



Dream of Travel Writing

Live Idea-to-Pitch Walkthrough Part #1: Turning Your Trip Notes into a Pitchable Idea List

So today we are kicking off a brand new very different, very special series. I've been talking to people about this for months in fact, particularly on the trips that we're gonna use as the fodder for this series. So the idea of this series, is that I'm going to literally go from my notes from tours that I have been on, or meetings that I've had at a conference in the Czech Republic, and in over the course of a number of hours, walk through every step of the process with you guys live on the screen. I will do no part of this outside of our webinars. It's the only thing that I have done so far, is I just moved all of the emails of my notes to a specific folder, I didn't read any of them so that we can look at them together today.

So I'm really trying to strictly adhere that I won't do anything outside, so you will literally see everything that I do. So you will see how long it takes me to do something, you will be able to ask me why I'm doing something this way or that way. And most importantly, you will see when I say okay, this idea is okay, but I can't find a home for it. Or it's too hard to figure out if this is true or not, or whatever that is and I move on. Because that's something that I see a lot of you guys struggling with, is when do you just cut bait on something for now and move on.

So what we're gonna do is particularly today, I'm gonna be laying a little bit of groundwork because the part of this process that we're covering today doesn't take quite as long as everything else. But I wanna just actually go through... I have this slide at the end. But I just wanna go through with you guys the trajectory of what we're gonna cover in these webinars, so you can see how we're gonna go through.

So today, we are going from the notes, so the very raw tons of typos I'm simultaneously transcribing at tour guide while I'm out on a tour, type of notes, we're gonna go through those. We're gonna go through as many as we can, as many as we're interested in, as many as we need to, today, to get a pile of potential article ideas. Now what happens next week, is that we take those article ideas and we turn to the database and we say okay, what magazines could these possibly run in. And we're gonna do that a couple of different ways.

So what I see a lot of times people do is that they take an article idea, maybe a couple, or maybe like a place that they've visited, or a concept, or a topic that they wanna cover, and they start looking for magazines for that one thing. We're actually gonna do it slightly differently, which is that I'm going to open up a bunch of magazines. And I'm gonna open them before our call, at least some of them so that they're loaded, so we don't have to wait for that. I'm gonna open up a bunch of magazines that could potentially cover the Czech Republic basically. And I'll open up magazines in some sort of different areas, but mostly airline magazines and things like that.

And then what we'll do is with the list of ideas that we're making today, we will kind of have them side by side and start scanning magazines with the entire list of ideas in mind, rather than one idea at a time. And that's one of the things that make it go faster. And then we've got



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two more webinars which seems like a lot, just about the idea phase, but there's a reason for that. Because as we are making sure that an idea actually fits a magazine, that's where we do these checks to see first of all, if we're wasting our time even writing this pitch, because the editor is gonna say no, because it really doesn't belong in that particular magazine.

But we're also learning about the idea, we're learning more about this idea, so that when you go and sit down to pitch it, you know not only if it's solid. But you also have enough details about it, whether from your notes or otherwise, to be able to put that pitch together. And then the pitch writing itself happens very quickly. So that's why we spend so much time on the ideas, but they happen in these three phases. The webinar we'll do today, and the second one are much more about the raw idea generation and matching. So it's kind of like you know, we're out... to use a really sort of you know, old-fashioned expression. We're out you know, getting the ore, and then we take it in and we refine it, but it's still kind of crude. And then it has to be you know, mixed with something else to become steel, and then forged with a sword.

These are all different steps, so right now, we're just gathering those very crude raw materials, and deciding which of them to keep. So what that means is that today, we're gonna go through the notes and have a really basic collection. But next week, when we match the ideas to the magazines, that's also a step of deciding which ones to keep, because if we can't find a home for something, we don't wanna dwell on it. Okay, this is really important, and I see this happen a lot.

So the other things that we're gonna do today are talk about how you can follow along at home. Because I know it's the end of the year, and some people have... actually I had a number of people I know are going on really big trips this time of year, and other folks have big commitments for the holidays. And other folks have you know, otherwise just travel commitments, family, whatever. But I'm hoping that at least with one trip, with one pitch coming out at the end, you can follow along with me in this process. And we'll talk about how to do that as well.

And the other thing I'm gonna do because I'm not sure how many of you have seen this webinar, is I'm just gonna do a very quick refresher on the different types of magazine articles. Because as we're looking at raw ideas right now, I'm always looking at them with the lens of is this gonna be a profile, is this gonna be a feature, is this gonna be more about the person? Do I have enough already available from the notes that I have, from when I was on the ground to make this a pitch without doing more research? Or at least without doing an onerous amount of research, like doing fresh interviews, or God forbid having to go back somewhere.

So one of the things to know for this series is that I tried to pick something that would be kind of very realistic circumstances for all of you guys. So I've picked... and in fact, I'm



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gonna go to the next slide for this. But I have picked a time period in which I was on a trip somewhere where I do not know the country very well. I have been to the Czech Republic which is now known as Czechia, but I'll just say Czech Republic because more people are familiar with that. I've been to the Czech Republic in the past for a pretty decent period of time, not like I lived there but did a long visit, but I have not been out of Prague. And I don't have very deep cultural knowledge of this country, like I would with Italy, or Spain, or something like that that I've been to and covered a lot, over the years.

And in the case of this trip, I had a mix of different experiences. So that allows us to touch the types of experiences that many of you would have. During this trip, it was for the TBEX Conference over the summer. I went on a couple different short day long or half day trips that included tours of different attractions that were guided. So in these settings, we would be going to a museum, or a historical monument, or something like that, and using the guide that was on-site in that place. So this is something that any of you guys can do.

