, but-

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) ... how'd you get into that?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I guess going back to age 12 is when I got into journalism. One of my friends, different friend, I guess we were like in middle school. She was interested in newspapers and was like, "We should start a publication," because my middle school didn't have one. And we both loved writing, reading.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And I was like, "Oh, that'd be great."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) We actually never ended up doing it, but when we both went into high school, we decided to work on the paper together. And so, she was kind of my inspiration. Also, my grandfather used to work in advertising, The Wall Street Journal.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I kind of had these connections to the industry. Once I got in, I got hooked. I loved [crosstalk 00:04:09] writing. I loved story-telling, but the thing about college, the reason why I studied environmental science is the school I went to didn't have journalism, and I kind of went into college being like, "You don't have to study journalism to be a good journalist."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I had all ready been a journalist essentially since age 13, you know, and editor in chief for my high school paper. See, that's not everything, but it's still something-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yeah.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... that I learned. I took a class in high school, and I practiced. When I went to college, I was like, and I went to Harvard, I was like, "I only have four years at this school. I want to study something that I think is going to be super important and will give me a great education."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) At the time, when I went to college, I actually, my [inaudible 00:04:49] was all about studying immigration because this was 20, 2009, 2010, when DACA and a lot of stuff was kind of bubbling, and as a story teller and someone in the news, I was like, "I'm going to go to study that."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) My first year, I had that thing, where freshman year you kind of discover who you are and what you're interested in, and I ended up taking a class about climate change. I was always fascinated by animals and life in the sea and stuff like that, but I-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) The life in the sea ...

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... the life in the sea, that was one of the classes that I took. I ended up completely changing and decided to study science. Because again, going back, I

was like, "I only have four years at this school. I'm going to take these rigorous science classes."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I don't need someone to teach me how to write or read. I've been doing that my whole life. The thing that's a little bit harder, and the thing that I appreciate having the knowledge in, is climate policy.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) So anyway, that's my background. I do nothing with that today.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Okay. But then, you were working in the news executive, right? And it is related to Harvard, and you were doing some free-lancing stuff. So you were all ready touching it. You had a bunch of internships, I see.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah. That's because that's a way into media. I knew I wanted to study science, but I knew I wanted to be a reporter, so a way into that was to have a job in that. So I was a part of my college paper, The Crimson. That was kind of my life.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) But then in the summers, I worked at a bunch of different papers. Actually, my first summer internship between freshman year and sophomore year of college was a PR internship.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) On the other side of the equation, a little part of me was like, "All right. I've been doing journalism for awhile, but I know there's whole other side to this industry, and I want to see what that's all about."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) It'd gotten to the point of I ended up, I said loved life in the sea. I love oceanography, so I ended up doing PR at an aquarium. It'll give me the two-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Wait, wait-

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... things I love: aquariums and experience in PR.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) But not just any aquarium, Kerry: Mystic Aquarium. But within Mystic, Connecticut, I've never heard of Mystic.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yes, my parents actually live near there now. It's southeastern Connecticut. I, now as a person who in PR there, it's actually one of the largest outdoor aquariums in the world, other than Georgia Aquarium.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Huh. Who would have thought?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah, it's great, and what's cool about it, so I'm sure you know of the Titanic.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yes.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) The guy who discovered the remains, like they knew where they were, but the guy who went and dug them up, Robert Ballard, he donated to that aquarium, and that's why it's actually called Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Because it's all about deep-sea diving and exploration. They have a whole Titanic exhibit now.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) It's super cool. It's a unique aquarium. You should really go visit.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Nice.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I don't work there anymore.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) In Mystic, Connecticut.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah, they have beluga whales. If you've ever seen a cute video of a beluga whale at an aquarium, like engaging with someone, it's most likely from Mystic Aquarium.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Hm.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) That was a great experience, but I did that for two months essentially, a summer internship, and then I was like, "All right. I don't want to do this PR thing."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I actually liked the other side.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Oh, okay.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) But I appreciated the experience.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) You got a little bit of the flavor.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) It made me appreciate what the other side does, you know? There's a lot people in my industry who don't really get it, and as someone who is on the other side, I get it.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) You get it. You get it now.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Then you did a bunch of internships, so let's talk about how'd you get your first job? So your first job?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) My first real job.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yeah, your first real job. [crosstalk 00:08:06].

