



Lee Burgess: Welcome to the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about how to complete your bar application, so you can become a lawyer. Whoo-hoo!

Alison Monahan: Whoo-hoo!

Lee Burgess: Your bar exam toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the bar exam experience so you can study effectively, stay sane, and hopefully pass and move on with your life.

We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review on your favorite listening app, and check out our sister podcast, the [Law School Toolbox podcast](#). If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on BarExamToolbox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

Alison Monahan: Welcome back. Today we're talking about the ins and outs of the bar application. And most people don't necessarily think about the bar exam as just being one part of applying to become a lawyer.

Lee Burgess: Nope.

Alison Monahan: Yep. Unfortunately, there are actually a number of requirements you need to check off before you get that coveted bar number. Ah, it's kind of a long list.

Lee Burgess: It is kind of a long list, and each state is different. Even these UBE states where they're trying to standardize things, each state is still different. I was doing a little research on this last night, and New York has their own rules and New Jersey has their own rules.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think the key takeaway message here is: Whatever state you think you're going to be applying in, make sure you know what those rules are and follow them.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and maybe don't look it up like two weeks before the bar.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think if you are still in law school, you probably want to know before, because it could be even that there are issues with certain states that you may not even be able to be admitted in for certain reasons.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: I'm thinking particularly people who came out of felony convictions and things like that. I mean, certain states are more lenient than others about...
- Lee Burgess: It's true.
- Alison Monahan: ...are they going to let you be admitted? It's probably not applicable to a ton of people who are listening to this, but some, possibly.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah.
- Alison Monahan: So you want to make sure that you know what those rules are. I mean, most people it's more just garden variety, but yeah, you've got to do some stuff.
- Lee Burgess: I talked to a potential student awhile back, who ended up taking the bar at a different jurisdiction because the jurisdiction he wanted to take the bar in, he needed some crazy certified copy of some record. I can't remember if it was a birth certificate or if it was a driver's license or something had to come from some other state, and it didn't come in time. He wasn't going to be able to sit for that bar, so he filed in a different state that had a different requirement, so he could take the UBE in a different state.
- Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah, particularly the UBE frankly doesn't really matter where you take it. Your score is transferable whether you pass or don't pass in that first jurisdiction.
- Lee Burgess: But then you still have to do all of the stuff.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, but if you're encountering problems in a UBE state, might be worth looking elsewhere. But anyway, at a minimum, what are some things you'd probably need to do?
- Lee Burgess: Some states want you to register as a 1L.
- Alison Monahan: Oh, I remember massively panicking about that when I was a 3L, because California was, as I recall, one of those states. And of course, nobody ever mentioned this to me when I was a 1L in New York. Nobody's going to tell me I need to possibly register for the California bar as a 1L. But I do remember having this moment of panic and thinking, "Oh my God, I didn't register as a 1L. Would I be able to even take the California bar?" Because that was when I was deciding



which state to take. And as it turned out, it wasn't a big deal. You just paid a little bit more money or something, but definitely, they wanted you to have done this.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, absolutely. Then there's that MPRE, which a lot of people forget about.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, because it's just one day, three hours, multiple choice. But you still have to do it, and most people need to do it their 3L year.

Alison Monahan: Right, or even earlier. If you think there's a possibility you're going to fail, I think do it sooner. I certainly knew people even at Columbia who failed it the first time they took it.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I mean, you've got to study for it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, not one of those tests you can just roll into without having studied. It's pretty specific.

Lee Burgess: Yep.

Alison Monahan: I definitely, again, just didn't really have it together and hadn't thought about all this stuff, so I took it the last possible time I could take it as a 3L. And then there's all this pressure of, "What if I don't pass?"

Lee Burgess: Right, because your bar license can be delayed so you can come back and study for it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, you would have to do it after the bar exam, which sounded like a total nightmare.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Luckily, I did pass and I did study for it, but if I hadn't, that was going to be a big problem that I just really didn't need to have set myself up for.