Say you're coming to an event at our retreat house in the Catskills, I was just doing a bunch of work there yesterday. And you wanna visit the Eleanor Roosevelt home, and the Roosevelt Library. That's the kind of thing where you can go and you can get a national park service tour. And that'll be very much like the types of things that I'm gonna talk about in the context of those day trips. But then after that, there was the conference itself. So these shorter trips that I was talking about happened before the conference. And then at the conference itself, we had speed networking.

Now I'm not sure how many ideas... I know there's a couple potentially interesting ones in there from these, but I'm not sure how many ideas we'll pull from those sessions. But what happens with the speed networking is that they are very short meetings, where you're just getting kind of the barest hint from somebody, about what it is that they do. So this would be like if you are at a Travel Massive or some kind of networking event, and you meet somebody from a company, or say or at the New York Times Travel Show or something like that. And they start telling you about what their company does, and you feel like you wanna do something with that. That's the corollary of that portion of what we're doing.

And then the third thing that I did that we'll also be looking at, is that I went on a multi-day, I think it was four, five days fam trip, where we made quite a few different stops. And those included historical monuments, also some cultural things, different things like that. So that was a multi-day thing that we can pull a lot of experiences from. Now, I mentioned this almost in passing, but something that you may have noticed me kind of being nervous about earlier, and also when I mentioned the series. Is that we're gonna be looking at my notes from these tours.

So some of you... I don't know about some of you who are on this call, but some of you who are in the coaching program and things like that, have traveled with me before. And when I



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travel I really actually do take mostly as much as possible verbatim transcription notes of tours that were on. And I do that because that allows me to do what you're gonna see today. Which is that it's been months, I went on these tours in I believe July and August, so let's see, yeah, July and August, and I have been many places since then including several other countries. So having notes and this depth of detail, allows me to be able to figure out what on earth was going on. If I thought a particular thing was interesting, and now I can understand just from my like scrawled, misspelled on my phone notes, I can read a little bit more about what the tour guide was saying and try to figure it out.

So as we're going through this is a very... I take notes in front of people a lot, but I don't share my notes with people very often. So this is gonna be a very interesting look at kind of what that actually looks like. And so it's an experiment, I do this kind of stuff in our live events quite a bit, but not with my notes. I do it more with other people's notes and other people's trips. And so this is a whole new thing and I'm really excited to share with you guys. And the premise really is that I talked about how you will follow along at home, in terms of how you can do your own version of this later. But what I also really wanna encourage is as I'm doing things, I know I talk quite fast and I'm trying to get through this series in a reasonable number of webinar hours as well, so I'll talk a bit fast because of that.

But ask questions about what I'm doing. Obviously, there's gonna be things that I mention, that have to do with the article idea itself. Now it may kind of surprise you to hear this, but it really doesn't matter even when I'm coaching you guys if I know what the article idea is. And in that same way, it doesn't matter if you guys really completely understand the article idea, especially on this webinar. Because what happens is as you go through these steps naturally of checking things here and there and against what the magazine has covered, and against the reality of you know, what you can find online and things like that, it naturally becomes clear whether an article idea is legit or makes sense or not.

So what I wanna show you particularly with this series, is that there are so many ideas out there, there are. There's just so many things that could become articles, but the things that you should be spending your time on, are the things where you can see where and how to pitch it

And when I say how to pitch it, I mean you got that information, it needs to go into the pitch available to you and ready to go. And that's really what I want for you from this webinar. Because the reason that I'm doing this, is I see so many of you getting really caught up on so many of these things that we're gonna walk through. And that's why I have structured this webinar series the way that I have. I really wanna highlight the areas, and how to get through the areas where I see you guys getting stuck so that you don't have to do it anymore.

And so you'll see me doing, you know, what could be called shortcuts, or perhaps I might have done something like how I take really transcription-type notes before this, which could



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be conceived as a shortcut, ask me about that. Ask me about how you can take those shortcuts as well. Because here's the thing, you've gotta be able to do this, this is the difference between having a career that you enjoy, and just ending up. I see this again, happen quite a lot too, I don't wanna say all the time, but having a career where you get out there, you do some pitching for gigs, or magazines, but more likely gigs, you get something going and then you just keep writing for the same people and you get stuck with them. And that's not what I want for any of you.

Being able to not just having the ability to, but also having the wherewithal to, continually pitch yourself is what allows you to move in the way that you wanna move into new markets.

That's what allows you to move into new markets. It's what allows you to take your career in the direction that you want it to go, so that you end up where you want, rather than turning around and being like, oh my God, I can't believe I've been a freelance for five years. And this is what I've been doing all this time, like how is this... this isn't what I left my job for. I don't want that for you guys.

So very interestingly today in terms of what being a freelancer could look like, an intriguing thing came up when we were putting together our job board that I wanna show you in this thing. So all of this stuff that we're talking about today, and next week, and probably the week after that, and the week after that, until webinars six. So a little bit of what we do today, and then everything until webinar six more or less, are things that somebody who is not you, could be doing. And here's what I mean by that. I know it's a little blurry for you guys.

But I came across this when I was looking at the job boards today to pull together the jobs for the newsletter. And at first, I didn't click on it, it just says Cassie Shortsleeve, Inc, and I thought that was a company name not a person's actual name, who knows if it's her actual name or her pen name. But then I saw it on another board, on another board, and I finally got this little snippet and I looked at it. "I'm a Boston-based health and travel writer and editor for major national websites and magazines, including "Men's Health," "Shape," "Women's Health," "Condé Nast Traveler," "Men's Journal," furthermore for "Equinox" and other outlets.

