Hey everyone. Welcome to another edition of “Off The Cuff.” I'm Justin Draeger.

I'm Allie Bidwell, one of our Today’s News reporters.

I'm Megan Coval from our policy team.

And Stephen is off working offsite today at some all-day event, so we will see him next time. We were just talking right before we started, everybody feels a little exhausted.

Even just saying my name, made me giggle.

Slap happy?

Well I said I was exhausted, and then Allie said she was slap happy. And I wasn't until I walked in here and saw your laughing, smiling face.

So, get ready for a great podcast guys. It's going to totally make sense.

We're bringing our A game.

Yeah.

We just came off the hill.

Yes.

And, yes. Great meeting up there. It's been like, it's Thursday. This is one of the weeks where all week long I've thought it was a different day.

Yes.

Yeah.

Same.

Okay. So yesterday I thought it was Thursday all day long.

Yesterday, I thought it was Friday. I was like, "Man, I'm so glad like, it's the weekend."

That's rough on a Wednesday.

Wait a minute, you skipped ahead two days?
Allie Bidwell: I did.

Justin Draeger: How does that happen?

Allie Bidwell: I don't know.

Justin Draeger: I'm gonna admit something. Last night, Megan and I were slacking, and if you know, that's a term for the platform Slack.

Allie Bidwell: Like instant messaging.

Megan Coval: Verbing.

Justin Draeger: Yes, verbing. And Allie, you were not a part of this conversation, but I gotta tell you, I was sort of like, "Megan, should we do the podcast tomorrow? Because I am whipped."

Megan Coval: Yeah.

Justin Draeger: Do we wanna, and I got a million things. Because this was our Leadership and Legislative Conference and Expo this week, which is, like, an energizing/exhausting week because the work doesn't stop either while all this is happening. And again, I thought it was Thursday last night. I was just whipped, and I kinda was like, "Should we even do the podcast?"

Allie Bidwell: I feel you, like I've-

Justin Draeger: But then you put out the agenda and I was like, "You know what, this is pretty doable." We can do this.

Allie Bidwell: Well yeah, and you had some special additions that, yeah. I practiced.

Megan Coval: Oh, right.

Justin Draeger: Yes, alright. The thing I wanted to say about, here, and for those who don't wanna listen to all this garbage, you can, Allie will, let's put the where they can skip to in the first line of the description.

Allie Bidwell: Okay.

Justin Draeger: I mean, I feel badly, but whatever. I haven't seen you all week, Allie. I mean, I saw you from a distance across the room yesterday or two days ago, whenever that was.

Allie Bidwell: Like last week, last month, I don't know.
Justin Draeger: So, I feel like the big thing is, we talked about the Oscars last week, but this Bradley Cooper, Lady Gaga thing.

Megan Coval: We didn't talk about the Oscars last week.

Justin Draeger: Didn't we? I thought we did.

Megan Coval: Oscars were Sunday.

Allie Bidwell: Oh, whoa.

Megan Coval: See that's what, I'm telling you. Yeah, this week is crazy. They were just Sunday, right?

Justin Draeger: Okay, that was just Sunday. So, are they together or what's happening here?

Allie Bidwell: Oh, I don't know. Okay, I wondered that too, but I thought that Bradley Cooper was married.

Justin Draeger: Because he's married right?

Megan Coval: Girlfriend. Serious girlfriend and a baby.

Justin Draeger: Okay, so it's a family unit.

Allie Bidwell: But they just have like, insane chemistry.

Justin Draeger: Well, okay, do they?

Megan Coval: I have lots of thoughts on this.

Justin Draeger: Because everybody's talking about this, and first of all, I have purposefully not listened to the song or seen the movie because I don't understand how this movie can be Oscar-nominated best film.

Megan Coval: Did you watch it?

Justin Draeger: No. It's a love story.

Allie Bidwell: No, it's not.

Justin Draeger: It's a love story about a guy, it's I understand, a guy who finds a girl, who is Lady Gaga, and is like, "Oh, she could be a singer." Well, no kid- it's Lady Gaga, of course. You're the one who can't be a singer. I mean, that number was terrible.

Megan Coval: You thought that was a terrible-
Justin Draeger: If you could see Megan's.

Megan Coval: No, but I'm just clarifying, you thought that performance was terrible?

