**Jered:** “Welcome to the second season of Coffee With a Journalist - a podcast featuring the tech industry’s most well-known tech journalists. We uncover the real person behind the stories you love to read. We discuss their beat and news coverage, what their inbox looks like and a whole lot more.

**Jered:** I’m Jered Martin, the co-founder and Chief Operations Officer at OnePitch. Our host for the show is Beck Bamberger: the co-founder of OnePitch, CEO of BAM Communications, and a current journalist.

**Beck:** Okay. Yes. Now look, see. You can see how here we're going.

**Alex**: Hey.

**Beck**: We're rolling. We are rolling. Fantastic. Alex Wilhelm, him, helm.

**Alex:** Wilhelm.

**Beck:** Helm. Why is it hard for me? Let's try it again.

**Alex:** You're not the first person to fuck that up, so don't worry.

**Beck:** Okay. All right. Today on the show guys, we have Alex Wilhelm.

**Alex:** There you go.

**Beck:** We got it. The Editor in chief at Crunchbase news right now. Many of you are quite familiar with him. He has a huge Twitter following, has quite a lot of great comments that are on the internet on a continuous basis, and you basically cover money and where startups intersect.

**Alex:** Yes. Yeah.That is the that's the main, that's the main goal. So I love the middle ground between finance and tech, and that kind of puts you right where startups do finance, and it's kind of the venture capital, private equity, exit, MNA kind of world. Anything in there is my favorite place to be.

**Beck:** Which is why I mentioned that photo that's on your Twitter homepage, which can you tell people what that is? Because some people might look at that, not knowing why is there a negative profit or whatever that is in some clear form of someplace, some company.

**Alex:** Yeah. So the header image on my Twitter account is, and I know, I want to fact check myself now that I'm saying this on a recording.

**Beck:** Yeah, yeah.

**Alex:** But I'm 90% sure that it is a screenshot from one of Box's original s-1 filings. And back then, people were very surprised at how much money Box was losing because people weren't as aware of how SaaS companies function and how they invest with long term. And so I was highlighting some of their, I don't know, operating losses of whatever it was and Twitter rolls out this new feature, so I just plunk that image up there and said, "whatever." And that was a long time ago now, I think.

**Beck:** Yeah, it was several, seven ...

**Alex:** Six?

**Beck:** Yeah, something like that.

**Alex:** It's not recent to be clear. So.

**Beck:** But still, I love it. It's just brutal because you get to see like, "Wow, clearly, there's a lot of money that's been lost." Why don't you give us quick one minute or so synopsis on the life of Alex thus far to this point, you've been to a lot of different outlets and TechCrunch, and now you're here at Crunchbase, but could you give us a synopsis in a nutshell of the life of you?

**Alex:** Yeah, so I was born in Oregon, which worked out pretty well. We had a lot of trees. Went to school in Chicago. Then I moved to Cali, where I was pretty familiar with the area. I joined The Next Web, my first professional writing job my second year of college. Right around the time, I started. I kept that through the end of school until my first year out in the Bay area. Then I joined TC, then I went to a company called Mattermark to try to build out a news team there. That didn't go wildly well, and then Crunchbase wanted me to do the same thing, so I went over there and started Crunchbase news. I joined the company in January of 17, and we launched the first news article on the new site. Gosh, that was like May- I think March 13th or something. So right around there and I've been doing that ever since.

**Beck:** And you mentioned there that you actually got, while in college, the job at The Next Web?

**Alex:** Yeah, but it's not impressive because the ...

**Beck:** Okay. I was like, "Damn. That ..."

**Alex:** Well, The Next Web at the time it was a, was like two people working part-time in Europe, and they hired me because I was inexpensive and willing to work a lot. And so I was the first U.S. correspondent, but also there was like three of us, and I don't think any of us was full time at the time. So it wasn't this burgeoning publication. I was there at the, not the genesis per se, but early on.

**Beck:** Still. Luckily you put that on your resume. That's good. I know people are always, so we get questions on just, "Well, how do you get that first internship? How do you get the job?" And people are surprised by they got hired from the internship or how they even got like their uncle to introduce them to something. So.

