

NASFAA's "Off the Cuff" Podcast – Episode 156 Transcript

Announcer:

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Justin Draeger:

Hey, everyone. 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 are still in our summer series here of podcasts, and because we weren't able to have the National Conference, we're continuing to have some of our very prestigious award winners with us on the podcast. Today, we are talking to one of our Lifetime Achievement Award winners, and for those who don't know, our Lifetime Achievement Award is the highest award that NASFAA can bestow on our members. The achievements and contributions, because it's a lifetime award, they have to be outstanding and significant, and they have to be made over a sustained period of time. So this isn't an award that's usually given for a one-time achievement, but over many years to the profession and to NASFAA.

Justin Draeger:

Today, we're glad to welcome to the podcast Ron Day, who I think most people know. He has given unselfishly over many years of his time and his knowledge and his talents to help the financial aid profession. He's been doing this for over 30 years, a strong advocate known for somebody who stands by what he believes to be true and right, never afraid to ask tough questions. He's been a mentor to many at his state and his region, and I would say nationally, and a friend and a mentor to me specifically.

Justin Draeger:

Ron, you're the type of guy who I think could tell somebody to go to hell and they'd actually want to go there, because you have a demeanor about you that's just, you can say tough to-the-point things, but you say them in a way that I think people really receive them. Thanks for joining us today, and congratulations on your Lifetime Achievement Award.

Ron Day:

Thanks, Justin. Great to be with you guys. I appreciate that so much.

Justin Draeger:

So Ron, when you found out about this award and the reasons that you're getting it from the NASFAA Board of Directors, all of your volunteerism at the national level, serving as a National Chair back in 2012 and '13. One of your focuses at that time was really about building the profession, I think you're really known for training and your commitment to leadership development. It's probably hard to encapsulate that, but what thoughts were running through your mind?

Ron Day:

When I received notice of the award, it was, I guess my mouth flew open, and because I think of extreme humility. I sat back and thought about it, thinking here's this little guy from the deep South that got into this profession, like most of us did, stepped into it without knowing what you're doing. And looked at those individuals, particularly on the national level, as people you aspired to be. You wanted to have their knowledge base, you wanted to have their demeanor, you wanted to be there. And to never in my wildest dreams ever, ever see that one day I'd have that opportunity to serve alongside many of them. It's an extremely high honor, and one that I will cherish for a lifetime. So it was an amazing, amazing notification, and won with great humility.

Justin Draeger:

Like I said before, Ron, one of the things I think people know you best for is your commitment and dedication to professional development, and leadership development and training in particular. What has drawn you to that? Why has that been a particular magnet for you?

Ron Day:

You and I have talked, and many of us have talked over the years, I think we're all wonderful managers, if you will, because we're given rules and regulations that we can follow steps one, two, three, four and so on, and so on. But when it comes to leadership, I think sometimes we tend to put that on the back burner, because I think we're dealing with all these extreme complexities. We can manage the complexities, but can we create what I call the simplicities? I think that's what's called true leadership. I really believe that we need to aspire to both management and leadership, but not put leadership as something secondary, but right alongside of understanding true management and true leadership.

Justin Draeger:

When you look back, Ron, over your many years in this profession and with NASFAA and SASFAA, and your state association. I wonder, is there any particular moment or moments that really stick out to you?

Ron Day:

Gosh, buddy, I could list tens of hundreds of them. It's the time, the first time I think when you have one of those individuals that comes back, that you never anticipate coming back, to truly say, "You made a difference in my life." Not just the moment that you sought to give me this additional award or you brought me in and talked to me, that time changed my view of what it is that we do. I learned very quickly that this is not a job, it's a profession. I think that time changed me completely in the outlook of what it is that we do.

Justin Draeger:

So I know your retirement is a little ways off, as you see your institutions through this pandemic. But outside of financial aid, what are you looking forward to? What's in store for you?