Justin Draeger: I thought Lady Gaga was amazing, because she has an amazing voice.

Allie Bidwell: She always is.

Justin Draeger: Bradley Cooper was weak. He was weak. That was terrible. Also, it was weird, he was leering at her the whole time.

Megan Coval: Well, they got into, it was from the movie, they got into character.

Justin Draeger: When have you ever seen an Oscar's performance where the people were in character? Can you think of a time?

Megan Coval: Well, there's not a ton of musical.

Justin Draeger: This is why I was like, watching it.

Allie Bidwell: It's part of the show, they were giving the people what they wanted.

Megan Coval: Also, they know people are so into them and like, speculating, so this is like, you know.

Justin Draeger: So, you don't think there's a thing there. You think it's just, they went into character and this is just their characters.

Megan Coval: I think that there is probably-

Justin Draeger: The whole point of the Oscars is to see the actors out of character, isn't it?

Allie Bidwell: Yeah, I guess.

Megan Coval: I think it'd be weird to be performing a song from your movie and then just being very, like, stoic.

Justin Draeger: Okay, so what I would really like to see is a rendition of this song right now. Allie, you'll be playing the part of-

Allie Bidwell: I know, you assigned me Bradley Cooper.

Justin Draeger: And Megan, you can play the role of Lady Gaga because the only part I know is-

Allie Bidwell: Whoa, whoa, whoa. I thought you were gonna be Lady Gaga.

Justin Draeger: No, no. That's what Laura, did you bring the wig?
Allie Bidwell: No.

Justin Draeger: Okay, Laura mentioned a wig. I don't get the appeal of the song. I don't, it's not.

Allie Bidwell: It's the big like-

Justin Draeger: I'm missing it.

Allie Bidwell: No, the, "I'm off the deep end."

Justin Draeger: Well isn't that the Lady Gaga part?

Allie Bidwell: I thought they both do it at one point.

Justin Draeger: Yeah, alright. I don't know I watched it again last night with DeAnn, my wife, and I don't know. He just was sitting there next to the piano, and I don't know how I would feel. Even if I was in mad love with someone, a new love, the most exciting love, passionate love, having someone just stare at me would make me feel like, weird.

Megan Coval: But they're actors. Like, that's their thing.

Allie Bidwell: They're supposed to be kinda like, a little bit over the top.

Justin Draeger: That would be a workplace aggression at NASFAA. Would it not?

Megan Coval: Yeah.

Justin Draeger: Okay, I was just checking.

Megan Coval: No love scenes as NASFAA, yeah.

Allie Bidwell: Do we need to re-listen to the like, hug or handshake episode?

Justin Draeger: I'm just saying, even outside of work, like, Dianne and I have been married for a long time, and so we're like, I can't even in our most youngest in love days, imagine leering at you and seeing.

Allie Bidwell: Yeah, now that you say that, and I think about it, sometimes I purposely do that just to make Pascal uncomfortable.

Justin Draeger: Leer at him?

Allie Bidwell: Like I do things that I know is gonna make him squirm, just because I think it's funny.

Megan Coval: You're like, "We're gonna be awkward here."
Justin Draeger: Aww, well that's kinda cute. That's nice.

Allie Bidwell: I don't know, I get bored and I'm just like, "I'm gonna do this and see if it makes him uncomfortable."

Justin Draeger: How do I make this weird? I feel like we need some real examples.

Allie Bidwell: Like, he'll be on his computer or like, reading something, and I'll just make a face at him and hold it as long as I can until he looks at me.

Justin Draeger: Alright, alright. Now that you say that, I do have one that I do with Dianne, I've done our whole marriage. Have you ever watched, I'm fascinated by like, old school movies and television shows. Like, I'm talking like, decades ago. Different culture, different time. And one of the things, do you ever notice how people kiss like in the movies from the 40's and 50's?

Allie Bidwell: Yeah.

Justin Draeger: It's like they're literally smashing their faces together. It looks ridiculous. And the way they're hugging-

Allie Bidwell: It's like a wrap around the...

Justin Draeger: Yes, it's like an uber-tight shot, camera shot. And so, I occasionally like to, and there's no mouth movement, like, it's just literally smashing faces together, and I always am like. I just wanna like, what did my grandparents experience? I guess they kissed like this. That's my awkward.

Megan Coval: That is true, yeah.

