



*Dream of  
Travel Writing*

# How to Get the Most (On the Ground) Out of Your Press Trips

by Gabi Logan, founder of Dream of Travel Writing

A blurred background image of a coffee shop setting. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the left, a smartphone is visible. In the background, there is a vase of purple flowers and a white napkin. The text "Today, we're going to talk about..." is overlaid in the center.

Today, we're going to  
talk about...

1. Best practices for on-the-ground research

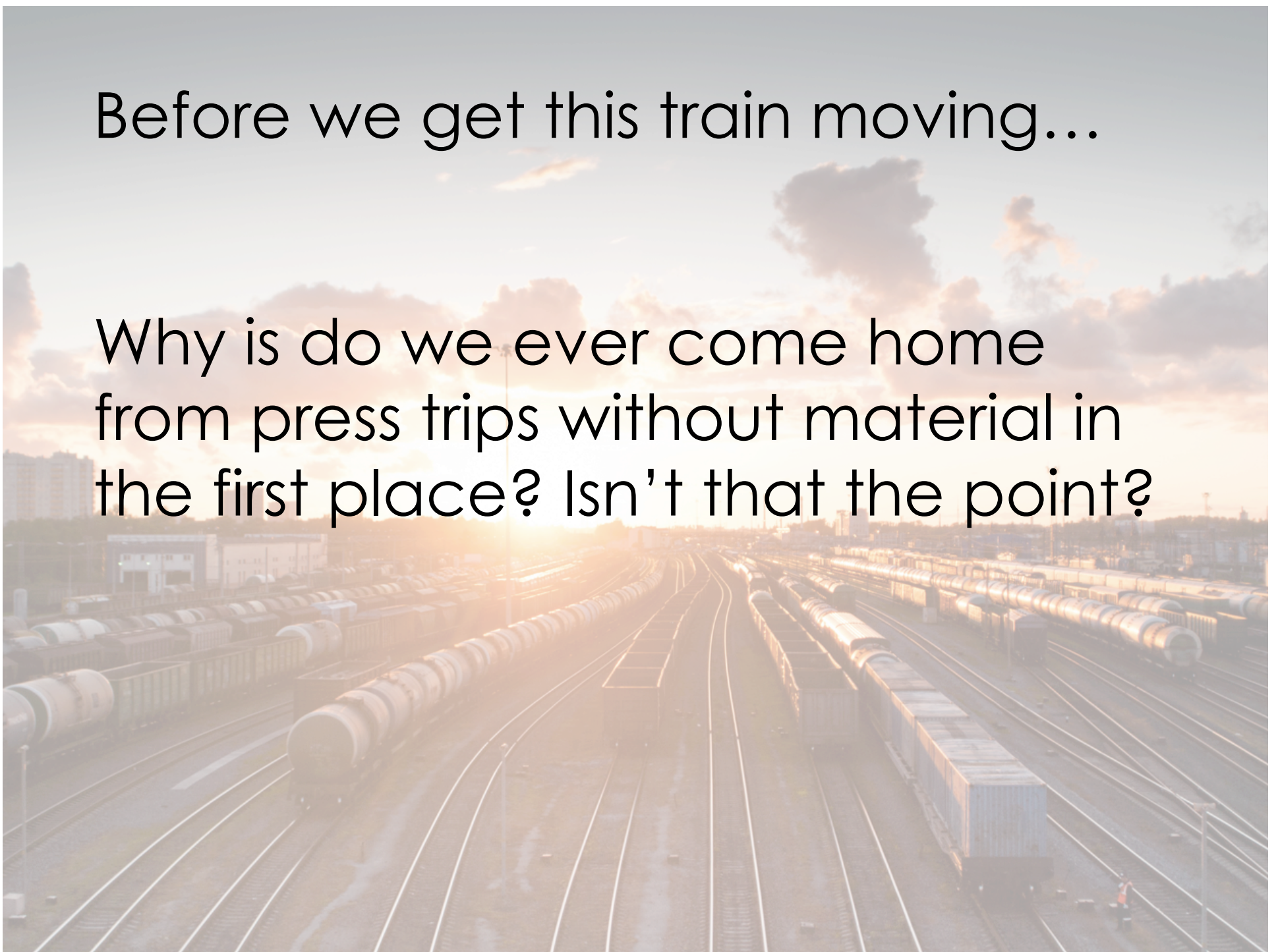
2. Troubleshooting some real-life sucky situations

