

**EPISODE 195**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:09] ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, brought to you by OnePitch. Are you looking for an easy way to pitch the right journalists? Head to our -website at [onepitch.co](https://onepitch.co) to start your free 14-day trial.

Our guest on today's episode of Coffee with a Journalist is Emma Hinchcliffe from Fortune. As the senior writer, Emma covers women in business and gender issues across business, politics, and culture. She's the author of Fortune's daily newsletter, *The Broadsheet*, which covers leading women in business, and the most important issues facing women. She's also the co-chair of the Fortune Most Powerful Women's Summit. During the episode, Emma talks about the various female related story angles *The Broadsheet* team covers, working closely with existing sources, why it's tough to cover exclusives for the newsletter, and more. Let's dive in.

[EPISODE]

**[0:01:01] BB:** Welcome, everyone. This is Coffee with a Journalist. How exiting. I'm Beck Bamberger, and ooh, this is Episode 184, like 84, the ancient times in which I was born. I like this. Today with us, we have a fabulous reporter, a definite heavy hitter in the space coming to us live from New York City, my other favorite place besides San Diego. Emma Hinchcliffe is here, and she is the senior writer at Fortune. She's author of *The Broadsheet*, which we're going to talk about, a very popular newsletter, and is co-chair of Fortune's Most Powerful Women Summit, which is 20 plus years in the making. I don't even know that. Emma, thank you for being here.

**[0:01:50] EH:** Hi, Beck. Thank you for having me.

**[0:01:52] BB:** Yes. Okay. God, Emma, where should we even start? First, you know what? Actually, tell us first about *The Broadsheet* for those who are not familiar.

**[0:02:01] EH:** Totally. *The Broadsheet* is a daily newsletter at Fortune, comes out Monday through Friday, five days a week. It has been around for almost a decade now. It predates me, but I'm not the author of the newsletter, and we say it is for and about the World's Most Powerful Women. In *The Broadsheet*, we publish interviews with women in leading executive roles, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, startup founders, all kinds of people. We also keep a daily pulse on the news, and follow the biggest stories driving the news cycle and how they affect women, whether that's something like paid family leave, something like the recent drama at OpenAI and the women involved in that saga, all kinds of things. Women are part of the news, wherever it happens, so we always find that angle.

**[0:02:46] BB:** Basically, basically. Emma, well, I was going to get into what difference you have seen if anything in women's chronicles. Actually, I do want to get into that right away. Before we get into your inbox, Emma, now that you've been on this beat for a while, what have you seen transpire for women in how they are reported, and maybe how they are illuminated in our culture? If anything.

**[0:03:13] EH:** Yes. This is actually kind of a complex question. Because one time, as you would imagine, coverage is a lot better in many ways than it would have been before. People are more aware of how women are underrepresented, how women of color are underrepresented, unconscious biases in reporting and in writing. So there's a lot more awareness of making sure that you're not, for instance, putting on a panel that is all white men or doing anything like that.

But at the same time, the media landscape is really challenged, and that has hit women's media really hard. So looking back five years, there was a much bigger group of publications that were specifically focused on women's media. Then, even just recently, looking at something like Jessabelle unfolding and **[inaudible 03:56]** being revived, one of the pioneers in the online women's media space. Publications like that, shutting their doors has also had a really big impact. What we tried to do with *The Broadsheet*, and at Fortune is keep our coverage going. There's still great reporting happening out there at publications, even if a lot of that reporting about women no longer has a specific home, and it's part of a broader mandate at a publication. But yes, it's a complicated question.

**[0:04:25] BB:** It is. Okay. Well, perhaps less complicated is your inbox, although we'll see. How is your inbox these days?

**[0:04:34] EH:** Oh my gosh. Well, my inbox is okay. I think with that, I have to thank *The Broadsheet*, because it is a very specific product that is really familiar with certain groups of people who really understand what it does. Then, of course, there are tons of people who don't understand what it does, but that kind of gives us the ability to just ignore those pitches, and move on to the many people who do. The specificity If the broadsheet does us a big favor in being able to filter through pitches.