This is the kind of person that we'd all like to be right, maybe you don't necessarily wanna do the health so much, but those type of outlets right. She says, "I'm seeking a resourceful solution oriented passionate editorial intern to help me with story research, organizational work, of story documents, story setup, and administrative tasks, interview transcriptions, idea generation." That's what we're doing today, right? "And website updating. This job requires handling multiple deadlines at once, and I'm looking for someone who lives and breathes all things health, wellness, and travel. The best candidate is a fast, passionate worker with a go-getter attitude, who is interested in a career in digital publishing/magazines. This is an opportunity to learn how health and travel stories are researched, reported, and published."



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Now important to note, paying \$11 an hour, is a remote position. I have seen quite a number of journalists who are in this type of position as she is in terms of outlets, who have a person like this. I, in fact, was looking to set up a person like this particularly to help me get my interview set up and to interact with people to get photos, and things like that. And that's the thing, is that a lot of the stuff that you guys are spending a lot of time being stuck on... first of all, we're gonna talk about just how to remove that. But I also want you to start to see how much of this stuff you can go through very, very quickly because the decisions are very binary. Which means it's this or it's this.

How can you, and how should you, or how could you, if you so desired, follow along with what we're doing in the series at home? So the idea is that... we're gonna split this up so that we're gonna cover... we're gonna be doing about two to three webinars in this series a month. So what you can do is you can watch me do whatever I'm gonna do that week, and then in the intervening week, you can go and do the same thing.

So today we're gonna take some notes, and we're gonna take an itinerary, and we're gonna make a big list of ideas. So you pick one trip that you're going on, it can be a weekend trip, it can be a day trip, a half day trip, and you go do the same thing.

So I told you that I was gonna recap a little bit before we got into matching ideas about the different types of articles. And the reason for this is that I wanna start priming the pump as I'm going through... again, I haven't looked at these notes. I'm reading them almost as fresh as you guys except it will kind of jog my memory, but who knows we all had heatstroke this summer, right. So I want to show you now the types of article ideas to prime the pump so that as you are looking with me at these ideas, you like I am doing are starting to think about where these can end up by thinking about what types of articles they can be.

So what do I mean by that? So the same thing can very easily be... I'm trying to think if there's any. Okay, so basically up to here. So pretty much anything you find without a doubt can be all of these. And I'll go through each of them individually quickly. Getting a personal essay, or an atmospheric postcard piece, or a narrative feature, out of something, can be a little more difficult. And a service or how-to piece depends on who might be available for you to get to interview. So the reason it's important to be keeping these in mind when you're coming up with ideas is that you don't want to see something that could work one way, as in it could work well as an interview, or it could work well as a narrative feature.

But you're too stuck on thinking of it as a news brief, or as a personal essay, that you miss the opportunity to potentially match that to a great clip in a great magazine. Because you're not quite conceiving of that idea and it's varying different formats, okay. So you may have in the past heard me talk about... I'll just use of little flowers here. About the triangle that is an idea. So what that means... let's see if we can make some lines here. What that means is that a



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triangle has three sides okay, so the base of the triangle, this is gonna be your content, okay. This is gonna be whatever it is that your topic is.

So you know, if we were to be doing... you know, let's just look at this photo. This photo is kind of like one of these Instagrammy, bright color flower arrangement type things. Let's say we wanted to talk about how to produce the best you know, home decor pictures for Instagram. That's often how people come to me with an idea, but as soon as you slap how-to on it, that means that you have put a format on it. The topic is interiors for Instagram, or floral design for Instagram, or whatever it is.

And once you put that how-to on it you've made it into a service piece. You could do an interview on how to design your flowers for the best Instagram things. You could do a business profile on a company that specializes in creating Instagram bouquets for restaurants. You could do a news brief about this company launching, or about how it's now become a trend that hotels, for instance, are not just looking for bouquets, but they're looking for bouquets with that special pop that will make someone stop and pose for an Instagram photo. You could do a profile of a person who has made their living through an Instagram based upon beautiful floral arrangements and so on and so forth.

So that format particularly, is where I see people neglect a lot of the other different types of article ideas and get stuck when they don't necessarily need to. So what is the third leg of the triangle? We've got as I told you the bottom is the content, our topic, and then that one side is the format or the type of article. And then this third sides here that is the audience, and that's what we're gonna get into next week when we look at matching these ideas with specific magazines.

In that audience bit that we'll talk about next week, is one of the really important things again that I see a lot of people neglect. And then they sit down to write a pitch and they get really stuck on the writing bit. And it's because there isn't a good way to warp or mangle the particular either topic or format. But usually, the topic that you have in mind, into something that fits for that particular audience. So the different types of articles that you can look at in our webinar libraries, you also have the opportunity to watch. We've done a huge long series this year on exactly how to put together each of these different types of pieces.

So if you feel like you aren't up to writing a particular type of article, I really recommend checking those out. Because I've heard from several people on the coaching program that they feel much more confident with pitching pieces that they didn't think they could write before. Because now they have a really solid understanding of how to write them. So different pieces that you can write our news brief is usually gonna be... it can even be shorter, but usually about 100 to 300 words. And it's typically about something that is, as it says in the title, new. And so this can be a trend, or it can be a particular thing opening, or it could be



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somebody who's doing something new, launching something new, or innovation something like that.

An interview usually takes the format of a Q&A type thing, where you actually see the questions that somebody is asking. As opposed to a business profile which is more telling the story of a business, and how it came to do what it does, and why that's important, and what takeaway there is for others. Whereas a profile of a person, is almost more of a vignette, you're trying to capture all of these different facets of somebody, right. You know, we can think about all the love poems of the ages and all that, that you know, you can't get what is it? The shape of the leg, and the curve of the... whatever. You can't get every single aspect of a person's physicality, personality, history, manner, you can't get all of that into one thing. So a profile of a person is really a snapshot.