3. Walking through \*your\* itineraries for opportunities



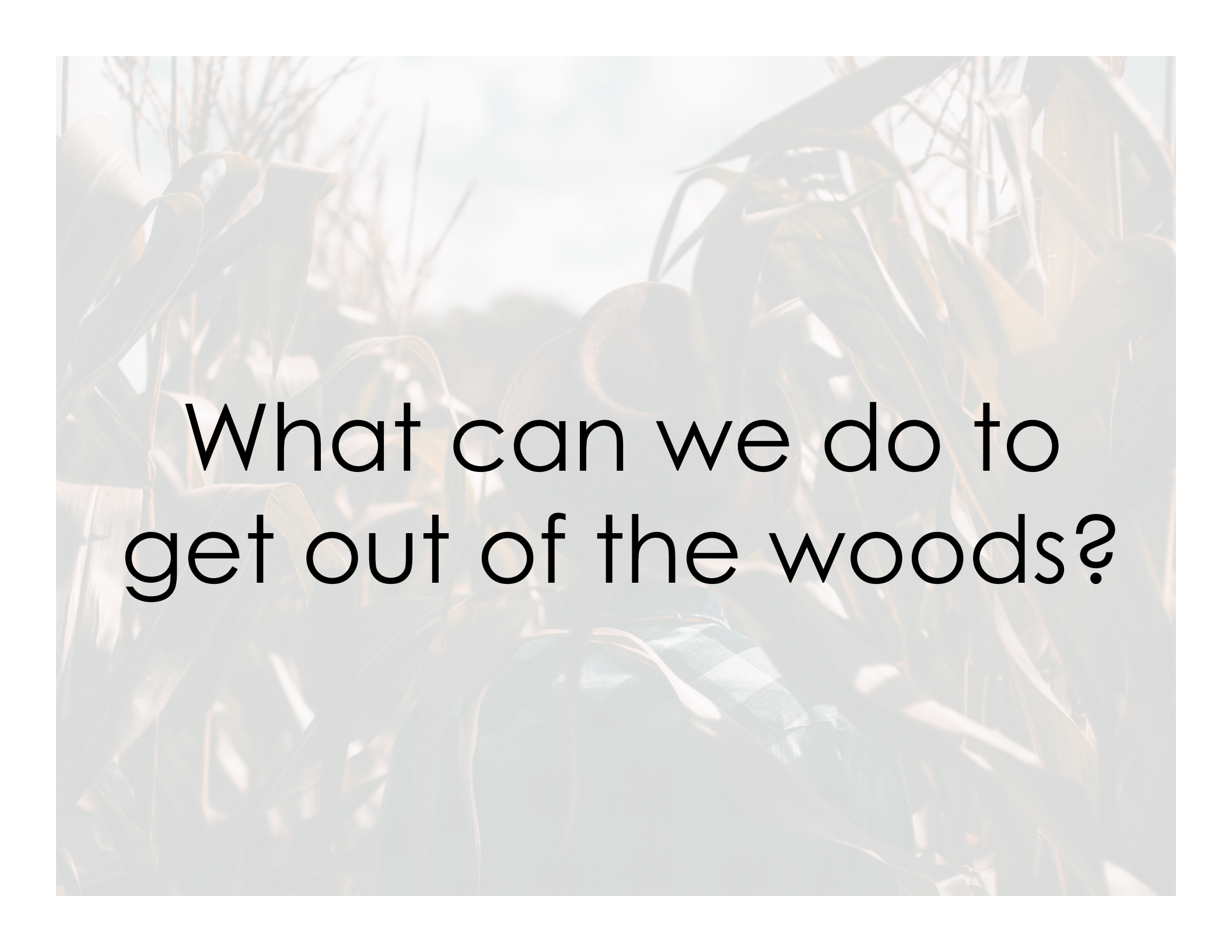
Before we get this train moving...

