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 being yourself in an interview. 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. And you can check out the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast if the bar exam is on your radar. And 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 being yourself in an interview. Welcome, Sadie.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: Oh, my pleasure. Let's jump right in here. We often see students struggling with feeling like they need to be somebody else. What they see is the perfect candidate in legal job interviews. Why do you think this happens?

Sadie Jones: I think this is just human nature. You want to get the job, so you want to be the person you think they want you to be. I think the problem with that is that you don't really know who they want you to be. So, trying to bend over backwards to be this student that you picture they want to hire, is just generally not going to work out for you. But I think it's just completely normal to try to figure out what they want and check all the boxes.

Alison Monahan: I think everybody thinks, "Oh, I have to be this or I have to be that", and sometimes it's things that are under your control, and sometimes it's things that are totally out of your control. So, I do think this can become a problem. It is funny, though, you really don't know what people are looking for. I remember when I was interviewing for clerkships, it turns out that the judge who actually hired me was really into architecture, and I had a master's in architecture. So that's something that you would think is totally irrelevant to this application, but it's literally why he hired me. When I talked to his clerks, they were like, "Oh, as soon as we saw your application, we knew that he was going to make you an offer. We a hundred percent knew." And I had no idea on that. I would never have thought that would be relevant to anything.

Sadie Jones: I think this happens so much of the time. And sometimes they're looking for something that they can't even define, that they'll just get out of the conversation. And I would say I think the majority of this is actually out of your control. So, trying to control it and hold it so tight, and again, check all these boxes – I just think it always backfires if that is your approach to it, because I totally agree, you don't know what they're looking for. It's not every lawyer that you interview with is looking for the same thing in a candidate. So, it's better to be more genuine, and then it will work out with the person that appreciates that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think people can sense if you're not being authentic and if you're trying to mold yourself into this idea of, "Oh, I have to be so serious and so this and so that", when maybe this person is actually like super chill and is looking for somebody else that can just be chill and get the work done, but have fun at the same time. What are some places you see this kind of playing out specifically?

Sadie Jones: I think that definitely people are sometimes trying to make up for something. So, they've decided that they're not at a good enough school, or their grades aren't good enough, or they're not on Law Review, and they picture that these are all the things that this person's looking for. So, somehow they try to have their personality make up for that. They try to go back and find all of these things that will show their skills as a student, or what they picture being a lawyer means, I think is another thing that comes up a lot, and it can seem like a caricature of what they think a lawyer is, when in reality, it's a job. You don't really know how to do it until you start doing it. So, I think that kind of insecurity can be at the center of all of these things, and I just don't think that's a good approach. Generally, if you're at the interview stage, they've looked at your materials and they think you're worth talking to. So, I would say, move on from that stuff. They can see all that stuff on your resume. They know what your grades are, they know where you're at school. So, let's try to talk about who you are.

Alison Monahan: Right. So, we're going to dive into some of the specifics in a minute, but yeah, I think the caricature of a lawyer is also very true. People think, "Oh, I have to be like super aggressive" and this and that. And yeah, there are people out there who are like that, but lawyers span a wide variety. And there are also people who would be repelled by somebody coming in an interview and being like, "I'm so aggressive", blah, blah, blah.

Sadie Jones: I find that lawyers are often non-confrontational and introverts, which doesn't fit with this idea of a courtroom lawyer. But I think that the majority of lawyers fit that personality type, actually.

Alison Monahan: It is true. Most people, including myself, I know who are litigators, are actually like, "We don't really like conflict, it's just what we do. I don't want to have conflict with the people that are on my team, on my side."

Sadie Jones: I think in an interview that comes across as like being the gunner, and being the obnoxious person, if that's your approach. And that may not be you at all, but that is what you've decided that you think they're looking for, and so you're acting that way in an interview.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's the thing. It's like, if that is your personality and you are the gunner, then alright, go for it. And again, that person probably shouldn't try to tone themselves down that much and be agreeable. If you're not agreeable, well, you're not agreeable. Somebody's going to want that.

Sadie Jones: I agree, because remember, this is somewhere you're hopefully going to work for a while. So, you do want to find the right fit. It's not just about a job, any job, most of the time.

Alison Monahan: Right. I mean, ideally it should be something you can keep for at least a few years without going completely crazy. Finding a job every year is really hard and time-consuming. So yeah, I think it's about finding a fit here. And I totally get people, particularly if they're coming in without a whole lot of job experience, may have some imposter syndrome – super common, and may be overcompensating for certain things. And I think you're right, it is that insecurity. So, before people go into interviews, what do you think they should do if they know that this is something that they might be susceptible to?