Ron Day:

Good heavens, buddy. I am not one of those that plans on sitting down. I'm anxious to hand off the directorship, because I think there are people that are in the pipeline that could step in. I guess I'm anxious to see what the next adventure will be. There are some opportunities, and I don't intend to sit down. I still enjoy assisting schools through situations, whether it be crisis or a temporary status or something like that. So I'm not sure, but I'm anxious to see what the next adventure will be. I'm open, let's put it that way.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. Given your history with mentorship and training and professional development, that answer doesn't surprise me. Anything else, Ron, that you want to say?

Ron Day:

No. I do want to say this before I get off, and I encourage people, and I think you've heard me say this, good gosh, hundreds of times, aspire to things to stretch yourselves. I think once you do that, that you'll take on leadership responsibilities that will not only help you, but help your schools and your students. Justin, I can not, can not leave this without saying how much I appreciate NASFAA. The staff are just exceptional, and I have to say you personally. You're a friend and I was there at the beginning, and I know without hesitation that we found a jewel. I want you to know how I feel about it. You've expanded this association in ways I never saw or expected. So thank you for what you do, thank you for what the staff does, and I look forward to seeing what NASFAA will become and grow in the future. So let me say that, love you, guys. I want you to know that.

Justin Draeger:

Thanks, Ron. The same to you. For those who don't know, Ron was actually on the search committee and the board that brought together the search committee that hired me. So right or wrong, success or failure, you had hitched your ride to my coattails, and with your mentorship and friendship, you've been a big support to me. It's important for me to let you know, Ron, that you've definitely made a difference in the life of the association and the trajectory of this organization and me personally. So thank you very much for your service. The Lifetime Achievement Award is a really big honor, not one that's given out every year. I can't think of a more deserving person. So congratulations to you.

Ron Day:

Thank you, Justin. I appreciate you guys so very much.

Justin Draeger:

All right. Our very best to Ron Day, people can reach out to him, he's in the NASFAA membership directory, and wish him well. All right, Allie, any member feedback from the last episode?

Allie Arcese:

Yeah, we have quite a few, and this listener question seemed to really resonate with people as TV tends to do. So we asked, as a reminder, what people had been binge watching on Netflix or Amazon or

whatever their device of choice is. One of the responses we got was from Richard Woodland, and he said Dead to Me, which was also something I had recently binge-watched that was really fun.

Justin Draeger:

That's a Netflix show, good show.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah, it's like two seasons, really easy to get through. Anthony Marone, he said this was on this spring, and he tells anyone who will listen to watch it, it's called Dispatches from Elsewhere. It's 10 episodes and it was created by Jason Segal, and he put a little description where it says, "Four ordinary people feel there's something missing in their lives, but can't quite put their finger on what it is. They're brought together by chance, or perhaps it's by design, when they stumble onto a puzzle hiding just beyond the veil of everyday life. As they begin to accept the mysterious Dispatches from Elsewhere challenges, they come to find that the mystery winds deeper than they imagined and their eyes are opened to a world of possibility and magic."

Jill Desjean:

I'm totally going to watch that one.

Justin Draeger:

Is that a show about drug use? I don't understand what that show is about. That shed no light on it for me at all.

Allie Arcese:

Well, we'll just have to see.

Justin Draeger:

All right, great. Any other shows stand out? What else?

Allie Arcese:

We got Aesha from DePaul who said that she had just binged watched Veronica Mars, is now onto Doctor Who and Torchwood. I had never watched Veronica Mars, but I know people were super into that.

Justin Draeger:

All right, I'll check it out.

Allie Arcese:

So we got a question also from Richard Woodland who asked whether NASFAA would be providing an update for the P&P builder to cover COVID.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah, the answer to Rich and anybody who is interested is we do plan to reference the flexibilities in the CARES Act in the P&P builder, so this is a tool here at NASFAA where we actually give you the citation of

the regulation and the handbook of how you build your policies and procedures manual. So there's the policy part and then there's the procedure part, you can do that all within the tool and then you can recreate your policies and procedures every year. So we will include those flexibilities. A lot of those are optional flexibilities for an institution, so they're not necessarily required. But if a school is implementing them, they certainly would want to document them. So that will be available to members before summer's end, and we'll refer to that in our P&P tool. So thank you for the questions, keep them coming.