**Alex:** Well, I can help. So I founded a company with some friends the summer after my first year of college, and we actually got TechCrunch to cover our prelaunch, our birth, and then our death two months later. Because the project didn't go well, those articles are still in life want to look them up. But I was bored living on my friend's couch because I didn't have anything to do and I didn't have any money. So I started to write online on just AlexWilhelm.com, and I met some friends on the internet that were also on Twitter and writing about tech. And so we formed a little group blog called Tech Geist, which thank God is no longer on the internet because it was terrible. But that was the initial platform that I got hired off of. So we built our own tech blog and ran our own ads and had our own site. And then, from there, I got my first job.

**Beck:** And they found you, or did you apply to them?

**Alex:** I mean ... I forget, actually, that's- it's, that's lost in the midst of history. Maybe a little bit of both. I think at the time it was a the blogging world is very different. That was back when GigaOM was part of a network of sites, and VentureBeat was much larger and TC was still kind of coming up and all that, and so it was a different world. Blogging was a much bigger profession than it is today. It's become much more systematize and professional than it used to be, and that's why I kind of managed to go in there and make tons of mistakes and get away with it because it was.

**Beck:** Yeah. So yeah.

**Alex:** Yeah.

**Beck:** New terrain. What made you fall in love with the finance aspect of looking at, for example, these s-1 filings and these detailed term sheets and things that you otherwise might not be too excited by?

**Alex:** Well, I'm the coolest kid in the world.

**Beck:** Well, yes.

**Alex:** Which is why in middle school, I was reading the Wall Street Journal in print.

**Beck:** I read the Wall Street Journal every day in print too. Do you still read it every day?

**Alex:** I don't read it in print anymore. I did it in a, at our house in Providence. Got The Times in print for a while, but I just found that I'd already read the entire paper by the time I got it. So I read it online as soon as it comes out.

**Beck:** Exactly, exactly. So I have to not look online in order to enjoy and savor when it is in print. That's my half that I have to do.

**Alex:** My compromise is that I read The Economist whenever I'm flying. I just read the whole thing, and that's my, my ...

**Beck:** That's meaty; that's hard.

**Alex:** Well, print is good because it makes you read outside your box. Right.

**Beck:** Yes.

**Alex:** And that's, I forget where we were, where the question was before we took that.

**Beck:** Oh, just how you got down the path of finance and what you loved about it.

**Alex:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So I was obsessed with finance from a really early age. I ordered a bunch of s-1 filings, sorry, not s-1 filings, 10 Qs, quarterly reports from companies when I was a kid, and I just read them all.

**Beck:** What?

**Alex:** Yeah, I was cool like I told you, I was the coolest.

**Beck:** Well, obviously.

**Alex:** Well, if you got the journal back then.

**Beck:** Wait, so would you say like, "Hey mom, I need to mail order my

**Alex:** It's worse than that. I didn't ask.

**Beck:** You just did it.

**Alex:** And so there was this little pamphlet, you got in The Journal or Business Week or something, and you could check little boxes, and they would send you reports. So I just checked the all box for all the industries, and we drove home down, my parents drive in one day, and there was like six huge boxes on the front porch, and it was all just full of filings. So I just read those, and I just loved it. I loved seeing the raw data behind all the stuff that everyone talks about. Though at the time I couldn't convey to you in that form, I just found it interesting. And then, later on, I discovered tech and the world of startups, and that to me was everything I'd read about business but much faster, which made it more interesting.

**Beck:** What was the first tech company you became aware of? Fell in love with, let's say?

**Alex:** Well, I read a book by a man named Phil Kaplan, who goes by the name of Pud. He ran, can we swear on this show?

**Beck:** Yes. It's a podcast, you know, it's not regulated.

**Alex:** He ran well, it's a respect thing. He ran fuckedcompany.com in the first .com boom. And he wrote a book about the worst tech startups from the first .com boom. And so I read that, and that's when I was like, "Oh my gosh, there's this other world of business that is insane. I must go be part of it." So I tried, and it worked out.

**Beck:** Fantastic. Wow. Is that still alive? Is that still around? Is ...

**Alex:** I don't, I don't think so. Pud now is mostly a heavy metal drummer. We've almost met up several times I think over the years that haven't pulled it off, which is too bad because he's one of my internet heroes.

**Alex:** Although that book hasn't aged as well. Some of the jokes don't; I reread it last year, I think. And not all the jokes were jokes that I would like now repeat, but I when I was like 14, I thought it was the funniest thing.

**Beck:** When you were the smartest, coolest kid. The coolest.

**Alex:** I was so popular in middle school. Everyone was like, "Alex, give me stock tips." That's what everyone wanted. No, no, I was not cool at all. I was the least cool person in a 10-mile radius.