Sadie Jones: Well, practice is my number one piece of advice. And that might mean practicing with another person. That might mean recording yourself – practicing to yourself and listening to it. And we've talked about this before, that can be very painful and difficult to do, but I have never talked to anyone who didn't get something out of doing that. It is important to see how it comes across. I would actually also talk to people, practice with people who aren't lawyers, to see how it sounds. I would just get as much practice as I could, and get feedback and be able to take that feedback and absorb it, and not get defensive about it, and try to make adjustments as needed. I think that this can also come across as, you're practicing so much that it sounds like you've just memorized something. That is not what I'm saying to do, because I think to me that's kind of the same concept of not being yourself.

Alison Monahan: Right. You want the perfect answer to every question. There is no perfect answer. It's just going to sound scripted, and you're going to get thrown off if

somebody interrupts you and says, "Okay, great, but what about..." and then you're like, "Oh, I don't have the perfect answer for that. Now I'm paralyzed."

Sadie Jones: And I think actually that's at the heart of all of this, is this idea of the perfect answer, the perfect student, the "what you're looking for". And there really isn't. I actually think most of this is about how you answer the question. I think that there could be 10 different answers to the same question and someone could want to hire every one of those people, depending on how they answered it. And your ability to roll with the punches and deal with a question you weren't prepared for – all of that matters, even if your answer wasn't spot-on. The other thing is, I think people try to answer the exact question in the exact right way. And obviously, you want to be on point and not say something that's completely off base, but you could have an answer that didn't answer the exact question that can sound like it did. I say this all the time, and I think people get so tripped up. "Oh, that story did not demonstrate that exact thing they asked." And I'll hear it and say, "It was close enough."

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Like, "Tell me about a time when..." And you're like, "I'll tell you about a time that's sort of like that." Okay, that's good enough.

Sadie Jones: The other thing to remember, my experience is, people want you to do well. I think that sometimes students think that this is some kind of test and they're trying to trip you up and they're trying to see if they can shake you. I feel like most people do not want an interview to go poorly. And they want you to do well and they don't want it to be uncomfortable. For some reason, students think this is supposed to be hard or supposed to be bad.

Alison Monahan: No. I mean, occasionally you'll run into that person who's just like a total pill and wants to make everybody struggle. I mean, anytime I did an interview, I was just like, "Oh, okay, great. This is 30 minutes out of my day that I get to probably bill, and all I have to do is talk to this person and get to know them and be friendly and answer their questions. This is easy for me. Don't make it hard."

Sadie Jones: And I bet if you feel like the student's uncomfortable, you want to fix that. You don't want them to be uncomfortable.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I'm an empathetic person, I'm trying to make you feel at home. I'm not sure everyone interviews this way, but probably they do, because we're not trained usually to interview. So you're giving people softball questions.

Sadie Jones: Yes.

Alison Monahan: "What do you like about law school? What's your favorite class?" I'm not trying to trip people up. I'm just trying to make a conversation. "Oh, I see on here that you're interested in bowling. Tell me more about that."

Sadie Jones: Well, that's the other thing – I think students think it all has to have to do with law school and have to be academic, and all of this. And the reality is, sometimes you're just going to have a conversation. You're going to bond over architecture or baseball or something else. So, I think that's completely fine. Sometimes students will try to keep getting back on topic or something. And that isn't what this needs to be. This isn't a test.

Alison Monahan: Right. Literally, the last thing I usually wanted to talk about was law or law school. I mean, I was doing that 10 to 12 hours a day. I was happy to talk to them about their other interests, but yeah, occasionally you get that person's like, "Oh, let me tell you about my Law Review note." I was like, "I was actually having a really interesting conversation about what you were baking last week, but okay, cool. We can talk about your Law Review note if you really want to bore me with that."

Sadie Jones: That's the thing, I feel like that's a turn off. It's like, "Oh, okay, I understand what this student's trying to do."

Alison Monahan: Yeah. It's also just not recognizing the flow of the conversation. The person who's interviewing you, if they're interested in a certain thing, you should talk about that thing. That's just good interviewing.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. Really, you want to make a connection as a human being to this other human being, because that is going to, in the end, make them say, "Oh, I would want to work with this person."

Alison Monahan: Right. "This person was pleasant. I enjoyed the conversation. Done." That's all we're looking for.

