**HFNT #17: Limited Edition**

**Episode Transcript**

[INTRO MUSIC]

Scott: Happy Friday, North Texas. I'm Scott.

Alicia: And I'm Alicia.

Scott: Today is Friday, January 17th. And we are so happy to be back to brighten up your Fridays in 2025.

Alicia: That's right. Today we've got an interview with Corporal David Causey of the UNT Police Department, sharing spring safety tips for students. We also have a new installment in our “Democracy Primer” series about term limits. And we've got an Eagles Abroad interview with an art student who studied abroad in Florence, Italy, which sounds like a dream.

Scott: But before we get to all of that, Alicia, we've got a lot of catching up to do. Alicia, it's so good to see you again. How were your snow days last week?

Alicia: They were all right. Unfortunately, I live on the second floor of my apartment, and my stairs were iced. So, yeah. So, I couldn't go down them safely, but I enjoyed being cozied up inside. What about you, Scotty?

Scott: The snow days were a blast on my end. We haven't had snow like that in a long time. And at eight and five years old, my kids are at the perfect ages to make the most of it. Snowballs were thrown, snowmen were built, and we finally got to break out the sleds that we got them for Christmas a couple of years ago.

Alicia: That sounds like a fun but exhausting time. I'll stick to my sleep and soup. Thank you.

Scott: No judgment at all. That sounds absolutely delightful, too.

Alicia: Anyways, back to the podcasting business. Tell us about this first interview, Scootle.

Scott: With Law Enforcement Appreciation Day being last week on January 9th and with students returning to campus and the spring semester kicking off this week. I talked to Corporal Causey from the UNT Police Department to get some safety tips and resources for students.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Scott: All right, Corporal Causey. Thank you again for taking the time to join us for the podcast today. I know you all are busy, especially on the first day of school today, so I appreciate you taking the time out of your schedule.

Causey: Absolutely. I appreciate you having me on.

Scott: So, for starters, can you tell me a little bit about your role with you at UNT PD and how long you've been with the department?

Causey: Yeah, absolutely. So, my name's David Causey, and I'm part of the Community Engagement team. So really, my primary function, I am still a fully licensed peace officer, so I could do patrol. But my primary function at this point is really to get out and engage with the community. So that could be anything from, say, like safety training over, say, a department or an organization wants me to come and talk to about, say, active-shooter response or theft prevention or things like that, or to hosting a Coffee With the Cops event or having like a car event for drunk-driving awareness, all that kind of stuff. Also help work with like our social media for our department. And, recently, most of you probably know, but I do have, I am in charge of the comfort dog, Clover, which we were working on getting her her therapy certification, as you may or may not hear her squeaking in the background now. Yes. And I've been with the department for about 13 years.

Scott: Nice. amazing. I mean, I know I assume to be a police officer. It's kind of a strong calling, but what made you specifically want to join the UNT Police Department?

