Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're excited to have admissions consultant Anna Ivey here with us to talk about the recent increase in law school applications. 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 admissions consultant Anna Ivey here with us to talk about the recent increase in law school applications. Welcome, Anna.

Anna Ivey: Hi Alison.

Alison Monahan: It's so good to see you again.

Anna Ivey: Likewise.

Alison Monahan: If people don't know, we have several other podcasts we can link to. Well, to start us off, if people aren't familiar with you, can you just give our listeners a little bit of information about your background and your work, just for some context?

Anna Ivey: Sure. I'm a recovering lawyer. Like many of your listeners, I too once applied to law school, went to law school, graduated from law school, practiced law. And had my quarter life crisis, went back to my law school at the University of Chicago and was Dean of Admissions there for a spell. And then worked at Stanford for a bit, in development. So, I've seen a lot of sausage get made. Between admissions and development, you see a few things.

Alison Monahan: I would imagine, yes.

Anna Ivey: And this was when admissions consulting was incredibly nascent. There were very few people out there doing it. Now it's sort of a dime a dozen, but back then it was sort of a new thing and you had to spend a lot of time at cocktail parties and whatnot, trying to explain what you do. And then the end of it all, they'd say, "Well, which school do you work for?" And I'm thinking, "Okay, back

up. I don't actually represent a school anymore", which gives me a fair amount of freedom, I will say. When you're representing a school, you do speak differently to the world, of course, because you're representing an institution. So I can speak a bit more candidly now. So in the meantime, I have been running and growing an admissions consulting business, written a few books, although I'm not sure anyone reads books anymore. I'm actually debating whether to update *The Ivey Guide to Law School Admissions* again, in book form, or maybe cross media and do it some other way. I don't know, I'm on the fence. If anyone has opinions on that, come find me. But in general, if you want to come find me, the best way to do that is through my website, Annalvey.com. Just my first and last name .com. There's a contact form there, feel free to shoot me a message.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. Well, we've had someone reach out to us recently about possibly writing a book, so I don't know. Some people think they're still valid. I mean, yeah, I think that's an open question for us as well. Alright, what are we seeing in terms of law school applications these days? Because I keep seeing these headlines saying numbers are up, numbers are up. But what are we seeing?

Anna Ivey: Yeah, they are up. I mean, fortunately, that information is all public if you know where to find it. And I think it is a good idea for applicants or people thinking about applying maybe someday to go just dive into the data. It's at LSAC.org – that's the organization that makes the LSAT, and also runs the platform through which you submit your application. So, the analog on the undergrad side would be the Common App platform. There're some important differences, but that's basically the concept. So yeah, get familiar with LSAC. They have a bunch of research and data that they make publicly available, and you can always look it up in real time. So, when we look at the data, compared to this time last year, overall applications are up about 20%, which is not nothing.

Alison Monahan: Right. That's pretty substantial, and I think it's been going on for a few years, hasn't it?

Anna Ivey: You know, the most recent big increase before this one was during the first Trump administration. So, there was the first Trump bump, and I think now we're experiencing the second Trump bump, for a variety of reasons. But this cycle that is still ongoing has been pretty brutal for applicants. It's been a great year to be a law school. You've really had your pick of fabulous people. I think they were also understaffed for the amount of application volume they got. That's a separate problem, and I feel for them. It was not a great year to be an applicant. For example, a Subreddit for law school applicants is a subsection of applicants, and I don't want to read too much into that, but oh my gosh, when you read people's sort of postmortems of how the cycle went for them, a lot of hearts got broken. And that's true in general at the more selective law schools.

But yeah, this past cycle has been especially rough. And one of the reasons for that is that the increase in applicants and applications, that increase wasn't evenly distributed across the range of applicants. The biggest increase was among the top scorers. So, overall application volume up about 20%. Guess what? For people who scored 170 to 174, that increase was more like 34%. And here's the real kicker: The increase for people scoring between 175 and 180 – 40%, actually a little over 40%.