Lee Burgess: Yep, exactly.

Alison Monahan: I could have just done it earlier.



Lee Burgess: A lot of jurisdictions have some sort of background check, or they call it "moral character", or some sort of bar application which includes an abundance of personal information.

Alison Monahan: Oh yeah. Well, a lot of them are now fingerprinting and it's like... I guess they were even doing that. I don't know. I do remember at one point I had to get fingerprinted.

Lee Burgess: I know you're not active in California, but we just all had to re-fingerprint.

Alison Monahan: Right. It's like there's a process. It's not just like you put your fingers down and that's it. You have to go someplace and I think there are appointments involved. It was kind of a big deal.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and a couple other lawyer friends and I, we ended up getting somebody to come to our office to do us all at the same time, because it was easier than trying to go get an appointment somewhere because they have to be a certain kind of live scan something. I mean, it's not easy.

Alison Monahan: Particularly if you're not in the state and they may have requirements you do it in this state. Again, these are not things you can't do, but you also need to be aware of them so that you know, "Oh, the next time I'm in California, if I have to do it in person, I need to go and do this." That kind of thing.

Lee Burgess: Yep.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I remember I applied in Massachusetts, where I was first admitted. And there you had to get, as I recall, a letter from a practicing attorney attesting to your good character from a lawyer who was barred in Massachusetts. And I never lived in Massachusetts. I was just clerking for a judge and he was like, "Oh, why don't you take Massachusetts? 90% pass rate." I'm like, "Great, sounds good to me." Because I was like, "Can't decide between New York and California. Those bars are really hard. Maybe I'll take the easier one." Literally, that was the thought process. I thought, "Oh, no big deal." And then you get this thing and you're like, "Wait, I have to get this letter?" I don't even remember how I ended up getting it. It was really a big deal. It was a huge hassle.

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: I think I had to... My godfather is an attorney in Georgia and he knew somebody. It was just one of those things where you're like, "This is a crazy



requirement." But it really can put a roadblock in someone's way if they don't know they have to do it.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think that some of these things are just surprising when they come up. Even I remember doing my moral character in California, which took me hours to fill out.

Alison Monahan: Oh, that takes forever.

Lee Burgess: And I'd already done security clearance because I had worked at the US Attorney's office, so I had done a mini version, I think, of this for my security clearance. I didn't have very high security clearance. It was a short document, but I had done a first pass collecting all this information. And thankfully, my mom, who's kind of a copious record-keeper, my father had always had security clearance because he worked for the feds for much of his career, so she started keeping records when I left home.

Alison Monahan: Oh, that's convenient.

Lee Burgess: She had a file folder where every mailing address... She would just write down a new mailing address for me.

Alison Monahan: That is so smart.

Lee Burgess: I know. So, I remember calling her and being like, "Oh, no. I have to do my moral character." And she was totally like, "I gotcha."

Alison Monahan: That is one of the most amazing stories I've ever heard, because I definitely recall having a complete nightmare of a time. I mean, you reconstruct your entire living history starting, I think, from 18?

Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm.

Alison Monahan: So, everywhere you lived in college, grad school, working, in law school. I mean, places you live for like a few weeks in the summertime.

Lee Burgess: Temp agencies you work for.

Alison Monahan: Exactly. Every single job. I mean, this stuff is a nightmare to find.



Lee Burgess: Yep. And then you have references. I had to have personal references and professional references. You're calling your friends and you're like, "Hey, can you be my reference?" I think what people also forget as part of this is they do actually send out.

Alison Monahan: Oh, they check.

Lee Burgess: They check.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, for sure. It needs to be accurate.

Lee Burgess: It needs to be accurate, but also, you have to warn people because for instance... I've filled out a ton of those forms for California lawyers. I know you have too.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: And sometimes people won't warn us.