Why is do we ever come home from press trips without material in the first place? Isn't that the point?



# What Often Goes Wrong

- Poor initial planning (PR or you)
- Weather
- Misunderstanding of focus/  
background
- “Rock star” being catered to
- Bad sponsor/attendee focus fit

A person wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a plaid shirt is sitting in a field of tall, dry grass or reeds. The scene is captured in a soft, slightly desaturated light, creating a calm and somewhat melancholic atmosphere. The person is positioned in the center of the frame, looking down. The background is filled with the intricate textures of the dry vegetation, extending to a hazy horizon under a pale sky.

What can we do to  
get out of the woods?

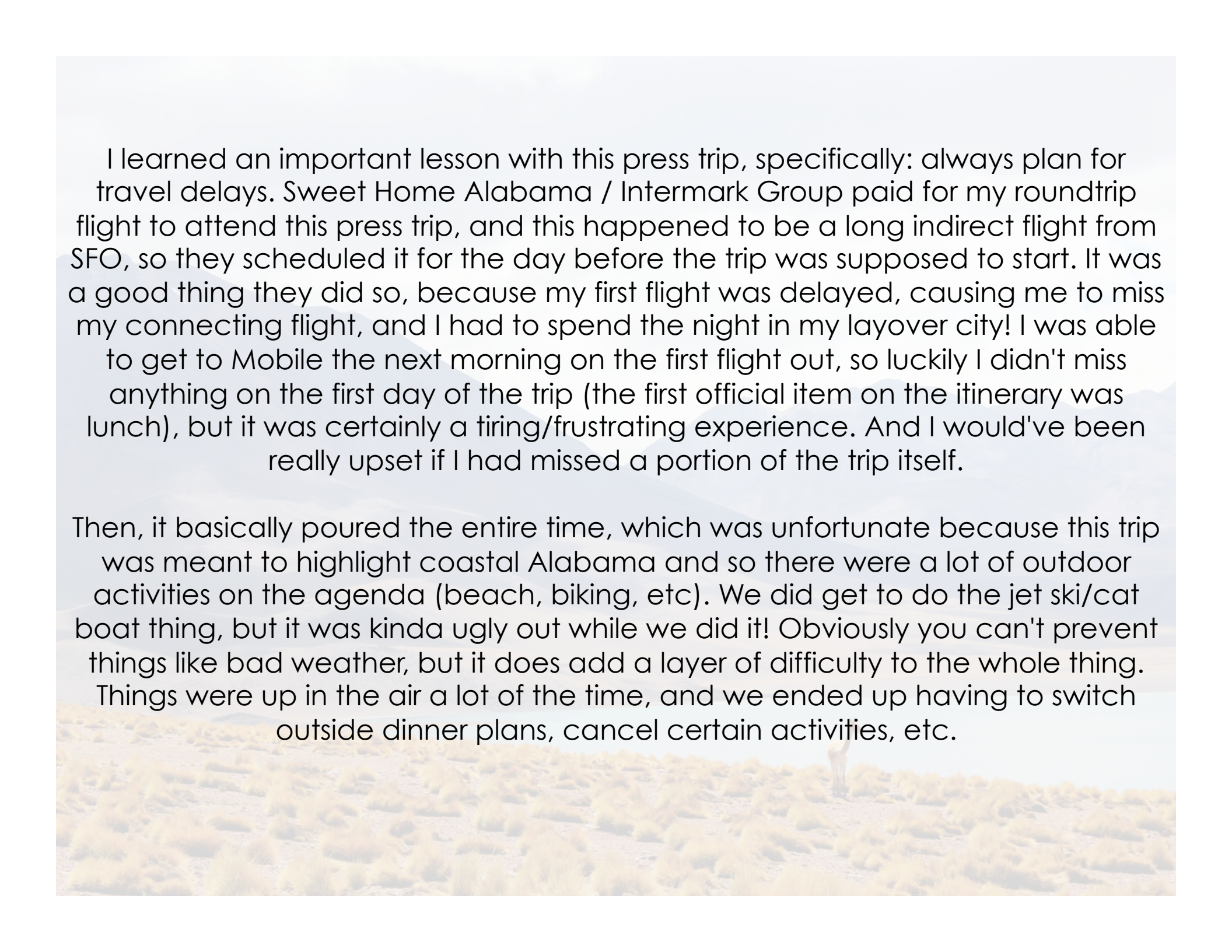
# General Best Practices

- Pocket cheat sheet – make the best of any itinerary
- Sleep in advance (I'm really not kidding)
- Sidebar interviews
- Asking for exceptions
- Maximizing your break time
  - Part 2: Defending your break time
- Being Focus ruthless and unapologetic about it
- Work the PR (and the sources)

A person is seen climbing a steep, snow-covered mountain slope. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a soft, golden glow across the sky and the snow. The background shows a range of mountains and a forest of evergreen trees. The overall scene is serene and adventurous.