**[0:05:04] BB:** How do you filter through pitches? Are you a mass scroller of just the subject line or do you actually open every pitch, or email, I should say? Because not every email is a pitch. thank God.

**[0:05:15] EH:** Yes. I wouldn't say I open every pitch because some of you can tell from the subject line are just nonsense right away. But I am an inbox zero person.

**[0:05:24] BB:** Ooh, you're in the club, the very elusive club. There are like five members, Emma, which you are part of.

**[0:05:29] EH:** Wow. Are you?

**[0:05:31] BB:** I am. I am. But I'm a publicist, so I'm talking about your colleagues in the media landscape. Most people are in the let it ride 57,000 unread emails. Although, then, there are those who do daily calling, but never hit the zero, I have to say.

**[0:05:44] EH:** Exactly, yes. I usually get to zero eventually. It's not like every moment it's at zero, but by the end of the day or in the morning, I'll hit it.

**[0:05:52] BB:** Wow.

**[0:05:52] EH:** Then like, get back up. I will do, like if I go on vacation or something, I'll do like a mass delete when I get back. So it's not like –

[0:05:57] **BB:** Wow. Wow.

[0:05:59] **EH:** I do the Outlook filtering between Focused and other does help in maintaining zero.

[0:06:05] **BB:** Got it. Got it. Okay. Let's double click a little bit on how you do that. Do you have a process? Like, "Okay, it's three o'clock. I'm trying to wrap up." And you're like, "Okay, let me blow through things" or like, every hour, I go through and clean it up, or what is it? Tell us your wisdom.

[0:06:24] **EH:** Definitely nothing like that. Not on the hour, certainly not a specific time of day. But I would say, usually, sometimes in the morning, when I am getting started for the day, I will go through anything that I didn't look at the day before and just delete anything that's not relevant. I wouldn't say, I don't respond to everything right away, but I'll read it. So we've gotten everything to be unread.

[0:06:43] **BB:** Hmm. Okay. Then, do you ever search for emails where you're like, "Oh, who is that female chemist who was building the next COVID vaccine thing? Let me search my inbox from three months ago" and you find something. Or how do you use previous pitches to pop back up, if ever?

[0:07:00] **EH:** I would say that, for me, and for *The Broadsheet*, which is where most of anything that is inbound, rather than our own ideas. Usually, something that lives in *The Broadsheet*, rather than like a bigger fortune story, which I also do for the magazine and the website. I will tell you, it's really about relationships. I'm really looking for people, publicists who I know are good at their jobs. If they're sending me something, it's probably at least worth considering and responding to. I wouldn't say that I searched through my inbox, and often find a surprising pitch with a source. I've talk to this person who's an expert on whatever, after the fact. But I will sometimes search for a specific person who, I remember having really good connections on this issue, or a conversation that I've had that I remember from the past, if a new story resurfaces, or we're diving back into a topic.

[0:07:51] **BB:** Hmm. Sounds like you keep just the files in your head.

[0:07:55] **EH:** Yes, pretty much.

[0:07:55] **BB:** Dang. Okay. Now, okay, then the next question I'm sure everyone is thinking about is like, how do I get in your head? How do I find you, Miss Emma? Do you ever try to make relationships with publicists and how does that look?

[0:08:07] **EH:** Yes. I would say, the key is just someone who really demonstrates that they understand what *The Broadsheet* is, and what it does. It's a pretty specific tone in publication. We're covering women leaders in business. So obviously, folks who are in house or working with leaders who are already interested in and are just maybe bringing us a specific opportunity to speak with them, rather than introducing us to a new person. That's obviously a little bit of a more of a direct connection. But then, there are other folks who, even on the agency side work with clients, and they understand that we're looking for leaders who are willing to talk about their personal story, as well as the business. Oftentimes, it's a combination of the two.