Then we have a couple different types of features. There's two round-ups you can do. And this is another thing where when we're looking at this phase of pulling ideas out of something, you might see that I've jotted down ideas, or it'll say an idea, which is only tangentially related to the thing at hand. And that's because something can be the inspiration for a basket of kittens. Which is when you have a number of things that are all similar and all awesome, but that live in their own universes.

So for instance, one idea I saw when I was pulling together my list of notes for you guys, was something about a trip that I took to Iceland. Where I went to all the attractions like at midnight, and it was still light out, but there was nobody around. And clearly, something that happened on that trip that I took in the Czech Republic was sort of similar to that, and it made me think of that, okay. But unfortunately, I didn't in my notes put what in the Czech Republic made me think of that because otherwise, I could make a basket of kittens or something like that in the Czech Republic.

Something like that you know, about walking like you know, around the Louvre or through like the main squares of Paris at night, or in Florence, or something like that. And so I could have like overcrowded cities you know, that are best experienced at midnight., and I could do a whole round-up on that, as a basket of kittens. And another type of round-up is the destination guide which is something that is very easy to pitch, but it has to be to a magazine that has it.

Now narrative features and postcards are very much similar things, but there's something that has quite a bit of atmosphere to them. And in the case of a narrative feature, it has a story, it has a beginning, middle, and an end. Whereas a personal essay is much more of a thought piece, something happened to you, you're thinking about the implications of it, and you usually have some realization, or maybe you don't, but it's an exploration of thinking.



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So those are ones where occasionally, I will have an idea like that, and it's very fully formed. If I have an idea for a personal essay, I'm usually gonna start writing essentially whatever is the beginning of that personal essay in my notes, as I'm writing down the idea. Because it's kind of a thought exploration. If you just have an idea for an essay, and you don't start to get it down you're usually gonna lose it. So that's really important to know, as well, if you're out and you feel like you have an essay idea.

And service or how-to pieces are of course pieces in which you're telling somebody how to do something. And these are things that it might seem actually hard to pick up while we're out traveling, but once you kind of have your mind around this idea of looking for all the different types of articles, it can be easier than you think.

I told you that this trip that I took had a couple of different pieces to it. I'm just gonna open up for us a file of notes. So this is where I'm gonna put my ideas as we generate them from the particular trip. And I'm just gonna title it "notes," so that it's very easy for us to find, and keep it on my desktop so we can find it again next week. And I can't cheat because you can see the last modified date right. So this is gonna be my file of notes, for this trip, and you can see all of my other things up on the screen.

So here we go, we got the notes, and we've got the chat box. So this trip was composed of three things right. So we had the day trip that happened beforehand. Now I'm trying to see how small everything is for you, but it's hard to tell. Okay, I'm gonna try to make it a little bigger so you guys can see it, hopefully, that's good. All right, so we had the day trips that I took beforehand, we had the meetings with companies at TBEX. And then we had this multi-day fam trip that I took. Now the multi-day fam trip, this is the itinerary for it, and I just wanted to go over it with you, so you guys could see a little bit of what we did.

So I guess it actually was not long, I would say it was about three full days, and there was one day before this that was all travel. Where we didn't really do much, but we were kind of together as a group and we talked a little bit. So on this first day, we were actually staying in the Gustav Mahler Hotel. So Gustav Mahler is a pretty famous composer. Now even though I have in the past played violin and sang classical music, and done ballet, as well as many small girls do, I don't have like a huge sense of Gustav Mahler's music. So that didn't particularly strike me as something that I had a lot to do about.

But this Jihlava Town was really interesting, and it seems an odd thing as the take home and thing that you wanna write a trip about. But I'd love to try to do something, and I really don't know what around these hedgehogs. So the hedgehogs in this town, they have the stuffed animals for them everywhere, and there's beer named after them. It's just like the mascot of the town, it has been forever. And they're very unclear, there's kind of like a mythology around it, they're not sure why everything is named for hedgehogs. It might be that there



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were some hedgehogs in circulation kind of when they first moved there and then they all left, but they're not sure.

And it was just this kind of thing that seems weird, but it made the town have this personality. Every historical monument that you went to, even if you were going into this mining system that went underground and connected it from people's houses, they had these little-stuffed animal hedgehogs as the town mascot. So I'm just gonna write here that that might be an essay, or might be a narrative piece with something about identity or connection. I don't really know, but I feel like with the hedgehog piece whatever that becomes, that's the kind of thing where... it's one of those things that I just kind of have a sense about it. And then once we see what magazines are available, we're gonna see what happens there.

So as you're in this town, I mentioned that we went to this underground. So the underground thing was really interesting. And this is something rare I feel like there's gotta be potential for a round-up here. So what happened was this... how it actually some of the other ones that we went to in the Czech Republic, had an underground that connected different storehouses. And people would basically move down there. After there was a fire that destroyed the town. And there was more to it, so it was even like the Royals would have their food brought underground from the field, so you know, the town wouldn't see all the rich things they were eating when everyone else was starving in riot, and all sorts of very you know, pre-revolution things like that.

And these tunnels were quite extensive, but also the different uses of them in the different time periods were really interesting. So that's the kind of thing where I think we could with the right magazine, and the right setting, look at something that's more of a round-up of these underground as a way to sort of you know, time travel. I have to think of something smarter than that. So that was something that we did with underground and of course, I have specific notes from these places that we'll look back to as well.

Now something else that we did in this Jihlava town is we also kind of climbed up these historic walls, and it was interesting but I don't quite think I have a good piece about it, unfortunately. It was really that you climbed up these old stairs, and he went up into this tower, and it's kind of like the highest place around for miles. But well, it was a really cool experience you really wouldn't send somebody there just for that. So I think we'll just kind of let that pass unless I see something cooler in my notes. So then, we went to this town of Trebic.