Causey: Yeah, so great question. I get this quite a bit because, like you, it is not normal. Like most people, when they think about like, police, they think about maybe a municipality such as like Dayton P.D. or Dallas PD or Frisco or, you know, anything like that. They don't necessarily think about the specialty departments like us, like DFW or something like that. So, I went to school here at UNT. I always kind of thought about being a police officer was something that was kind of in the back of my mind. I was like, “Man, it's something I would like to do.” But it's quite it is quite an investment as far as like time. And, you know, you've got to, you know, hit all these marks and able to be able to do it. So, I was always a little bit leery of like, you know, the commitment to it, just where it was that, you know, was that something I would be able to do? And, you know, just kind of in that kind of mindset. And then I had my children and my youngest son, my son was two months old. And it kind of I kind of had that moment of like either I do it now and, you know, go at it a little bit later in life. I was 28 at the time. Or I just don't do it like, you know, just kind of, you know, either do it now or don't do it. And I was like, “Hey, yeah, it's a great time, you know? So, I'm going to go ahead and commit. This is something I, you know, thought about and kind of want to do.” And it's always stayed my mind for years, so I'm just going to do it. And the reason I chose UNT specifically was I went to school here. I had a lot of strong ties to the community. I felt like it gave me a lot. I was a first-gen college student, so I felt like I owed a lot to this university. Like, I felt like they gave me a lot of opportunities to be able to improve my life. And then, another thing, which was a big deal for me, was they were, they would fully sponsor you, which meant they would send me to the academy. They would pay for all of my gear, all of my equipment, all of my uniforms, the cost to go to the academy, they would pay me my salary, my full salary. They would do all of it for me. And at the time, again, I had two kids, so I couldn't afford to go to the academy, which is 8 to 5 and work because, because, you know, the academy still a lot of very intense, like, schoolwork, studying and testing, a lot of that kind of stuff. So, to be able to do that and work a full-time job and provide for my family just wasn't really feasible for me. So, they provided that way to get me to do that. And then, you know, in my mind then, I was like, “Hey, you know, I'll come in, I'll give them, you know, this will help ease me in to maybe, you know, police work, you know, give them, you know, four or five good years and then, you know, then I'll learn some stuff and then I'll, I'll be ready to, you know, to go on to bigger and better things.” And then I just found just, I really felt like I found my place here with this community. We're not like a lot of other agencies. We're not call-driven. We're officer-initiated driven. So, what that means is that we're not necessarily like we're not always getting calls. Now, those days do exist. But we're really, we're out in the community looking for stuff, right? So, you know, trying to help keep us safe. So, that gave me the ability to build relationships outside of the department, like, I had friends that worked, staff members that worked at like Willis Library, the Union, because that's all the hotbed places. If something was going to happen, it would be at Willis at 3 o’clock in the morning, right? So even when I was on night-shift patrol, I'd be in there and I would be talking to those folks, or I'd be at the Union talking to those folks in. So, I built those relationships and just really felt a part of this community. And so, that's kind of what kept me, that's what brought me here, it’s what's kept me here for so long.

Scott: That's awesome. I love to hear that. But any time I talk to somebody, it turns out they're an alum, I like to ask what's what year did you graduate and what was your major?

Causey: Yeah, so good question. I think that a lot of people really are really surprised by this. So, I graduated in August of ‘04, and my major was in fashion merchandising with a minor in business marketing.

Scott: That is a surprise. I would not have guessed that.

Causey: Everybody’s like, “Really?” I was like, “Yeah, that was like my gig back in the day.” The retail scene was a whole lot different, you know, almost 21 years ago. So, yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Scott: That's awesome. All right. And so, like we said, the spring semester has officially begun this week. So, you have anything spring specific or just general safety tips for students to keep in mind this time of year, or just general good practices or things to be aware of? I know especially, we saw this week big wreck on 35, so that creates traffic and there's always a lot of traffic and parking things going on the first week of school.