We're looking for a newsletter format, anything that is exclusive to us is really helpful. So we're interested in exclusive news.

[0:09:02] **BB:** Oh, yes, these exclusives. Yes.

[0:09:04] **EH:** If something is going out wide, like whether that's on the tech side funding or something else, I think we're less likely to cover it. So if someone's just telling us an embargo, and it's not offering us the exclusive, that's not probably someone who we really have that strong relationship with, and not something that we're really considering that much, unless it's obviously like extraordinarily new cycle driving news. So yes, it's really often about the person both when it comes to the person who would be interviewed, and the person bringing that news to us themselves.

[0:09:34] **BB:** Okay. Emma, is there any recent stories, and I do want to look back to exclusives though, that you have done that came from a pitch?

**[0:09:45] EH:** Yes, definitely. There are a couple. Earlier this week, I featured an interview with Amanda Bradford, the founder of *The League*.

**[0:09:54] BB:** I saw it right here. Yes, yes. I know Amanda.

**[0:09:57] EH:** Her team had pitched to us the chance to speak with her and had come to us with an exclusive opportunity to talk about her decision to sell to Match Group, which is not something she had talked about before. That is something, that is someone who understands what *The Broadsheet* does. We have covered Match Group many times in the past in many different ways. That's a big business that's of interest to Fortune. Amanda is a female founder, selling her business is a big inflection point, and something that resonates with our audience. Her being willing to discuss how she made that decision, and the personal perspective that led her to come to that decision, as well as the business story of how it's gone so far. So that was from a pitch, and it ended up being a really good fit for us.

**[0:10:38] BB:** I love the recent pitch example. That's great.

[BREAK]

**[0:10:44] ANNOUNCER:** Today's interview will continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious to learn about the unique ways OnePitch helps brands engage with the right journalists? Head to [onepitch.co](https://onepitch.co) and create your own custom media list in five minutes or less. Now, back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUES]

**[0:11:07] BB:** You mentioned just a little while ago there, Emma about exclusive. Oh, we love an exclusive. Can you paint us a picture just so everyone's super clear on what you define as an exclusive and what you look for more pointedly with an exclusive? Obviously, something that has to do with your beat, but is there something more? For example, "Don't be giving me an exclusive with a six-hour lead time" or whatever. Do you have any exclusive requirements?

**[0:11:33] EH:** Yes. I would say, for me, I would define an exclusive as something that is actually exclusive to us. So we are actually the only one that has it. Not, we are given an hour lead time compared to other people who are publishing an hour later. Because me as a journalist, if I saw something published by someone else, I would consider an embargo broken, and any agreement that we came to publish at a later time null and void. We're not really in the habit of having outside publicists determine a published time for Fortune besides setting that initial embargo. So, yes, definitely, a true exclusive, not just you're going an hour before everyone else.

Also, flexibility, if someone's coming to us for *The Broadsheet*, they're coming to us because they want to *The Broadsheet* audience specifically, which is highly engaged and highly influential. But because it's a newsletter, we can only publish one story a day. We also need to stay close to the news cycle. So if we agree to cover an exclusive, like a piece of funding news, that's great and we would love to do that. But if major news happens, if Roe v Wade is overturned, we need to pivot.

**[0:12:39] BB:** You need to pivot big time.

**[0:12:40] EH:** To write about something else. If something is really tight and they're saying, "It has to go this day, and there's zero flexibility."

**[0:12:47] BB:** Then, bye-bye.

**[0:12:48] EH:** Yes, that's probably not the best fit for *The Broadsheet*. So yes, being able to work with us a little bit on some of those things, like the potential for breaking news to impact us because of the newsletter format is really important as well.

**[0:12:59] BB:** People got to be flexible with that. Speaking of, I noticed you coauthor a handful of articles that you do. You don't always see that with journalists. How do you co write an article or a feature?