Now over  
to you

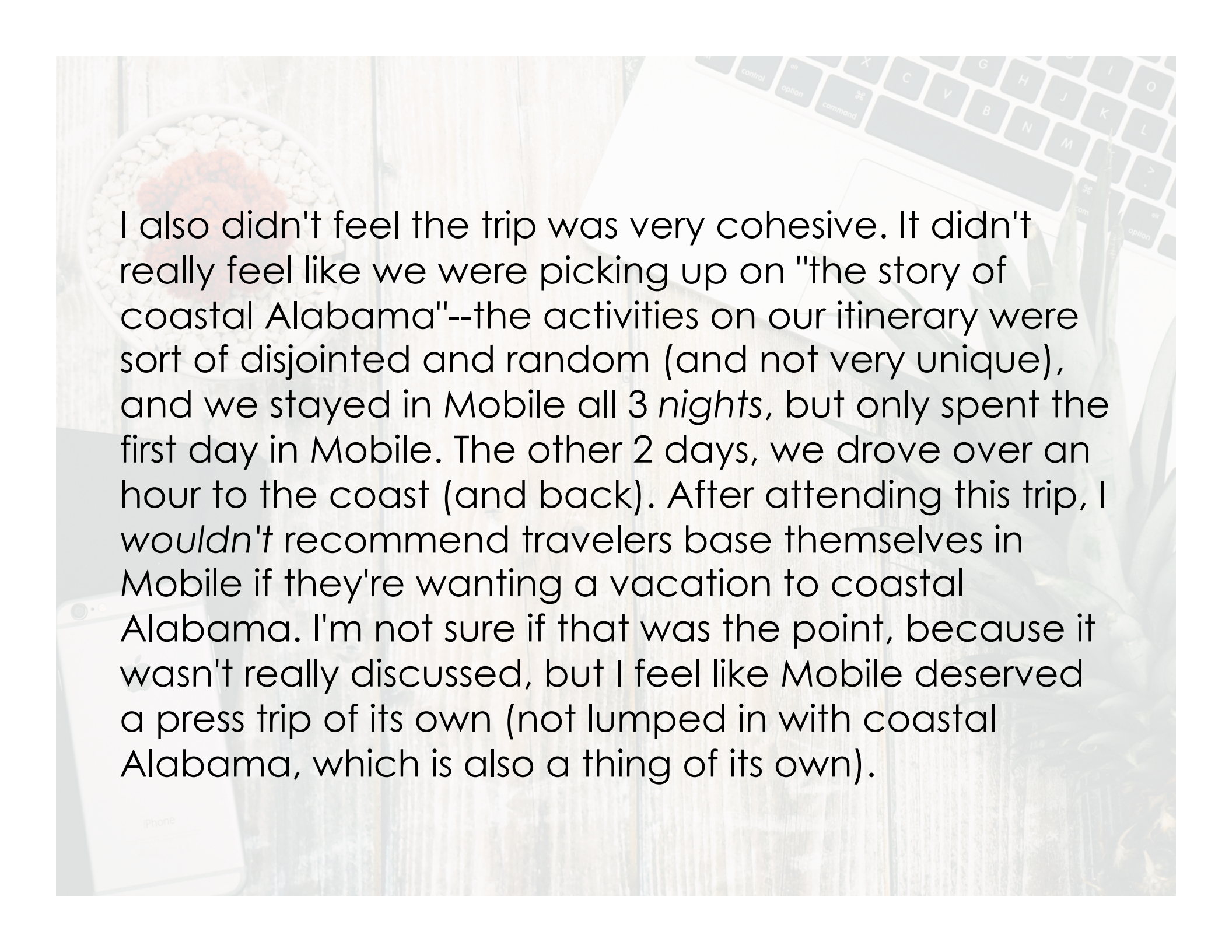





I learned an important lesson with this press trip, specifically: always plan for travel delays. Sweet Home Alabama / Intermark Group paid for my roundtrip flight to attend this press trip, and this happened to be a long indirect flight from SFO, so they scheduled it for the day before the trip was supposed to start. It was a good thing they did so, because my first flight was delayed, causing me to miss my connecting flight, and I had to spend the night in my layover city! I was able to get to Mobile the next morning on the first flight out, so luckily I didn't miss anything on the first day of the trip (the first official item on the itinerary was lunch), but it was certainly a tiring/frustrating experience. And I would've been really upset if I had missed a portion of the trip itself.

Then, it basically poured the entire time, which was unfortunate because this trip was meant to highlight coastal Alabama and so there were a lot of outdoor activities on