Alison Monahan: Wow.

Anna Ivey: So, you combine those two, sort of 170 and up – that's a big jump. And that's just year over year.

Alison Monahan: Huh. I mean, are we just seeing more people who did well on the LSAT applying to law school?

Anna Ivey: Well, that's where it really benefits from some data analytics, because at the same time the LSAT also changed. So, it is hard to compare apples to apples in a direct way, at least when you're focusing on LSAT scores as a unique variable, because the game section famously went away. I don't need to, whatever the equivalent is, to mansplain that to you. I'm mansplaining.

Alison Monahan: I loved that section.

Anna Ivey: You loved section, I could take it or leave it. Some people were very happy to see it go. But there may have been a confluence of variables that led to this big jump in high scores, and that's the subject of some debate. But the bottom line is, not only was there a decent sized jump in applicant volume and application volume overall, but especially among high scores. So, that has repercussions throughout the whole food chain and ecosystem of law schools, because if you sort of look at the tippy top, they've got substantially larger numbers of high scores, so they can be even pickier than they normally are. And that's pretty picky. And then that has a ripple effect throughout the whole ecosystem of law schools. So yeah, it was an especially difficult cycle. And of course, do we have a crystal ball for this coming cycle? None of us actually does. Although some people like to sound very authoritative about what the future holds. I tend to be more sanguine about making those kinds of predictions, but I suspect the coming cycle is not going to be meaningfully easier than it was this particular cycle. So, we're sort of bracing ourselves for another difficult cycle for applicants. You've got to be ready. You have to have your ducks in a row.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. What advice do you have for students who are applying in these very competitive cycles, other than obviously do well on the LSAT?

Anna Ivey: Obviously, do well on the LSAT. And your undergraduate record, or even if you're in grad school, by the time you apply, that's mostly, if not entirely, water under the bridge. So that's typically not a variable that you can still tweak, in a meaningful way, by the time you apply. You really have to start earlier than you think you do. I mean, how long have we been doing these podcasts together? Years and years, and that is my message every year. That has not changed. It is evergreen. People wait until the summer, the fall to take the LSAT for the first time. And very few people are happy with their first LSAT scores. It's usually not a "one and done" deal for most people, and you have to budget that into your timeline. But where it gets tricky is, September rolls around, applications are open, it's a rolling admission system, which causes unnecessary chaos in my opinion. But law schools are wedded to it for some reason. And what happens is, if you're not happy with the score or scores that you currently have, and you think you might still take it a few more times... Because LSAC keeps making it easier to take it a bunch of times over the years – they've really lifted those limits, because it makes them money.

Alison Monahan: I say, why would they say "no"?

Anna Ivey: It's a cash cow. It's not complicated.

Alison Monahan: They're like, "Cool. You want to give us more money to take it again? We're okay with that, yeah."

Anna Ivey: "We'll take that." Yes. The problem is, you a strategy in the fall for what your school list is going to look like, and in particular, whether you're going to do a binding application somewhere, and if so, where. And that whole analysis, I don't want to say the LSAT is the only thing that matters for that, but it's very important. And so, if you don't yet have a score that you're actually comfortable with using to apply, you're not going to be able to do a very thoughtful analysis. And the one thing I've seen this past cycle is that applying binding, it's a good way to go in terms of optimizing your chances. Of course, not everyone offers it. Famously, Harvard, Yale, and Stanford do not. And guess what? Where everyone wants to go, whether they're in the running or not. Most schools besides Harvard, Yale, and Stanford do offer binding applications. And the sense I get is that their admissions strategy on their end, they're really taking a page from the undergrad admissions playbook, which is that over the years, colleges have really leaned heavily on binding early decision to fill their enrolled class as much as they can justify. And just to be clear, early decision is a great tool for schools, because managing enrollment is just a huge headache, and it's part of what makes the job very hard. It's terrible, for applicants and students, for a whole host of reasons, but it is the system that we have. And so, I think early

decision has to be part of your analysis and your thinking around your school list and timeline. And those deadlines, those early deadlines are typically in November. You don't have a lot of wiggle room.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.

