

NASFAA's "Off The Cuff" Podcast - Episode 191 Transcript

Justin Draeger:

Hey everybody, welcome to another edition of Off The Cuff. I'm Justin Draeger.

Allie Arcese:

I'm Allie Arcese with our communications team.

Megan Coval:

I'm Megan Coval with our policy team.

Jill Desjean:

And I'm Jill Desjean, also with our policy team.

Justin Draeger:

Welcome everybody. We have a bit to talk about today, including President Biden's speech last night in a joint session of Congress. This was different than a State of the Union, which is, I guess, that's constitutional. This is more... What? State of the Union lite, Megan?

Megan Coval:

Yeah, some...

Justin Draeger:

Something like that.

Megan Coval:

... might call it skinny State of the Union.

Justin Draeger:

Before we jumped on though, I did have a question. Megan, you talked about, you have baseboard heating in the room that you're recording this podcast in?

Megan Coval:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

Look at all this stuff against your wall though. You say you're cold, but look at all this stuff blocking the heat back there.

Megan Coval:

Well, the baseboard heating is over here.

Justin Draeger:

Oh, it's just on that wall.

Megan Coval:

And there's just a couch, and it's the couches...

Justin Draeger:

You made a suggestion, which I thought was really good, that we should start doing MTV Cribs NASFAA style, which is walk people through your working environment. And Allie you showed us your desk. You had a monitor, right? That surprised me, because in the office, I feel like you've never used your monitor, you only used your laptop.

Allie Arcese:

I never did, but I don't know, since working from home, I feel like I need more space.

Justin Draeger:

Good for you.

Allie Arcese:

I have too many tabs open.

Justin Draeger:

Yes. I like it. Welcome. And Jill, you're still in your attic.

Jill Desjean:

I'm still in the attic. Yep.

Justin Draeger:

Okay. Good on you.

Allie Arcese:

Jill, you bop around though. I feel like I see you in different places a lot.

Jill Desjean:

Yeah. This is my quiet place. And so I always come here for the podcast. I come here if I'm alone, it's odd, if I'm alone in the house, I come up here, because I don't have to supervise anyone downstairs. It's loud and crazy and I wish that was up here, but I have...

Justin Draeger:

What is the mouse situation in the attic? Because given that there are mice flying around your home, it seems like the attic would be the last place you might want to be.

Jill Desjean:

No, oddly they are limited to the kitchen and the basement.

Justin Draeger:

Oh.

Allie Arcese:

Great.

Justin Draeger:

All right.

Jill Desjean:

One did venture into the dining room once, but I caught him. I stepped on his tail.

Justin Draeger:

Okay. Yeah. All right. Well last night, President Biden spoke to a joint session of Congress. It started almost on time. And I should say before we get into the whole speech and everything, this is always the time of year, whenever the President's about to speak, where I raise my annual gripe. And I just want to say, I've been plus one-ed now by former Speaker of the House, John Boehner. I'm most of the way through his latest book, his autobiography. But he also says that he tells a story about when President Obama was giving a speech, he made an agreement with Joe Biden, who was the Vice President at the time, that they would not applaud every applause line, and they would not stand up. Just so they could get to the speech faster.

Justin Draeger:

Boehner had no... He wasn't trying to play political games, he just wanted to get the speech done. And Biden agreed, but then on the night of, Biden turns to, the way Boehner tells it, he turns to Boehner and he says, "You know I'm going to have to stand up sometimes." And Boehner's like, "Yeah. I get it. It's okay sometimes." And then Boehner says, he proceeds every time to stand up. Every time there's an applause line. And every time he stands up, Joe Biden looks over at Boehner like, "Sorry, I have to do it."

Justin Draeger:

Last night, far less applause. Which, there were a few people, they were doing social distancing. I was watching a Twitter feed of some of the reporters. They were giving updates much more relaxed, some members had their shoes off during the speech.

Megan Coval:

I saw that, yeah.