the agenda (beach, biking, etc). We did get to do the jet ski/cat boat thing, but it was kinda ugly out while we did it! Obviously you can't prevent things like bad weather, but it does add a layer of difficulty to the whole thing. Things were up in the air a lot of the time, and we ended up having to switch outside dinner plans, cancel certain activities, etc.

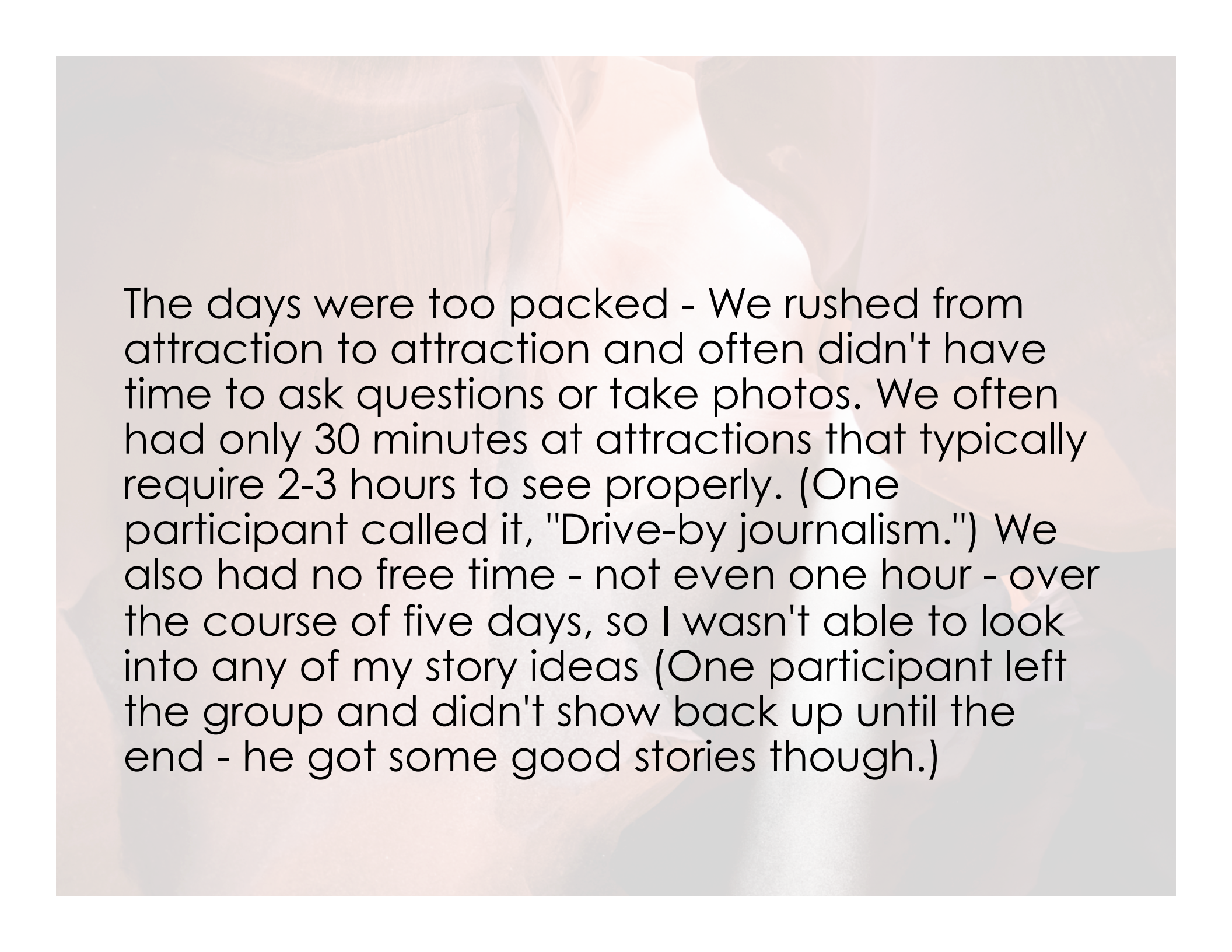
For example, we couldn't do the bike rides in Gulf State Park on Thursday due to the rain, so instead they quickly shifted that slot to a family-friendly museum (GulfQuest). Then on Friday, our dolphin and lighthouse tour skipped the entire "lighthouse" side of the island because that's not where the dolphins were that day, so we didn't see any of that (nor did we end up seeing any dolphins!). On Friday night, we went to a different restaurant for dinner, staying in Mobile instead of driving back down to the coast (we were kind of glad about this, to be honest, and the restaurant we did end up going to was really neat).