Anna Ivey: That'll be here before we know it.

Alison Monahan: I know. I can't believe we're already recording this in May, which is crazy. I'm like, "How are we halfway through the year?" And how do you think the GRE plays into that? I mean, that's an option for people too.

Anna Ivey: It is an option at many schools, not all. Your mileage may vary, as they say, but I think the GRE is a big nothingburger for law school admissions. I think it can be a useful option if you are also applying at the same time for another graduate degree. If you're applying for a JD MBA, wouldn't it be nice not to have to take the LSAT and the GMAT? You can just take the GRE and use it for both applications. I think there're some scenarios where it could actually make sense. I think if you're applying to law school only, or the JD application is your priority compared to wherever else you might be applying, from what I have seen, the LSAT is still very much privileged compared to the GRE. My personal opinion is, yeah, the GRE is an easier test. It just is.

Alison Monahan: It is, definitely. I mean, I've done both. It's so much easier.

Anna Ivey: It's a slightly souped up SAT, it's just not nearly as difficult as the LSAT. And if you score higher on the GRE or your percentiles are higher – yeah, that's what one would expect to see. And so, getting a sky-high GRE score, it's just not going to be as impressive as the equivalent on the LSAT. I'll also point out those conversion tools, I think they're put out by ETS from the GRE side, because of course they're trying to promote the GRE for these purposes. They'll say, "Oh, plug in your GRE score and we'll show you the equivalent." It's sort of the concordance with what your LSAT would be. And it's ridiculous. It is impossible to take seriously. So, don't rely on those little conversion options, because they chronically overstate what your LSAT score would look like if it were the LSAT – which it's not, they're totally different tests. But we worked with enough people over the years who've taken both the GRE and the LSAT to realize that those concordance tables, those conversion, that it's completely bogus. They completely inflate the LSAT piece of things, based on whatever the GRE scores are, percentiles. And so, yeah, do not rely on those. But if you're starting from scratch, you haven't taken a test yet, you haven't invested in the prep, I would not pursue the GRE, for at least the more selective law schools, where you're going to have a lot of competition.

Alison Monahan: Sure. Let's back up a little bit, because you touched on a couple of theories about why this might be happening – these increased applications now. Give me some context here. Why do you think this is happening?

Anna Ivey: Yeah, so one factor is that historically law school application volume tends to go up when the economy is down, or perceived to be down, and in particular, perceived to be down by young people, who make up the bulk of law school applicants. So, it tends to be countercyclical, as economists would say. So, that alone would make me totally unsurprised to see a bump in law school applications. Then, as I alluded to before, the Trump bump – it really fires people up when they look around and see what is happening. It is very motivating for young people especially. And it's sort of a clarifying experience for them to realize due process matters, constitutional rights matter, immigration status matters.

Alison Monahan: Details.

Anna Ivey: Details. Whether you are left to bleed out in a parking lot in front of the hospital because you're a woman, matters.

Alison Monahan: For one example.

Anna Ivey: The way you're treated as a trans person. You look around and there are just so many demographics that are affected. On my mind I'm thinking, "Gosh, there's this talk now that women are going to lose the right to vote if they've changed their names?"

Alison Monahan: Yeah, or like access to credit and financial institutions. You're just like, "Where are we?"

Anna Ivey: It's just crazy town. The Season 1 pilot of The Handmaid's Tale, if you haven't watched it. And oh my gosh, there's a scene I'm thinking of, I won't spoil it. So, it's motivating to a lot of people and in my opinion, rightly. I do like to point out though, to young people, that law school and a legal degree, those are one way to advocate for change and for the things you believe in. It's not the only way to have an impact and do things that matter. So I think sometimes there's a bit of tunnel vision and there's this assumption, "Well, I'm going to be litigating things in the Supreme Court and I'm going to change precedents and push back on authoritarianism." You might. Who am I to say you won't, right? But probably you're going to be doing due diligence, stock review in a windowless conference room somewhere for some merger that you couldn't care less about.