Justin Draeger:

Joe Manchin had his foot up on the chair in front of him.

Allie Arcese:

Getting cozy.

Justin Draeger:

... Chair in front of him. What's that Allie?

Allie Arcese:

Said getting cozy.

Justin Draeger:

They were very cozy. But overall...

Megan Coval:

I like that.

Justin Draeger:

... I like the fact that we can actually... I find it really discombobulated when it's constantly interrupted by a partisan applause. I actually like hearing a speech in its entirety, because you can follow the narrative a little easier. And the one thing that Politico reported on, they had some off the record, well, not off the record but, it was, what do they call it when it's not cited?

Allie Arcese:

Behind the scenes.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah.

Allie Arcese:

Oh, on background.

Justin Draeger:

On background. They had some people from Biden's team who were talking to Politico about his speech that night, and they said they compared Biden to a cat with a mouse, a near dead mouse. Did you guys see this? Where they were like, "He won't stop playing with it." A cat with a mouse will play with the mouse until it's nearly dead. The same thing with the speech. They're like, "He'll play with it all the way up until the point he's giving the speech, and then he won't even stay on script."

Justin Draeger:

They were just voicing some of... Which if you listened last night, and I think this is kind of what makes President Biden a little more relatable, is that he didn't stay on script. He went off script a lot. He talked to Mitch McConnell directly, and referenced his son, who I think passed away of cancer. Very heartfelt, but he went off script left and right. I think the speech clocked in just at what? An hour, fifteen, maybe?

Allie Arcese:

I mean, we've had longer. I feel like.

Justin Draeger:

Well, if you add in the applause, it's crazy town. But like I said, last night, it felt a little more contiguous to me, even though there were some applauses here and there. How about you Megan, overall impressions?

Megan Coval:

I thought it was a strong speech and a unifying speech, and I just also really liked the feel of it. The fact that people were more relaxed watching it, I think, made a difference. And also, I kind of liked that he went off script. I think it sort of humanizes him. I mean that's certainly what he was after here and the plan that he's putting forward is about. It's about being in touch and being relatable and things like that. All in all great speech, lots of mention of higher ed, which is always fun for those of us who are watching.

Justin Draeger:

I haven't run it through any of our databases or anything, but I would venture to guess this is the most we've talked about higher ed in maybe any State of the Union address. The real estate is so expensive in the State of the Union address...

Allie Arcese:

Wasn't when President Obama pitched the college rating system, wasn't that also in a State of the Union?

Justin Draeger:

It was, but I think it was...

Allie Arcese:

I feel like...

Justin Draeger:

... in one or two sentences.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. A line or two, I think.

Justin Draeger:

He went on for a while and talked about a couple of things, which I thought sort of would resonate. One is he talked about, this is the middle of the road candidate. This was the conservative Democrat running for President. And he talked last night about how he wants to spend all this money, which Republicans are pointing out, what the American Family Plan is how much? Is it two trillion, \$1.9?

Megan Coval:

\$1.8.

Allie Arcese:

Just under two trillion.

Megan Coval:

Close to.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

That's a lot of money, even in Washington DC. On the other hand, he's being branded a lot of liberal and socialist agendas, which Representative Foxx, who's the ranking member of the House Education Committee, came out with a statement afterwards and talked about President Biden outlined his vision for a socialist America. On the other hand, Biden said during the speech, he said, "I argue with my own party members about that." And I look out in the audience and front and center is Bernie Sanders, who's maybe one of the most progressive members.

Justin Draeger:

I think he has said he's a socialist or at least... And Biden said, "I disagree with my own members on this." He said, "I'm not against people becoming millionaires and billionaires, but they have to pay their fair share." Everyone has to do their part. That was his point. And he talked about the emergency spending this last year, how it's cut child poverty in half, because of all of the emergency grants that have gone out and support funds that have gone out through state and local governments.