Now, this was a really interesting experience that can definitely be pitched to a lot of places and we'll have figure out where. So I think there's... so there's this idea of the Jewish quarter in Trebic in which they've done... I can't tell exactly off the top my head when they started preserving it. But they've put together a really lovely... homage is not the right word. But they've put together a really lovely remembrance of the Jewish life there before the few



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families that there were taken away. And I've not quite seen anywhere for a town of its size... because it's really like a hamlet. This is a very small little town, very picturesque but very small.

I'm not saying something of that size have such a sort of well-planned well thought out, and well interpreted. By that I mean well-guided Jewish experience. So I'm gonna put in here that I think this could be a piece for "Hadassah" which is a Jewish magazine. But I know we don't actually have it in the database, so that's something that I'll have to look up, I'll make myself a note about that. And what exactly the story would be I don't know, I would have to look there more specifically. So I'm just gonna write Jewish quarter for now.

There could be a larger round-up here about these more home-oriented, let's call it, Jewish museums. And by home-oriented I don't quite mean like the Anne Frank House like a place of hiding. But they took a house that used to be a store and a home of a Jewish family, and they kind of completely redid and recreated the interior. So there might be a round-up of you know, pre-World War II Jewish living in various parts of Europe. And so you know, that could bring in some Aryans in Rome. And I'm sure I can find some other ones I don't know so well. So that's another thought there.

Now another thing that you'll see on here is this... oops this Romanesque-Gothic Basilica. So this Třebíč is like this adorable little town, it's just so picturesque on par with one of those Italian villages or something. And it's got this very unassuming, but UNESCO I believe designated Cathedral. Which was quite old and really fantastic. And I feel like this should be a good kind of day trip or kind of weekend trip piece, perhaps for something in an Easy Jet or something like that. But that will boil down to where exactly we can find a home for such a piece.

So this would be a very sort of smackdown destination guide, style or piece that we're looking at there. So, by the way, just as I'm going along here... sorry, I shouldn't click there. As I'm going along here, I just wanted to mention that... nope now we've lost our notes. That what I'm doing right now is the very sort of quick overview part from here. And we're gonna go to my actual notes and see some ideas that I've written out explicitly here. But this is the kind of thing where if you have an itinerary from a fam trip, you can go through like what I'm doing quite quickly because everything's laid out there.

But if you have taken a trip of your own, and you don't have something like this that says exactly where you wanna go, that's step one. You should go through whatever trip you took, and makeup something like this, which says each place you stopped. Because that's really how you start to get into this sense of being able to say okay, yes, I remember because that's the most important thing. Any time we're looking back at putting together pitches, based on a trip that we took... this wasn't even super long ago, right, this was four, five months. But it's



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out of your mind now, normal life, other trips, work preoccupations, family preoccupations, other things have come into your head.

So we want to start jogging our memory and going through the trip list rather than looking directly at your notes, it's really a great way to do that. All right, so we just finished Třebíč and we were talking about that as a destination guide.

Now it's interesting because I don't have so much on this next town, I just don't remember it very, very well. Except now that I look at it, it kind of comes back to me that this town also was just incredible in terms of picturesqueness in a different way that this town Třebíč was. So Třebíč with kind of very much like an Italian mountain town kind of spilling down around this river.

But Telč had this... what do I wanna call it? It had this massive Square and all around it were these older houses that had interesting facades from different periods. So it was very photogenic, the kind of thing where we could maybe even do like an Instagramable city piece for a web outlet. Because it was really hard because most of the buildings are still private homes. It was really hard to get specific information about the buildings because nearly all of them are homes.

And so what that meant is that I've got great pictures of this place, and I also can get other pictures from other people who were on the trip. But I don't have so much of the history of these individual buildings. Now they also had an underground tour as you'll see here, but that was much smaller, and they also had an observation tower as well. But with that town, it was really more about the ambiance, so that could be something that was also work for a destination guide. But it just seemed smaller than Trebic, when Třebíč also had that UNESCO site. So there just wasn't quite as much going on here.

Now it says here typical Czech culture atmosphere. And you could start to kind of also as you're looking through this remind yourself of different cultural things. So something I didn't mention, for instance, was Czech food. Now I write Czech food here without really writing too much else. Because what I was thinking here is more something in the vein of an essay. Because what happened is that all of us at the beginning of the trip, we all really liked Czech food, it was something that we talked about, it was something that we all liked.

But at the end... actually not at the end, but by the time we made it around this day, and particularly even for lunch, they had a chicken salad on the menu. And we were all like, "Oh, thank God, we can't have any more bread dumplings and beef, and Berry sauce. It's all we've had for lunch after lunch, after dinner after dinner." And even though we really liked the food. And so this was something that we were all talking about quite a bit.

So I feel like there could be an essay there on the foods that you can eat all the time, and the ones you can't, and how new foods make their way into that. So again, this is something that



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will begin... this is an essay that can begin with anecdotes from this trip, and they can be woven into there. But it wouldn't be something where the essay is entirely a narrative piece about the trip itself if that makes sense.

So one other thing that there was in Telč that I forgot about is... it says Castle Telč here, and the castle there was... I don't know exactly how to describe it. But the interiors were really something else. And when I say something else I mean just sort of like paintings of hunting scenes and different things. I mean something else like you just wouldn't find that kind of thing today anywhere.

Now I don't know exactly what kind of piece we would do with that, but the thing that stood out to me the most about this castle was the interiors, and the wall art, and things like that. And the frescos and things like that. So off the top of my head, there is a magazine that pays very little called "Renaissance Magazine" where you can do something which is about a renaissance castle, and it's kind of just a write-up, almost like a profile of the castle itself. That would kind of be the low end of what I would wanna do with this, it's a really lovely site.