[Kerry Flynn:](#) **Yeah, there's a lot of internships because that's kind of the one way to get into journalism-**

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yes.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) You kind of got to not get paid for awhile, or get paid like \$10 an hour and it sucks, but that's-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) What you're doing.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... journalism sometimes. So I did that. I interned at Money Magazine. That was when I was still in college. Then I interned at Forbes right after college. Then I went to HuffPo's.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) All of these are opportunities where if you work your butt off, and you like it, then maybe you get to stay there. But those places that I just mentioned, nothing against those companies, I didn't have that great of an experience. Not to say I didn't make connections. Not to say I didn't learn. But I didn't really like it.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) There was a time, when my HuffPost internship was over and I was like, "Oh, no. I don't know what to do. Maybe I'm not right for this journalism thing."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Like, I know-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Oh.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... because once your, you know, it's different from college. You're in real New York media-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yeah.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) ... and you're like, "This place, this is hard."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And everyone around me doesn't really like their life and everyone's getting laid off. And I have to write all this click bait stuff. It's just journal ... really? Journalism is way different than me being a little newspaper kid and in college.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yeah, at Harvard.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) At Harvard, yeah. It's a very different ... but I was at this point. It was, what, 2015, and I debated what I was going to do.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I was like, "Maybe I just leave it all behind."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Even though I'd been doing this since I was 12. Luckily, I made a mentor who actually reached out to me when I was at HuffPost, and she asked me, her name is Karen [Novak 00:09:33], I love her. She, I called her my side mom because she's like a second mom now to me.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) A side mom.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) But she had reached out to me. It was my last two weeks at HuffPost, and she was like, "Hey, does so-and-so still work there? I have a company that I want to pitch her."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And I was like, "Oh, no. Actually, she doesn't work there anymore."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And it was like, "Oh, well, can I pitch you?"

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And I'm like, "Actually, no. I'm leaving this job."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And she's like, "Oh, what are you doing next?"

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And I'm like, "Honestly, I don't know."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And she's like, "Oh, well I know someone who's hiring."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And I was like, "Oh, okay."

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And she actually ended up introducing me to this guy, Michael [Learmonth 00:10:02], who ended up, he worked at a company called International Business Times, which is owned by Newsweek, and it has a lot of scandal to it.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) But anyway, it was a great job, and she introduced me to him. He's now the news director at [inaudible 00:10:12]. Obviously, now I'm at Digiday. But he was the guy ... she saw something in me; he saw something in me, and that's when I got my first job.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And that's to say that mentorship and connections and networking, you know how people hate networking? That helped me get into this job. It's the reason why I'm still here today. I could be ... I'm not, still here, but the reason why I'm in journalism still today.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) It works, networking.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) It was lucky because someone slid into my DMs on Twitter and asked me for something, and I said, "Oh, I can't do that." But she was like ... it was crazy.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) See? Okay. This is good [fodder 00:10:47].

[Beck Bamberger:](#) You were there for about a year and a half, and you end up in Mashable and now. Then you're- [crosstalk 00:10:52].

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Well, the company collapsed.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yeah.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) That's the issue. It was a great time. I loved my time there. ... It's how I got into what I cover today. I covered tech. I was at Forbes and HuffPost, but then I was at-

PART 1 OF 3 ENDS [00:11:04]

[Kerry Flynn:](#) For today, I covered tech. I was at Forums and Huff Post, but when I was at IBT, I got into covering social media and kind of just the business of social media. And now as I cover today, that's all advertising. So yeah, I kind of specialized in that. When my company collapsed, everyone got laid off, I had a lot of interviews, ended up joining Mashable-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) So let's talk about that because you've seen very early in your career, unlike some people we talk to who they're like 25-year vets and such.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah, yeah.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) You've seen a complete shutdown of a place. A total layoff of yeah, we no longer exist. Not even a layoff but like we don't exist.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) What's weird, because they still exist but they don't. But yeah, I've really been a part of a lot of turnovers at media companies, probably because I've been in the digital world. At the same time, there are obviously layoffs at newspapers. But I was a part of Huff Post until it was like maybe a month later they got bought by Verizon, so that was crazy turnover I was a part of. When I was at Forbes actually before that, they got bought by that Hong Kong company. So I was like an intern there and we had this meeting where Steve Forbes was ... essentially the whole Forbes family kind of gave up ownership and ended up selling out. Luckily no one got laid off but it was like, I experienced it like wow, there's a lot of things that happen in this industry. A lot of things that change on a moment's notice.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And then obviously the biggest thing I was a part of was IBT when they had massive layoffs because they just weren't making money. You can read about it in a lot of papers. Just Google IBT and you'll learn all the problems they have.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) So yeah, it was traumatizing to lose all of my colleagues. I wasn't a part of the first round of layoffs. I was saved. I was one of the quote-unquote "lucky ones." But you lose your entire ... all your friends that you made. I mean you don't lose