Alison Monahan: That is true. Although I do think there is value, particularly these days, into having people educated in our constitutional system.

Anna Ivey: It's funny how that works. And you know what? I am a big believer that you shouldn't have to go to law school to understand a basic civics education and to have a benefit from a basic civics education. I mean, this is just a gross failure of our education system, that there are so many ostensibly educated people who don't seem to grasp the very basics of our system.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I remember the first day or two of Con Law, I had Lou Henkin, who's an absolute legend, and he handed out a pocket Constitution to everyone. And literally read it because he says, "You know, no one's ever going to sit down and read this whole thing. It's very important. I'm going to read it to you. And you should keep your pocket Constitution with you at all times because you never know when you might need it." And we were all sort of like, "Huh, this man, what?" But he had a point.

Anna Ivey: They know a thing or two.

Alison Monahan: I still have that pocket Constitution someplace. It's like, you just never know.

Anna Ivey: And that is a gift about going to law school, is it turns out these things do matter. And as I say, you shouldn't have to invest in a JD to learn about these things. But hey, we live in the Internet era. These things are all accessible one way or another.

Alison Monahan: Right. You can pull up a pocket Constitution on your phone and have it with you at all times in case you…

Anna Ivey: You can subscribe to some very educative, interesting Substacks. There're lots of things we can do. Anyway, point being, law school is one way to make a difference in the world. It's not the only way. And so I would say if for whatever reason the LSAT doesn't come together, life gets in the way, what have you, please don't labor under this sometimes attractive fiction that law school is the only way to make change in the world. I don't think that's true.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think there's just kind of an interesting tension when I was doing some research for this episode of people who are saying it's the Trump bump and people want to understand these things and whatever. And then other people saying, "Well, no, it's just because the economy is bad for recent graduates and this is one of the clear ways that you can actually get a job in a few years, paying you a lot of money." So, I think there's kind of an interesting tension here.

Anna Ivey: Well, yes, and they're of course not mutually exclusive. And it is absolutely still the case – none of this part is new – that law school is still the path of least resistance for a lot of people who have no business, honestly, applying to law school. But it is the path of least resistance, compared to other graduate degrees that have very particular requirements. Right? So, medical school – gosh, if you didn't do a pre-med track in undergrad, you have to go spend some time doing a post-back right before you really become eligible to apply for medical school. Business school – most competitive MBA programs are going to require some substantial work experience before they'll take you seriously at all. I will say however, that law schools increasingly are following the MBA model in that regard. And don't think this is brand new either, I just think it's become more amplified as things got more competitive recently. I do think there are attacks if you are coming straight out of undergrad as an applicant. Very often, and from where I sit, that seems to be driven by parents who want to push their adult children straight into grad school. And the way to push back against that is that, "Actually, I'm not as competitive an applicant coming straight out of college." And if you stop and think about it for a hot nanosecond, it makes total sense.

Alison Monahan: Oh, totally.

Anna Ivey: Whatever you have to offer by the start of senior year in college, there's still a whole quarter of your college experience that hasn't even happened yet, if you're going to go straight through, because that's when you would be submitting your applications, right? It's fall of senior year. Anything you've accomplished up until then, it doesn't magically go away if you go off and do something after college, before going to law school. So, you're only adding to your profile if you're not going straight through. And certainly the most competitive and hardest to get into law schools... I hate to use terms like "top schools", that's very fraught. But certainly the hardest ones to get into, however you want to call those, it's a tough way to... I mean, it's tough anyway, but you're making it even harder if you're applying fall of senior year. You're just not at your best as an applicant if you're doing that.

Alison Monahan: Right. And I think it carries through too, when you're looking at jobs and things. It's like, "Okay, you're how old? You're 22. Do I really feel like you're the person I want to put in front of a client right now? Maybe grow up a little bit." I think there's a lot of benefit in people not applying immediately, personally.