Justin Draeger:

We had some news last week, we did a little blurb on it in today's news about changes to verification and professional judgment. Jill, you want to catch us up?

Jill Desjean:

Yeah. So the department put into the 2020 and '21 Application and Verification Guide a pretty significant change with respect to verification and PJ. This wasn't just announced, the AVG actually came out in late May, but we just stumbled across it in reviewing ...

Justin Draeger:

So this was just tucked away in the handbook?

Jill Desjean:

Yeah, yeah. To no fanfare. So luckily for us, our crack team in TRA pours through the AVG very carefully, updates all their [inaudible 00:12:25] articles and found this, and noticed that it was a big deal right away. So prior to this year, if a financial aid administrator wanted to use PJ for a verification selected applicant, they had to verify the application first, send the IRIR correction back to the central processing system, wait for that corrected ISIR to come back and then they had to perform PJ, submit another ISIR correction to the CPA with that FAA adjustment flag checked off or indicated to yes, and then submit the correction file again. So for 2021, ED has indicated that schools can perform verification and PJ on the same ISIR correction.

Justin Draeger:

This is only something a financial aid administrator would get excited about.

Jill Desjean:

I totally thought of this as I was writing it up for the podcast too. This is huge, guys.

Justin Draeger:

Well, I saw all the chatter on Slack, and I've got to admit, when I first saw it I was like, "What? I don't understand what the ..."

Jill Desjean:

It's been too long since you've seen a financial aid office, but sending out ISIR corrections and reading them when they come back is such a tedious, boring process.

Justin Draeger:

So we're taking two transactions and now they can be one transaction.

Jill Desjean:

Putting them into one, exactly.

Justin Draeger:

So party, celebrate.

Jill Desjean:

Absolutely. I'm celebrating.

Justin Draeger:

Is this live now?

Jill Desjean:

It's effective for the 2020/'21 aboard year, so people are making, are verifying and doing PJ for the upcoming award year.

Justin Draeger:

If you're doing PJ, are you required to do a verification?

Jill Desjean:

No, so nothing in that respect has changed. You never have to verify an application that wasn't selected by the department or by your institution. But if it had been selected prior to doing the PJ, you would have before had to do the verification in a separate transaction, now you can do them the same. It doesn't change the fact, you never had to do verification before you did dependency override, and that stays the same.

Justin Draeger:

All right. So this is good news, streamlining is always good.

Jill Desjean:

Yeah, yeah. A couple fewer days to process PJ.

Justin Draeger:

Do you know, how much of the handbook is out now?

Jill Desjean:

I think just the Application Verification Guide.

Justin Draeger:

Okay.

Jill Desjean:

I can double check that.

Justin Draeger:

Okay, all right. Great. Let's keep moving. Congress is starting to make some movement towards appropriations. Megan, you want to catch us up here?

Megan Coval:

Yes. So the House made the first move this week and on Monday, the Labor, Health, Human Services and Education, and other Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, or LABORH, released their bill for fiscal year 2020, which impacts award year ... I'm sorry, for fiscal year 2021, which impacts award year 2021/2022. So that's what you should be thinking about when we're talking about these numbers. All things considered, it was a pretty good bill for higher education and for the student aid programs, given everything else that's going on.

Megan Coval:

So just a couple high level numbers here, the overall total for education, and that includes pre-K through post-secondary education, was \$73.5-billion dollars. So that was an increase over last year, and it has about \$24.6-billion dollars for the federal student aid programs, which is a \$45-million dollar increase from last year as well. When we get into the specifics a little bit, it provides \$150 boost to Pell, so that would bring the Pell max to \$6495. It also provides a boost to SEOG and to work study. So all things considered, pretty good. It passed out of the subcommittee just a couple days ago, and it will go before the full Appropriations Committee next week, where it is also expected to pass. That's where the good news is.

Justin Draeger:

This is, to be clear, there're increases, but they're modest.

Megan Coval:

They're modest.