them, hopefully they're still your friends, but all of a sudden all your colleagues are gone, right? And then I was finally laid off.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And then I joined Mashable who had layoffs like two months before I joined they had massive layoffs. They pivoted to video. And then a year later I'm a part of this company and they again have massive layoffs. So anyway, no place is safe.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) No place is safe. That's our take-home message today.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) But luckily if you keep working hard, which I think I do, hopefully you'll find new places to be a part of and a good home. Digiday is great. One reason when people ask me, they're like "Why are you joining Digiday?" and I was like, "Well, they're profitable."

[Beck Bamberger:](#) And do you know that? Do you know [crosstalk 00:13:17] for a fact ... okay.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah, I've never been a part of a profitable company until I joined Digiday.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Wow!

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Most media companies are VC funded. Which is great, you can grow for VC money but also it's super unhealthy and unstable. So Digiday I feel like is a safe space because they don't just rely on advertising revenue. We have a balanced diet of subscriptions, advertising, events, awards. It's great.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Okay. So hopefully we won't be seeing anything going on over there [crosstalk 00:13:50].

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I don't think so. It would be really ironic because we write about it now. That's what ... Digiday covers the behind-the-scenes kind of inside baseball but really important to this industry, right? We write for people in media and marketing and we write about the industry. So we write about when companies have layoffs. But the whole point is we don't just write, "Oh this company had layoffs," we're like, "Why did this company have layoffs?"

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Why, why.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) What are the lessons learned? To get back to the Mashable story, it's like maybe pivoting to video was a bad idea, right? Maybe we shouldn't do that again. So that's cool to be a part of.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative). What do you think is the best ... well, we're gonna talk about your inbox in just a second, but in terms of what you cover now, which is in the niche of marketing and the brands and such that are in this sphere of all the things that do, what is the most compelling to you as an interest? So for

example, the reason I'm asking this is you said, "Oh, so and so company has layoffs, but why?" That I would want to be totally ... I would dig so deep to figure out really really why that happened. So is there anything that's sparking you right now with what you cover?

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Yeah, well to my inbox, I guess one thing that I'm working on today is one of my favorite companies to cover is Snapchat. And obviously I can write about like, oh, there's a brand that used Snapchat, but I love to talk about like okay, why are you using Snapchat, right? There's this narrative that Snapchat is dead, all my friends joke that no one uses it, but I'm like, okay but there are these companies here and I really want to know why. What I cover and what I tell people I cover is like following the money, right? And people say like, "Oh, well the money's in Facebook, the money's in YouTube, the money is still in television." I'm like, okay but clearly there's money going to other places. Why are you still dedicating those dollars? What is happening there that maybe other people are ignoring?

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

Why is it one of your favorite companies to write about? Because you never know.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

I think ... you never know. Things are happening there. I think because it's young so it's interesting. It's also ... I have an affinity to it because it came out when I was ... Snapchat the platform came out when I was in college, so I'm an active user of it, so I feel like I've ... because it's interesting. I think one thing when I joined IBT and even before IBT, I felt like I was competing against ... I was, I am to this day competing against people who have 20 years of experience on me. And they go in and they write about Facebook. And Facebook came out maybe when they were in college, or when they were in the field. And I'm like oh gosh, I don't know. I don't have Zuckerberg's cell phone number because I was on the ground when Facebook launched.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

So what is helpful as a young reporter is covering things that maybe older reporters are overlooking or don't have as much context in because it's a little-

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

They weren't in it early enough.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

They weren't, exactly. So that's a benefit there. Obviously now I cover Facebook to this day and I don't feel as intimidated. But it's a little harder when you're first starting and you're trying to make or break it and you've got competition from the big guys.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