Anna Ivey: Well, and once you've been to law school, as both of us have, you realize too that this stuff actually matters in the classroom too. And because of the Socratic Method and the somewhat unusual way that law schools operate in the United States, it's not how really the rest of the world does it. And by the way, the case

method in top MBA programs, they borrowed that from the law school model. You are very reliant on your classmates to have a really interesting learning experience during law school. It is not just a sort of lecture model, where you sit back passively and just receive wisdom from the person at the front of the classroom, although they're very important. So, your classmates are very important in terms of contributing to your education while you're there. And it turns out having some life experience, having some work experience, having some real-world experience, it's invaluable.

Alison Monahan: Right. No, I think also so many people struggle with any type of executive functioning skills at this point coming out of college, that that really becomes an issue for a lot of people.

Anna Ivey: Well, let's touch on a perhaps delicate subject, but I think it's an important one, which is, we are still experiencing cohorts of people who were under lockdown and did Zoom school for some very formative parts of their education. So, that might have been high school, it might have been college. Either way, there was a loss that came with that, and it's nobody's fault. That's the dumb luck of being born in a certain year. And the calendar was what it was. We had a once in a lifetime pandemic that led to that.

Alison Monahan: Hopefully.

Anna Ivey: But on the topic of executive function, which does cross over into some of those life skills, it's perhaps not uncorrelated to the fact that especially the schools that get their top pick of the bunch, they care a lot that you have been out in the world and there's some evidence that you can function as an adult, and that you're not still burdened with some real deficits that people experienced with their skills; something as basic as – we see this sometimes with applicants, "Did you pick up the phone and call them and ask?" Oh no, didn't occur to them. Or they find it scary. I don't mock it. We all find different things scary. That's one of the things I have learned in life – what is scary to people can be a very different can of worms. And we have to respect that. But yeah, you have to be comfortable just picking up a phone and calling the admissions office and getting some piece of information that you are looking for.

Alison Monahan: And doing that in a professional manner.

Anna Ivey: In a professional way.

Alison Monahan: That's not entitled. These things seem easy, but they're not.

Anna Ivey: And either being comfortable or being able to fake being comfortable. If you're on Zoom with an admissions officer, and maybe it's one-on-one, maybe it's part of a group info session or what have you – you don't just get to lurk and turn off your audio and turn off your video. This is not the forum for that. That might've worked when you were in high school, or even in college, during lockdown and Zoom school. That's not going to work out in the real world.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.

Anna Ivey: So, these are just certain adulting life skills that are very important. We can group those together as "executive function", we can call them lots of different things, but those are really important skills when you're applying to law school, when you're in law school, when you're out of law school. They do matter.

Alison Monahan: Right, because the reality is, you are going into a professional career. Well, before we wrap up, I have a couple more things I came across, and one of them – I don't know if this has been on your radar, I saw this kind of randomly – but apparently student loan availability may be changing soon, and also more limited options for income-based repayment, maybe some borrowing caps. Is this something you've been paying attention to at all? I just randomly saw this.

Anna Ivey: Well, I have to pay attention to it, but I will say, I think at this point it's all just bills and I don't think anything has been passed yet to my knowledge. If those things do pass, I think we are going to see some changes. Not least the one that really caught my eyes, I think they were talking about limiting loans for graduate professional school to, I think it was something like $110,000.

Alison Monahan: 150,000 I think, which is nothing.

Anna Ivey: Well, that will get you one year at Columbia Law School.

Alison Monahan: Exactly.

Anna Ivey: Tuition and fees and expenses. I mean, that would not get you a full three years of law school at plenty of law schools in the United States.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I just think it's something people might need to be aware of, or be paying attention to.

Anna Ivey: That's going to be a whole separate conversation that we're going to have to have, if that comes to pass.

Alison Monahan: Fair point.

