



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're excited to have ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones here with us to talk about what to do when you really just need to find a job. Any job. Your Law School Toolbox host today is Alison Monahan, and typically, I'm with Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. Together, we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're excited to have ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones here with us to talk about what to do when you really just need to find a job. Any job. Welcome, Sadie.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. Well, to start us off, how does someone know that they are in this position?

Sadie Jones: Well, obviously if all your friends in law school are getting jobs and you see that happening and you're the last one left, you kind of see you're hitting the end of the season. And the season depends on where you are in law school, whether it's the end of fall if you're a 2L, the spring if you're a 1L, 3L I think could go all year really. So if you're hitting the end of that season and nothing's panned out and whether you're getting through callback interviews and you're just not getting a job offer, you're not even getting a lot of callbacks, you're not even getting initial interviews. There could be different stages of this, but you know that you're not getting results for the effort you're putting in and maybe you're starting to feel like everyone else has a job at this point, and I don't.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think sometimes people wait too long because they think, "Oh, I did have that one interview, maybe they'll get back to me." But I think this is a situation where you want to be as proactive as possible. And if you think of the funnel – you're putting yourself in the funnel and nothing's really coming out, or very little is coming out – I think at that point you have to be a little concerned.

Sadie Jones: I agree. I definitely wouldn't panic, but I think you have to ask yourself what's going on here, why is this not working out? And I would do it sooner rather than later. Like you said, I think a lot of people wait too long or they say, "Oh, I'm waiting to hear back from three firms I did interviews at." And my philosophy is, until you have a job offer in hand, you keep hustling, you keep applying, you



keep trying to get the job. So, I would never just wait on hearing back from somewhere.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. Unless it's the beginning of the process, I guess.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And even then, I think the reality is if you're going to hear from a place, you're probably going to hear from them relatively quickly, because everybody wants to get people on their schedule and whatnot. So if it's been a few weeks and you haven't heard back, probably not a great sign.

Sadie Jones: I agree. And I would definitely be following up. I think people are hesitant. There are situations, I think especially these days, where maybe they're keeping a bunch of people warm. You're not their top choice, but they're waiting to hear back. So it's totally fair to follow up. If you do have other things that might be pending, you can let them know. I usually say two followups. I think it's really unprofessional to not hear back from a job, but that does sometimes happen. There is a point where you just have to say, "I haven't heard from them. I'm just moving on." To me, that's two follow ups. So, it's fine to follow up, but I agree with you – if you were really going to get the offer or you were high on the list, you probably would have heard from them. And there are places that give offers on the spot. I think some students just assume it takes a really long time. And I do think you have to think if they really wanted you, they would have made the offer.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I will say most of the offers I got after callback interviews, I got within a couple of days, if not the same day by the time I got home. I guess it depends. I've also worked at firms where everybody had to put in their assessment, and then they went into a committee. It just depends on the firm. But generally, if it's been weeks, you're probably on their waiting list almost, like it would be you're applying to school. You're not actually rejected, possible you might get in, but odds not so great.

Sadie Jones: I totally agree. And a lot of places I've worked have weekly meetings. If you're a superstar, they really want you, they may give you an offer outside of the meeting. But usually if it's past a week, they should have had a meeting at that point. It depends when you come in where the meeting fits, but within a week. So, I would say if it's been over a week, then you're on their hold list, and so then you really can't count on it, basically.

Alison Monahan: Alright. Well, what do you think people should do if they find themselves in this scenario? Things are slowing down, you haven't gotten a lot of results, time is getting short, doesn't seem like there's a lot going on in the hiring market. Do they just keep doing the same thing?