Justin Draeger:

I think we can call those modest. But in terms of goalposts, this is the Democratic bill, right?

Megan Coval:

Yep.

Justin Draeger:

So in terms of increases, this is probably where the increases would be. I don't know where the Republicans are going to come out in the Senate, but we wouldn't expect to see larger increases in an appropriations bill, I guess.

Megan Coval:

Yeah, I think we can consider this the high water mark. These increases are actually kind of in line with last years. Knowing everything else that we're facing and how the price tag has come along with these COVID bills, I think it was good to see that we still aimed high here.

Justin Draeger:

So Megan, do you want to call the odds? This is for the '21/'22 year, so this might seem like a ways off. The issue is of course, that we started processing FAFSAs and if we don't have Pell amounts set, then schools start getting into this situation where they have to decide whether they're going to package for next year without set numbers. But if you had to venture a guess, this is supposed to be done by October 1, will it be done by October 1?

Megan Coval:

I would say very unlikely.

Justin Draeger:

Especially in election year, so we'll probably get some stopgap measure until we decide what's happening with the election?

Megan Coval:

Yeah. I think that this goes over to the Senate now and they have basically not indicated any interest in getting started on approp's work, and they also, they have a big task before them with getting this fourth COVID bill out, and then it will be August recess and elections. So I think we can look for some continuing resolutions on the spending bills at the end of the day.

Justin Draeger:

This is also completely separate from any additional stimulus bills that might be considered, so we might see more emergency grants, more funding for colleges and institutions. That would be separate from an appropriations bill.

Megan Coval:

Yep, and that will likely be done before August recess.

Justin Draeger:

So we'll still be keeping our eyes on all of that. Okay. Thank you, Megan. This last week, the House Education Committee, or subcommittee I guess it was, had a hearing on reopening schools. This seemed to run the gambit. Allie, want to catch us up on this hearing?

Allie Arcese:

Sure. So I think this one actually did focus exclusively on higher education, because it was the Higher Education and Workforce Investment Subcommittee that held the hearing.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah, and all the witnesses were from higher ed too, right?

Allie Arcese:

Yeah, all the witnesses were from higher education. It fell along the lines of where you would expect it to, along party lines with the Democrats touting the HEROES Act, which is the fourth COVID aid package that the House had passed I believe back in May, as a way to help higher education institutions navigate

basically life moving forward. A lot of the witnesses that were there were saying that institutions really need more aid from the federal government in order to move forward, especially if they are expected to reopen in some form, so that they can provide testing and just keep things afloat.

Allie Arcese:

As far as the Republicans go, I wouldn't say that they've been necessarily opposed to more funding for higher ed, but they've also pushed, again, something that they've advocated for, for a long time in HEA reauthorization bills, but just an increased pathway to career in technical education, short term programs. Which those programs particularly, it's really unclear how those are going to move forward, because I think they've been really impacted by the pandemic, because they do require hands-on, in-person instruction.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah, I would say a couple things to build off what you said. One is, in terms of Republicans and Democrats fell back along party priorities. So Republicans talked a lot about competency based education, they talked about transfer credit, they talked about workforce development, they talked about micro-credentials, all that sort of thing. Democrats talked about funding, they talked about safely reopening. The other thing, I hate to go down the road of tropes, and Megan, I know you watched part of this too, but this was like a comedy routine at one point.

Justin Draeger:

God, it was a remote hearing, so everyone was logged in. It looked like a Zoom-esque sort of thing. God, what is with, can people mute themselves? What is the deal with the muting? This was like an SNL sketch. Phones were going off, people were having conversations.

Megan Coval:

The tech guy came in, then he was on Zoom. He was like, "Oh, representative, I think when we tested you, you had your other ..." I appreciate that it's hard, but it was funny.

Justin Draeger:

No, come on. It's not hard.

Allie Arcese:

It's not that hard.