**Beck:** Well, now you're the coolest as an Editor in Chief. So I bet people calling you now.

**Alex:** You know they loosely email and ask for things, but ...

**Beck:** Yeah. Okay. Well, we're going to get into that for in a moment on just what is in your inbox. But first, but first, we are about understanding how stories actually get made. Actually get reported on because I think that's a big black box as it comes to just from a consumer understanding all the intricacies, all the details, all the fact-checking and so forth that it really takes. So can you walk us through a recent story about and give us kind of a play by play of, "Okay I had this idea, I went to this, I had to then do that, and now this is how it came about." We can use one of the first ones if or one in particular, but is there a way you go about telling a story?

**Alex:** Well, I'm cooking something up right now, so why don't I tell you about that?

**Beck:** Perfect. Tell us about that.

**Alex:** Yeah, by the time you hear this, it'll be out cause it's going to go out tomorrow.

**Beck:** Perfect.

**Alex:** Okay. So one relatively fertile place to look for ideas is in lots and lots of raw data, and I get sent reports from banks and investor groups and activist investors and all sorts of people. I love these because they provide really interesting looks into the world as it is. And these are, these don't tend to be particularly biased because they're just big chunks of data that has been sliced and graphed in different ways. And I'm going to try to get this right. KeyBank put together its 10th annual SaaS report, and it's looking at the 2018 SaaS market through the lens of I think it's 242 different companies that are broken up by size and how they approach the market and they've cut their data and growth and- in a lot of different ways.

**Alex:** And what the report gave me is really just a limpid look into what is going on in the world of SAS, which is one of the most important parts of tech, one of the most important parts of venture capital and one of the most important parts of the IPO market. So what I did was, as I read it, and then I emailed them with a couple of questions because I wasn't sure about two of the metrics. I wanted to understand what was behind them, got the answers, and then I reread the report and I'm now currently comparing what I've read and written and understood about the market against that and trying to figure out where the most important anecdotes and data points that will help explain the world as it is to people who read what I write.

**Alex:** And so what comes out of that's going to be a hybrid of what I already knew and what I learned and then it's my job to like the thing about stories and how they come together is to craft those into something that's readable and then people actually want to spend time with because it's not hard to just write eight facts in a linear fashion, but to put something together that people will want to engage with and are able to actually finish reading. That's where you get to have a little more fun and be, and not an artist per se, but to be more of a craftsman than just a builder.

**Beck:** Do you think of that lens always first in terms of what does the, what does my reader want? What is helpful to them?

**Alex:** No, no, no, no, no. Not always. Sometimes. Sometimes you want to do things that are reader's service. You want to make sure that when people generally read yourself, they walk away better informed, or at least as better educated about something because you're conveying information. Like fundamentally journalism is finding out what's true and telling other people. That's its most basic substance. But sometimes though you've got to write something for yourself and you just, you don't care if it gets 12 reads because you need to get that out of your head or it's not going to go out.

**Alex:** I've written entire articles that I wrote, just so the- my head would shut up, and then we just killed them. I'm like, "Read this." We're not going to publish it. I mean, we didn't go, "That was great. Kill." Yeah. So.

**Beck:** How often does that happen?

Alex: Infrequently. I have a lot of, I'm very hashtag blessed in that I have, I've always had a lot of free reign in what I write, which means that I can get into a lot more trouble, but also means that I can go much further in a field than I could if I worked for like The Economist for example, or like The Financial Times, which is a great publication, but I don't think they'd want to hire me.

**Alex:** I don't think I would be a great fit.

**Beck:** And is that because you've got a lot of ideas and you want to put a lot out there?

**Alex:** Well, I mean ...

**Beck:** They're pretty constrained.

**Alex:** They'd want to tell me what to do, and I would be like, "Well, I ... no," and then I'd get fired.

**Beck:** No, that.

**Alex:** So I mean.

**Beck:** Yeah.

**Alex:** I don't think it would work.

**Beck:** Next part, we're going to play a little bit of a word association. This is a new segment that we're doing. We're going to see how it goes. So you're a tester.

**Alex:** I will happily be your guinea pig.

**Beck:** Let's see. Let's see. Okay, so I'm going to give you a word. You gave me the first word that comes out that you associate it with.