Sadie Jones: Because there're probably 20 other law students that have very similar background to you, right? But, "Oh, I liked this person. I enjoyed the conversation." That's it. It's not that complicated.

Alison Monahan: It's literally like, they were pleasant. They didn't say or do anything that made me be like, "I don't think I want to work with them 12 hours a day or more."

Sadie Jones: Exactly. And I feel like the interviewer can really tell if you had decided, "This is my persona. These are all the points I want to make", and try to keep getting them back in, even if it doesn't go with the flow of the conversation. And I just

find that so awkward, even though I think some students think, "Oh, but I needed to say all this in the interview." No, you didn't. You needed to just make a good impression.

Alison Monahan: Right. You need to talk about whatever they were asking you about and not push your agenda on the person who's actually in charge.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. The other thing that I think can be an issue in this whole area is when students try to figure out the background of the interviewer and fit everything into what that person practices, especially if it's something you're not interested in. So, the way interviews work is, of course, the person who made your schedule wanted to give you people that fit with whatever you said your interests are, and sometimes they will, and sometimes they won't be as successful in that, and sometimes they just need to fill an interview schedule, and so it could be people who are practicing areas of law that you are not interested at all. That's fine. They work there. They're lawyers. That's all that needs to be on the schedule. And they don't expect that just because they are a tax lawyer that you want to be a tax lawyer because you're in an interview with them. So you don't need to make that case. You don't need to even discuss it at all. They're fine with just talking.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. You don't need to pretend like, "Oh, I haven't taken a Tax class, but I'm definitely going to. I'm really interested in this." No, you're not. You're a 3L.

Sadie Jones: Right. And I get why people do this, because they think, "Oh, they'll like me more if I like what they like", but that's just not how it is.

Alison Monahan: And oftentimes – you know better than I do on this – but my understanding with interviews is they're also trying to get a variety of people. So you want to give somebody a younger person, a kind of mid person, maybe a partner. You want to have that range. And people are busy, you may not be able to get your exact desired practice area in all of those, but they're trying to mix it up so that you get more of a sense of the firm as well.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. And I think you can ask questions about their practice area, without having any interest in doing it, because a firm is going to have interaction with practice areas that have nothing to do with what you do. So, I think it's important to be curious. But just don't pretend with every single person, because then also it's going to look weird on the review, when you said you wanted to do six different things. They will figure that out, because it's all going to be printed together.

Alison Monahan: Right. No, I think the tax one is great, because that's pretty specific. So that's a great example, where if I'm in an interview with a tax attorney and I knew nothing about tax, I might say something like, "Oh, that's really interesting. What does an average day as a tax attorney look like for you? Is that different from a litigator?" And they'll be like, "Yes, here's what I do."

Sadie Jones: Totally. Just be interested.

Alison Monahan: Exactly. I probably wouldn't be like, "I know nothing about tax. Tell me everything." I think there's a line, but obviously, they're an attorney, you can assume they do something legal-related. But I would actually find that a pretty interesting conversation, like, "How is your day different than somebody else who works here, given that you do this more specific area?"

Sadie Jones: And I bet that they don't have that many people asking about tax. It sounds boring to a lot of people, so I feel like they would appreciate that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, apparently it's actually a highly stressful area of practice, as I found out from friends who did that. Alright, let's talk about a few specific areas where this might play out. And you've alluded to some of these, but let's dive in a little. What if you're at a lower-ranked school, but you've done really well there? Do you need to really sell yourself a lot to make up for the school?

Sadie Jones: No.

Alison Monahan: Next question.

Sadie Jones: Basically, I think it comes down to what I said about these insecurities, and I totally get it. But the fact is, that stuff is on your resume. They have seen it. They, hopefully, have looked. But I feel like that's all on there. If they ask you a question where that's a relevant answer, like, "How did you pick this school?", it might be relevant to say, "They gave me a full ride."

Alison Monahan: Totally legit.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and I think they appreciate that. They understand that that's how people make decisions, because I think that happens a lot for people who do really well at a lower-ranked school. There's usually a reason. So, I just think that you don't want it to be a really big deal. And you also don't want it to sound like you're badmouthing your school.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think you want to have something positive to say, and it might be that, "You know, I did really well my first year, as you can see from my transcript. And

I considered my options and thought maybe I would transfer. But then I realized I really enjoyed this school, and I had all these benefits, X, Y, Z, and I have a lot of people supporting me. And I thought it was going to be a really great experience, so here I am."