Alison Monahan: Or they don't double-check dates. Someone who worked for us for awhile, we think they worked from X to Y and they think they worked from Y to Z, and those dates now don't match. And it's just like, this doesn't need to happen. We can put whatever dates. We can talk about this before you file it, like, "Actually, I think you started in May, not in April."

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: "Oh, yeah. Right. Yeah, okay. May, okay. Yeah." But you want to clear that up.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And you want to tell us that these forms are coming, so we keep an eye out for them.

Alison Monahan: Right. That way we look for them, we don't just throw the envelope away.

Lee Burgess: Exactly. We open it. Some in different jurisdictions have different forms. I mean, we're used to filling out the California forms, but we got some from back East. I remember I screwed it up and then we had to do another one because I signed it and you weren't supposed to sign in the one thing. I don't even remember how I screwed it up.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's like you've got to print them, and it just goes on and on.



- Lee Burgess: I know.
- Alison Monahan: It's such an antiquated process, this whole thing.
- Lee Burgess: It really is. But the reality is that there are lots of steps and it can take a long time. What I think is one of the things that happens is that folks don't take the moral character seriously as in it's going to take a lot of time. So when they finally put it together, they file it late in their 3L year and then they are twiddling their thumbs trying to wait for their moral character determination. And then if something quirky happens to it...
- Alison Monahan: Oh, then you've got problems.
- Lee Burgess: Then you have problems and you are dealing with the bar during bar study. Not fun. Not fun, guys. We're going to talk more about some of those quirky issues here in a bit that can come up, but that's why you don't want to delay, because the time you don't want to be talking to the bar is while you're studying for the bar exam.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Or don't be me, who couldn't decide which bar to take, and then didn't deal with my moral character until I think after I sat for it. Then that's a nightmare because you're like, "I just finished taking the bar and now I'm spending three days trying to recreate every single address I've ever had in my life from old Amazon shipping, which wasn't even early enough for college." Credit reports – that's another good place to find your addresses.
- Lee Burgess: That's a good one, yep.
- Alison Monahan: I definitely pulled a bunch of those, because again, it needs to be right. And I'm like, "I don't remember the address of my college dorm."
- Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm, yeah. Exactly. So, that is a big project that you need to set aside time and energy to do, because it's going to take talking to friends, talking to employers, recordkeeping, digging. And maybe your mom will also have a file folder that has your addresses.
- Alison Monahan: If you're super lucky and your mother is incredibly organized.
- Lee Burgess: Right, yeah.
- Alison Monahan: And some jurisdictions even have additional exam requirements. Super fun.



- Lee Burgess: Yep. I wouldn't say they're gatekeepers, really.
- Alison Monahan: No, but you have to do it.
- Lee Burgess: But they're these hoops you have to jump through. So, Washington has this, New York has this. New York also has this new... Or I guess it's not that new anymore, but a pro bono requirement. We already talked about fingerprinting. The reality is that there's this movement to make licensure more standardized from the bar exam perspective, but each state still gets to hold power over who they give a license to.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. You've got a couple of people who are like, "No, we really need to test them on this certain thing." That person has powers and now you have to do a separate online exam.
- Lee Burgess: Exactly. Exactly. Again, these aren't probably going to stop you from getting your license. They just need to be done and you want to make sure that you're not depending on having a license. Or your job – let's say you have a big firm job that thinks if you get your bar results in November that you will be sworn in in December. But then you didn't do your moral character and now you're going to not be able to be sworn in until April.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I don't know if this is still the case, but a number of years ago, New York was absolutely notorious for this. In most places, like when I was admitted in Massachusetts, the judge that I worked for swore me and my co-clerk in. It was a very nice little day, whatever. We went to lunch, no big deal. In New York, they were notorious for only doing this at a certain time, there's a certain ceremony. It was a couple of times a year. It was just insane. People would just end up waiting, particularly firm lawyers who didn't have time to go to this thing. It was multiple hours of going. In theory, it was a nice ceremony, but basically you just want to be sworn in, and there was no other way to get sworn in. I knew so many people who particularly had taken New York as their second exam who waited forever before they actually got sworn in because they just could not make it to one of these ceremonies.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. This is the stuff people don't think about. You want to make sure that you understand exactly what you're signing up for, and also so you don't get in trouble with your job because you don't have a law license when you think you're supposed to.
- Alison Monahan: I don't even remember how I got sworn in in California.