**Alex:** I hope this word's like profane. Yeah.

**Beck:** Let's keep it clean. Let's keep it clean if you wish. If you wish. All right. First one, food.

**Alex:** Biscuit.

**Beck:** Biscuit.

**Alex:** Which is British for cookie. You said the first thing I've been watching British television this is what you get.

**Beck:** Okay. Drink.

**Alex:** Coca Cola. Interestingly enough.

**Beck:** Hobby.

**Alex:** Sleeping. Wow. That's weird. I don't sleep enough. I am tired today.

**Beck:** Maybe you need to get that hobby going.

**Alex:** Yeah.

**Beck:** This is why this is interesting. Okay. Okay. Do you see this? Wait, can you see my sheet?

**Alex:** No, no, no.

**Beck:** Okay, we got to keep it. We got to keep it hidden. Okay.

**Alex:** I promise I'm not cheating on the word association.

**Beck:** Okay. Okay. Funding.

**Alex:** I just have a generic eye roll at that. Probably something like venture capital or like, I don't know. Investing.

**Beck:** Okay.

**Alex:** But nothing really big pops in.

**Beck:** Okay. WeWork.

**Alex:** Fucked.

**Beck:** Unicorn.

**Alex:** Dead.

**Beck:** Startup.

**Alex:** Boring.

**Beck:** Equity.

**Alex:** Lots, please.

**Beck:** Founder.

**Alex:** Neat.

**Beck:** VCs.

**Alex:** Best.

**Beck:** Yes. Yeah, that's a good one.

**Beck:** IPO.

**Alex:** Optimistic.

**Beck:** Earnings.

**Alex:** Incredibly interesting.

**Beck:** Journalism.

**Alex:** Dying.

**Beck:** Pitch.

**Alex:** Pass.

**Beck:** Inbox.

**Alex:** No. That's my honest.

**Beck:** That completes our word association phrase. Wow. Biscuit, sleeping. Those were my favorite.

**Alex:** I mean, you can tell that up top I didn't know what we were doing because it's they got better as we went along.

**Beck:** They did a little bit, but I think those are more interesting.

**Alex:** Yeah.

**Beck:** No, no. Look it. Okay. Now we want to; I want to talk about just what is actually in your inbox. What does it actually look like? You think about it, you've seen it many times today.

**Alex:** I've seen it many times today. Yeah.

**Beck:** What's going on in there? Because publicists are trying to get in there and trying to get a response. Is it all publicists? Is it hundreds of emails? Thousands?

**Alex:** So I'm going to just be honest and then.

**Beck:** That's what we want.

**Alex:** ... We're going to see how people like this. So ...

**Beck:** Okay.

**Alex:** I have priority inbox turned on, in Gmail, I have a work account that runs on Google apps, everyone does in Silicon Valley and I have my inbox set to only show me emails that Gmail deems important, and I never read anything else. I read about 10% of the ones that are marked as important. I'm very hard to get ahold of.

**Beck:** Wow. How did we even get you on this podcast?

**Alex:** Polite persistence was how I would term.

**Beck:** Wow. Damn, damn, damn Jared. Oh, he's so great. He is nice. You guys know him. Okay. So to understand that then only the stuff that gets filtered by Google, that is a priority and then even in the priority, only 10% of that.

**Alex:** I'd probably- maybe it's at 20%, but I mostly just go through and mark most of them, and then I just mark around them without reading them.

**Beck:** Wow.

**Alex:** Yep.

**Beck:** That must keep a pretty clean inbox.

**Alex:** It is. It's pretty efficient. I mean, I mostly had my own ideas. The things that stick out are interesting, funny rounds that I either want my team to cover or that I want to take a look at. Bits of data that I can't find elsewhere. Invitations from people that I know. But you know there are ten bajillion things to cover each day if you'd want to and you're going to cover two. So are you going to spend your time doing the endless sifting, or are you going to find the most efficient way to take your understanding of the world and add bits to it and explain those to the readers? So you have to be ruthlessly prioritizing, I guess. Otherwise, you'll get nothing done. You know, if you read all your emails and respond to them, you'll get stuck in these endless with very kind people who are doing their job efficiently, and I have no beef with that.