Anna Ivey: With loan repayment and loan forgiveness programs, I have always told people, and this goes back to the very first edition of my law school book, I've been saying this for so long: Do not rely, even in the best of times, whoever's in charge, I don't care – never rely on loan forgiveness in the future.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I agree.

Anna Ivey: For your financing plan, because what Congress giveth, Congress can taketh away, let alone the executive branch doing God knows what.

Alison Monahan: And the same with the school. The school could say one thing and then suddenly it turns out that there's a lot of fine print you didn't read.

Anna Ivey: What matters is, the bottom outline, out-of-pocket expense that they offer you at the front end. And it's a still broken system. You have to apply and get in before you find out what the price tag would be and what you would actually pay. I mean, that's just the brokenness of the American higher ed funding system that we have. But you want to know that price tag upfront, before you enroll somewhere. And do not rely on loan forgiveness programs, whether those are offered by the individual school or the government, to be an important part of your funding plans.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I was also surprised to learn the current interest rates on graduate loans right now are almost 10%, which I was a little surprised by. So I think, yeah, this whole thing about the financing, I think people just need to be very aware and really calculate out, "What is this going to look like for the next 20 to 30 years of my life if I have to pay these off?"

Anna Ivey: Yeah. And that's so abstract when you're an applicant. I mean, it's funny money, but I do think it has led to some perhaps poor decision-making, where you could borrow the whole thing currently, right? Or even when I was in law school. You could borrow the whole thing for graduate professional school. And I think that gets people into some trouble in terms of their longer-term planning, because it's just not real yet. What does 10% interest even mean? And what does that mean for the kinds of jobs that I have to be eligible for, whether I enjoy them or not? Am I going to be eligible for those BigLaw jobs that pay me those kinds of salaries that allow me to carry that kind of debt? Most people coming out of an ABA-approved law schools in the United States do not make that kind of money.

Alison Monahan: No, this was one of my very first posts on The Girl's Guide to Law School, was about the bimodal salary distribution, and I still get comments on that post.

Anna Ivey: But that curve has been bimodal for as long as I can remember.

Alison Monahan: And it might have shifted this way, but it hasn't changed.

Anna Ivey: From year to year, but it's just always bimodal. So yeah, the whole financing and funding topic is an important one. And yes, what's actually going to happen with loan forgiveness, I don't know. Shrug emoji. We'll see.

Alison Monahan: We'll see. But yeah, it's definitely something I think people want to keep an eye on, because it seems like there could be changes coming that are not going to be favorable for you.

Anna Ivey: Absolutely. We'll have to do a follow-on episode.

Alison Monahan: We will, exactly. Well, before we wrap up, one more final question. So, I saw this thing about Hope Walz, who apparently has turned down an admission to a certain program that she's not naming because of their kind of political stance or their... Do you think there are going to be any repercussions? I mean, we both went to Columbia, for schools that have capitulated or standing up to the administration. How is this going to play out? Are people just going to say, "You know what...?"

Anna Ivey: And just to your listeners and your viewers – I went to Columbia undergrad, you went to Columbia Law School, if I'm remembering correctly.

Alison Monahan: Yes.

Anna Ivey: As a Columbia alum, I am deeply ashamed of the Columbia administration.

Alison Monahan: Like, so embarrassing.

Anna Ivey: Deeply ashamed. I'm not a "bumper sticker on the car" kind of person to begin with, but if I were, I would be scraping that sucker off my car, man.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's so embarrassing.

Anna Ivey: It's shameful. And what's sad to me is, they seem to be good neither at crisis management, which they especially needed during those congressional hearings. They're not good at the crisis management in the short term, but they're also not good at the actual leadership part. And those are two different things. It's zero for zero for both of those. Anyway, repercussions, I don't know. But the people who are in the situation to turn these things down have a lot of options.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly.