The background of the image is a soft-focus collage. On the left, a wooden surface is visible. In the upper right, a portion of a laptop keyboard is shown, with keys like 'control', 'option', 'command', 'C', 'V', 'B', 'N', 'M', and 'option' visible. In the lower left, the top corner of a white smartphone is seen, with the word 'iPhone' faintly visible. In the upper left, a white bowl filled with small, colorful beads (red, orange, and white) is partially visible. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on travel and technology.

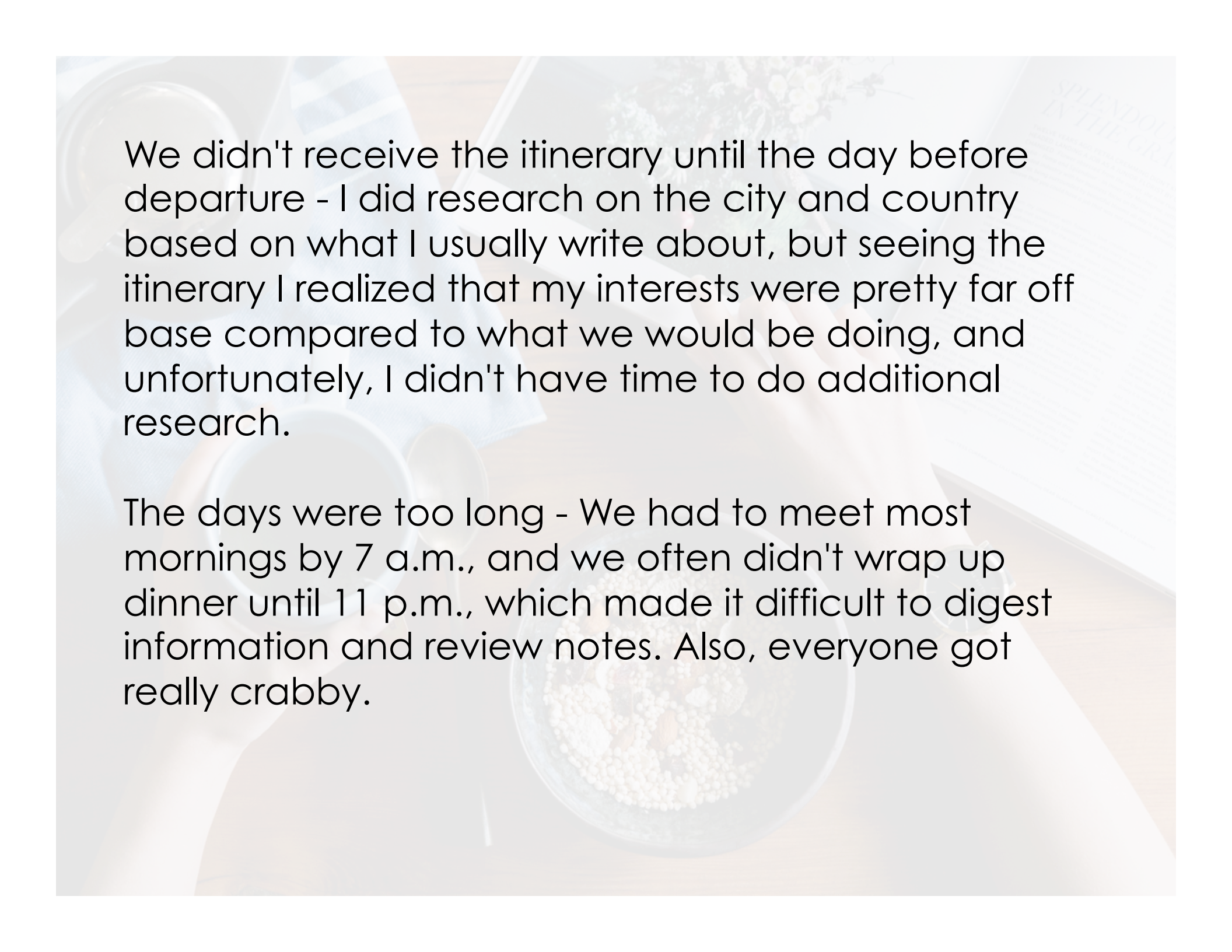
I also didn't feel the trip was very cohesive. It didn't really feel like we were picking up on "the story of coastal Alabama"--the activities on our itinerary were sort of disjointed and random (and not very unique), and we stayed in Mobile all 3 *nights*, but only spent the first day in Mobile. The other 2 days, we drove over an hour to the coast (and back). After attending this trip, I *wouldn't* recommend travelers base themselves in Mobile if they're wanting a vacation to coastal Alabama. I'm not sure if that was the point, because it wasn't really discussed, but I feel like Mobile deserved a press trip of its own (not lumped in with coastal Alabama, which is also a thing of its own).

A person's hand is shown writing on a notepad with a pencil. The background is a soft-focus image of a person's face and hands, suggesting a professional or creative setting. The text is centered on the page.

Lastly, as a side note: several people on this trip kept staying behind/opting out of activities once we arrived. Or whining/complaining when they didn't get their preferred way or wanted to do something else... I know you know this, but this is such bad form! They didn't have any good reason to back out of certain activities--they simply weren't feeling it. I just find this to be so unprofessional and lame.