Justin Draeger:

The one line that I loved a lot, it was shortly after he gave a shout out to Pittsburgh, Megan, to near your hometown, was, "Wall Street didn't build this country, the middle-class built this country, and unions built the middle-class." And as someone who, I come from a union family, that hit home for me. I'll even say, I'll cop to the fact that I was moved at times during his speech.

Justin Draeger:

And then, he got into Higher Ed talk and really kind of couched it in four years of additional education. We have to move from a K-12, which is 20th century education construct, to universal, basically, 16 years of public education. And the way he's couching it is, two years preschool and two years after your senior year. So that's four extra years.

Justin Draeger:

And he did draw a distinction between pre-K and daycare. He wants universal pre-K. This idea has been around a long time. He basically said, "It's crazy to try to compete in a 21st century economy with a 20th century education model." And so we have to update it to pay for pre-K through 14, through two years of college. That was the proposal. Megan, what struck you about the Higher Ed speak?

Megan Coval:

I think just everything you said and really just the fact that on the Higher Ed piece, especially with the free community college tuition, it's not even really about college affordability. Sort of building off what you just said. This is just about a philosophical change. He's pointing to a philosophical change that he wants to see this country make. That we're no longer just going to do K through 12, it's our responsibility to provide additional education.

Megan Coval:

I think that, that is kind of the part that struck me. A lot of these other proposals that we talk about are really about, college is unaffordable, people can't attain or can't access Higher Ed, and that is certainly true, but the underpinning here I think is what's different.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. The change in the way that he's addressing this, that really stuck out to me. He talked about a lot of time that he spent with the Chinese president. And he talked about how they are positioning themselves to be basically the world leader in this next century. And he also talked about how democracy has taken a bit of a hit, and that he said that, autocratic countries are looking at Western-style democracies and saying, "They are no longer serving you well or competitively for this next century. You cannot compete with us, because you're too slow, you don't get consensus, and there's a credibility issue."

Justin Draeger:

He talked about climate change, but that's one example. Whatever you agree about the Paris Accords, the idea that one president can put us in, one president can pull us out, and another president can try to put us back in. This is a problem when we lose credibility abroad, because we're in and out of so many things by presidential fiat, as opposed to congressional mandate. I feel like it hit a lot of notes that we've been talking about for a very long time here, which is regulation comes and goes, it creates whiplash, gainful employment is a good example of that. When things are passed by Congress, they tend to stick around for a while longer.

Megan Coval:

One other thing I was just going to say and I sort of like this just from a feel-good perspective is that, I think Mike Allen said in the Politico email this morning, again, kind of off the record or behind the scenes thing, that Biden had studied a lot of FDR's notes from the New Deal. And not only just in his language, but in his tenor and his delivery, tried to really replicate that. And maybe it's just as a person who likes history and politics, I love the idea that we sort of look back. We've come so far and experienced so much, and we're a different country now than we were back then, but the human condition is the same. The fact that you go back and rely and study that, I think is just kind of fascinating.

Justin Draeger:

I agree with you. And I think he even quoted FDR last night. He said that everybody has to do their part. FDR said it, and he's saying it, everybody has to do their part. He did mention Dreamers as well. I think he said something to the effect of he has a proposal, Biden, in part of his infrastructure plan to beef up security on the border but also a pathway to citizenship.

Justin Draeger:

And he said, "If you're for border security, you should be for my bill. If you're for pathway to citizenship, you should be for my bill." And he said, "at the very least, I hope we can agree that we ought to support Dreamers and provide them with basically access to student financial aid." Which is part of his proposal that Pell Grants would be made available to those students. He was talking around the American Family Plan. Megan, why don't you give us sort of an overview? What's in this plan? What's fleshed out? What's a little nebulous?

Megan Coval:

The plan was released the same day as Biden's address earlier that morning. And this was really significant for higher education in terms of it being the most amount of funding and investment we've seen proposed maybe ever, if not for a really long time. The biggie in there is we finally saw a little bit more detail about the President's plan for free community college. And the high level points there, we still don't have a ton of detail is that he would put forth 109 billion to make two years free community college, regardless of income, and this would be a federal state partnership. States would have to choose to participate in it but the Federal Government would contribute \$3 for every dollar that the state put into it.