But the problem is anytime something is a pretty well-known site, then you get into the idea that if it's pretty well-known, it's probably been written up different places. So it's hard for you then to figure out where else you can pitch it. So I'll just put that down here as a note, so other things we've gotten here.

Now I could not tell you what this specifically geographically valuable landscape is. I do remember that we had a hike somewhere that was a bit underwhelming in terms of the hike. And that kind of created actually this interesting thing with our group, because the people leading the group from the tourism office wanted to do another hike, but the rest of us wanted to get to this resort.

Now, this was not a resort in the sense that you might think of a resort. And when I say by that I mean this is not Disneyland, and this is not Hawaii. It was an old-timey not in a 1950s way but in the, you know, 100+ years ago, way. This was just a perfect emblem of the resort culture of the Czech Republic modernizing. So what I mean by that is that you know, we've probably heard of whether it's Bath or Baden-Baden, which also means Bath but is in Germany. There's so many old spa towns that people used to go to, to rejuvenate, revitalize, rest, whatever "R", they needed.

And today, many of them... and I've seen this particularly in the Czech Republic, are looking at how to return to the glory days of the spa tradition. And so this hotel, there could be a trend piece there on the resort culture of the Czech Republic modernizing. But they also have a couple really weird things. So they have this Stonehenge that was designed by a landscape



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energy designer, if I haven't missed my mark, who himself is probably worthy of a profile. And the site itself should probably be profiled, but I'm not sure how.

So it could be places that look like Stonehenge around Europe, or it could be landscape energy sites I don't know. So this particular spot was put in, and it really is like a ring of stones, it has a very Stonehenge look to it. And then it's got one stone in the middle in particular, that you can go climb on, and they hold yoga classes there. And it's part of this resort that they've put in, as part of this modernization. And beyond that, you kind of just have to see it. But it's the kind of thing where it stands out to me that it's quirky and it's interesting, and there must be at least one story there and probably many.

But until I go and see the magazines, until I see what the magazines are looking for, it's hard for me... and I say it's hard for me, because I've kind of trained myself. But it's not so hard for you to go past that, and to start to envision what the story about the Stonehenge place is. And that's because I know for myself, that I don't wanna get attached to some story that's not sellable. I don't wanna get attached to a story that doesn't have an audience. And to be honest, it's not even just not wanting to, but also knowing that it's not so worth my time. Because a story comes out in the world because it has a home.

So it's simply quicker for me to write down oh yeah, this cool Stonehenge thing and what I remember about it, and a couple of notes, and then to see where the magazines take us than it is for me to sit here now in a vacuum without knowing who's gonna be on the receiving end of these pitches, and to start to try to come up with 12 different ways to write up that Stonehenge thing. So this, in particular, is a thing really important that I wanted to you guys think about.

And then the other interesting thing that I wanted to make sure you get down here is that this resort has partnered with a whole spa team from Kerala which is in India, that they have brought in to create a sanctioned via this other institution in India, but a center for ayurvedic medicine in the middle of the Czech Republic. So this is part of the resort culture modernizing, but I think this is its own entity itself. And perhaps obviously, I didn't do this when I was there, so this is something that I would wanna go back and do, but to interview or profile the owner of this resort specifically about why he's doing these different things.

So this is the overall itinerary for the trip, but now I wanna pop over to my notes where you'll see that I've stashed already... well some specific ideas. And I also wanna show you how in my notes as I'm taking notes in the tour, I delineate things that may or may not be ideas. So what we're gonna do is we're gonna kind of just scroll through the notes, there might be some other things in there. But right now we're gonna end up with... I don't know it depends how much time we have, but you know, five to 10 pitches out of these seven hours that we're working together. So it doesn't matter that I go into absolute detail in my notes right now. So we're just gonna kind of zip through them.



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Okay, so I made a folder just for us of this Czech Republic tour notes. And it begins with those day trips that I mentioned that we were talking about.

Now on my first-day trip, we went to this place Český Těšín which has so much interesting stuff going on. So this Český Těšín place is at the border... it's gonna get very small I think. But it's at the border of Poland which I actually hadn't been to, and the Czech Republic. And we also in another one of our tours went to a place where I believe it's Poland, but there's three countries that touch on. I believe it's Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. And to be honest, you know, I'm not sure... and this is when I mentioned that I was using this trip in part as a demonstration because it's not a place that I am overly prepared for. It's not so easy for me to just churn out ideas for this area, as it is for other places. Because I don't know the historic background as well as I do other places.

So this is an interesting trip, because... I'm gonna see if I can write this slide correctly. So this was an interesting day trip because most of us didn't even know really until we got there that we were gonna be visiting two countries on the same day. So this could be an interesting piece as well as a destination guide type thing for perhaps a website. I'm not quite sure what the audience would be, could even be "Delta" or something that has a lot of millennial readership. But of the idea of hitting two countries in one day.

And that would also fold in the history both of it being this capital of Austria for six months as well as the other history of its role in the Czech Republic and the larger region. So I mentioned this just that this Český Těšín had got quite a few different things going on as well. And so there was a hotel in the main square that was the place where all of the dignitaries lived, when it was briefly the capital of Austria. But one of the most important thing, or one of the most impactful things I thought about this visit was there's a river that separates the Polish and Czech side, sides rather. Where they have an international film festival.

And the festival, it's just got so many beautiful stories around it. But basically, the thing with this festival, is that it started out during the Cold War when there was the ability on one side of the river, in one of the countries to get these films from different places, and not so much in the other. And they would set up a projector, and they would show the film in one country and people would come on the banks of the river in the other country, to watch this film. And it's evolved over the years as it's become not only easier to get these films of course, but also there used to be a border that you'd have to wait potentially three hours to cross to go back and forth between the two countries. And so now you can just walk across without even realizing that you're changing countries.