- Sadie Jones: Probably not if it's not working. I guess you could keep trying, but that's unlikely to get results. I would say the number one thing that I see with students is that they're not applying enough. Obviously, there are a variety of reasons things don't work out, but that's the first thing I look to. I say to a student, "How many applications have you sent out?", and usually it's way, way, way too few. And maybe they were just confused, they didn't know how many it took, or they felt really confident about where they were applying. But I think students tend to underestimate how many applications need to go out. It is hard to give an exact number. I try to give a number that seems doable, because you don't want to give yourself a goal you're never going to hit. So maybe you say, "I'm going to get out 20 applications this week." And I think that'll get you rolling if you really haven't sent out enough. So, if I talk to a student and they're saying, "It's been a month of applying to jobs and I've sent out like two applications a week, and I can't believe I haven't gotten one" – that is way too few. But I definitely hear that quite often. So, that's the first thing I'd asked myself – how many applications have I sent out? Especially in an economy that's not great, it's just going to take more applications. And it's a numbers game – you'll get there eventually, or most people will.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I remember – this is a specific example – but applying for 1L firm jobs my first year. And I remember sitting there with my roommate on the day before we could mail everything with actual envelopes, like stuffing envelopes. And we each applied, I'd say over 100 places with paper. And I think I got out of that two interviews.
- Sadie Jones: Wow. Yeah, those numbers sound right to me.
- Alison Monahan: And that's not even the job I took, I ended up getting the job through the school. And I think she got a couple of interviews and one job offer. So it did pan out, it was worth it, but it definitely... And that was at a top school.
- Sadie Jones: And that was harder, right? Because you had to physically stuff all these envelopes and print all this stuff out.
- Alison Monahan: And stamp them.
- Sadie Jones: It's pretty easy to just send an online application in. So, I feel like you just need to say to yourself, "This is how much time it takes." You need to find the time you need to make sure you're giving yourself enough time to get all this stuff out. So yeah, I would say well over 100.
- Alison Monahan: In retrospect, I can't even believe that we actually did that, because we had to put in the crane. We got the nice stationary, you had to make sure it was feeding



into the paper correctly, so the cranes logo on the paper wasn't upside down. And then you had to sign them all.

Sadie Jones: And did you have to print out the address on the envelopes?

Alison Monahan: No, no, I didn't.

Sadie Jones: Oh, you did stickers, or did you write them?

Alison Monahan: No, I didn't write those. I did stickers.

Sadie Jones: Okay, yeah. It was a lot more effort.

Alison Monahan: It was a lot of effort. And it did pay off and it was worth it in the end, but that was 100 plus applications just sent in one day.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. And so, I am surprised at how few I think people have in their mind. So, I'd always overshoot. The worst that happens is you don't hear back from them. And you spent a couple of minutes submitting the same application to all the same places.

Alison Monahan: Right. It's so easy.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, exactly. And it doesn't cost you anything.

Alison Monahan: Exactly.

Sadie Jones: So, that's the first thing I would do. And then I would take a deeper dive. Let's say that you have sent a lot of applications out, then I think you need to evaluate the different parts of it, which is where are you not getting further? So, is it that you're not even getting looked at at all, which may mean that your resume doesn't look perfect, you're not framing yourself in the best light. Maybe you're applying to things that aren't within your reach. Those are more of the reasons. Are you getting a lot of callbacks and then you're not getting further? Then you might want to look at your interview skills. Is there something going on there? Is that something you can practice? Some of it's going to be out of your control. Maybe they're making fewer job offers. But there should be a job for you and you should be able to get there if all of this stuff works out, basically.

Alison Monahan: Right. And do you think people should pick one thing to focus on, or should they be doing multiple different new things?

Sadie Jones: I would probably say somewhere in between that. I definitely wouldn't change everything, because then it's going to be hard to figure out what was the issue. You don't want too many variables. But if you just do one thing, you may be



spreading yourself too thin. I would be systematic about it. To me, like I said, the first thing I would do is make sure there're enough applications going out. Maybe I would bring in somebody else to look at my materials and see with a totally fresh eye, someone who's never seen them if they have feedback. Don't be defensive about that. I wouldn't beat yourself up because you've sent all this stuff out and it's not perfect. Focus on the future, where else you're going to send it out? So, I would do it in an order. I wouldn't just change every single thing at the same time.

Alison Monahan: Right, I think that makes sense. I think there are a lot of, as you've identified, a lot of different potential problem areas. Do you need to be applying to different types of jobs? Well, that's a different problem than your resume has a glaring typo on it.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. Or you did no practice in interviewing, and so you've never gotten feedback and you don't know how you're coming across. And so, you don't mean to, but there's something really obvious that's going wrong in the interviews. And so, getting somebody to practice with you and taking their feedback and maybe making some adjustments, I think can be helpful too if it's going wrong at the end.

Alison Monahan: Right, yeah. And so the sign of that would be that you're getting plenty of interest when you send out your materials, and then you get the interview and either you don't progress to a callback stage or you do, and then you just don't get the job ever. And sometimes people I think can get a little hung up on like, "Well, I had three interviews and I didn't get a job." It's like, that's not really that many interviews. Some of this is just luck of the draw. You weren't quite what that particular place was looking for. Okay. No harm, no foul. But if you've done 10 final round interviews and gotten no offers, that suggests there's an interviewing problem.