Who are the big guys to you? We don't need to say names, but as you think about-

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Well no, just-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) ... competition.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) The big networks, right. And I worked ... obviously I worked at great companies, IBT was a little hard. But I guess you go back and I will name names, like I remember I was at a Facebook event and I was sitting next to Mike Isaac who everyone loves, Mike Isaac is a great reporter. But I'm sitting next to Mike Isaac and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, this guy's great." And he's sitting there, I had my laptop on the desk and I'm diligently taking notes and I know I have to file a story because that's how my company worked. Mike Isaac's just sitting there with like his notepad and a pen and maybe writing like two things down and I'm like, ahhh. It's like what am I missing?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) But no, it's fine. We're all great. I hate to say "competing" because I think one thing that gets lost sometimes in this industry is in journalism, we all have the same goal. Right? We're all trying to tell stories. And I think one thing that's helpful and that I think Digiday does a good job of, it's like if someone else writes something, don't just re-write it. And so many companies do that. And again, one thing I love about my current job is we don't do that. If someone writes something we're like great, awesome, good story. Let's further it. Let's further tell this narrative. What else did they miss in that story that we can add on and contribute to the narrative rather than just re-writing something and filling your inbox or your Facebook feed with stories you don't need to read again?

[Beck Bamberger:](#) We did touch on your inbox.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) How bad is it? How many pitches are you getting a day?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I don't know, I feel like there's this whole narrative. One of my colleagues, I won't name names, but like everyone complains about how full their inbox is. My inbox is really full but I'll just mark as read. If I don't like it, I'll just mark as read. There are some people who want to respond to every one and I'm like, no. I get a lot of emails. I get a lot of emails. I'm on my phone all the time though, I'm always on my laptop so I see the subject lines. Do I respond to all of them? No. But some people are so intimidated and they're like, "Oh, half my job is responding to emails," and I'm like, "Maybe you're not doing your job right. You don't have to respond to every email. You don't have to look at every email."

[Beck Bamberger:](#) This is true.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) And that's why people ask me, "Oh well how do I break in your inbox, should I not bother to email you?" And I'm like maybe, I don't mind if you'll send me a press release and maybe there's the power of searching your inbox. So right now I'm writing about Pinterest and I don't cover Pinterest as much as I do other

companies. So just like this morning, I just searched in my inbox and I'm like "Pinterest" and I'm like, who has reached out to me with anything. That's not to say I'm gonna immediately respond to anyone who ever said "Pinterest" in an email to me. I will see it, and be like oh, actually this company did X campaign last month, let's see how it did.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Kerry Flynn:](#) So my inbox is a powerful thing.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Oh, so you're really mining it for potential resources.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Totally.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Sources.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah, where I know some people the annoying thing that I think lots of people do is like, news happens. Like I said earlier, news happens and everyone writes about it, right? Maybe we don't do that. And so people will email me and be like "Resource for X thing" and maybe right at the time I'm not gonna respond to it and then that's probably sad for that person because they maybe hopefully wanted a response. But maybe two months later I search in my inbox being like "All right, who's capable of talking about Pinterest?" Again, that doesn't mean I'm gonna immediately reach out to this person. I'm gonna do my own due diligence to be like, is that person really qualified to talk about X? Can they really add to it? And maybe I will though. So inbox, people hate on the inbox. I love my inbox.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yeah, yeah. Love your inbox.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) But maybe it's not a place to reach me in real time is one thing I'll say about that.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Where can people reach you in real time? Let's clarify that a little bit more. Publicist. You just, I would say, you can't be reached in real time by a publicist, why would you want to be reached by a publicist [inaudible 00:20:28] time?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I think it depends. So actually because I have good relationships with some people, like some PR people who I will immediately respond to them. Someone this morning Twitter-DMed me and I think that's an easy place to reach me, and was like, they were just responding like ... they said, "Kerry, Kerry, Kerry" and so I replied, I'm like, "What?" And they're like, "Oh, XYZ." And I'm like, "Oh yeah." And I respond immediately because that person already did their job of building a relationship with me. And then they knew me and they were like, "You're

gonna be interested in this," so they DMed me to tell me "Hey, let's talk about this now," rather than it getting lost in my inbox.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

And what about the relationship? So this person built a relationship you said. What did that look like for people who are listening? We mostly have publicists who are listening going like, "Oh, how do I know journalists more," You know. "What do they really think, how do I really break into this," etc. So what does the crafting of the relationship look like?