So that film festival, it could be you know, a news brief about what they're doing right now, it could be a profile. It could also be a more narrative feature which could focus on some particular individuals involved. So there's really a lot that can be done with that film festival.



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Now, I went on a couple different tours, this is the one that was about Český Těšín which I mentioned. And I'm just gonna skim through here, if I have a particular pitch idea, I usually pop out of my notes and email it to myself separately, but sometimes I also put some notes in here as well. Now, you'll see that in here I just mostly have notes, notes, and you don't see like a big arrow saying this or they've made a bunch of stars, or that I've made... you know, said pitch idea or something like that. Now I do have an entire bit here on this three-country meeting point that I mentioned. And this is actually part of a different tour.

And the three-country meeting point could be a nice essay. I have to see what would be in a culturally appropriate way to handle it, and something that wasn't just a personal essay, because of the history and what not. But it's interesting in how not a big deal actually it is, in terms of there's like a little-covered place where you can have a beer, there's a hotel going up. The bridge between one side and the other is down, but it's okay because you can kind of run around and cross the river. It's a very nonchalant sort of things where these countries meet. And part of that is because that border used to not be there.

And so I found that to be kind of a really interesting moment that could become more of a personal essay type thing. But would take quite a lot of digging and reporting to make that into a narrative piece. And this is the type of thing I often see people blow up and hang onto that they're so much there. But if you don't have it yet, you're better off writing pieces that chip away at fragments of it so you're getting paid to learn more about it, than you are sitting down and trying to just do that big piece. Because the pitch won't come across if you don't have enough background.

Now I believe it was on the same tour, one of the places that we went was a... I'll have to get the name. So there was a villa that we went to, had a very interesting history of all the families. So on the one hand, the villa was...the storytelling of the tour was fascinating, in the kind of way where I would think of doing it almost as if not any round-up of museums, where they tell the stories of inhabitants of the houses and such detail. Which if any of you guys have been to the Tenement Museum in New York, for instance, they do a really great job of investigating the history of the past tenants.

But it could also potentially be more of a how-to piece, or an inspirational piece, for more of an... sorry, spelling. For more of a museum type of audience in terms of people who are pulling together exhibits. If you haven't seen, we actually have in the Travel Magazine Database we have quite a few different art oriented publications that are for the art world. So as you're going to museums and you're seeing different in like this, you can also think of servicey pieces in terms of museums as well.

So within the villa several of the stories that they had revolved around like these very interesting marriages that shouldn't have taken place between nobility and not nobility. Things happening around you know, women running enterprises who typically shouldn't



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have. It was just really great storytelling, but it's really hard to just do a profile on an attraction. So it's something that we can keep an eye out for, but usually, that profile of an attraction would have to be wound into a larger destination guide. But that villa wasn't in really a place where we would do such a guide. Sorry about that.

So what that means is that sometimes you will visit an attraction, and no matter how wonderful the attraction was, there's just not that much you can do about it. And it's a shame, and it's the kind of thing that you can feel bad towards the PR people who took you on these trips all you want. But in order for you to publish things in a magazine setting... obviously, in your blog you can do anything you want. But in order for you to publish things, it's always gonna be at the behest of what editors are looking for, okay.

So here is the type of thing I do when I have a specific pitch idea. So one place that we went to they showed us several different types of unusual accommodations. So we toured this water mill there's also the opportunity to stay in that chateau/villa that I was talking about before. So my next bunch of notes on here, these are gonna be particularly meetings that I had during TBEX.

Now, this one place had some really crazy collaborations that they did in order to get coverage. So it's called Northern Hikes, and I'm blanking on what country they're in, but I think it's Switzerland. But they actually partnered with a coffee company to create their own coffee for people to have on the hike. Now, what magazine that would go in? I'm not sure, but there's often a lot of business section in a lot of these magazines that this might be an interesting point for.

The other thing that they did was they brought in Instagram influencers to find new Instagramable spots in these location, because the main Instagramable spots were being overrun. Now there's a lot you can do there to talk about whether that should be done, whether more places should do it. When I say whether it should be done, I mean because then they're bringing our visitation to previously wild areas.

Now another thing that I had mentioned earlier was this idea of the spa culture. Now there's this area Karlovy Vary which is very famous for its spa culture historically. They have more than 650 years of spa tradition. And they had actually also mentioned something that would tie into that piece that we talked about before of the modernization of spa culture. But what they're looking at right now that I found was really interesting, was how to get North Americans who have very little vacation, to understand the idea of going for two or three weeks to the spa in a way where you're not sightseeing, you're not going to the city. You have a schedule of treatments, you have multiple massages and different things every day. And you're so tired from all your treatments that all you wanna do is go to sleep. And how to get North Americans to understand that.



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And that's the kind of thing where again, we'll have to see what that could be, it could be a piece about how they've marketed to these people, or different things that they've added, or could be a profile of some people that I would find out from them of who've gone. It could become a whole narrative feature, but I'll have to see what the magazines will take. So a couple other things on here. Starting here we get into all of my different notes that are from the places that we went on our fam trip. So there's a couple in here that I wrote down kind of fully-fledged as they say you know, Athena from Zeus's head or thigh and all that. So I'm gonna drop those ones in here in particular.

A couple of these are actually ones that another writer who's more of a blog than magazine writer and I discussed when we were having lunch in Prague that day. And a couple of these, in particular, the ones that are from Prague are weddings at this place, and the idea of a beer spa, although we saw that at several places. As well as this nuclear bunker hotel where someone was going to stay in a place that was... to go back to that bunkers piece that we talked about. They have them everywhere these underground places in the Czech Republic.