Sadie Jones: I totally agree. And that's why I think it can be good to bring in somebody else, whether it's a professional or it's somebody you know or it's career services and go through where you are with the job search. And so they can hear that, "Oh, I had 10 callbacks and didn't get an offer" or, "I had two callbacks and didn't get an offer" or, "I've never had a callback." I think the other thing that I see the most, aside from not sending enough applications out is people overshooting where they're applying to. And I think there can be a mentality of, "This is what I want, so I'm just going to apply there. I want BigLaw, so I'm just applying to BigLaw." And it is hard to hear, but it's good to hear BigLaw is a reach for you, it's unlikely right now. And so really, you're just wasting your time, and a job is not going to come out of this. Or I'll say to people, "Sure, you can apply to BigLaw once you've applied to the places that are way more realistic, if you have extra time." That's usually what I say. I have no problem with that, but if that's your only focus, no one can change your GPA for you and make it more likely.



Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think this is a great place to go to career services and have a real conversation with them and lay all of your cards on the table and just say, "Look, this is what I've been doing. This is what I'm interested in. This is what I'm open to." Which may not be the same thing as what you really want. And then get help from them and say, "How do I manage this situation? What do you think I should be doing?" And if they're not giving you the help, find somebody else to do it for you.

Sadie Jones: And you can say, "Here's what I'm open to." And they may say, "I think you should be open to more, that's too narrow." And I think usually people are responsive to that. Maybe they didn't know. They thought it was really good to be really specific or be like, "I only want to practice this. I only want to do this kind of work." And then you can also think about, "Okay, I do want to get there eventually." So you can think, "Okay, what's the best thing I can do now to get there, because there is impossible right now?" Because I think there's a path to it down the road; it's just that you're not set up for that dream job as a 2L.

Alison Monahan: Right. And I think it's a good idea to actually ask people directly, "Do you think these options are realistic for me, given what we're dealing with?" Because sometimes people want to be nice, they're not going to give you advice that you haven't asked for. They're like, "That's not my problem if he wants to go and apply to 10 places. I know he's not getting that job." But if you're asking for the advice, just go ahead and ask outright, "Do you think this is realistic for me?" And if they say "No", then follow up with, "Well, what would be more realistic that you think I could actually do?" That's going to move that conversation forward, even if it's not feedback you necessarily want. But whatever you're doing hasn't worked, so you need better feedback.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. Because I do think there's a job for everyone and you can get there, but you can't get there from just doing the same things that aren't working and just assume it will work out at some point. That's not guaranteed. Just because you want BigLaw, it does not mean you're getting it, no matter how many firms you apply to. There're only so many BigLaw firms. And usually the criteria is similar to all of them. Or same with, "I really want to work at the public defender's office", or the federal public defender.

Alison Monahan: Right, the ACLU.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, those are all really coveted also. And I think some students don't realize who they're competing against. They're competing against students that could get the BigLaw job but want to do the public interest work. And so, it's not the backup plan. The backup plan may be a smaller firm, it may be a midsize firm, it may be a firm you don't think sounds that good, doesn't pay market rates. But



that's what you're going to do right now, because that's what you can get. And getting the experience should be the point.

Alison Monahan: Well, and the thing too is you don't know, you might like that place better. I've worked at BigLaw firms that I absolutely hated and would never have gone back to. And I've worked at more midsize places where they were really nice and had a clear idea of how they did things, and it was a nice culture and I was like, "Wow, this is so much better."

Sadie Jones: That's why actually with career services when they say, "What are you open to?", maybe don't even say, "Here are the jobs I think I want." Maybe you say, "Here's the type of work I'm thinking. Here's the type of environment I think I'd do well in." Maybe they have an idea – they're like, "Oh, maybe you should consider X or Y", because maybe you just don't know.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, "You might be a great fit here." And then the question is, what do you do with that information? I think one other thing that can be often overlooked here is you've got to start asking for help from everybody you know – friends, family, classmates, professors. Everybody you know should be aware that you're looking for a job because you just don't know which of those loose connections might have an actual someone that they know who has a job to offer. I definitely know so many friends who've gotten jobs in the most random ways – their uncle sat beside someone at a banquet and that person happened to be hiring. That kind of thing definitely happens.