Sadie Jones: Exactly. And the fact is they're interviewing you, so you've gotten that far.

Alison Monahan: Right. I was going to say, yeah, you're interviewing for the same job as somebody at a different school. So I think by the time you get to the interview, these things should not be a huge issue. You are sitting in the same chair as somebody who went to Harvard, basically.

Sadie Jones: Also, I will say different interviewers will feel really differently about this, or different people. There are people who really like the top students at a lower-ranked school. There are people who feel like the school is the most important. So even if you're midway through the class, it's okay, it's a higher-ranked school. So I think it just depends who you're talking to, and there's no way you can know that going in. So your approach needs to be the same, basically.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. And there's good data on this, that people who do well at lower-ranked schools actually tend to succeed more in law firms than people from top schools. But again, you don't have to point that out.

Sadie Jones: It's just there. This is the stuff that's out of your control. Yeah.

Alison Monahan: And also, people know this. Everybody's read the same study.

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: So yeah, you don't have to sell yourself. You're already there, you belong there. Just go with it. Alright, what if you are at a great school, but you have a few low grades? Maybe 1L didn't go so well. Do you need to explain these?

Sadie Jones: You only need to explain this if you are asked. So, do not bring it up. I don't know why everyone wants to bring it up. This is so common. Now, you should prepare an answer, but you do not give that answer unless you are directly asked, and the answer should be short.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, the answer should be, "Yeah, first semester was definitely challenging, but I learned a lot, I turned it around, and here we are."

Sadie Jones: Yeah, have some kind of story. Hopefully there was an upward trajectory, something I use a lot. Maybe there wasn't, but you come up with some kind of

way that you are selling this as a positive. And do not go into details about what happened to cause that grade. Do not badmouth the professor, do not go into details about a surgery. There are like a million personal issues that should not be discussed in an interview. You just need to keep it simple and vague.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, even if it's something like, "Oh yeah, I had some really unfortunate personal stuff come up right before that test, and it is what it is, but I don't think it's something that's going to recur."

Sadie Jones: I also think that it's actually pretty rare for someone to directly ask. I know it happens, but I think more often than not, they see it, they don't feel like having a conversation about it's going to add much to it, unless it's a really big outlier, which happens occasionally. But I would just say prepare for it, but most likely you're not even going to be asked, so just go in with the same plan you would go into if you didn't have that grade.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I don't think a lot of the time I even had a transcript in front of me. I had a resume, but I mean, maybe I had a transcript. I don't recall ever looking at them, to be honest.

Sadie Jones: Well, a lot of interviewers don't like to have the transcript first before they talk to the person, then they'll look after. And they might feel like, "Oh no, I really like this person and there's no way I could call them back." Or they might say, "It's on the bubble, I really like this person, I'm going to make a case for them." But I think that generally interviewers want to get to know you as a person and not as a grade.

Alison Monahan: Right, because again, if you're sitting in the callback interview, you've passed some sort of test of, okay, your grade is sufficient. Maybe it's not amazing, maybe you're not top of the group that we're looking at, but it is sufficient to be hired here, because otherwise they're probably not going to go through an entire callback round, because that takes time. It's expensive.

Sadie Jones: I think the only time grades come up again in a callback is if you did very borderline or they're comparing you to somebody else, where you are totally equal and they can say they had a much higher GPA. Now, again, this is completely out of your control. There's nothing you could have done different. I feel like you treat the interview the same, and if your grades are going to end up being the issue, there is nothing you could have done to change them at that point.

Alison Monahan: And honestly, most people, like we said, don't care. You might encounter somebody who wants to be a jerk about it, but they're going to be a jerk about something. They're going to find something else to be a jerk about, basically.

Sadie Jones: I agree.

Alison Monahan: Alright. What if you're not a typical hire for this organization? You're not somebody that meets a specific mold, whatever that is, or whatever you think that is. And some of these may be immutable characteristic type things that you can't change. How should people handle that?

Sadie Jones: So I actually think it's what you said – what you think it is, because very rarely are you going to know exactly what they're looking for, even if you know who they've hired in the past, right? So my approach is still to be as true to yourself as you can in the interview, because they probably brought you back because they were interested in you. I personally have seen more people move along because they had a more interesting background, or this was a second career, or they put themselves through college so it took a lot longer. All sorts of things that put you "not typical". You didn't have a top undergrad, Poli Sci major went straight to law school, got the best grades. That's boring in a lot of ways, and doesn't show as much about why you're wanting to do this if you just kind of follow that route. If you did something different and then you ended up in law school, you probably thought very clearly about why you wanted to be there. So I would say just know what your story is, what you want to convey that's true about yourself, and they can decide whether or not you're a fit for their organization, their firm. But I still think that it has to be true at its center.