Justin Draeger: Alright, so we already mentioned, we have a full agenda today. We have our leadership conference and legislative expo just wrapped up two days ago, yesterday really, because that's when we were on the hill. We'll talk about that, we'll talk about being up on the hill with our members. We have some news in public service loan forgiveness and court setting new precedence. Senator Alexander did his thing, Senator Murray's about to do her thing now and laying out her priorities. And, I mean, again, this isn't like our bread and butter, but the big issues right now in D.C., like the Michael Cohen thing.

Allie Bidwell: No one is thinking about higher ed right now.

Justin Draeger: The Michael Cohen thing. You were up on the hill-

Megan Coval: The higher ed came up in the testimony.

Justin Draeger: Well, fill us in.
Megan Coval: Yeah, I guess, what came up in Mr. Cohen's testimony was, he was sharing that President Trump had, according to him, threatened his alma mater, so University of Pennsylvania, I forget where he-

Allie Bidwell: High schools.

Megan Coval: And high schools and the College Board.

Justin Draeger: Which, I haven't reached out to the College Board.

Allie Bidwell: Well, according to his testimony, he said that President Trump made him write the letters at his attorney.

Justin Draeger: He said, "Threatened." Did he not? He said threatening them not to release either his grades, transcripts, or test scores.

Megan Coval: Yes, yes.

Allie Bidwell: Minor higher-ed appearance.

Megan Coval: Yeah, yeah, so.

Justin Draeger: I will say, if you don't wanna watch seven hours and twenty minutes of hearing, I would say focus on, maybe, the closing remarks. There were a couple good back and forths, but the closing remarks by Chairman Elijah Cummings, did either of you see that?

Megan Coval: I did not, no.

Justin Draeger: I would go back and watch it. I watched it two or three times last night. I mean, if you are calloused by the, we were just talking earlier off air about how like, it's hard to be surprised anymore. I had a reporter reach out to me two weeks ago and they were asking a question about a news story, and they're like, "Do you find this shocking?" And I was like, "Does anybody find anything shocking anymore?" What is left to be shocked about?

Allie Bidwell: Yeah, and I've like, mentioned this to Erin and other people before, but once you've been, sort of, in the world of higher ed or policy or whatever, for long enough, it's all cyclical.

Justin Draeger: Like the same things?

Allie Bidwell: Like every couple years, the same thing will come up, and you'll be like, just by a different name.

Justin Draeger: Yeah and then some years, action happens, some years not. But Elijah Cummings, yesterday, ended by basically not offering a full pass to Michael
Cohen, but basically saying that he did believe in some redemption and talked about Michael Cohen's family. And the part that really, for me, stuck was, he talked about this idea, the phrase he used, which I don't know if I've heard before, is he said, "One day, we're all gonna be dancing with angels and we're going to have to give an account of what we've done." And he said, "Myself and Mr. Trump included, what have we collectively done to strengthen democracy?"

He said "we," as in collectively. He wasn't talking democrats or republicans or the president or congress. He said "we" can do better.

And I don't know, for some reason, while I was waiting for my daughter to finish her volleyball practice last night, sitting in the parking lot and listening to that, it hit a chord. Maybe it was the exhaustion, maybe it was his words. But the, "We can do better," part, I felt like, it's inclusive. "We," we can do better. So anyway, give it a listen, it's in the last ten minutes of the hearing.

2020, not a president, like you said, everything's been focused on Michael Cohen. I will say, one thing that has stood out to me about the democratic nominees, did you guys see the New York Times piece about Amy Klobuchar and...

Megan Coval: Staff?

Justin Draeger: Yeah, the way she might be treating her staff?

Megan Coval: Yes.

Allie Bidwell: Yes.

Justin Draeger: I don't know, something about that, I did find disconcerting. And it wasn't like one off, because every one of us might have a disgruntled staffer here or there, but it seemed like there were multiple stories. I mean, when was the last time I threw something at you, Megan?

Megan Coval: Years.

Justin Draeger: Yeah, it's been years.

Megan Coval: It's been years.

Allie Bidwell: And now we know how to duck.

Justin Draeger: Right.

Megan Coval: Yeah, I just think that's the kinda thing, I feel like I've said this before, but I just tend to believe where there's smoke, there's fire. I think in those type of circumstances, people, for a long time, don't talk because of fear, and then eventually something opens the door.
Justin Draeger: Employees that gripe about someone in a powerful position might feel like they're harming their own careers by speaking up. Especially if nobody else is doing it.