**[0:13:14] EH:** Yes. That's usually for *The Broadsheet* specifically, which is, we have an opening essay, which is what we're talking about with this conversation. Then, there's also curated news

in the second half of the newsletter from Fortune as well as other publications. That co-byline is my colleague who works on that second half of the newsletter with me. So of course, curation is a big job, and we want to give full credit. So that is a byline on the site as well as credit in the newsletter. I have coauthored before for a true coauthor situation where you're working on the same story. I think it depends, it really depends on relationships and who you're working with. I know for me, oftentimes, those have been on bigger magazine stories, where you have sections of the story, so it's a bit easier to say, "Okay. I'm doing this section, you're doing this section, and then we'll finish, and then we'll work on weaving them together." That's how I've approached it.

**[0:14:01] BB:** Got you. Okay. Emma, is there anything that really bugs you about pitches?

**[0:14:09] EH:** Yes. I would say, some of the habits that I'm sure other folks mentioned, really incessant follow –

**[0:14:16] BB:** Tell us. Tell us. Oh, yes.

**[0:14:18] EH:** Yes. Really incessant follow up is sometimes tricky to navigate, or someone who's just pitching. If you get one email that's not relevant to you, that's fine. I can delete the email. I'm not throwing a big fit about one pitch that is not the right fit. But if you get seven emails from the same person about something that's not the right fit, it's kind of like, okay.

**[0:14:39] BB:** Yes, you're not getting it, you're not getting it.

**[0:14:40] EH:** If you have something that's genuinely a great fit and you want to follow up, and say, you really think this could be right for you, then sure. I might have missed an email like I don't – I'm not anti any follow up, but you're following up about something irrelevant, then that sometimes is not the point to that.

**[0:14:56] BB:** Got it. Okay. Is there a list of blocked people, of people you never talked to. Basically, is there just a little journal of such people or publicist you all keep handy?

**[0:15:08] EH:** Or is that just in your mind, as you kind of referred to before?

**[0:15:12] EH:** I wouldn't say there's a blacklist or anything, but there are folks who had negative experiences with in the past, and I would say, I remember those when that comes back up.

**[0:15:24] BB:** You keep tabs.

**[0:15:25] EH:** Yes. I would say that, I've had a negative experience with someone, and then they come with the story of a lifetime, I don't have a blacklist. But if they're coming with –

**[0:15:36] BB:** You can be redeemed.

**[0:15:37] EH:** Yes. If they're coming with something borderline, and in the past, we've had a tricky situation, especially something that actually affects the story. Like, if we agreed on an exclusive, and then that agreement was broken, or something like that, then I'm probably – or with *The Broadsheet* as well, if we agreed to publish something, we do then count on that, because the newsletter has to go out, and it needs to have an opening essay. So if someone comes 30 minutes before it sets to go out and says, "Oh my God, stop publishing, we can't have this." Then, that causes issues on our end. So if that happens, that is something that could affect our likelihood to work with someone in the future.

**[0:16:13] BB:** Okay, good to note. Emma, have a quick little list of rapid fire questions. Shall I tee it up?

**[0:16:20] EH:** Sure thing,

**[0:16:21] BB:** Let's do it. Video or phone interview?

**[0:16:24] EH:** I would say for anything that is, we're building a relationship, definitely video. Although for background meetings, definitely in person. If we're doing a quick expert call to add some expertise to something about a story driving the news, then phone is fine. That was not quick.

**[0:16:39] BB:** Phone is fine. That's okay. That was an extensive answer and we like the detail. Bullet points or paragraphs in pitches?

[0:16:45] **EH:** Usually paragraphs. A few bullet points is helpful, but unless we're just – most situations, I would say, a good email is good.

[0:16:53] **BB:** How short or how long for pitches do you like?

[0:16:56] **EH:** Definitely not too long, it's a medium.

[0:16:59] **BB:** Okay, medium. Medium, that works for us. Images attached or Dropbox zip file?

[0:17:04] **EH:** I would say attached.

[0:17:05] **BB:** Attached. Email or Twitter/xDM?

[0:17:09] **EH:** Oh, definitely email. Please do not DM me with a pitch.