Causey: Yeah, absolutely. So, I think I take a good approach to this. What I say is like, for, if you're talking about like your personal safety, a huge thing is to just be aware of your surroundings. Like, you know, I give a talk, I do a lot of safety talks. That's a big part of what I do, you know, being in Community Engagement. And I get that a lot. Like, you know, “What's, what's the key takeaway?” And I really say the key takeaway in general safety, and whether you're on campus or off campus, is just general awareness, right? So, if you're walking around and I know you're going to be on your phones. Like, I'm on my phone if I'm, you know, walking from a different meeting to a different class, whatever it may be in. I'm, you know, check and see where I'm going and all that kind of stuff. Just don't let it overly consume you. Make sure you kind of look up, look around every once in a while. It’s going to give you the more time to react if somebody's trying to harm you. But also, it helps you out. Like, if somebody maybe is driving and they're not paying attention. Maybe it’s that first week of school, somebody is going the wrong way down the one-way and you're not, you know, and you're thinking, `Well, nobody will be coming from this way. It's a one-way street,’ you know, like all that kind of stuff. It just gives you that extra awareness of your surroundings. And then, I would say just kind of broader. I would say, know your resources around UNT. There are a lot of different resources. I actually recently was just responding to an email that somebody asked about resources and I was like, `Yeah, let me get you started.’ I started typing. Next thing I knew, I was like, you know, half-a-paragraph deep in in links to different things for people to know about, right? So, yeah, you know, think, you know, real simple things like no one about the, the, list, LYFT, excuse me, shuttle that will get you around campus late night that's offered through Transportation Services as well as like the E-ride, and so knowing how all that stuff works because that may not be like an immediate safety concern, but if you know that we that the Transportation Services offers that, then, you know, if you're leaving the library, you know, 2 o’clock in the morning, like, `Man, I don't you know, it's too late. I don't want to walk all the way back to Victory,’ or whatever may be. Then you're like, `Hey, I know this resource exists. I'll go in there and take care of it that way.’ You know, that kind of stuff, knowing like where the PD's located, right? Because our lobby’s open 24/7, 365. So, if you're driving and you think somebody is following you, you're like, `Man, where I go?’ If you already know where the PD is, you know, the lobby is open. So, like knowing all of that kind of stuff is a huge help to get to kind of get you. And then if I were to say anything like spring specific, I would say as we, you know, as all of our staff noticed, maybe not our students as much since class started today, but, you know, we just came back from the break and then we had some inclement weather days. There's, you know, I am absolutely no meteorologist, so I'm not predicting anything. But there's a chance that we could still get a couple of those days, right, like maybe in February or something. So, making sure that you're connected to, making sure that your Eagle Alert works. So, if those things are coming out, you're getting it. Making sure you're following at Mean Green Ready. That's our emergency services folks that can help, that will start pushing that information out. So, if weather emergencies are coming up, you'll know about them. You know, just all that stuff that gives you that little head’s up so, you know things are going on so you’re able to prepare and plan accordingly.

Scott: Very nice. Yeah, I love all those resources. And those are good things. You know, you don't always need them, but they're good to be aware of. Better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it.

Causey: Exactly. That’s the thing, if you just know it exists, then you can say, `Oh, I need this.’ Or like, I mean, even from, you know, stuff from not this, but even like, you know, food insecurities, like, you know, and the clothing closet, things like that. Like knowing UNT has those resources, so if you're going through that, it's maybe that one less thing that you can be concerned about, I guess.

Scott: Yeah. And you mentioned, you know, you've mentioned a few things there. Are there any other safety best practices or tips or resources that, you know, students or parents don't necessarily think about but is more commonly needed than they might expect that people should know about?

Causey: I would say big thing that I push is the U-Lock Program that we here have here at the PD. So, anybody that's riding bikes or scooters or something like that, that is part of the UNT community, they can bring that biker scooter up to the PD anytime because we're a 24/7 department. They come up here, we'll engrave their driver's license or state-issued I.D. on that bike or scooter, and then we'll give them a free U-Lock. There's, like, no strings attached. You get it as part this as part of being a UNT student will take care of you for that. Now, we do only give one of those. So, if you have, like, two bikes, you know, we'll give you one lock. Like, we’ll engrave all your stuff for you, but you get that one lock. And again, no strings attached. It takes, you know, if you come in, especially if you come in during the day, if I'm here, I'll run out and knock it out real quick and it takes just a few minutes. Just fill out the forms, will have all your stuff in case we come across it. But it's a great way to keep your stuff safe as well.

Scott: Nice. Yeah. It's a good resource to know about.

Causey: Absolutely.

Scott: All right. And then, last question, maybe a tough one. What is your favorite part about being a police officer at UNT?

Causey: I would definitely say the community overall. I really getting like getting out, interacting with the law, all the different folks. So, you know, anywhere from like doing this. Like, this is fun for me, to you know, I'll go and work a football game and meet like, talk to the athletic folks, you know. And it's like, knowing so many different people in so many different areas and seeing how they impact our students, and oftentimes in a great, positive way. And just there being so many, so many people that I don't necessarily work with daily, but, you know, I could I could get a hold of at any time if I needed something. Just a great bunch of folks, the people that we have. We all have one common mission to help our students to grow and be successful, productive members of society to get out there. So, I enjoy being a part of that process.