**Alex:** But if I-

**Beck:** Are you talking about publicists, particularly?

**Alex:** Publicists or people like researcher and people who want to contribute guest posts or just all sorts of people that if you have any sort of platform in any sort of area in the world, there are more people who want it than who have it. And so you're going to have people that respectfully want some of your time or attention or help or work. And that's perfectly acceptable. If I was on the other side of the coin, I would do the exact same thing. So I have no beef, but also I have a team to run, and I'm on podcasts, and I got stuff to do. So I have to be as efficient a human as I can be. I'm a good capitalist cog.

**Beck:** There you go. Damn capitalist cog, yeah.

**Alex:** But, there are better ways to get ahold of me. Like Twitter. Twitter DMs are great. I only follow some people. That's actually not a very good outlet. Don't text me.

**Beck**: Who would text you, you'd have to have your number.

**Alex:** I think it's.

**Beck:** People wait, wait, wait, do people text you pitches?

**Alex:** Not frequently anymore. That seems to have died down in the last couple of years. When I was at TC ...

**Beck:** Thank God.

**Alex:** ... I got more of that. I ... but people were just trying to break through the noise. They're trying to do their job. They're under a lot of- here's my impression about this, about the publicist world, world in this area. A lot of more junior PR people aren't given the best of guidance when they go into PR, they're given like a pitch and a list of people, and they're told to go out and make magic happen. And so you end up with a lot of junior PR people out there in the trenches being a little annoying but not through their own fault, but through a lack of leadership, it seems.

**Alex:** And a lack of proper training. And there's lots more publicists than there are journalists as we all know. And so again, no beef. Just if I was, I'd just have to defend my time and I lots of my own ideas that I want to write about and I have my own ways of tracking data and like what's going on in the world and so I don't need people usually telling me what's happening. I should already know to some degree.

**Beck:** What percent of your stories comes from pitches versus your own head and your own ideas, your own raw data that you crunch in, and do something with?

**Alex:** Well, going back to the story that I just mentioned. So KeyBank just sent me a report like, "Here's a report, check it out." And they just went away. Would you say that's a pitch? Because it's somewhere in the middle, right?

**Beck:** It is somewhere in the middle. They didn't ask like, "Oh, could you review it? Could you check it out? Could you anything?" It was just seriously, "Here's the report."

**Alex:** "Do you want to see it?" And then, "The embargo was tomorrow at 9:00 AM. Off you go."

**Beck:** Oh, okay. I would say that's a pitch then because there was an embargo or there an exclusive, there was something there.

**Alex:** When it comes to things that I write off of reports that were embargoed. It's not a 100% because I can't break into those servers and steal it, but a lot of what I do is based on my own newsgathering, and then I'll try to weave things in sometimes from pitches, if there's an interesting round that I care about and that sort of thing, but not a huge percentage. If I could write five times as much, it would be a higher percentage, but you can only put so many words out each day.

**Beck:** Is there any round of founding- funding that still perks your interest, piques your interest?

**Alex:** It's never going to be the some automatically matter. If Airbnb raises another billion dollars, everyone's going to cover it because it's one of the five companies essentially you have to write about, right? So that's putting those aside. It's very hard for a $12 million series A or a $24 million series B or a $36 million series C, et cetera to stand out because no one shares things. You get an investor lists a dollar amount and a couple of canned quotes, and then that's kind of the standard package that goes out. Companies that I write more about tend to share more, they'll tell me about their blended gross margins. That's fantastic, that tells me about the health of your business and why I should care and will you go public?

**Alex:** Companies who share revenue growth numbers are more interesting than those who don't. Companies who share hard revenue numbers are the most interesting, but everyone's is, well, I'm private. I don't have to share that, and I'm like, "Cool, I don't have to write about you." But the more information you share, the more I might care.

**Beck:** Okay. The more information you share, the more you could care, got it.

**Alex:** And I've been beating that drum. I ran an experiment.

**Beck:** Yeah, yeah. Oh, and? Do tell us.

**Alex:** I was writing, I have a little morning column that I do each day, kind of keeps me sane, and I was like, "Startups, send me your ARR graph from 2018," and some of them did and we published them, and it's fun. Yeah, that was cool. So they got free publicity, and I got what I wanted. So everyone kind of won but like four people.

**Beck:** Maybe you could train the behavior. Maybe.

**Alex:** I tried to, but it would be a lot of ...

**Beck:** Yeah.

**Alex:** Be a lot of dog treats to make that one work.

**Beck:** Yeah. Okay. But note to the wise, more info you share, more likelihood.

**Alex:** And also if you're just fundamentally interesting, one thing that people don't get is that if reporters use your product day in, day out, you're going to get written about more like Tik Tok. So that coverage is different by the fact that like everyone's on Tik Tok now. I'm not, because I think the Chinese government is authoritarian and bad and that app is censored. And so I'm not in favor of it, but all my friends are on it. And I think every reporter that I know watches Tik Toks, so.