Justin Draeger:

Come on, we've been doing this for four months, I haven't had a call like that for months. This is ridiculous. I don't know what to say about it except that, you know who was, I'm probably showing implicit bias here, but do you know who was on the ball? Virginia Foxx, with her technology.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

She was on it, she muted herself, she got off mute. She was even having back and forth with people and ceded part of her time. I don't want to call out any Congresspeople, but there were a few perpetrators on there who did not know what they were doing with the technology and were unmuted the entire time. We were listening to their conversations. I think the mute guy, or the tech guy that you were referring to, had to mute them. Anyway, that aside, nothing necessarily really surprising.

Justin Draeger:

There weren't a lot of fireworks during the hearing. It felt like it was pretty cordial, members of Congress were polite, and a lot of folks in general were hitting the themes that we would necessarily expect. Go ahead, yeah.

Allie Arcese:

I was just going to say this was also happening somewhat simultaneously with a White House panel.

Justin Draeger:

That's where I was headed next.

Allie Arcese:

On reopening for K12 and for higher ed, that was pretty forceful.

Justin Draeger:

It was a little different, the tenor was a little different.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah.

Megan Coval:

That's one way to say it.

Justin Draeger:

So it was the president and a couple other folks, including Secretary Betsy DeVos, right?

Allie Arcese:

Yes. The First Lady was there, yeah.

Justin Draeger:

That's right, I forgot. Melania Trump was there. I wasn't able to listen on this one, I had to go from the hearing to another meeting. Anything of note during the summit?

Allie Arcese:

Well, that was what I alluded to, there was someone there from Ivy Tech Community College, which I believe is in Indiana. They were actually the ones that brought up the impact that the pandemic has had on workforce training programs, career and technical education. Because especially right now with so many people unemployed, typically a lot of people flock back to higher education and a lot of them end

up in those credential programs, and they may not be able to now because of the inability to do things in person. So I thought that was interesting. Then just a lot of pressure for schools to reopen in the fall.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. The president and the administration have basically, they've come out pretty hard in favor of all schools reopening. Now, people might not agree with this, but I actually, I get it, as a parent. I get it for especially elementary school kids. Because if the president's priority, and you don't have to agree with it, but if the priority is getting the economy starting again because people need money, so that they can pay their bills and survive, K12 or at least K6, K-through-6 is a pretty vital piece of that, because people can't work when they have children they have to teach at home.

Justin Draeger:

I don't understand the big push, and I should add to that as a parent, that I also feel like this has to be made locally. To some extent, what's going in Fairfax, Virginia, is very different than what's going on in Austin, Texas right now. And vice versa, maybe in November. Maybe it will be a completely different story. What was going on in Austin, Texas, wasn't what was going on here in April, when COVID was off the chart here in the DMV area. So anyway, but I don't understand the big push at higher ed. Colleges are in the best position to make these decisions, and then the administration's pushing so hard for all schools, including colleges, to open. On the heels of this summit, then you have ICE, immigration enforcement, they come out ... Was that just on Monday?

Allie Arcese:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah, so everything seems to be gelling together here for me. But just on Monday, they come out and basically say that international students who, let's be clear, in March, when the president declared a National Emergency, ICE at that time had come out and said that international students whose schools were no longer meeting in person could continue to stay here on their visas, even if they went to 100% online. That was the standing guidance until Monday, when ICE came out and said if a school's 100% online starting this fall, international students aren't attending on campus, and so they would have to return to their countries of origin.

Justin Draeger:

As everybody is looking at this, it seems pretty clear, this is all a move to pressure schools to offer on-campus classes, which I just don't get. I don't get it. Schools will decide to do what they can do. Some are doing hybrid, some are announcing, but ultimately the virus will decide.

Allie Arcese:

It's not necessarily having all of them in-person, because if they were taking some in-person, then they could stay, right?

Justin Draeger:

Yeah, that's right.

Allie Arcese:

I know a couple schools like NYU, Columbia and I think Berkeley I saw were creating a one-credit global course that it would be on campus.

Justin Draeger:

Some people were calling that fraud. I saw like, "Oh, you can't do this just for ..." If this is a game of chess, then schools can do whatever they want. This is obviously ... I just don't see the logic behind it. It seems awfully cruel to international students who might be in a financial bind already, to say, "Now you have to get enough money to go back to your country of origin, and then maybe come back when we're on the other side of this."