Scott: Yeah, that's great. All right, well, those are all the questions I have. Thank you again, Corporal Causey, for not just for joining us on the podcast, but for your service to keeping our UNT community safe. We appreciate it.

Causey: Absolutely. Thank you for having me on.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Alicia: Not Corporal Causey surprising us all with the fashion merchandising degree. We love that tidbit and all those good tips and resources.

Scott: Yeah, and it was great finally getting the chance to talk to Corporal Causey. I've worked here for eight years now and I've heard his name a bunch around the office, but never had a chance to work with him before. So, it's nice to finally put a face to the name.

Alicia: Same here. Big thanks to Corporal Causey and the entire UNT Police Department for everything they do to help keep our campus safe. Scott, I understand you have another “Democracy Primer” interview for us, but the last time I checked, the election wrapped up in November, bro. What's going on?

Scott: The election may be over, but democracy never sleeps, my friend. This is an interview I recorded for our original run last year but didn't get a chance to put it out before the election. Turns out that might have been for the best because I spoke to political science principal lecturer Eddie Meaders about why some government positions have term limits and others don't. And it just so happens that Texas Senator Ted Cruz recently introduced a constitutional amendment that would impose term limits on members of Congress. Keep in mind, this was recorded last year before Biden had even dropped out of the race yet. So, please forgive any dated references, but Eddie and I talked about what it would take to pass a constitutional amendment like the one Senator Cruz just introduced last week.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Scott: The first thing I wanted to ask you about was about term limits. Obviously, most people know there are term limits on the presidency, so the founding fathers recognized the need for that. But there aren't term limits for the Senate or the House or the Supreme Court. Can you speak to any idea why other offices don't have term limits similar to the presidency?

Meader: Well, first, the founders, when they wrote the Constitution, said nothing about term limits for the president, for the presidency. The tradition for the two four-year terms was kind of set by Washington. And Washington said, you know, two terms was enough. And he was the first president, wo he was kind of, you know, plowing the ground, for lack of a better term. But, I guess the thing that got people's attention, I think, was Franklin D. Roosevelt. And he served, of course, he was elected four different times and he died very early into his fourth term. He had served for eight years and I believe at the time his vice president was John Nance Garner, a Texan. And I think John Nance Garner had dreams of taking Roosevelt's place and had presidential aspirations. And then Roosevelt announces he's going to run for a third term. And so, Garner just packed up and went back to Uvalde at the time. But the term limits officially for the president were part of, but if you look at the 22nd Amendment, which was ratified back in 1951, Section One says no person shall be elected to the office of president more than twice, and no person who has held the office of president or acted as president for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected president shall be elected to the office of the president no more than once. But I think, you know, some of the thinking might have been that, you know, two terms is enough on that. But the founders the founders didn't say a word about it. They just said, you know, that the term the term that the president's elected to is four years. But there were no term limits when the Constitution was drafted in, you know, and came into being in 1787. Now U.S. representatives have a two-year term, U.S. senators have a six-year term. If we're looking at, you know, high officials in the federal government, federal judges serve for life. Of course, here in Texas, our governor serves for a four-year term, which originally started out as two years, and they lengthened it here a few years back. Lieutenant governor for four years. State representatives serve for two years, no limits. State senators, no limits. For our Texas high-court judges, that would be the Supreme Court of Texas, which handles all civil matters, so like property disputes or child custody issues, they are elected to a six-year term. There's no limit. They've got to be at least 35 years of age and under 75. So if you get too old …

Scott: Oh, there's an upper limit?