**Beck:** Damn. How about books you're loving right now?

**Alex:** Do you want business books or.

**Beck:** Anything you've got. Anything you got.

**Alex:** Okay, so.

**Beck:** Fiction, nonfiction, even podcasts. What do you got?

**Alex:** So I'm currently reading Beloved by Toni Morrison.

**Beck:** Classic.

**Alex:** I'm finishing a book called The Horse Heresy. That is not a good book, but it's a fun book that a friend recommended. I'm reading a collection of Philip Larkin, actually, my wife Barbara borrowed it now that I think about it. I'm reading The Federalist Papers with my dad as part of our father-son book club because I'm a huge nerd.

**Beck:** Wait, wait. You have a father-son book club.

**Alex:** Yeah, but we don't live in the same time zone most of the time. So it's how we stay in touch every week. Yeah. I come from a pretty nerdy family.

**Beck:** I love it.

**Alex:** And-

**Beck:** Wait, wait, how's father-son book club work? You call up, and you're like, "Hey dad, did you read that chapter? I read it. What do you think?"

**Alex:** Well, we assign a section of X number of pages depending on what we're reading and how dense it is. And then we do a call and take about an hour, and we both have underlining and taking notes, and we compare notes, and then we pick the next section and do it again.

**Beck:** I love that.

**Alex:** Yeah, we've read-

**Beck:** Because then, it gives a nice frame of a conversation that's productive and interesting and not just mindless and annoying. Probably.

**Alex:** You get more out of it. We read On Liberty by John Stuart Mill. We read Democracy in America by Tocqueville, and now we're doing The Federalist Papers, and then we're going to read Russo next.

**Beck:** I love this.

**Alex:** Yeah, and then, check this out, in my sibling book club.

**Beck:** Wait, wait, wait, there's a sibling book club. Wait for different books.

**Alex:** Different books. We just finished Exhalation by Ted Chiang, which is a collection of short stories, which is very good. If you saw the movie, The Story of Your Life? No, no, oh, I'm going to butcher this. It doesn't matter. We read another short story collection by him before and then finally with them. I'm reading; I'm about to start reading The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead. Yeah. That's the constellation of books I'm currently working on.

**Beck:** And is sibling book club as frequent as father-son book club?

**Alex:** No, way less frequent. We read about two books a year with that group.

**Beck:** Oh, slower group.

**Alex:** Well, all my siblings have children, and so they're very busy with their kids whom are all fantastic, but it's much harder to get four of us together than just my dad and I. So books are good.

**Beck:** Do you also mandate, who marshal, are you in charge of book clubs? Do you mandate like, "Hey, three o'clock Thursdays, that's our time."

**Alex:** It's a- It takes a multi captain approach, or you won't get anywhere.

**Beck:** I was going to say.

**Alex:** So my little sister Emily and my brother Andrew and myself kind of share the scepter to keep that one going. But it can die for three months when we're all busy, then you kind of come back to life.

**Beck:** Who selects the books?

**Alex:** We do a little group chat. When we finished the current book, and we talk about either books one of us just started making it a good book to pick up, or we go through like, "Who won the Man Booker prize in 2014 let's read that," so we've read a number of real clunkers over the years.

**Beck:** Oh, damn. Yeah.

**Alex:** Anyways.

**Beck:** But then that's fun to talk about. Because sometimes the worst ones or the bad ones. You're like, "Oh God,"

**Alex:** Yeah. But sometimes these go on and on and on.

**Beck:** That's true. That's true.

**Alex:** But I love reading. It's, I don't think you can be a good writer. Bring this back to the actual topic. I don't think you can be a ... maybe someone can. I can't, I need to read a lot, or my writing gets stale repetitive. I don't have new words, and I'm just not nearly as good. So I think it's kind of a, it's like exercise if you're in sports, so it's not like I don't want points for reading, but I have to, or I'll suck at my job.

**Beck:** Ooh, I haven't had, I haven't heard someone use the analogy of that, training for as like a professional athlete, to reading as a way to get better at writing.