Justin Draeger:

So this is a dollar for dollar or leveraged federal state maintenance of effort program?

Megan Coval:

Yep.

Justin Draeger:

Presumably states could opt in, right?

Megan Coval:

Yep.

Justin Draeger:

And it replicates, I think some of the things that are already happening with the states with community college. On top of this, then how does the Pell Grant figure into all of this? Because he's also doubling down on Pell funding, right?

Megan Coval:

Yeah. There's a whole separate proposal in this plan for Pell Grant funding. He proposed an additional \$80 billion for Pell Grants and this would increase the maximum award by \$1,400. And this is on top of the \$400 increase that Biden proposed to the maximum Pell Grant that was included in the first part of his budget.

Megan Coval:

It's a little confusing when you have his plan, his infrastructure plan and his budget are technically two separate things. But all told it would be more than an \$80 billion investment in the Pell program. And they noted specifically that it would be considered a down payment toward the President's commitment to getting toward double Pell.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. And we're all in on doubling the Pell Grant program, as we've talked about here before. Let me go back to the free college proposal for just a minute. I know we're, as I understand, that we don't have a lot of in-depth details. We have maybe a frame work set up. But we have a handy-dandy chart that we can link to in the show notes, people can check out.

Justin Draeger:

But if you're getting lost in all the sort of quote unquote free college proposals, we have Biden's American Family Plan, we have America's College Promise, we have College for All Act and Debt-Free College Act. I'm looking at sort of the differences and similarities between here. One thing I've noticed, I don't see any Republican co-sponsors on any of these bills.

Megan Coval:

Not yet at least.

Justin Draeger:

Not yet, you're right. And based on what representative Foxx released last night, I'm not sure that we would expect at least house Republicans, to jump right on board.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah. Some of these are re-introductions too. Have they ever had Republican co-sponsors?

Justin Draeger:

No.

Megan Coval:

I don't think so. No.

Justin Draeger:

But these are all partisan bills, which means that they could only be passed or portions of them could be passed in budget reconciliation unless they're going to reach across the aisle. The other thing I noticed is that all of them are matching or federal leveraging programs. So they are trying to extract money out of the states, which is something we've talked a lot about, state disinvestment.

Justin Draeger:

The other problematic thing and we talked about this a little bit last week, is in each one of these bills and I'm not talking about doubling the Pell grant program, because that's obviously portable. But with each of these programs, there is an institutional eligibility factor that then plays into student eligibility. The American Family Plan from President Biden would be for community colleges and then MSIs. So public four years would be excluded?

Megan Coval:

That's right.

Justin Draeger:

Private non-for-profits would be excluded?

Megan Coval:

Yes.

Justin Draeger:

Trade schools will be excluded?

Megan Coval:

Yes.

Justin Draeger:

And proprietary schools?

Megan Coval:

Yes.

Justin Draeger:

And as you look across the other bills, it's pretty similar. There are some allowances for private HBCUs and MSIs, but most of them are really focused on community colleges. I do think that's going to be challenging because you do have other open access institutions besides community colleges. There are four year schools that are open access schools.

Megan Coval:

Yeah. I think that's going to be a big point of pushback and maybe is part of the concern and part of why there aren't Republican co-sponsors. But it's definitely focused on community colleges alone, at least this component of it.

Justin Draeger:

I think there's another issue with community colleges, which is, well couple issues, that I just think we have to think through. One is if you double the Pell Grant program, isn't that going to cover tuition plus incidentals, cost of living at a community college?

Megan Coval:

I would say for almost certainly we can say for most.

Justin Draeger:

I was on a call this last week, I was in a meeting with Flagship Public Universities and I asked "If we double the Pell Grant, how many of you... Would that cover all of your tuition and fees?" And I did see a significant number of hands go up. That was from Flagship four-year publics. And now that's only for Pell recipients of course, but that's the program with a need analysis attached to it. I think there's some question there about well, what's the remaining need to community college? Why can't this be portable to other institutions?