Meader: There is at least that age limit for our Texas high-court judges. But, of course, in Texas, we, we elect our judges in a partisan manner. They have to run in the primaries like we just had, you know, a few weeks back. In fact, two, maybe three, I know that there were several incumbent current sitting judges on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals that lost in the Republican Party primary. And they will not be they will not be coming back to office next January. And then, of course, the other state-appellate courts, which we call our state court, and then there's the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, which is another state high court that only deals with criminal matters. But they have a six-year term. And there is, there is that age restriction that kicks in, but that's only for our Texas high-court judges. And then, the Texas Court of Appeals judges, we have a state court of appeals in Dallas, in Fort Worth. If there's an appeal that's coming out of state court in Denton, it goes down to the court of Appeals in Fort Worth. It's just how the lines are drawn. But those judges have a six-year term with no limits. And then our state district judges, which you would see, you know, over here at the courthouse, those individuals have four-year terms with no limits on it. So, some states do it differently. You know, every state can be kind of differently. But up on the federal level, though, the only term limit is for the presidency. And no such thing for U.S. representatives and U.S. senators. Now, years ago, there was a movement and I don't remember if it was back in the seventies or the eighties. I kind of remember all this stuff, but then I'm also kind of getting old. But these are, you know, these are centuries for some of our students and stuff that I talk to. But there are a lot of perks to being a U.S. senator and being a U.S. representative. And I know one of the things that that reared up, they had, there was some sort of a rule or a perk in Congress that there was a bank. And, you know, if you're a member of Congress, you could use the bank. And what was interesting is you could draw checks off that bank like, you know, you and I would normally do draw if our bank account. Problem was, they would pull money out when there was no money in there to pull out. So basically, you know, they were taking a loan and the problem was there was no interest being charged on those withdrawals. And, you're in the seat of power. You're the elected official. You're talking to lobbyists, you're talking to interest groups. You know, you're making policy. It's kind of a big deal. And, I think, you know, maybe sometimes people get `the big head,’ is what I like to call it, in public office. And they’ve been up there for years. And I think, you know, to people that don't keep up with politics, which is a lot of people, you know, `Look, they're up there and they're doing all that. Do they care about me anymore? And do they even know what it's like to be, you know, a normal person out there,’ because they're so detached from reality up there? And so, the thinking was maybe, maybe let's limit the time that they can actually serve in office. And there was a movement. It actually went to the Supreme Court. There was a case that came out of Arkansas called Term Limits v Thornton. And in the Thornton case, basically what the Supreme … because the state of Arkansas tried to limit the terms of office for U.S. representatives from Arkansas, like Texas legislature, saying that Congressman Burgess, who's about to retire that, you know, you can't run, you can serve your two-year terms, but the state is going to limit you from serving more than X-number of terms or whatever. And that's basically what Arkansas was trying to do. And it got to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court said, `Arkansas, you can't do that.’ If you want to have term limits. The only way you're going to be able to get term limits on federal-elected officials is to amend the Constitution, which is what they did with the presidency and the 22nd Amendment. So if you wanted to say, `Ted Cruz, you can only run for two terms.’ Of course, he's a senator. He's up for reelection this year. Well, let's just say the Texas legislature tried to tell Senator Cruz you can only serve for three terms and then that's it. That would hunt. What you're going to have to do is, it would have to be a constitutional amendment. And then that's going to be I think it's like a two-thirds joint resolution of Congress. And then, you're going to have to have approval of the states to do that. And we've only had, you know, 27 amendments to the Constitution over its over its history. And that's easier said than done. So ultimately, you know, when it comes to term limits, it's up to the voter and the ultimate check on limiting somebody’s term is, `We're not sending you back.’ You either lose in the primary, you know, where the party is electing their, you know, who their candidates are going to be in the general election, or it's in the general election and you lose, and you're not, you're not going to get the job because the voters have voted you out of office. In Congress, chances of you getting reelected if you're a sitting representative or a sitting U.S. senator, chances are you're going to get reelected. And then, it all kind of depends on, you know, how safe is your congressional district based on how the state legislatures have driven the, you know, drawn the districts during the redistricting process. But, you know, some elected officials know that they're going to have a really good chance of getting reelected because there's, you know, it's drawn to benefit the Democrats or it’s drawn to benefit the Republicans out there and kind of minimize the opposition out there. But normally, if you're an incumbent, chances are you're going to get reelected. People don't like Congress in general. You know, you look at the public opinion polls and you look at Congress as an institution and people kind of hold their noses. But then, you say, `Well, what do you think about Congressman Jackson or what do you think about Congressman Burgess?’ And they’re like, `Oh, we love them.’