So there was a hotel that another fam trip actually stayed in overnight help them because I would never do that. So God help them for not having enough claustrophobia to do that. But did they actually stay that's formally a nuclear bunker that's now a hotel. So those were some things that I kind of had as full ideas kind of fully flung. One here was... this is kind of a hard one to quite exactly say what the idea here for the pitch was. But it was something around the person I was talking to telling me about this company that she really enjoyed their food tours, which was called the Eating Europe. So that would be more of a company profile.

And I'll blow this far and back up for you guys. And we're just about done with these. So you'll see here.... and I'll kind of count them up at the end as well. I've got an essay idea here, which I don't quite have enough words here though to make sense of what I'm trying to do. So that is something that we'll all have to look back at as we're pulling things into magazines. And the rest of these are... again, you'll see the familiar style from the first couple fam trips. These are all just my really raw notes, and these are gonna come back into play, later in the series, when we're talking about how to fill out your pitches, and how to check the pitches for accuracy. So this is a really interesting one down here at the bottom.

We were told in this town Telč that the Czech Republic is the second most drinking country in the world, and first for smoking cannabis. And that people just grow it in their backyard and even the grandmas use it in their creams like their lotions and everything. And this guy as he was leaving had said, "I don't grow marijuana" as in I don't sell it as a side income. "So I have to go home now and cut my own firewood, but I'll see you guys tomorrow for a tour." So this is the kind of thing where if I wanted to do that as a narrative piece, or a traveling pitch or something like that, I'd have to do a lot more reporting. But this would be something that we can instead turn into more of an essay idea.



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So when there's something like this that that comes up where you have some limited experience with it, but you don't quite have enough, where you have scene by scene by scene, to make that into a narrative feature, that's the kind of thing that's gonna become more of an essay idea. And then we look for homes for those by clicking on the essay tag, and then Travel Magazine Database and seeing what's coming up. So as you'll see these other ones we're now going back through those places that we talked about when we went through the itinerary.

This is that chateau with the crazy family history. This is the castle that had all of the different stags and things like that on the walls. This is the Jewish house in Třebíč where they have the Seder board and all these things. And I don't have any other things kind of popped out on here, I don't see anything that I put in all caps, where I said pitch this, or you know, this is interesting, or something like that. See this is one of the sideways notes, can you visit Gregor Mendel's Garden, I'm not quite sure where I had that idea, right. But it was a related idea that I had in the middle of all these things.

So here's one of those essay ideas that I had, and I don't quite have very much written down. I said some story in being bowled over by all the 13th century things. So I'll have to think on that as I'm going through matching the ideas and try to see what that means.

So I think now this is the last one, and I said it's really nice here how all the museums in Jihlava have things in English as well. And when we were going through writing down different trips, I didn't mention Jihlava as a place for more of a destination guide. We talked about Jihlava as being the hedgehog place. So I'm just going to add up here all of the museum signs they're in English as well so that I have.

So you'll see now I've got a couple other still in smaller text, so let me blow this up for you. But you'll see how I did a little bit of preamble so we didn't have a whole hour exactly. In fact, I think we've really started talking about pitch ideas more like 30, 45 minutes ago. So you'll see that I've come up with... these are from the day trips, and I went through these quite quickly because I didn't pull up the itinerary right. So we've got about 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32.

So at the end of this time, from about... let's say we're gonna have to travel, I've got 32 raw ideas. And then I'm gonna pull it off of the all screen thing here so you stop seeing that, great. And then from all screen ideas we have this idea of the types of articles. I'm trying to switch back to PowerPoint from you. There we go.

So what we'll do next week is that these 32 raw ideas that we have, as we hit the Travel Magazine Database, we'll see how can we break these different ideas out into different types of articles. How do we take them and say as I've done... you can't see now. But as I've done with some of these this could be a profile of the business, it could be a profile of the person



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who started this business, it could be an essay based on my experience there. It could be a news brief on something new that they're doing.

The way that we do that is not by doing in a vacuum, we do it by doing it with the magazines. We do it by seeing what's out there. So like I said there was a little bit of not exactly cheating because I did it when I was out in the... like in the destination. But you see there's about eight or so ideas here that I already had written up, but all the rest of this, I just brainstormed with you guys going through and reminding myself what we did on those tours.

So what we're gonna do next week, like I said, is that we're gonna look at magazines that are likely to cover these geographic areas. And then we're gonna look at magazines that are likely to cover the topics that we've mentioned here. So that's gonna be history, architecture, other things like that. And then we're going to look through the magazine based on article type. So there was a lot of essays that I mentioned we'll look for that. We'll look for city guides, we'll look for business profiles and things of that nature. And that's how we will start to quickly without just taking one article idea and spending you know, hours and hours just looking at matches for that one article idea. We'll start to quickly get some matches going.

And what's funny is that once you have an idea and you match it to one outlet, you start to work-up that pitch, that idea becomes more solid. You kind of take that you know, clay or Plato whatever metaphor you wanna use, and shape it into something more recognizable. And then you actually start to see, or you learn more facts that help you to see, how it can fit into several other different types of magazines, or different magazine sections even.

So what we'll do next week, is we're gonna go deep, deep into the database, we're gonna take all those ideas, we're gonna see what matches we can get. We're gonna not worry about the ones that we can't and we're gonna see how far we can get in one hour of going through the database. And then we're gonna start to go through to make sure the ideas really work, to make sure they fit the specific sections, and to make sure that the idea itself works. That there is something new to talk about or that this is the only one of its kind, whatever we wanna say. And the process of doing that will help us get our facts together to write the pitch.

So thank you guys so much for joining me. And I look forward to plowing through some more progress with you on these pitches next time. I hope it's been helpful, to see me go through the trip but I know that next time to go through the database is gonna... hopefully, you're gonna start to see all sorts of new ways so that you can attack your ideas. So I look forward to chatting with more of you guys about that later. Bye, guys.