Justin Draeger:

The other thing is, the national disaster that the president put in, in March, is still happening. It hasn't been rescinded, so I don't understand why the guidance would change. To that end, Harvard and MIT also don't understand the logic behind this, because immediately after this announcement came out of Immigration, they filed an injunction on Wednesday in federal court asking that this provision be stopped. I've lost count of the number of colleges that are filing amicus briefs, which are basically supporting statements that will go to the court.

Justin Draeger:

What's interesting about this is the judge that it was assigned to is the same judge that was involved in some of the DACA findings against the Trump administration. So a lot of the arguments that were used with DACA, which NASFAA was a part of, will be used here. To that end, NASFAA is working with the American Council on Education, lots of other organizations to file amicus briefs in support of Harvard and MIT, who together said that ICE's new directive would prevent many of their 9000 combined international students between the two schools, and hundreds-of-thousands of schools across the country from being able to stay in the United States.

Allie Arcese:

Yeah.

Justin Draeger:

Philosophical argument alone, the idea is that higher ed in the United States is supposed to bring together the best minds from the world. That's the model. So why in the world we'd be sending students packing just doesn't make any economic sense, it doesn't make any philosophical sense, and it certainly to me, doesn't make any moral sense.

Allie Arcese:

I think you said this earlier this week too in Slack, Justin, that a lot of schools are at least somewhat dependent on the tuition that international students bring in, and especially right now, and then they're already trying to figure things out for the fall and whether to come back or not come back, or what's the best thing for them and their students. Now to throw this in the mix too is just kind of insane.

Justin Draeger:

Yeah. Like I said, K-through-6, I understand the debate that can happen there. I just don't get it at the higher education, at the level.

Allie Arcese:

It's so different when you have K-through-6, the kids aren't living in the school.

Justin Draeger:

Right. For a school now to face the pressure of like, "Okay, am I going to do what I think is in the best health interest, mental and academic and biological, physical health of my students, or am I going to be making a decision based on the financial impact of me having to send all my international students home?" That to me, seems like a piece of calculus that didn't need to be thrown into the equation. It's obviously a change in direction and meant to turn the screws on schools opening in the fall.

Megan Coval:

One other thing I'll just say here, because I know we talked about the court cases, and those actually will probably move pretty quickly. I think the judge is aware of the timing here and how important it is. There's also some potential for the Hill to address this too, either through the Defense Appropriations Bill or potentially through the fourth COVID bill. So it is bad news, but I do think there are a couple of legitimate avenues for recourse, which is good news.

Justin Draeger:

All right, so reason for hope. We will keep our eyes on this. All right, final thing in the news this last week, which I think is pretty important to cover. We do have a new contender in the presidential race, and Allie, I know you tried to strike this from the agenda, but this is not that kind of podcast where we're going to overlook something like this. Kanye West has officially thrown his hat into the ring for president. He was endorsed by Elon Musk out of the gate, unfortunately, that endorsement evaporated within 48 hours.

Allie Arcese:

I will draw the line though at adding him to our 2020 presidential tracker page.

Justin Draeger:

All right, you know what? I'll see that, I hear you. Let's just see. The thing about Kanye West, I'm not so much into the new music, he's been doing more gospel stuff, that's not my jam. I have nothing against it, just not where I am. But as a reminder, back in 2016, he had talked about this. This is back in 2016, this series of tweets, that he was going to throw his hat in the ring in 2020. And when he did that, as a reminder, this is why I have been watching this so closely, when he did that, he did so talking about a textbook and how much one of his I guess friends, how much work they had to do just to be able to afford one textbook.

Justin Draeger:

Just to remind, anybody remember what the very first album he ever put out, I think this back in maybe 2008 or '09, what the name of that album was? Jill, I know you know.

Jill Desjean:

I don't know.

Justin Draeger:

What?

Jill Desjean:

I did see him once around that era, but I can't remember.