Megan Coval:

I think that goes back to something that we were talking earlier about. They made a point in the proposal to say that, "This is for all incomes." I think this is really just driving home that, this is where we need to be as a country providing this next level. I see what you're saying, but I think for them they're

being very clear about, this is actually isn't about... It is about income, but it's about something bigger too.

Justin Draeger:

It's about this idea of universal. Here's the other question I have, which is, it wasn't that long ago, everybody in higher education was talking about under matching. This idea of students going to open access or less selective schools that might be stretched when it comes to student support services, might have lower graduation and persistence rates. When they would have been able to be admitted to a more selective university that has more resources, would be surrounded by students who are on pathways of success.

Justin Draeger:

And this was a big issue, how do we get low-income students to apply to Ivy league and more selective schools? I do wonder what the intersect, because that conversation does seem to intersect with this conversation in some way, but it hasn't really been fully drawn out yet. And I do wonder to what extent that some of that might have.

Allie Arcese:

Well, I wonder if the whole limiting it to community colleges for the time being as sort of a stepping stone. You guys were saying that, that might be an area of pushback from Republicans, but I'm wondering if on the flip side, it could also be sort of a bargaining tool. Because so many Republicans are resistant to the idea of making things free. Why don't we compromise on community colleges first? See how that goes and then open it up to...

Justin Draeger:

You think this is a Trojan horse to get into expansive?

Allie Arcese:

Maybe.

Justin Draeger:

All right.

Megan Coval:

I think I misspoke earlier too. I just wanted to point out that Senator Sanders' proposal would public institutions but there would be an income threshold, \$125K.

Justin Draeger:

So there is a need analysis associated with that?

Allie Arcese:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

The other thing I've noticed, and obviously some of these things can be done at the same time. We can still address under matching and still realize the vision of pre-K through 14. I understand that these things are not always mutually exclusive. But I do wonder if the institutional eligibility limitations, I do wonder about accountability being one of President Biden's talking points coming into the presidency on the higher ed accountability.

Justin Draeger:

I wonder if graduation and persistence rates, particularly at open-access institutions and community colleges might be more acute, default rates at community colleges because they're open access institutions. They're taking risks on riskier populations. The other thing that I noticed isn't in any of these is loan forgiveness. It's not in any single of these bills and it's not in President Biden's American Family Plan. Where's the loan forgiveness, Megan?

Megan Coval:

Good question, Justin. The fact that it's not in this proposal also signals that it's unlikely that it will be in the President's full budget, which is coming out next month. You can expect to see these proposals that we saw yesterday in the President's budget, replicated there. I don't know. I don't think we're going to see anything on the administration from this in the near future at least. But as we discussed, sort of the next step is that President Biden is waiting on this memo outlining his legal authority as president to do this or not do this with the stroke of the pen. I think for the administration, they're sort of waiting for that before they do anything.

Allie Arcese:

Here's me trying to rationalize again, trying to think through what they're thinking but obviously this does not address current borrowers, but if you double Pell and make community college, some four year colleges free, far fewer students are going to be taking out loans.

Justin Draeger:

It does address sort of the sustainability issue that we've critiqued about loan forgiveness, which is you forgive all this loan debt and then what happens next year. I like the way you think, Allie. Which is one of the reasons we're supporting this doubling of the Pell Grant program. I guess the other thing that makes me think about is there is a difference that I feel in the last 12 years we've seen in Congress that's different than maybe congresses before that.

Justin Draeger:

We used to have congresses that were all about cutting deals, compromise, finding ways to move forward. As partisan as like a Ted Kennedy was, he was also a deal-maker. John Boehner, a deal-maker. And this sounds like Justin old man Draeger waving his cane at hooligans today, but there is something about lawmakers that make perhaps a lot of noise but don't actually get a lot of legislation done.