Sadie Jones: Totally. And I think another thing I hear a lot is when I ask people that, "Have you looked at your network? Is your LinkedIn updated? Have you gone through it? Have you thought about who you know?", I hear a lot, the immediate reaction is, "There're no lawyers in my family. I don't know any lawyers." They're just immediate to say that, because I think they have this idea of, what I mean is my dad's a partner at a law firm. And that's not what I mean.

Alison Monahan: Because you're probably not in that scenario if that's the case.

Sadie Jones: Right. What I mean is, really look at your network. Sometimes you go on LinkedIn and don't even realize you know people at some company you were looking at, or some firm. So be creative, think bigger. It doesn't have to be a lawyer; it could be someone who's in marketing, but in-house somewhere, where maybe they could get your application over to the legal department. Like you said, it could be a professor that you've developed a rapport with. So, I think there's no one in law school that doesn't have a network of somebody. It doesn't have to be lawyers or partners or BigLaw. It could be anything. It could be in really random ways. Like you said, it could be a hobby that you do that somebody knows someone.



- Alison Monahan: I met a lot of people playing squash when I took squash classes in law school, because all the law students and all the business students all played squash.
- Sadie Jones: So see, develop a hobby, have something you're interested in, outside of just doing your work. I think I totally agree, you never know where you're going to meet someone. I also think it's good to be well rounded and meet people outside of the circle.
- Alison Monahan: Well, and you need something to talk about in interviews. So, if you have a hobby, at some point they're going to need to fill some time, so it's like, "Oh, what do you do for fun?" "Oh, I play squash." "Oh, tell me about that." You can kill five to 10 minutes easily on that.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly. But like you said, everyone you know should know you're looking for a job. So make sure that that's out there, and make sure you have a LinkedIn, it's updated. That's just the easiest way I think in the job realm to find people.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. And think about people when you went to college. If you're in law school, you probably have people you know from college. And the professors. Particularly with judges, professors are like, "You're in there." So if you have a professor you really like, go to their office hours, be like, "Hey, by the way, looking around for job options, here're some things I'm thinking about. Do you have any suggestions?"
- Sadie Jones: And that's another thing I think students don't do enough. They think they're going to be annoying or a burden or no one's going to want to help them. And I don't think that's true. I think if you come to those people and are open and want to hear from them and seem interested, most people want to help.
- Alison Monahan: Right, exactly.
- Sadie Jones: And I would assume they're there because they don't mind talking to students.
- Alison Monahan: You never know. They might be like, "Oh well, if you don't find anything else for this summer, I'm looking for a research assistant. So that can be your backup plan."
- Sadie Jones: And I think it's great to have a backup plan. That's the other thing.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly.
- Sadie Jones: I do feel like people sometimes have a backup plan and don't even want to talk about it. They do have something that they could do that's a job if they don't find anything else. And sometimes it's like pulling teeth to find out what that is. But it's good to know and it's good to get an outside opinion, like "That's





actually pretty good, maybe you should take that" or, "Now's the time to take the backup plan. Now's the time where we don't have much time left."

Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah, because I think there is a certain point where it's really like, if you have any offers, even if it's not exactly what you want, you probably should just take it. How do you think people should handle that situation where maybe they do have an offer, but there are other things they're waiting for that they would like more, but they're not sure are those going to pan out or not?

Sadie Jones: There's not an exact science that this is where it is in the process and this is the point where you take Plan C. But I would say, if you've been doing this for a few months, you're a few months into the season and everyone you know is getting a job, has a job and you don't know a lot of people in your position, because that's how it works – there're not as many people at the end who don't have a job – that's where I would say if you have a job offer, even if it's paying less, not paid, not the thing you wanted to do, but it is legal related – that's where you take it. And even if there're some other possibilities, you kind of have to let it go. If you've said to the places that are open, "I have an offer that I need to take at a certain time" and they don't get back to you, they are telling you they're not that interested. You don't need to accommodate them or their timing. They've decided that you're not that important, they're willing to lose you. And so, that's where I would take the other offer. There might be situations where you ask for an extension because you really think you're close on something that's better. And I want everyone to get the thing that they feel best about. I think it can be really disappointing to take something that you're not excited about – like you're not getting paid, let's say, or it really was Plan C. But having a job means something too, and having a job is way more important than having the perfect job. So, if you're at the point where everyone else has something and there aren't a lot of things open, that's where I would take anything that you have. There is a point where you just need a job, whatever it is.