Lee Burgess: Well, any clerk... Any notary, I think. A notary can do it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think a notary did.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think a notary can do it in California. I did it at my school, because I went to law school in the Bay Area. They held a little mass swearing-in. It was a nice little reception and it was nice.

Alison Monahan: I have a vague recollection of my secretary swearing me in after we got my results.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think it was any notary.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. She was a notary, so she swore me in.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: I think I bought her a cupcake or something. Yeah, "Thanks for doing that for me."

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Point being: Very different for different states. California, it could be your secretary. In New York, you had to show up in person at a certain time that didn't happen very often.

Lee Burgess: Yep. Alright, so one of the things that I've seen the longer we talk to people about getting admitted to the bar is the stuff that can come up with these background checks or moral character that can cause a little bit of trouble. First, before we dive into that, I do want to make sure that people know that it costs money, not surprisingly enough, to file all this stuff with the bar. When you're budgeting your student loan money, you need to make sure that you have enough money to file, so make sure you understand what those requirements are. We already talked about how it can take some digging – looking for old addresses, tax returns, Amazon, credit reports, all of that kind of stuff. But for a lot of people there can be some challenging things that you have to report, and you want to be thoughtful about that. Some of them that I have seen over the years are issues with credit – not even bankruptcy, but if you've just had issues with your credit. So, you've gone to creditors, maybe collection agencies have been called in. A lot of times that stuff has to be reported. If you don't report it and they find it, that's a problem.



- Alison Monahan: Right. The takeaway here is, anything that you should have reported and didn't is going to be a much, much, much larger problem than if you had just reported it to begin with.
- Lee Burgess: Right.
- Alison Monahan: This is not a place to get cute. This is a place to very carefully read the instructions, really think about the question they're asking. If there's anything that is directly responsive to that, you have to report it, because if they find out later, it is going to be a much bigger problem.
- Lee Burgess: Oh yeah. Even stuff that's not your fault. Your identity has been stolen. Let's say your identity was stolen and you've even fixed it, or you're in the process of fixing it. But as the bar starts running background checks, it's possible that they're going to find things that don't have anything to do with you. You need to know how you're going to report that to them, so when they get some weird stuff from your financial records, that they know why. Again, it's all about disclosure and organization, but you want to disclose, disclose, disclose.
- Alison Monahan: Right. There are actually lawyers who do this type of work, at least in California, full-time. So, if you have questions, talk to them.
- Lee Burgess: Right. And often times, even the bar has an ethics hotline or somebody you can call to ask.
- Alison Monahan: Right. Anonymously, probably.
- Lee Burgess: Probably. "Hi, this is Sally and I have questions about my bar application."
- Alison Monahan: "Or my friend's bar application."
- Lee Burgess: Right, exactly. But I think that you do want to call and get these questions answered. Other things that we've seen that sometimes people don't think about – maybe back in college you did some stuff on campus that got you in trouble. One of the things that you have to report are things usually like any sort of arrest or run-in with the law. And there can be some squishy areas. What about if you got detained by campus security at your college for drinking? I mean, that's a pretty common thing, but is the bar going to find that on a transcript? Is that on your undergrad transcript? Is that something that you need to report?



The other things that come up – if there were any allegations of cheating. I know somebody that that had happened. It ended up that the finding was that they hadn't cheated, but it still somehow showed up on his record that he'd been accused of cheating. And so, that was kind of a big deal.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Lee Burgess: Something else that is unfortunately common are DUIs. DUIs are very concerning for the bar, because drinking and substance abuse is such a big problem with lawyers.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I knew someone who had gotten a DUI as a minor. She wasn't really actually drunk; it was more like, "I had one beer and drove, but I was 19 and I got pulled over." I believe she had to go through some alcohol counseling before they would let her be admitted.