Justin Draeger:

And I do... Loan forgiveness feels like a microcosm, a little bit of that to me. Because there are a lot of supporters of the Pell Grant program on both sides of the aisle. I don't know if there'll be Republicans lining up to double the program, but it's a very popular program. Loan forgiveness gets a lot of play. It gets a lot of people animated and maybe involved in politics. But when it actually comes down to it, I'm still waiting to see what is the proposal and where is the legislation?

Allie Arcese:

So much of Congress now I feel like it's just, who can yell the loudest about their thing and get the best sound bites? And it's really disillusioning.

Justin Draeger:

I think, is it cable news? Is it Twitter? Whatever the reason is, people and then they fundraise off it. There is a very perverse incentive here for people to make a lot of noise about things that have no chance of moving.

Allie Arcese:

You've mentioned before, when they sort of grandstand during hearings, immediately after those hearings, I get emails on their press list with a video clip of that thing that they were grandstanding about in the form of a press pitch.

Justin Draeger:

Owen, let's take a clip of Allie saying that and then let's put it on our YouTube and Allie will be grandstanding against grandstanders. There's something very meta about that, that I like. No. I'm 100% and I don't know, I missed the... What last night felt like to me was less of that and more of this is a comprehensive policy and it's not about the sickest burn that Biden got in on a political adversary. I don't know. I will say, I also noticed he leaned into the podium, which is that's when I know we're really talking to Joe Biden because I've been at speeches with him before where he leans in and then that's when I'm like, "Okay. Here, this is real talk."

Megan Coval:

Now we're cooking.

Justin Draeger:

Now we're cooking.

Megan Coval:

Well, one thing I just want to say to your deal making comment. All of it is a very big proposal, large price tag but the Pell piece is interesting to me because to me this signals... We would have loved, of course, to have seen a proposal that said yesterday, double the Pell Grant. But I think this is a long game for the Biden administration. I think they understand that there's a way to get there and it might be piecemeal. And I mean, we're supportive of any progress but I think there's something bigger there.

Justin Draeger:

There's a pathway. They're doing appropes, they're doing mandatory, they're doing budget reconciliation, regular order. They're trying to get at it every direction. That does feel like progress to me.

Allie Arcese:

It's funny because we brought this up before too, but when Obama was running for President, I think he just mentioned increasing the Pell Grant and that was considered like, "Whoa! Let's not get crazy."

Justin Draeger:

It's a lot to be said for the most who... This might've been the most moderate Democratic candidate for President in the running and he's coming out with the largest sort of revamp of how we think about education and all sorts of other policy. I don't know. We'll see what we get there. Jill, I do have one question for you because it's the question I get asked multiple times a week and at every conference I go to which is, where's the HEERF III money?

Jill Desjean:

I don't know where it is. I guess it's in the US treasury. Not in school's bank accounts just yet. Have unfortunately no updates on that.

Justin Draeger:

We've heard originally what? What did the department say? Early April?

Megan Coval:

2nd week in April.

Allie Arcese:

It's always next week.

Justin Draeger:

We do know they want to sew up guidance and they want guidance issued before they actually release the funds. But we understand that schools are also trying to budget and plan. All right, well, people can send us their comments and their questions about HEERF money or observations about President Biden's speech and his joint session of Congress last night.

Justin Draeger:

Well, let's move to What Was That? This week I'm curious, it never dawned on me until I had this conversation within my family, that people might speak to themselves when they're giving themselves a pep talk in different voices. I don't know if you know what I'm talking about.

Justin Draeger:

If you're running or you're doing a workout or you say something really stupid and then you're regretting it, as you think about that conversation later, I'm curious, do you speak to yourself in the first, the second or third person? And I didn't even realize and I'm in my forties, I didn't realize till recently that not everybody does this the same way I do. Allie, how about you?

Allie Arcese:

I think it's some combination of the first and second person.

Justin Draeger:

You say, "you" and you say, "I"?