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

I think having those initial coffee meetings are helpful. I don't remember with this person. But in general, I actually just made an ask to a publicist, only like an hour ago to give more real-time examples. She made an introductory meeting to someone I think last month. A marketing executive of a company, and at the time they were doing a bit PR push of new content and I was like, "I don't cover that, but I'll have the meeting, I'll sit down with this person." And then for a story that I'm working on this week I actually practically reached back out. It was kind of like that thing where this person knew that I'm not gonna cover this in real time but kind of made the time for me, because they ... wanted to make this intro because they knew that it may be that valuable ...

PART 2 OF 3 ENDS [00:22:04]

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

And wanted to make this intro because they knew that it's maybe that valuable resource in the future. I think that's one thing that's awesome is that it's less of a give take, you know, like, "Oh man, I have to set up these meetings and I need coverage right then. If I don't get coverage, my client's going to kill me. I think it's also about, I think what this person did is be like, "Hey, this person is worth your time to meet with because you're going to start to build a relationship with them." Don't immediately need something from them, but know that like probably a month later, if the conversation goes ball, they're going to reach back out to you. And that's exactly what happened. Then same thing with the other person.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

But that was okay at that point because now you have this relationship and you trust the source.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Yeah. And it's just not like ... It didn't feel needy. You know where it's like-

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

Desperate.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Exactly. Why didn't you write about by my colleagues? I need this right now. And I'm like, but you know how Digiday works and I work and we don't write those press releases.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

Do you get that? Of this desperate like-

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

But Kerry! We need help here. This is really important. But no, and I think that's important. One thing that I always tell people to do and, and one thing I was saying I do is, to use the term, is stalk people. One thing that I love and appreciate when publicists do is really understand who I am and what I cover. So one thing that I'm going to have to update in my bio right now, and this is my fault, is like right now I'm a marketing reporter and essentially I cover ads on platforms.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Which you can easily see if you just scan through the articles that I write and it says it in ... but no, actually changing in my Twitter bio, which is another good place to go to see what journalists do. It says platforms because actually my beat is a little expanded now and I cover ads on platforms and publishers on platforms. So that's something that maybe a journalist today would reach out to me or publicist reached out to me being like, "Hey, do you want to write about this new video thing?" I'm like, "Hey, no. I have a colleague who literally covers video day to day. You should be reaching out that person." Clearly this person didn't do their research. If you went to digiday.com, you would be able to see what people do. So don't just like email me and be like, "Oh this is the perfect story of you."

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

I'm like, "No, it isn't. Look at what I cover."

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

And there is so many of us.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

"Look at my Twitter bio."

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

So do you respond to those people?

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Yeah, I do. I do a thing where I responded being like, why didn't you reach out to my colleague? You know, and don't spam them obviously. Just suggesting that I don't cover this, but future if you want to talk to someone like this. I've even done that, again, for people that I have relationships with, there'll be like, "Oh, I have this story." And I'm like, "Actually like I think someone at this outlet may be better suited for this thing because it's not a Digiday story or it's not a me story."

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

And is that feedback well received?

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

I hope so. I hope so because I feel like, you know, it's a weird thing.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

It's like kind of like telling people how to do their jobs, but I'm not trying to do that. I'm trying to be like this to be honest. Yeah. Not me. Maybe this person. Good luck. Bye. Talk to you again soon, next time. Well, maybe it's true. Right? Like I said with that example of today, right? I reached back out to that person. I'd be like, guess what? I would love to talk to your client. It would be amazing.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) See they were patient and it comes around.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Patience pays off, I hope.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Okay. We have to talk about this because it's on your Twitter bio.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Okay.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) You have your phone number. Is that your cell number?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) There is my phone number?

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Do people call this number?