**Alex:** Well, I think it ... I don't want to compare myself to a professional athlete.

**Beck:** No, no, I'm not saying that. I'm just saying it's a great analogy that you're the first to bring to the table, so that's cool. Nice. What do you think about the future of journalism? You had a word associated with journalism that was, what was it? Dead? I think your word was dead.

**Alex:** Yeah, well, I mean that's not how I describe it, that's my first-word response.

**Beck:** That's the first one response.

**Alex:** I am cautiously optimistic about the survival of all the pubs that you can name, and I'm mostly pessimistic about the survival of any pub that you can't. I think there's going to be a paywall elite if you will. It's going to be relatively robust. It's going to even some medium-tier pubs they're going to make it in. But I think local journalism is probably kaput, and nothing hyperlocal has ever managed to stick for long enough to make a real dent. So I think we're going to see huge waves of corruption and so forth at the local government level, state government level that are unnecessary. But we never found a way to fund it. So, optimistic about one half and a pessimistic about the other half.

**Beck:** If someone's listening to this and who aspires to have your job one day or be in journalism, what would you say to them?

**Alex:** If you have to do it, please do it. It's the best thing in the world. It's much better than having a real job. I've had those. They're terrible. But if you're wishy-washy about it, go get a law degree. Do something else. Because it's going to be, it's not going to be worth your time, but I get, I got paid to write today, and that's the biggest blessing I can possibly imagine.

**Beck:** Damn, we should just end right there. But we have a mad libs section.

**Alex:** Oh, that's right.

**Beck:** But that's right. That's right. Okay.

**Alex:** Is is the part podcast and part game show I feel.

**Beck:** So let's make sure ... it is a little bit while we're changing things up and you can talk to Jared about this on his feedback on like, how did this go?

**Alex:** Well, Jered going to talk to us on his feedback.

**Beck:** That's right. That's right.

**Alex:** Hi, Jered.

**Beck:** Hi, Jered. We're here having a great time. Okay, so let's make sure we do this right. So this is going to be a little bit of a couple minutes segment. You're going to fill this out. I'm going to then read it out loud. So I'm going to type your responses, and then I will read what is actually.

**Alex:** So you will be.

**Beck:** Yes, yes.

**Alex**: So you'll tell me what the thing I need to fill in is?

**Beck:** Yes, exactly. Exactly. Okay. We're piloting this live. Let's see. Okay, so first thing is a catchphrase. What is a catchphrase? Oh, just a ...

**Alex:** "Did I do that?" From Steve Urkel.

**Beck:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Or what did the twins on that Full House show say? Like, "What's up dude," or something.

**Alex:** I grew up pretty religious. We didn't really have a lot of TV.

**Beck:** Shit.

**Alex:** This is going to struggle with me. Now I It's the first-

**Beck:** Maybe a tech catchphrase, like what's a catch ... tech.

**Alex:** All right, fine, "One more thing," from Apple.

**Beck:** "One more thing," that's from Apple?

**Alex:** It's how Apple ends their keynotes. They would always have like, "And one more thing," and then they did the-.

**Beck:** Oh.

**Alex:** final thing.

**Beck:** Dorky. Okay.

**Alex**: I mean, it's me. So yeah.

**Beck:** Yeah, there you go. Okay. Now, ooh, this is more advanced. Journalism scare phrase. Jered, what does this even mean? Okay. It says, "Journalism, scare phrase."

**Alex:** So I'm presuming it's a phrase it makes journalists scared.

**Beck:** Probably.

**Alex**: I got one for you.

**Beck**: Yeah, what's that?

**Alex**: When you turn in a draft, and your editor says, "It's a good first try."

**Beck**: Oh, oh, okay.

**Alex:** Because you thought you were done and then.

**Beck:** And then you're not.

**Alex**: You've just been informed that you're not. So that's a journalism scare phrase if I'm understanding what ones.

**Beck**: Yes, yes, yes. But, "It's a good first try." Yeah. That's never fun. Okay, next one. Okay. Now it gets easier. Ooh. Empowering PR journalism buzzword.