Scott: Yeah, kind of, `That's our guy’-type of thing.

Meader: Yeah, that's-our-guy-type of thing. But then, they look at the big institution and they have problems with it. But, you know, ultimately, if people will get out and vote and kind of keep up with things. And if they don't like the job somebody’s doing, vote them out of office. That's the ultimate term limit right there, and you don't need to amend the Constitution or do anything. But, you know, the problem is people keeping up with what their elected representatives are doing and paying attention, kind of having some sort of political awareness of the issues and all that. And that takes an awful lot of work. Must be people are like, `Gee, I’ve got to get to work. You know, I got to pick up the kids after soccer practice.’ Or then, you know, you've got all the other things in life that kind of get in the way and they kind of push politics in the back burner. You can't limit federal terms. But a lot of states, as a matter under their own state constitution, if a state wants to do that with a state official, that is perfectly fine. That's up to each individual state. Now, we don't do that in Texas, in general. You know, we've had some very long-serving governors -- Governor Perry, George Bush, Greg Abbott -- you know, that have been in office a very long time. And, one of the things that you talk about, or at least with the states. We haven’t chosen to do that on the statewide level. Now, you go out to California, and I think the governor out there is limited to two terms. I believe that's what the law is out there. I believe Governor Inslee up in Washington state can't run for reelection because of term limits. Virginia's got some some funny rules on that as well. You can get elected different times, but I don't know that you can serve consecutive terms. So maybe you serve four years, you sit out four years and then you can run again. But we do have, here in Texas, there are term limits, maybe down on the local level. Now, I don't live in Denton, I live in Lewisville, and I'm not aware of any kind of term limits for our city council members or whatever. But you look down in Dallas and I think there are limits to the number of terms you can serve as a Dallas City Council member. Or, I believe the same is true for the Dallas mayor, that there can be term limits, but that's down on the local level. And the folks in Austin, you know, the way the laws in Texas are written, that's OK. But, you know, statewide, you would have to amend pretty much everything we do in Texas. The legislature can do a lot but they're kind of restricted sometimes. And I don't know that they can outright pass legislation putting in term limits for our state, and especially our statewide elected officials. I suspect we’d have to get a state constitutional amendment and that has to go through the legislature and then the voters get to decide that in November. But we do have some of that here in Texas, but it's strictly going to be down on the local level if that's going to happen, but nothing on a statewide basis.

Scott: OK. It's just funny. You know, obviously my whole idea behind asking these questions and wanting to have these conversations is kind of admitting my own ignorance about all this stuff. And that was a perfect example, that I assumed it was a founding fathers’ thing putting in term limits. But then it wasn't ‘til, what was it you said, 1951 that that got put in place?

Meader: ’51 it was ratified. It was it was proposed by Congress in ‘47 and, you know, and then it was declared ratified in ‘51. So it took, you know, four years to get the thing done. You know, but amending the U.S. Constitution is not an easy task. One of the things I was going to tell you. One of the problems, though, if you limit the terms, you get somebody in there and let you say they're doing a good job and they get in there and maybe you say, `Well, you can serve for six years.’ OK, well, they've gotten in there. And you know, somebody like Congressman Burgess, I think, you know, he was a practicing physician for years and then he runs for Congress. But that's, there's a learning curve and you’ve got to know parliamentary procedure and then how Congress works and staff and who to talk to about when you got a question on pending legislation. There's all sorts of different things and there's a learning curve. But then, you get in there and you serve for 15, 20 years or something like that, you kind of know how things work. The problem is, you limit somebody like they have and you say, `Well, you've been doing a good job, a great job, in fact, but your time is up and now we're going to put in somebody new,’ and you’ve lost that institutional memory in a sense. You've lost the ability of that elected official who may have developed some expertise over the years in some substantive areas, you know, that Congress is dealing with. And then, all of a sudden, they can't serve anymore. And then you put somebody new in there and they have to learn it all over again. And that may not be, you know, some critics of term limits say, `Well, you're limiting somebody that knows what they're doing and you're getting rid of them. And now we're going to have to start the process all over again.’ And that may not be very efficient, because it's like this guy's doing a good job, and now, we're not going to let him do it anymore. You know, of course, the flipside of that is maybe they eek it out for a couple of terms. But, you know, you look at an elected official, they serve maybe four years or something, and then it's like, `Gee, they're awful.’