[Kerry Flynn:](#) People do call that number. I think one of my favorite examples is when I added that, someone, and as you can see on Twitter, I tweet all the time.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Yeah, you do.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) There is sometimes I tweet and I say something and people, like I'll say something about one of the companies I cover, and this has happened multiple times. People at that company will call me, and this is not PR people. I'm saying people internally who work at the company and want to tell me something, and that's why I have my phone number on there because some people may be internally at the company, let's say it's Twitter, they're not going to DM me, you know, a phone is like a safe form of communication. Also that phone number is same thing on signal, you know, private encrypted messaging apps. So that's why I put it up there.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Good.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) There are some people who are like, DM me for my phone number and I'm like, here it is.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) There it is.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) There it is.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Right out there.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) But one thing-

[Beck Bamberger:](#) That's rare.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) It's rare.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) You don't see a lot of people do that.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) **But I'm like, it's the type of thing were you gotta ... don't call me with something bad. Don't pitch me something that's not worth my time. It's just like knowing your medium. Maybe you have something that you should send me a quick DM about or maybe something that's worth an email or I don't know, something else. But the phone number is there for a reason. Not for everything.**

[Beck Bamberger:](#) You better use wisely.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yes.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Do you have a do not call list, like people who you know.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I don't. I remember my old boss, [inaudible 00:04:42], had a black belt. I don't know if he still does, but when I worked for him, if people did me wrong, I would be complaining about someone, he would put them on a list.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) People have those lists. I don't have one. There are people that I don't love, but I would never not. I'd never blackmail someone in the industry. I've never, not blackmail. I would never black list someone in the industry because what if? This industry is small.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) It's short-sighted. And it is small.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) Yeah, because what if they work at a different company? They have different clients? I can't. That would be bad.

[Beck Bamberger:](#) Longterm thinking, Kerry. I like it. Speaking of, what do you think of the future of media in five, 10 years? Where are we going to be at? That's what I always like to ask people.

[Kerry Flynn:](#) I think one thing that's weird is like, so I said I worked at a lot of like digital first companies and we've seen a lot, I know my colleagues who cover more of the publishing industry have covered more consolidation, right? It's hard to be an independent media company. My company, Digiday we're profitable, but again, that's very rare these days. There are some good ones. There's not my favorite publication, but Axios, is a newish company that's doing very well right now. One of my old colleagues works at this company called Futurism. So they cover cool future stuff, right? They write about Elon Musk a lot and they're, I think they're doing super well. There are all these new media companies. In terms of what's the future, I'm curious of anyone jumping in and doing more of that. I'm just predicting probably more consolidation. We've seen a rise of like Vox media

doing super well. So having these umbrella companies that can take advantage of having verticals.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

I'm curious to see more of that. So the success of niche publications like Axios, which, I don't know at the same time, and I feel like they're doing everything these days, but then there's like Inverse and Futurism, which are two publications featuring very much the Elon Musk stories of the world.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

What would you tell yourself or let's say a college freshman who's coming to Harvard who's like, "Oh, journalism. I wrote for my school paper." **Would you tell them to go into media? What'd you tell him to be journalists?**

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

I totally would. I will happily say there was one time I was at an event in college and Crimson alumni will come back and I will probably say Jeff Zucker, who works at CNN, at the time, he worked at NBC and he had just gotten laid off from NBC and he gave this talk and he was like, "Media sucks. Blah Blah Blah." **Essentially he was saying that you shouldn't work in media because it's so hard and I would take what he said and be like, "Yes, media is really hard."**

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

As we talked about earlier, **I was a part of crazy turbulence and I actually almost left the industry because I was like, maybe I don't belong here because it's so sad and hard and I don't really like what I'm covering. But I'd say stick with it. I think again, like I said, people make fun of networking. How networking sucks. I would say don't think of networking as that way. Think of networking as super valuable.**

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Learn, meet people who work at other companies because, like we talked about, the media industry is super small. Fun fact: when I had met the former CMO of Digiday like four years ago and we had exchanged business cards and he doesn't work there anymore, but it was the type of thing where now I'm over at Digiday. Make connections, learn what other publications are, don't give up. Journalism's great. It's not as glamorous as maybe people make it out to be, but it's really fun.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

Awesome. So get into journalism, folks.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Yes.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

Thank you for being here, Kerry.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Thanks for having me.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

Look, and you drank.

[Kerry Flynn:](#)

Oh no. I'll finish it.

[Beck Bamberger:](#)

We're working on the coffee. All right.

[Jered Martin:](#)

Thanks for listening to our very first episode of coffee with a journalist featuring Kerry Flynn from Digiday. If you're a journalist who loves coffee or a publicist who loves this podcast, we'd love to hear from you. Had to onepitch.co to drop us a line. Until then, let's end bad pitches and start great stories.

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