**Alex**: Empowering PR dash journalism buzzword?

**Beck**: Slash, yeah. Dash slash- slash. PR or journalism buzzword.

**Alex:** I mean, I want to be sarcastic and say synergy.

**Beck:** Perfect. Okay. That's ...

**Alex:** I read a lot of Dilbert growing up, so I learned about that word really early on.

**Beck:** Oh, that's great. Okay. Okay. Ooh, this is going to be good. Adjective.

**Alex:** What's an adjective? I get these mixed up.

**Beck:** This is describing a noun.

**Alex:** So like fast?

**Beck:** Yes. Or blue, like the blue shirt, the fast rabbit.

**Alex:** I'll go with dripping.

**Beck:** Dripping. Woo. Okay. Interesting. Next phrase. Part of a pitch.

**Alex:** I should learn what an adjective is. No, I ...

**Beck:** That's all right. That's all right. So yeah.

**Alex:** I think I missed that in elementary school when they described nouns versus adjectives.

**Beck:** That's all right. That's all right.

**Alex:** What was the next one?

**Beck:** Next one is a phrase that is part of a pitch. I guess like the opening or.

**Alex:** I'll go with the kicker.

**Beck:** Oh, kicker. Okay. Okay.

**Alex:** Everyone loves a good kicker.

**Beck:** Okay. Then adjective. Just ...

**Alex:** Bombastic.

**Beck:** Ooh.

**Alex:** Someone's going to run in, "Those aren't adjectives." You're going to be like, "All right," "It's participle flipper.

**Beck:** No, that's- Oh, God. No, we're not, we're not going to do that. Okay.

**Alex:** editors, people.

**Beck:** That- yes. Then another phrase, another part of the pitch.

**Alex:** Sure. Another part of the pitch?

**Beck:** Yeah.

**Alex:** I'll go with, I get a lot of pitches about a funny rounds. So I'll say investor quote.

**Beck:** Investor quote.

**Beck:** This is going to be so good. Good job, Jered. Making us do this. Okay. This is good. This is good. An amount of time.

**Alex:** A fortnight.

**Beck:** Okay. Okay. I like that. Writing it down. Adjective.

**Alex:** Man, there's a lot of these.

**Beck:** I know, I know. It's ca-

**Alex:** Minute.

**Beck:** Okay. Singular noun.

**Alex:** Bucket.

**Beck:** Bucket. Topic.

**Alex:** I don't want to say something boring like current events, but fine current events.

**Beck:** All right. Current events. Yeah, that works. Okay. And then a verb.

**Beck:** Oh, two verbs. Something with "ing" on it. And then a verb.

**Alex:** So racing.

**Beck:** Okay, racing. Yes.

**Alex:** And then I want to say crashing.

**Beck:** Okay.

**Alex:** I watched formula one this weekend, so it's on my mind.

**Beck:** Okay. All right.

**Beck:** Okay. You ready? We're going to read it.

**Alex:** I mean ...

**Beck:** Let's see. Let's see.

**Alex:** I'm super curious.

**Beck:** Oh, God. Okay. All right. Here it goes.

**Beck:** To me. Wait, wait. To me, tech journalism is one more thing. It consists of when you turn in a draft, but then you hear the feedback that it's a good first try and synergy on the daily. If a pitch has a dripping kicker, I will absolutely respond to it. However, if a pitch has a bombastic investor quote, you can expect no reply from me. If a fortnight goes by and you don't see an email back from me, you can just assume I am not minutely about it. The best stories always have buckets and are usually about current events. The best way to reach me is by racing to me, but you can also crash me.

**Beck:** That was fun. I liked that. That was exciting.

**Alex:** I do not mind that. I haven't done those since I was a kid in a car so.

**Beck:** I will. I love it. Okay. I think we've got to keep it. I think we've got to keep the mad libs. This is fun.

**Alex:** Whoever's in charge of editing this ...

**Beck:** Madlibs.

**Alex:** enjoy how long that took us.

**Beck:** Yeah. Yeah. Then we might have to extend that segment. That was a little bit ... Well, thank you so much for being on today. This has been so great. Do you have any parting words for your publicists that are listening right now? Besides crashing into you.

**Alex:** No, I mean, hi, what's up? I would say shoot me an email, but it's not a very good idea.

**Beck**: No, we covered that.

**Alex:** So send me a tweet. I try to be as available as I can be for stuff like this, but I'm just one dude, and I'm not particularly smart. So it's been fun having me on. I appreciate this, and I'm glad people are trying to do more bridge the divide sort of stuff between the two different worlds.

**Beck**: Yeah. No crashing.

**Alex:** No crashing. No buckets.

**Beck**: I like it. Thank you.

**Alex**: Thank you.