[0:17:12] **BB:** There you go. One follow up or multiple? You alluded to this a little earlier.

[0:17:17] **EH:** One is usually enough.

[0:17:18] **BB:** One enough, great. Direct or creative subject lines?

[0:17:22] **EH:** Direct.

[0:17:24] **BB:** Direct. Press release or media kit?

[0:17:27] **EH:** Well, I don't know.

[0:17:30] **BB:** Okay, undecided.

[0:17:30] **EH:** Yes. We're usually only doing something if it's maybe in the stage where the press release isn't final yet. Or if our media kit is in the, we're not covering something that's an embargo going out widely most of the time. So it depends. Part of the –

[0:17:45] **BB:** Okay, part of the process.

[0:17:47] **EH:** You did allude to this a little earlier, but just so we can have this noted. Preferred time to read pitches?

[0:17:54] **EH:** Any time if it's a good pitch, or if it's important news, it doesn't matter.

[0:17:59] **BB:** And then, any sources you look for in particular?

[0:18:03] **EH:** What do you mean by sources?

[0:18:04] **BB:** Sometimes people say, "Oh my gosh. I really want like MDs who are specializing in genetic engineering." Or, "Oh, I really like venture capitalists who specialize in AI right now" or something like that. Maybe you don't have a particular one. That's okay.

[0:18:18] **EH:** Oh, yes. Sure. We're always looking to connect with interesting female leaders in business, so that can be CEOs, that can be founders. Occasionally, that can be non-CEO executives as well if their role is really interesting, or really relevant, or perhaps, they're building a profile outside of their day job. Writing a book, something like that can weigh in on an important issue. That's kind of the main thing. Anyone who is really relevant enough, interesting enough, authentic enough to drive a story on their own. Then, on the flip side, always as well looking for interesting perspectives on some of these gender-based issues that continue to drive the new cycle. So someone who has a new perspective to offer on AI safety, and how its impacting bias, how it's impacting women and people of color is always welcome. Someone who has interesting data to share that is really actually new about an issue like paid family leave or sexual harassment. We're always taking a look at those things, even if we don't end up covering that specific data point.

[0:19:18] **BB:** Last, Emma, is there anything you want to promote, highlight, tout? We're here to champion you.

[0:19:24] **EH:** Thank you so much, Beck. Well, please subscribe to *The Broadsheet* on Fortune.

[0:19:28] **BB:** Yes, it's free.

[0:19:28] **EH:** Yes, it's definitely free. It's five days. Once you get into the groove, I promise, a lot of people find it to be a great way to start their morning on these.

[0:19:36] **BB:** I have to. I like it.

[0:19:38] **EH:** Thank you. Yes. Then, definitely follow our work at Fortune and my work. You can follow me on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, wherever you would like and stay in the loop on our stories.

[0:19:49] **BB:** Fantastic. Emman, thank you so much for being here. Emma Hinchcliffe from Fortune. Sign up for that email that is every single day, Monday through Friday, *The Broadsheet*. And if you get so lucky to show up at the Most Powerful Women's Summit at Fortune, my God, that's a hot ticket. By the way, Emma, how do you get a ticket to that?

[0:20:08] **EH:** That is an invite-only event. So our team is definitely in the loop, making sure that you know the executives who should be at that gathering are there, but we're always looking to diversify and bring in new faces as well.

[0:20:21] **BB:** There you go. Perfect. Thanks, Emma. Appreciate you. Happy Holidays. Oh my gosh.

[0:20:27] **EH:** Thank you. Talk to you soon.

[0:20:29] **BB:** Take care.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:20:31] **ANNOUNCER:** Thanks for tuning to this week's Coffee with a Journalist episode featuring Emma Hinchcliffe from Fortune. For more exclusive insights about the journalists on this podcast, subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter at [onepitch.co/podcast](https://onepitch.co/podcast). We'll see you

next week with even more insights about the journalists you want to learn more about. Until then, start great stories.

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