Justin Draeger:

The name of the album was the College Dropout. That was the name of the album. One of the things that I also pointed out in Slack this week, when he announced, was one of his songs back from 2009 was ... What was the name of that song real quick? All Falls Down. In there, he talks about a girl who goes to college, and he says, "She has no idea what she's doing in college. That major and she majored in, don't make no money, but she won't drop out, her parents will look at her funny." He talks about her being insecure, and then she's been going to school three years, still a sophomore and hasn't picked a career.

Justin Draeger:

I think it's safe to say he would be supportive of gainful employment regulations. So if that's your deciding factor, this guy would definitely be in favor of gainful employment. He wants to get the value proposition. Allie, does he have your vote?

Allie Arcese:

No.

Justin Draeger:

I don't feel like you gave that much thought.

Allie Arcese:

You know what party he's running under from the Forbes article?

Megan Coval:

The Green party, right?

Allie Arcese:

The birthday party.

Megan Coval:

The birthday party?

Justin Draeger:

The birthday party, is that what you said?

Allie Arcese:

He's like, because if he wins, it's going to feel like it's everyone's birthday.

Megan Coval:

Every day.

Jill Desjean:

Oh, my god.

Megan Coval:

I give him some points for creativity, so hey.

Justin Draeger:

[crosstalk 00:33:41] Well, this brought up a question for me, which was, if you had to pick an artist solely based on lyrics, let's stay away from their political leanings, solely based on lyrics, who would you select to run for president? Who do you got? Megan, you got anyone?

Megan Coval:

Yes. This is a nod to me liking country music and being a little bit folksy, self admittedly, but Kenny Rogers, the Gambler.

Justin Draeger:

Because ...

Megan Coval:

The lyrics of the gambler, "You've got to know when to hold them, when to fold them." I feel like that's a very politically astute way to think about things. You know when you play, you know when to walk away. It's more of a foreign policy or that type of thing song.

Justin Draeger:

You're looking for a candidate who has some political savviness, who is willing to come back, to come to the table and hammer out deals, figure something out.

Megan Coval:

Who can make deals, there's not much in here about loving the USA and things like that.

Justin Draeger:

I think everybody knows Kenny Rogers loved the United States.

Megan Coval:

Yes.

Justin Draeger:

All right, Jill, do you have anybody?

Jill Desjean:

I couldn't think of anyone that I could think of that had lyrics that would in any way qualify them for the presidency, but I love the lyrics of the Smiths and Morrissey, and I was thinking about that they do have a song called, a Morrissey song called November Spawned a Monster. If he were to win the election, that would absolutely be the appropriate song, because he is a horrible person.

Justin Draeger:

All right.

Jill Desjean:

There's that.

Justin Draeger:

So at least it would fit, is what you're saying.

Jill Desjean:

It would fit, yeah. Their lyrics are phenomenal, I definitely recommend them, studying them if you get a chance.

Justin Draeger:

Okay. I'm going to give you mine. This is why I think there's only one answer to this, and unfortunately, like yours Megan, my person is not alive.

Megan Coval:

Yeah.

Allie Arcese:

Oh, Kenny Rogers is dead?

Megan Coval:

Yeah, just recently. I forgot to say RIP. Just a couple months ago.

Justin Draeger:

It was not COVID related, but he did pass away in the last couple months. See, I think you'll know the lyrics and the lyricist as soon as I start saying, "Imagine all the people living for today, imagine there's no country, it isn't hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for, no religion too. Imagine all the people living life in peace. You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be as one." Now if that's not a world leader that you can get behind, obviously John Lennon, Beatles. That's where I had to go immediately, because he's singing about a utopia where we're all brothers and sisters, we are all together, end of strife, more unity. I'm all in for that candidate.

Justin Draeger:

All right, listeners, send us, solely based on lyrics, the artist that you would vote for, you'd want to see run for president, solely based on lyrics that they wrote. We will talk about it on a future episode of the

podcast. Thanks, everyone, for joining us for another addition of Off the Cuff. Remember to subscribe, tell a friend. We'll see you again next time.