Lee Burgess: Yes. I know somebody else who had a DUI that had to go through alcohol counseling to be admitted. Again, it's not that that will prohibit you from getting a license, but again, you want to document, document, document. They're going to ask you very specific questions about that and the conditions for that, and they're going to be concerned about whether or not you have a substance abuse problem.

Alison Monahan: Right. Some of the states still have some, I think, fairly questionable questions on some of these about mental health issues and have you ever gotten treatment for these? Again, if you're listening to this in law school and you're thinking, "Oh, I want to go talk to a therapist or something" – maybe you don't want an actual diagnosis, for example, because a lot of them ask, "Have you ever been diagnosed?" You might want to actually look. I mean, I don't want to make people paranoid, but I don't think a lot of these are probably ADA-compliant anyway, but you might want to look at... I mean, most states are not that bad. Some of them are really bad, in my opinion, and they ask, "Have you ever gotten any mental health treatment?" Which I think is very questionable, because we want people to do that.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Alison Monahan: But again, you just probably need to tell them, "Yes, I did", if that's the question. You can't lie about it, because they can find, probably, your medical records.

Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm. But then you'd have to consent to the medical records.



Alison Monahan: I think they probably make you consent.

Lee Burgess: Do they make you consent? It's been a while.

Alison Monahan: I don't know. I think this is a very squishy, gray area.

Lee Burgess: I know plenty of lawyers who've gone through quite a bit of mental health treatment. So, it's not prohibitive.

Alison Monahan: No, no, no, and it depends on the state. I mean, most states realize that this is a really stupid question and they phrase it more like, "Have you been diagnosed with a mental health condition that negatively impacts your ability to practice?" or something like that. It's not like, "Did you go for counseling because you were depressed after a parent died?"

Lee Burgess: Right, exactly.

Alison Monahan: I mean, you have to answer whatever the question is, and this, frankly, could in some cases cost people probably to go be admitted elsewhere. Most states I think have moved in a more liberal direction on this, but some of them are still pretty bad.

Lee Burgess: I mean, the big things here I think to remember are that if the bar can find it, you better report it, because they're going to go look for everything.

Alison Monahan: And also assume that they're going to be able to find it, even if you think maybe they won't.

Lee Burgess: That's true.

Alison Monahan: If you're blatantly lying about something because you think they won't find it, I'd say that's probably questionable.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, nondisclosure is a huge problem, and that makes them very nervous. I think nondisclosure makes them nervous. Drugs and alcohol abuse make them really nervous. Lying makes them really nervous. I think that what you said earlier is really important to keep in mind, that you have to read these questions very carefully.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, don't over-report.



- Lee Burgess: No.
- Alison Monahan: It's like, "Okay, yeah, I talked to a therapist in law school because law school made me crazy. No one asked me about that. I'm not sharing that information."
- Lee Burgess: But you know what's funny? I remember filling out mine, and one of it was something about I had to report if I'd ever been a party to a lawsuit. My homeowner's association once, my little apartment in my apartment building, we all went through arbitration with somebody who refused to pay their parts or the fees, or the assessments or whatever. And then I was like, "Is that a party?" Because technically, my HOA was the party. I think I ended up just disclosing it.
- Alison Monahan: "But I'm a member of the HOA."
- Lee Burgess: But I was like, "Am I listed on some court document somewhere?" I don't know. And I think that sometimes it can be hard. I went ahead and disclosed that because I was like, "What does it matter?"
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, it doesn't reflect negatively on you.
- Lee Burgess: Right, exactly. I also could have called the hotline and been like, "Do I have to report?" And I think that often times, people need to be willing to call old school – pick up the phone and call the bar and anonymously ask questions. But also, if you really do have some sticky stuff in your past, I think it does make sense to invest in talking to an ethics lawyer that can help you navigate this, because you literally cannot practice law if you do not pass the background check.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. And this is what these people do all day long. If it's a straightforward answer, they're probably just going to be able to give you that answer of, yes, you do, or you don't need to disclose this. But if it's more complicated, these are the people who are going to be able to help you get admitted, so you may as well rely on them.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, for sure.
- Alison Monahan: If you think there's a serious issue that could come up, do not try to do this on your own. I think, too, we've seen people who did have what would seem to be a red flag issue, and then got cute with it and then got caught. And then suddenly you're going to trial, basically, about whether you're going to be able to be a lawyer. And that scenario could have just been avoided.



- Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm, yeah. And some of that all happens around the time that you're sitting for the bar exam. That's why you want to file this paperwork early, get it in, pay your fees, cross your fingers, and you'll hopefully early spring get a nice little message from the bar.
- Alison Monahan: "Yay, you're qualified."
- Lee Burgess: "Yay, you're qualified." I think the summertime before you're a 3L is a great time to do this.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah.
- Lee Burgess: If you're not in school, you've got some downtime, start. All these forms you should be able to get your hands on, but get hands on an old form. Start digging for the information, just so it becomes easier.
- Alison Monahan: It's probably going to be about the same.
- Lee Burgess: Yep. We mentioned this a little bit earlier in the podcast, but what about if you don't know where you want to practice? You can wait to do this after the bar sometimes, although sometimes you might have to fill all these applications as part of being able to even sit. But you need to investigate what's necessary in each of these jurisdictions that you want to sit in and make sure that you have all the documentation necessary.
- Alison Monahan: Right. It just depends on your own situation, too. For me, I knew I was going to be clerking because I'd gotten that job. I don't need a bar admission to be a law clerk for a judge. Yeah, he wants me to take the bar and be admitted, but it's not like my job is on the line if I don't get admitted as soon as possible. But if you're working at a firm, particularly a smaller firm, they might need you to go to court and you need to be there as soon as possible. If this drags out, that could be a serious problem.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, and they can't bill you like a lawyer until you have a law license.
- Alison Monahan: No, I think it makes a big difference if you have a clerkship or something versus an actual legal job, where, exactly, you're going to be billed out and until then, you're not a lawyer.



Lee Burgess: Yeah. I mean, that's a problem. I just think all of this stuff, it's so important to be very specific. Can we take a moment, speaking of documentation, to complain about the REAL ID process?

Alison Monahan: Oh, God, yes.

Lee Burgess: Because this is what makes me think all of this, is that the REAL ID, if you have not done it yet, is a pain all over the country. California has turned it into this...

Alison Monahan: Total nightmare.

Lee Burgess: ...totally insane nightmare. But what got me, it took me two times, two tries to get my REAL ID, because the first time I went, I brought... Because we don't have W2s because we own this business, I brought all of my tax documents, that have my social security number on it, that were filed with the IRS, that say I own half of this business and say how much money I make. And they were like, "That's not a W2." And I was like, "But I don't have a W2."

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's a K1 as you go up to file with the IRS.

Lee Burgess: "I don't have a W2. I'm not an employee. I'm a business owner." "You have to be here with your social security card." "But I don't have my social security card because I have my social security number on this tax document." "That's not going to do it." I was nine months pregnant and I had done my makeup and my hair to go get my photograph taken. And they sent my pregnant person back out the door.

Alison Monahan: With no ID.

Lee Burgess: Sent me home with no ID, and then I had to try again. I did try again and that time, I had to file to get a new social security card. I know that you're on like round 27 of trying to get a social security card.

Alison Monahan: Oh, my god. Now I finally managed to create my online account after being on hold with like three different people. And then I finally get the online account and I log in and I click the button for "Get a copy of your social security card", and they say, "Oh, you know what? You're going to have to go in person to the office to get this." And so, I asked my mother, who was going to be visiting, "Do you have a social security card for me?" And she said, "Yes." So, she brought me one, but it's literally from when I was born.