Alison Monahan: Do you think it's ever okay to take something and then back out of it if you get a better offer?

Sadie Jones: Coming from the employer side, I feel like I have to say "No", because I find it really distasteful. And I remember anyone who's ever done that, I'll tell you, like 15 years in. I know their names and I know what they did. Now, there are people that life situations come up and they had to back out, and that feels different. But if it really is like "I got something better" – to me, you've made a commitment once you've accepted the job, and you've potentially taken a job from somebody else, and you affect other people. So, I think that unless there's no other option, you should assume once you've accepted the job, that's your job and you need to take it, even if the perfect thing comes up. I would definitely stop looking. I think people have a tendency to sometimes still want



to see what's up if they've taken something they're not excited about. So yeah, it is hard for me to say I think that's okay.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I would be incredibly reluctant to do that because I think it does follow you around. The only exception I think would ever be acceptable is something major came up in your life – someone in your family has a terrible disease and you really need to be there for them, and you found a job in this other location – okay, fine. But just, "I've upgraded and I don't want to work for you anymore" is really not okay.

Sadie Jones: And I'm telling you, no one will ever forget. They will remember who you are. There're even people who turned down an offer and then come back later and want it, because they didn't like the other thing they took that they thought was better. And usually the answer is like, "No. You had a chance, we're not hiring 3Ls."

Alison Monahan: You made your choice.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. The legal world is small.

Alison Monahan: It is. And people definitely remember things.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. It's hard to come back from that.

Alison Monahan: Don't be that person. Just suck it up for a few months.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. You've made a commitment. And I'd say even if it's Plan C, try to get excited about it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, there's no reason...

Sadie Jones: Try to say, "This is the thing I got. I got a job, I don't have to look for a job anymore. That's exciting."

Alison Monahan: Exactly. You have a job, you're going to have this experience, you're going to be setting yourself up on the first step or second step or whatever it is of your legal career. And you're going to go in and you're going to do the best job you can do. And you're going to make the connections you can make. And you're going to show up every day and be positive and be working hard. I mean, why would you not do that?

Sadie Jones: I think that's the thing about taking the backup option, is some people go into it and the employer can tell they weren't excited about it. You don't want anyone to think that about you.



- Alison Monahan: No.
- Sadie Jones: That you feel like you're better than this. Even if you're helping a professor research something – be excited about that, make sure that that's a great reference and you've learned skill.
- Alison Monahan: Right, be the best research assistant they've ever had, knock it out of the park. I mean, why not?
- Sadie Jones: Exactly, exactly. I'd say get the most out of whatever it is you end up doing. And when I say "backup plan", I mean it really should be legal related. So, your backup plan is not just having a job to make money over the summer. I understand there are people in life situations where they might need to do a side thing like that. But really, you have to have something in law school that's legal-related in some sense.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And if this job isn't the perfect option that you were hoping for, it's not going to doom your career forever. This is a way to get experience it's something to talk about later, it's something to put on your resume. And there's no reason not to make the most of it, in my opinion.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And there're lots of people that have different roads to the same place. If you look at people's bios, they definitely don't look the same and there're lots of ways to get there. To me, you should always be focused on the end result down the road, what you're looking to do and how this is going to lead you there. It doesn't have to be that that's where you started, that you are exactly on the right path. You can get there still.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And most people who start off on the perfect path – BigLaw, New York, whatever – everyone leaves anyway, so it's not like it lasts forever.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, those are the people who drop out of the whole thing after three years and they're like, "I don't want to be a lawyer."
- Alison Monahan: Exactly. It's not like it pans out with a career forever for most people anyway.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, I agree.
- Alison Monahan: Alright. Any final thoughts on this topic before we wrap up?
- Sadie Jones: I just want to go back to the people are not applying to enough places, because that really is the number one. I can't overemphasize it. It should be in the over 100 applications wherever you are. And it could be hundreds, really. So yeah, two or three a week is not enough. That's my final thought.



- Alison Monahan: No, I completely agree, particularly if you're not seeing the results. If you're not seeing results, do more, basically. And if you do more and it's not working, do something else.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly, I agree.
- Alison Monahan: Alright, well, thank you so much for joining us.
- Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me.
- Alison Monahan: My pleasure. With that, we are out of time. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. We would really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison at [lee@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:lee@lawschooltoolbox.com) or [alison@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:alison@lawschooltoolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

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