Megan Coval: So, I actually saw Senator Klobuchar yesterday. I was walking out of the hill meeting, and she was walking down the hallway. She had come out of her office, and then I passed her in the hallway and as I was walking past the door, there were three staff standing there. And I heard them going, "No you grab her." "No, you grab her." "You get her." "No, you get her." And then they went, "Um, Senator, Senator." And they had apparently had forgotten to tell her something or needed to grab her something, so there was lots of deliberation between who was going to stop her in the hallway.

Justin Draeger: Which, under normal circumstances, you might look at and be like, "Oh, whatever."

Allie Bidwell: I mean, were these like, more senior staffers, you think? Or were they like, interns?

Justin Draeger: It's hard to differentiate on those sometimes.

Megan Coval: Yeah, I mean I don't think they looked super young.

Allie Bidwell: I feel like you can usually tell, you can usually pick out the interns.

Megan Coval: I didn't think they looked super young.

Justin Draeger: I don't see age, so I couldn't tell you. I mean, everybody's just an amorphous blob to me.

Megan Coval: Did you see that, so Joe Biden is supposedly supposed to announce soon, I know, I know. He makes everyone wait all the time.

Justin Draeger: Yeah, so does Beto O'Rourke.

Megan Coval: Yeah, I saw that too.

Justin Draeger: This is so, I can't. You know what? It reminds of, remember when Ted Cruz ran and had like a secret camera that was filming his kids when they told them?

Allie Bidwell: No, no, no, no, that was Bobby Jindal.

Justin Draeger: Oh, was that? Sorry, my apologies to Senator Cruz, it was Bobby Jindal. And he told his kids-

Allie Bidwell: And they were just like, "Uh..." blank face.
Justin Draeger: I sorta feel like when Representative O'Rourke is sorta like, "We've made a decision, and we'll be telling people very soon. We're very excited." It's kinda like-

Allie Bidwell: It's not gonna be no.

Justin Draeger: Would you be very excited if you weren't running?

Allie Bidwell: I almost sometimes feel like I would relate more to a lawmaker who was just casually like, "Yeah, I'm gonna run for president." Like no huge roll out event, just like, "I'm gonna do it."

Justin Draeger: Yeah, I'm running.

Allie Bidwell: Why does it need to be a show?

Justin Draeger: Like the mayor from South Bend. Or wait, was it South Bend, or? I can't remember exactly what town even.

Megan Coval: Somewhere in Indiana.

Allie Bidwell: Yes, South Bend, Indiana.

Justin Draeger: Okay, South Bend, alright.

Alright, so we had our leadership conference this week. Highlights, what do you think? What stood out to you guys? I will say, I did a couple different sessions, popped in and out. One with, we had four different tracks, we had our association management, advanced topics and leadership. We had new aid directors from New and Aspiring aid directors, and we had our enrollment management track. And all four tracks looked just, fantastic. I popped into sessions in the various tracks, all really...I mean, I love this conference because, really, we get top notch people here, some of our big thinkers in the community, some good debates, strong conversation. Highlights?

Allie Bidwell: Yeah, and it's different because the whole conference is focused more on, how can you do your job better? Rather than policy issues. I tried to pop into one session on each of the tracks and I went into one on the advanced topics and financial aid leadership, lead others to potential. So this was also, this was all three of our national chairs talking about their career trajectories and how to take advantage of, not take advantage, but make strategic career moves.

Justin Draeger: Yeah.

Allie Bidwell: And people seemed to really like that, and hearing from them and like, their stories and getting advice.
Justin Draeger: And what's even better about that is for women in our community, all three national chairs right now are women. And in higher education, we know that it's very traditional, I think this is changing, obviously, but three very accomplished women who've moved up the higher education career ladder and put themselves in a position to really benefit their campuses and their students. Great stories, yeah.

Megan Coval: I like this conference too. I love our national conference, but this one just feels a little different because it's smaller and you get to feel like you can really connect with more people, I think. I think an obvious highlight for me and our time was the hill day yesterday and just getting to, not only be up there, but also help members prepare for it because it can be a daunting thing if it's your first time. And about half of the people who went, it was their first time. So just seeing that excitement combined with nerves and then, I think everyone is always really happy with how it turns out.