Lee Burgess: It's falling apart.

Alison Monahan: It looks like something that I printed on my laser printer. I mean, it has no security features. Literally, it's a piece of paper with a typed number on it.

Lee Burgess: But I think that's what they all look like. Even my new one looks like that.

Alison Monahan: Well, that was my question: Am I going to show up, and is this sufficient?

Lee Burgess: Yes. The weird answer is, yes.

Alison Monahan: I mean, I haven't been yet, but I'm like, "I could make this on a laser printer."

Lee Burgess: No, I know, because I just got my new one.

Alison Monahan: Or an inkjet, actually. I could do this in an inkjet.

Lee Burgess: I got my new one. I've got new cards for my kids.

Alison Monahan: Were they paper?

Lee Burgess: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Huh. Yeah, maybe. I've been putting off making the appointment just for this reason that I want to find out if this is actually going to be sufficient before I go to through the hassle.

Lee Burgess: I took my paper one, and I would even tell you, I had my kids as home birth, so you have to go to the social security office and prove to them that you had an actual baby. I won't even tell you the hilarious documentation; how many people had to say, "Yes, I've seen this baby" to get this piece of paper. We could go on and on, because this REAL ID process totally drives me crazy. I know it's driven you crazy too, but it's a very good exercise in how ridiculous these bureaucratic application processes are.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, just some of it doesn't make any sense. I'm like, "I have a passport." For me, I'm like, "I have global entry. You know who I am. You let me in the country with a scan of my fingerprints. Is that not enough to get me a driver's license?"





Lee Burgess: No. No, not anymore. That is the reality, though, is that these hiccups about identity and things like that can really go down the vortex. How much time have you spent trying to get your REAL ID?

Alison Monahan: I mean, at least hours. And I've literally never even gotten to the point of making the appointment.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. It took me two appointments and the time to get my card fixed.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I'm at the point of just kind of being like, "You know what? I think I'll just travel on my passport for now." I think I have a year to get the license still. This is not something I can be bothered with.

Lee Burgess: I know.

Alison Monahan: But now I have this insane, literally from the '70s ID card or whatever.

Lee Burgess: I think what also is so funny is, sometimes I worry about traveling with my passport because I don't want to lose it, but I think now it's easier to get a passport replaced than it is to get a REAL ID.

Alison Monahan: Oh, it would be so much easier. I have a friend whose daughter apparently threw her passport away.

Lee Burgess: Oh, my.

Alison Monahan: And they found this out the day before they were supposed to fly to Switzerland on a Friday, and they got her passport on Saturday morning.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's kind of amazing.

Alison Monahan: But they could not have gotten her driver's license.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, but even a passport... I just did this for my family recently, and it's lots of boxes to check. You have to be very exact. The reality is, all of this stuff is a bureaucratic nightmare. Don't leave it to the last minute. You never know what's going to happen.

Alison Monahan: Well, and just don't assume they're going to bend the rules, because they're not going to bend the rules.



Lee Burgess: No. My K1, pregnant lady, "Go home." I thought if they were going to bend it for anyone – nice, super pregnant lady, who had done her makeup for my photo.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. No, I think they would also take a 1099. A few years ago I had a 1099. I was like, "Maybe I can dig up one of those in a box of paper that I'd never shredded." Then it says it has to be current. I'm like, "What does current mean in this context? Is two years ago sufficient?" Yeah, it's a lot.

Lee Burgess: It's a lot. Okay. Well, enough about that. That's my REAL ID rant for the afternoon. Okay. Well, on that, I think we should let everybody go about their day. I think we're out of time.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Lee Burgess: I want to take a second to remind you to check out our [blog](#) at BarExamToolbox.com, which is full of helpful tips to help you prepare and stay sane as you study for the bar exam. You can also find information on our website about our courses, tools, and one-on-one tutoring programs to support you as you study for the UBE or California Bar Exam.

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