Allie Arcese:

Yeah. I kind of alternate throughout my conversation with myself.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. Okay. When do you do this? Are you doing this on the regular?

Allie Arcese:

Mostly when I've done something embarrassing and then I think about it immediately and then seven months later at 3:00 AM, I'm like, "Oh God, remember that thing you did?" Well...

Justin Draeger:

Right. All right. How about you, Megan?

Megan Coval:

I think a combination of the both and I think...

Justin Draeger:

Wait, wait. Of what? First and second person?

Megan Coval:

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. First and second, like Allie. And I think it varies on level of intensity. If I feel like I'm being nice to myself, it's usually the like, "I can do this. I got this." But if I'm beating myself up like, "You need to pull it together." Then it's you or, "That... You... That was dumb you."

Justin Draeger:

Right. Yeah. Then you're speaking from out into yourself?

Megan Coval:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

All right. How about you, Jill?

Jill Desjean:

Yeah. Second person. For sure.

Justin Draeger:

It's a lot of 'you' speak. Like, "Why don't you?" And when do you, I'm curious, when do you do this?

Jill Desjean:

I do the regret stuff but I do it to motivate. Definitely if I'm running or something and be like, "You can do anything for 20 minutes." That sort of thing. Talk yourself through but I'm never like, "I got this." It's like, "Jill, you got this."

Allie Arcese:

I don't know. Can you do burpees for 20 minutes?

Allie Arcese:

Can't do burpees for 20 seconds.

Jill Desjean:

I would never try to talk myself through burpees.

Justin Draeger:

I'm just going to say, so I'm a third person. I'm a third person.

Jill Desjean:

Really?

Justin Draeger:

Yes. I always speak to my... I do it in the third person. I do it every time I cycle home from work. I'm always like, "Come on, Draeger. Pull it together. Come on Draeger You got this." Or sometimes I'll go into second, but that's usually when I'm beating myself up, like, "Oh my God, why did you say that?" Or something like...

Justin Draeger:

But I don't ever do the 'I' or I can do this or I'm... It's always third person. And it's always me talking to myself. And I'm starting to wonder if this is... I don't know. Is this a gender-related thing? I wonder because in my household the men in the family all use third and the women in the family are using first person and second.

Megan Coval:

Interesting. Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

I don't know. Find out and report back. This is how unaware I am. I didn't even know that people would talk to themselves in the first person until I just...

Megan Coval:

I never even thought about how other people talk to themselves until you ask this question.

Allie Arcese:

I just assume everyone talks.

Justin Draeger:

But you don't say, "Megan, come on!" Or "Jeez! Come on, Megan." You don't ever say that to yourself?

Megan Coval:

No.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. You're probably more... I think that's probably healthier. I'm disassociated from myself. But you are...

Megan Coval:

Me too. I think it's interesting too that you use your last name.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. Well, that's when you are being rough. You don't want an intimate sort of... It's more of a Draeger.

Megan Coval:

"Come on, Justin."

Justin Draeger:

Never talked to myself that way. No. Never. My youngest son has a habit of muttering to himself constantly. If I say, "Hey, Archer, take the garbage out." He's like, "Oh, I could take this garbage out and..."

Allie Arcese:

Or he's going to have to master the art of [crosstalk 00:32:17]

Justin Draeger:

I'm like, "I know you're 10 but at some point you're just going to need to say these things in your head." You can't walk around life, just muttering your dissatisfaction with everything... I also didn't realize till recently how dissatisfied he is with a lot of things because there's a lot of muttering going around in our house.

Megan Coval:

No one's hiding feelings.

Justin Draeger:

No. Well, he's not. Maybe that's a blessing. And people should let us know. I'm curious, do they talk to themselves in first person, second or third, some combination. And if you do have sociopathic tendencies and have no inner monologue at all, send those directly to Owen and maybe we'll make some connections. We'll build a community. All right. Thanks everybody for joining us for another edition of Off The Cuff, remember to subscribe, tell a friend and we will see you again.