Justin Draeger: I feel like the exercising of our constitutionally granted authority to petition our government to have, literally, a couple hundred aid administrators on Capitol Hill, talking about their issues, access and success and accountability. This, in a lot of ways, it what it's all about. Always very strong, warm feelings about folks coming in and going up to the hill. And this event has grown, so several years ago, this was around 80, 90 people every year. Now we're up to around 320, 330, that many more people up on the hill. It's becoming one of our signature events.

Allie Bidwell: And it's a good way to end Financial Aid Awareness Month, with like, the hill day.

Justin Draeger: Like, be aware.

Allie Bidwell: What better way to do it?

Megan Coval: And so many people that I bumped into yesterday or even met with, told me that they actually got to meet their senators or representatives, so I thought that was really cool.

Justin Draeger: Which isn't always the case.

Megan Coval: Yeah, not always the case. I even think about all these years that we've been going to the hill, it's really only been a handful of times that we've bumped into actual members.

Justin Draeger: Or that, even, we see them all the time, but that you would interrupt what they're doing.

Megan Coval: Yeah, so I think they were all really excited by that.
Justin Draeger: Great event, and we'll be having our next one next year around the same time. Early February, actually, next year. Registration opens in the fall.

The other thing I love about the leadership conference is that we tend to hit some really high-level campus issues, so it's not just financial aid. Which is, of course, our bread and butter, but we talk about all sorts of campus issues. This year, we always bring in a speaker who tries to offer a larger perspective, this year we brought in Scott Jaschik, who's one of the cofounders of Inside Higher Ed, and he has a speech that he tailored to our audience that was sorta like, the top, I think it's like-

Allie Bidwell: Top 12.

Justin Draeger: It's not 10, but he did 12, I guess.

Allie Bidwell: Issues that will impact financial aid.

Justin Draeger: Yeah, talked about everything from race of admissions at the Supreme Court to demographic shifts in higher education, international students, physical stress that institutions are facing. So really covered the gamut on all sorts of issues that are affecting financial aid.

Alright, this last week, we also had some news with public service loan forgiveness. Allie, you wanna catch us up?

Allie Bidwell: Sure, so last Friday, a federal judge made a ruling in a lawsuit that I believe was filed a couple years ago in 2016, December 2016, and some of you might remember because we've covered this a couple times before, but a group of four attorneys joined the American Bar Association to sue the Department of Education over some specifics with Public Service Loan Forgiveness and their eligibility to qualify for loan forgiveness. So, these attorneys had been in positions, some with the ABA, some not, over the course of a few years. For example, like a pro-bono arm of the ABA, and they were told by submitting their employment certification forms to their service or fed-loan, that they were on track and that their employers were qualified employers for Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

Later on, the department came back and said that no, their employers did not qualify. And the lawsuit sort of focused on the argument that the borrowers believed that the department changed the interpretation of the requirements, so while they were working for a non-profit, the department argued that the primary focus of the organization was not public service and therefore, they wouldn't qualify. So, things like that.

And judge Timothy Kelly actually ruled in favor of three of the four attorneys and is requiring the department to reconsider their Public Service Loan Forgiveness.
Justin Draeger: Right, and when a judge tells you to reconsider, I mean, it’s sending a pretty strong message.

Megan Coval: Which way you should go.

Justin Draeger: You came to the wrong conclusion. Yeah, this is a good example of changing the rules halfway through the game. So, these borrowers looked like, I mean we’ll have to get final word, but the department will reconsider and presumably, three out of these four borrowers will actually qualify for PSLF.

Relatedly, last night, I was just scrolling through Twitter, and I saw a post from Rachel Fishman, who is one of our colleagues over at New America. She's one of their researchers, I think she's like, maybe Deputy Director of Student Aid research or something there. But she was posting, she posted a very long thread, but she is obviously working for a 501(c)3, and before New America, had worked at another 501(c)3, and is trying to obtain public service loan forgiveness. Now, this is someone who, this is her portfolio of issues. She tweeted about her experience of being denied multiple times.

Allie Bidwell: Because it's a non-charitable 501(c)3.