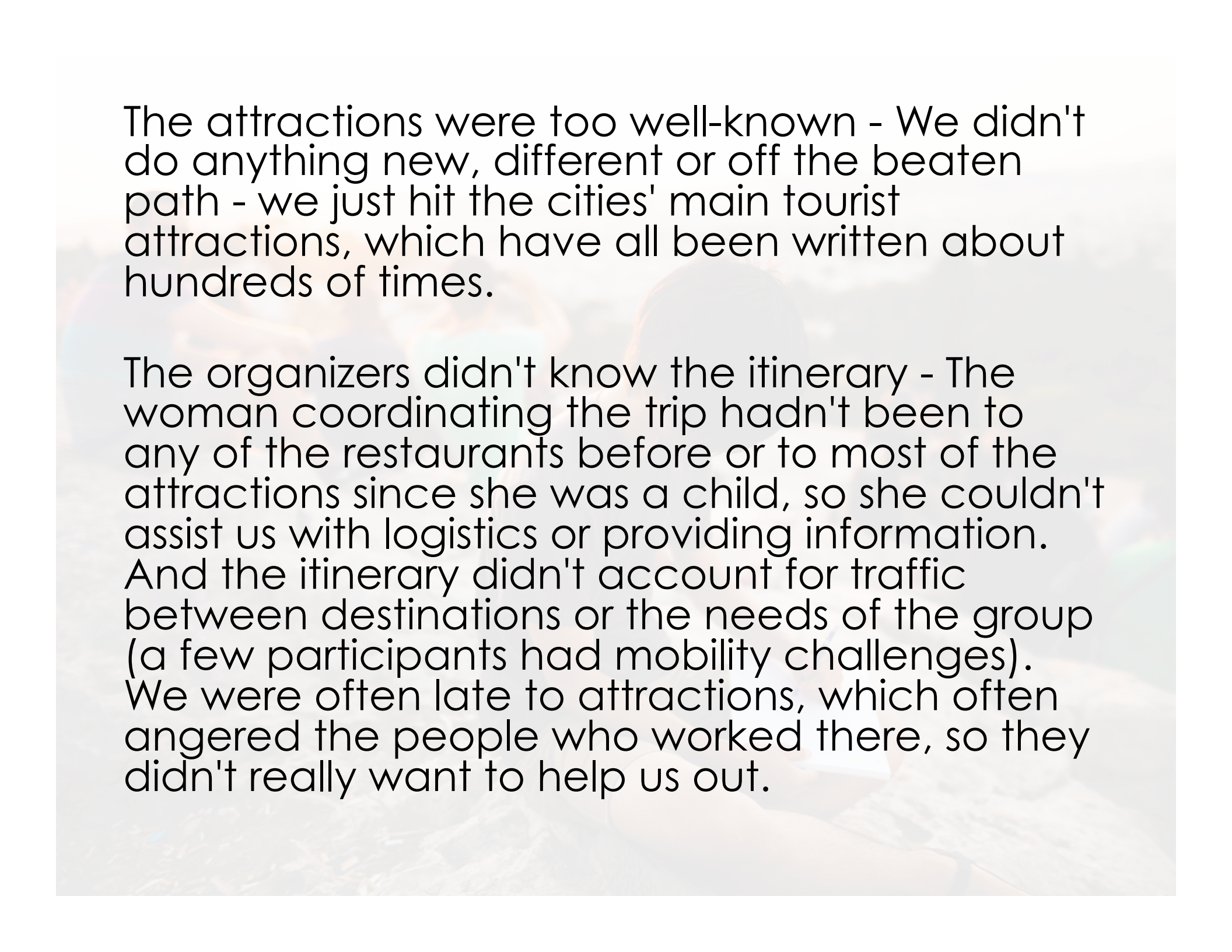


The days were too packed - We rushed from attraction to attraction and often didn't have time to ask questions or take photos. We often had only 30 minutes at attractions that typically require 2-3 hours to see properly. (One participant called it, "Drive-by journalism.") We also had no free time - not even one hour - over the course of five days, so I wasn't able to look into any of my story ideas (One participant left the group and didn't show back up until the end - he got some good stories though.)



We didn't receive the itinerary until the day before departure - I did research on the city and country based on what I usually write about, but seeing the itinerary I realized that my interests were pretty far off base compared to what we would be doing, and unfortunately, I didn't have time to do additional research.

The days were too long - We had to meet most mornings by 7 a.m., and we often didn't wrap up dinner until 11 p.m., which made it difficult to digest information and review notes. Also, everyone got really crabby.



The attractions were too well-known - We didn't do anything new, different or off the beaten path - we just hit the cities' main tourist attractions, which have all been written about hundreds of times.

The organizers didn't know the itinerary - The woman coordinating the trip hadn't been to any of the restaurants before or to most of the attractions since she was a child, so she couldn't assist us with logistics or providing information. And the itinerary didn't account for traffic between destinations or the needs of the group (a few participants had mobility challenges). We were often late to attractions, which often angered the people who worked there, so they didn't really want to help us out.

Thanks so much  
for joining us today!

It was a pleasure chatting  
travel writing with you 😊

Whenever you need to double check an idea fit, your assumptions about editors, or your self doubt on whether your idea is good, email [questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com](mailto:questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com).