Alison Monahan: The reality is, most of these things we're talking about, you can't actually change. It's like your background is what it is. Your grades are what they are, your skin color is what it is, your gender or whatever is what it is. So, if you are a woman going in a firm where you're like, "Oh, they're 80% men", first off, do you think you might actually want to work there? Maybe not. They know who you are, you're in the interview. So, yeah, I just think anytime people can lead with authenticity and feeling comfortable in themselves and knowing themselves. I think this is where I'd put a plug for therapy. The more that you know and understand yourself and your background and what works for you and what doesn't work for you, I think the more you're going to come off as an authentic, easy person to get along with, because nobody is for everyone. No organization is for everyone, and it's all about finding that fit. So if you are feeling like, "Wow, there's like a lot of tension in all of these interviews and I feel like I don't belong here" – well, you probably don't. That's just the harsh reality of, that organization may not be the right place for you.

Sadie Jones: I think people struggle with that the most when it's a place they thought they really wanted, or everyone's been talking about how great it is. I think that is a situation that people struggle with, because they ask themselves, "Why didn't it seem like a fit for me when it's supposed to be the best?" I really think it's important to say, "What will work for me?" and not what I've heard other people say or what I've read.

Alison Monahan: I think that's so true. And I definitely had that situation when I was a summer. And even looking back, it was actually clear in some of the questions I was getting in the interview process that this was probably not going to be a great fit, mostly because I was interested in litigation, this was a firm that was more known for their corporate side, but they did litigation. But I had conversations in these interviews with people about that, and they're like, "Oh, no, no, no. We're equally good at both" and blah, blah, blah. And I went there and that wasn't true, and it didn't work out. And looking back, I probably should have clued in more to, "Huh, I don't know that this is really the right fit." But it's hard at the time because you're like, "Oh, this is going to be so cool, and I'm going to get to do this cool thing. And everything's going to be great." But it was not the right fit for me.

Sadie Jones: See, I think that's interesting. That's like the opposite of what we're talking about, where the employer is trying to be something that they're not. That happens all the time also.

Alison Monahan: Absolutely.

Sadie Jones: And that's something to be on the lookout for, so that's something to think about also when you're interviewing. Does it seem like they're being genuine? Because I think you can really get a sense for it. And I know as a recruiter, there are people who are just very rah-rah, cheerleaders. I try to be as honest as I can in terms of, "This is what it's like here", because you want people to want to work there and to fit in and to think that it's a good place. So I feel like saying that some practice area that they are very unlikely to get is going to be possible, is never going to work out.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I just learned from that. And I my first summer had worked at a place that was super litigation-focused, and just in terms of what books were in the library and really basic things like that, was a totally different vibe. But yeah, just understanding that people will say all kinds of things, because that's the point here, is, they feel the same way. They're like, "Oh, we're not really what they're looking for, but maybe I can slant it so that this person feels like what we're like... I want them to like us." It's going on on both sides.

Sadie Jones: It's like places that really, really market themselves as a, quote unquote, "lifestyle firm", right? That's a red flag.

Alison Monahan: Sorry.

Sadie Jones: No, not like that. But you can ask solid questions: "Oh, what is your billable hours requirement?" And then you get an idea of how hard people are working. "What's the average?" That kind of thing. So there are questions you can ask that aren't just what their marketing stuff says.

Alison Monahan: Although, I will say I would probably wait until I had the offer to ask that.

Sadie Jones: Oh yeah. I didn't mean in the interview.

Alison Monahan: After the interview, you can ask all these questions.

Sadie Jones: Or pro bono hours, or more details on that. But yeah, those are questions to definitely ask after, but you can figure out from some of that whether it's going to be a fit with what you're looking for, your values.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Some of those you can definitely get objective data on. What are the practice areas they practice? How many billable hours do they require? What are their survey grades that their people gave them? There's actually a lot of information out there. Alright, before we wrap up, there is one thing. So, if you have a lot of interest or skills, or maybe you have a weird academic or job background, is it okay to emphasize the more relevant ones? Are you guys saying that I need to talk about every single thing on my resume to be authentic?