Justin Draeger: Yeah, but multiple times over the last couple years. And then trying to reconstruct, like, told that she would, she was fine, and then trying to reconstruct it, and then life happens. She talked about how she had a baby, and you know, when you have children, you don't have time to like, deal with all this other stuff. And then trying to get W-2's from a 501(c)3 that’s no longer in existence, and just all of the hoops that she can jump through, but most people, there's no way. Not equipped to deal with all of this.

Allie Bidwell: Yeah, and one interesting thing, too, about this ruling is, it's kind of like, what impact is this gonna have, moving forward, for people who do work for those non-profits that are not charitable organizations. And the way that I read it was that this ruling didn't really take issue with the fact that the department imposed this additional requirement, it was just when it was imposed.

Justin Draeger: Right, changing the rules after they'd already sent letters saying that they were in an approved job and company.

Allie Bidwell: Yeah. So not necessarily, it might not have any impact going forward.

Justin Draeger: Yeah, I think there's, this is a good lesson just in a principle. And the principle is, first do no harm. So, I'm okay with changing policies and practices, we have to do that. That's why we have a reauthorization of the Higher Education Act deadline that happens. Laws expire so that we can do adjustments.

The problem is, I always feel like it's a good idea to go into all of these things with like, do no harm to the people you've already made promises to.
Allie Bidwell: Yeah, but I mean, this was another argument that was brought up during this lawsuit, was the department, when they filed, they put in a court filing a few months ago and said that it was never a final determination. It was coming from the servicer, it was not considered a final determination from the department.

Justin Draeger: I mean, when we contract someone to do something on our behalf-

Allie Bidwell: It's all these technicalities.

Megan Coval: But they are us, then.

Justin Draeger: Exactly, and that same right is not afforded to schools. When schools have a third-party servicer, the department puts the responsibility not on the servicer, but always back on the school. That is 101, I mean that's been drilled in with Dear Colleague letters, schools are ultimately responsible for the servicers they hire. The buck has to stop somewhere, right?

Allie Bidwell: And I mean, that's probably why the lawyers prevailed.

Justin Draeger: So anyway, there are lots of issues with public service loan forgiveness. I mean like, the way the program's constructed anyway is problematic. And then besides that, the way it's been carried out and then you've got servicing issues. If we had to start all over, I think most of us would do this differently. And not the least of which is to say, like, grants on the back end are not the most effective way to handle college access issues.

Anyway, moving on. A couple weeks ago, Senator Alexander did at a think tank, a right-leaning think tank AEI, kinda showed up, laid out his priorities for HEA reauthorization. Now Senator Murray is doing the same, this is happening in just a little while, actually.

Megan Coval: Today, just a couple hours, yeah.

Justin Draeger: At the Center for American Progress.

Megan Coval: Yeah, so that's happening this afternoon, and we'll just kinda hear where she's coming from as a starting point. We don't have a whole lot of information, but we did learn yesterday on the hill, we met with a folks from her staff, that she is planning on having, sort of, four main tenants of access, affordability, accountability, and campus safety. All themes that we've heard before, and all themes that, I think are important for both sides of the aisle, and also for both parties. But she'll outline, today, sort of, the new ones.

Allie Bidwell: Just like a slightly different approach, I guess, where Senator Alexander came in and he had three specific goals, rather than topics.
Justin Draeger: Buckets of issues. Hopefully we’ll get into more specificity and have more details out for folks soon. I think, as we mentioned, last week, breaking news then, the House is planning a series of five reauthorization hearings. So whether or not we actually have reauthorization, we can speculate all day, but clearly, both the House and the Senate are gearing up and moving direction.

Allie Bidwell: Well, just with something that Scott talked about too, in his speech, was he thinks there’s a glimmer of hope.

Justin Draeger: Yeah, that’s right. Partly because Senator Alexander’s last term is, this is it. Two years. And he’s known for being bipartisan, he reaches across the aisle and can sort of supersede it.

Alright, one other thing I wanna talk about. Did you guys see that yesterday with all the Cohen madness, did you guys get caught up in that at all, when you were on the hill, Megan? Like were the lines extra-long?

Megan Coval: No, it’s so interesting. I was only on the Senate side; the lines were so long over on the Senate. It took some of our members 30 minutes to get in, which is not the case for us. Like you, when we go-

Justin Draeger: Today we literally walked into the House office buildings.

Megan Coval: Everyone that I talked to that was over in the House said it wasn’t a problem.