Anna Ivey: And the firms who are behaving badly – and you can go to Above the Law, they have the spine index for BigLaw, which I love – you can see who has a spine, who doesn't. Even the ones that don't have a spine, they're still going to get droves of highly qualified people applying for those BigLaw jobs, because how are you going to pay back all your loans? Or even if you don't have loans, if you have an expectation of a certain standard of living and cash flow, what's your option at that age?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, no, I think it's a – I don't want to say "funny" – maybe ironic situation when people go to law school thinking, "Oh, I'm going to save the world." And then they get into these pathways to the BigLaw firms and suddenly they're like, "Oh well, I mean, they're not that bad."

Anna Ivey: That's as old as the hills. That is as old as the hills. And it's fine. What you write in your personal statement, no one's going to hold you to it. It is not binding in any way. Real life slaps you upside the head pretty hard.

Alison Monahan: No, yeah, I think people should really understand the profession they're signing up to. I feel like anyone who's surprised by a lot of these law firms capitulating is like, did you not realize this has been a business and only a business for a very long time?

Anna Ivey: There's a book I recommend, and I know the author, but they chose to be anonymous; they used a nom de plume writing it. It's called *BigLaw Confidential*. It's a doorstop. It is the best book I've ever read on the topic of BigLaw. So, if you really want to educate yourselves, future lawyers, future applicants, go check out that book.

Alison Monahan: No, I think that's great advice. And we have podcasts, where we're actually diving in with people who've worked at these places saying, "You know what? This is what it's actually like here." So, I don't know that anyone who's worked in a large law firm is particularly surprised by any of this. Maybe horrified, but not surprised.

Anna Ivey: No, no.

Alison Monahan: Anyway. Well, Anna, before we wrap up on this upbeat note, any final thoughts you'd like to share?

Anna Ivey: I would say, as hard as things have been for applicants this past cycle, if this is really what you want to do, don't let that deter you. You might have to adjust what your list is like, and you might have to have some serious conversations with yourself. Ultimately, that's the only decision-maker here who matters. You are the CEO of your life, not anybody else. If this still makes sense to you and the math works, don't let that stop you. There are plenty of good law schools out there, but you have to be a really knowledgeable and thoughtful researcher and consumer.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. No, I agree. I think there's value in a legal education. The world needs good lawyers, but we don't need any more miserable people.

Anna Ivey: It's an expensive proposition, at least if you do it here in the U.S. And let's be clear, the legal systems – and this is true the world over – these are legalized cartels. You can't go get a JD in the United States and go practice in Germany, or vice versa. It is not a very transportable degree in that sense, compared to some other graduate degrees.

Alison Monahan: Or even across states.

Anna Ivey: Even across states, God knows, yeah. There's a reason I hang on to my inactive status with the California Bar. I don't want to have to take that again.

Alison Monahan: No, particularly not now. But that's a whole other podcast.

Anna Ivey: It's a different podcast.

Alison Monahan: Alright, Anna, thank you for joining us. Remind us again how people can find out about you.

Anna Ivey: AnnaIvey.com That's spelled A-N-N-A-I-V-E-Y.com.

Alison Monahan: Awesome. Well, this has been super fun, as always. Thank you for joining us.

Anna Ivey: Always a treat.

Alison Monahan: 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!

RESOURCES:

Annalvey.com
The Ivey Guide to Law School Admissions, by Anna Ivey
BigLaw Confidential: The Comprehensive Guide to the Large Law Firm Work Experience in the U.S., by D.W. Randolph
Republicans plan to overhaul the federal student loan system
'Trump bump,' iffy economy cited for huge law school application spike
Podcast Episode 256: Tips for Applying to Law School (w/Anna Ivey)
Podcast Episode 451: From Application to Acceptance: The Law School Admissions Timeline (w/Anna Ivey)
Podcast Episode 433: Career Tips from a BigLaw Partner (w/Bryan Nese)
Above the Law
Working on Your Executive Functioning Skills
Law School Myth #1: Lawyers Make a Lot of Money
The Reality of Law School Debt and Planning for It