Sadie Jones: Well, there definitely won't be time to talk about every single thing. So, I think you have to figure out what you think are the most important and relevant. I do think it has to be somewhat relevant to skills that maybe you would have as a lawyer. But I think that there are things that might not off the top of your head seem relevant. Let's say that you've been really into this acting class or something, and it's like, "Oh, I've developed skills in public speaking and other things that could be really relevant to being a lawyer". And so, it may not seem like it's on point, but actually is on point. So, I always think it's nice to talk about some outside interests, where you can bring in skills that make sense for doing well in this profession.

Alison Monahan: That's funny. That was the exact same example I was going to give.

Sadie Jones: Sorry.

Alison Monahan: No, it's just funny. We're all thinking along the same lines here. I really do think people should have something interesting on their "Interests" line. Like, I had a friend in law school who put cheese, and everyone's like, "Cheese?" She's like, "Literally, every single interview, I spend at least 20 minutes talking about cheese. Would you rather be talking about cheese or your favorite law school class?" And we're like, "Yeah, fair point."

Sadie Jones: Yep. And I always tell people to be as specific as possible, but maybe she actually wanted that to be general on purpose, to be like, "I like all cheese of any sort."

Alison Monahan: No, she had done cheese classes. She could talk about cheese for hours.

Sadie Jones: And that's obviously the thing, you can tell from an "Interests" section which is the thing that most people are going to pick out of it, that's like the weirder thing or something like that. I think that is what makes you a human in this interview, is your interests and your personality.

Alison Monahan: Well, and the specifics. So, if somebody has "reading" as one of their interests, that's not very interesting. If they tell me "reading historical fiction", now, even if I have no interest in historical fiction, I can talk to them about their interest in historical fiction. And that is going to let us kill several minutes of that interview with something that is more interesting than talking about your favorite law school class.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. So, that is why everyone needs to have an "Interests" section on their resume also.

Alison Monahan: Right. And to have them specific enough that you can actually start a conversation about them: "Oh, that's interesting, historical fiction. What have you been reading lately?"

Sadie Jones: You don't want to have "travel". I find that particularly boring. You pick an area of the world you've most traveled, or "I have been to a hundred countries." You need something that they can dive into.

Alison Monahan: Right, like, "Oh, I see that you've been to India. That sounds interesting. Tell me more about that." Not, "Oh, I see you like to travel. Okay. Where do you like to go?"

Sadie Jones: Reading, cooking, travel. Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, or like the person who put "cooking" and I was like, "Oh, you like baking? What are you into baking?" And he's like, "What?" I'm like, "You put it on your resume." He's like, "It would be more accurate to say I watch baking shows." I'm like, "Then you should put that on there, because this has now gone downhill fast."

Sadie Jones: Well, also that's another example of, I think sometimes people put things on their "Interests" section, again, trying to have a certain image or convey a certain person that you're not. And that will bite you somewhere in the interview when they ask you about it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. It's like, just be yourself. You certainly have some interests outside of law, I hope.

Sadie Jones: And it doesn't have to be a hobby. I think that's the other thing – a lot of people are like, "I don't have a hobby." But then when you talk to them about what they do in their free time, it's like you do have things that you do in your free time. They're just not like pottery or tennis or something. It's something a little bit different.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Alright. So basically, be yourself on your resume, put something interesting on there to talk about, and then go into the interview and just be that person. Alright, that was my final thought. Any final thoughts you want to share here?

Sadie Jones: I would say that you want to be as genuine as you can at the center, but my caveat to all of this is, you're not just talking to your friend, so you have to have some kind of filter on this "Be genuine." For example, they ask you about a time you failed and what happened. It's how you're phrasing it, right? You're not picking something that really makes you look terrible, and you're showing how you turned it around in the end. So, this is how you're selling yourself, so you have to have some kind of filter on it, but at the center, it should be who you really are and what you're really interested in.

Alison Monahan: I agree with that. Yeah, you probably don't want to be talking about the time you got thrown in jail because of whatever. It's like, okay, maybe that's really key to the story and you need to talk about it, but if you don't need to talk about it, maybe leave that one out.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. And this is where I would test some of these stories on other people.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, because you're going to get the like, "Hmm, I don't think that's something you probably want to bring up if you can avoid it."

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: Alright, with that, we are out of time. Thank you so much for joining us.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. For more career help and the opportunity to work one-on-one with us, you can check out CareerDicta.com. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd 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 or 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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