Justin Draeger: Really?

Megan Coval: Like where Cohen was, so I don’t, you know.

Justin Draeger: There was an intern, so there was a camera shot interviewing a congressman, and right in the background, which is like, this is quintessentially what you imagine young staffers on the hill, when things are going, they’re working non-stop because they’re bosses are working non-stop. If you ever think about it, the representatives and senators, they come here and they’re usually not with their families. Their families are back in district a lot of times. So, for them, working 24 hours a day is not necessarily a big deal because they don’t have like, kids’ events that night. But for the other staffers that live here, it can be exhausting. And really, out of work life balance, and that’s why folks don’t generally last a super long time on the hill, and those who do have figured out the secrets of life.

But there was an intern right behind the congressman that was being interviewed, had a whole box of pizza that he was just devouring. And then you could see, off camera, someone had told him like, “Hey, you’re on camera.” And he like, his eyes, he’s got like, mid-bite, and it just slides up to his face and he like, looks over at them, and then he looks right into the camera and then he tries to put it all away really quickly. So, I think we can put that link in the show.
notes, but this guy's obviously a champ. I think the intern actually posted it himself, an intern, and then set up a GoFundMe page to help him buy pizza and stay fed into the future.

Allie Bidwell: He did?

Justin Draeger: I think so, and I think the fundraising goal was only like, $100 bucks. People will have to check it out.

Megan Coval: Yeah, you know, guy's gotta eat.

Allie Bidwell: When you're super busy, you figure out like, weird life hacks to survive.

Justin Draeger: I think there's just something, like, really relatable, and also disgustingly obscene about having an entire box of pizza that you are devouring right out of the box.

Allie Bidwell: I mean, I haven't done that with pizza, but I have between meetings or like, between going places, like just stood somewhere and shoved a sandwich in my face.

Justin Draeger: Listen, I've done that as well. I would hate to be caught on camera, a national.

Allie Bidwell: I don't know, I feel like if I'm already in a state of mind where I am doing that, it wouldn't really bother me.

Justin Draeger: You've passed the point of public decorum.

Allie Bidwell: I would be like, I'm already at my low. I can't get any lower.

Justin Draeger: This is happening.

Megan Coval: That's why you always carry snacks in your bag.

Justin Draeger: Yes, you're a good person with snacks.

Megan Coval: Yeah, like a granola bar.

Allie Bidwell: My like, snack philosophy, my wedding dress has pockets, and I was immediately very excited. One of my friends was like, "Oh yeah, you could like, keep your lipstick in there." And I was like, "Yeah, I definitely am not gonna put tater tots in my dress." [sarcastically]

Justin Draeger: That is genius.

Allie Bidwell: Like, you know you're not gonna have time to eat.
Justin Draeger: I do feel badly for women who wear women's clothes because the pocket situation is untenable. I've seen women that can't even fit their phones in their pockets.

Allie Bidwell: Oh yeah, and these are like, full on, like, big. I can easily fit my hand into the pocket, my whole hand.

Justin Draeger: I have a theory that most women aren't cold, they wear jackets because they have functional pockets.

Allie Bidwell: No, and you're cold.

Justin Draeger: Okay.

Megan Coval: But I don't keep anything in my pockets in my jacket, like my gloves I guess, but.

Justin Draeger: You don't keep tissues in there or hand sanitizer?

Megan Coval: No, I just keep it all in my purse.

Allie Bidwell: I keep chap stick.

Justin Draeger: I don't know, I have stuff in my pockets all the time. I don't know what I would do without real, functional pockets. I mean, I guess you'd carry a clutch. That's so crazy. I just don't know how I would get anything done if I had to carry something around all the time with my stuff in it. Like, how would you shop? How would you walk around?

Allie Bidwell: I don't know how Megan and I are like, still functioning.

Justin Draeger: Well, anyway.

Allie Bidwell: Let's all go take a nap.


Allie Bidwell: I feel like we're gonna lose like, half our listeners this week.

Justin Draeger: I mean, not everyone can be platinum.

Megan Coval: Is next one our 100th?

Allie Bidwell: Yeah! Next week is our 100th episode.

Justin Draeger: Well, let's think about that when we have a free moment.
Allie Bidwell: Tell us your favorite episode out of the 100.

Justin Draeger: Remember to subscribe, tell a friend, see you again next week.