Scott: Yeah.

Meader: Or they're too controversial or, you know, any number of things. And then it's like, `Thank goodness we can, we don't have to deal with them after, you know, this next term because they're going to be gone and we can get somebody else in there.

Scott: You know, hearing you talk about it. It's something I never really thought about in terms of, you know, our political leaders, but it's something we think about in the workplace all the time. You don't want to have, you know, constant staff turnover because it's inefficient. And the same kind of principle applies to the government. It’s an interesting cost-benefit analysis to have to kind of take into consideration.

Meader: That's right.

Scott: So, you talked about it would have to be an amendment and a two-thirds approval of Congress. And so, like, they would have to do it to themselves essentially. And it's an interesting kind of, like, thought experiment in terms of strategy of, `OK, if I come out in favor of term limits and try to push for it and then it fails, then, you know, if I then serve for multiple terms, do I look like a hypocrite or do I just need to do it and keep fighting the good fight?’ It's an interesting kind of dilemma.

Meader: And I think there have been a few elected officials over the years that say, `Well, I'm only going to serve two terms,’ and then I don't know what happens to them. `Well, I think, I’ve rethought that. I'm going to run again.’ That can happen. But it is kind of interesting. It seems like, I don't know, Congress votes for an amendment for term limits. And it's almost like they're cutting their own throat, in a sense, because, you know, it's kind of, `Why would I do that? Why do I want to limit my term?’ And ultimately, you know, though, it's up to the voters to do that. But then, you know, you have to do it on the state. And it's kind of like with the Texas legislature, too. You know, the legislature could propose a constitutional amendment to limit their terms, but why would they do that? That's not really in their self-interest, at least individually. Now, you know, maybe it's good for the country or it's good for the state. Are they taking into account what's in the best interest of, from a societal point of view, not what's in their individual best interest or, you know, maintaining the perks and the power and the prestige, and then all of a sudden you say, `Well, I'm going to limit it.’ I don't know. That doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me that they would want to, they would want to do that. But just on the constitutional amendments, though, it's got to be a two-thirds vote in the House and the Senate. This is a most accepted way on amending the Constitution. It would be two-thirds vote in the House and the Senate. And then, then you have to have acceptance by the majority of the vote in three-fourths of the states, so that would be 48 states.

Scott: Oh, OK.

Meader: That's on the federal level. And, on the state level, it has to be resolutions from the Texas House and the Texas Senate, and then it goes to the voters in November.

Scott: That's for any amendment? It has to be approved by House and Congress and then it goes on to the ballot for the people to vote on?

Meader: Yeah. It has to it has to, a constitutional amendment to the federal Constitution has to be approved not only by the federal, the national government, but it also has to have the consent of three-fourths of the states. You know, so we think states don't have a lot of control over things. Well, if you're going to amend the federal constitution, the states have to agree to it and Congress has to agree to it.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Alicia: Dang, man. That's a lot of hoops to jump through to get an amendment passed. But, it is a pretty big deal, so it makes sense that you wouldn't want it to be too easy.

Scott: Yeah. When you're talking about making a change to the Constitution, you definitely want to make sure you dot all your I's and cross all your T's to make sure you get it right.

Alicia: Good stuff, Scotty. Very educational. You're going all out here in 2025 and brought us this next interview, too. Overachiever much? Just kidding. Tell us about our newest Eagle Abroad.

Scott: Yep. This is another one that was recorded last year while studio art major Sandra was studying abroad in Florence, Italy. Sandra goes by the nickname Stitch, and from what she told me, it sounds like Florence is a pretty good place to learn about art.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Blatz: My name is Sandra Blatz, but I also go by stitch.

Scott: What is your major and your classification?

Blatz: My major is studio arts and painting and drawing. I forgot the second.

Scott: Nice. And then you’re in your junior or senior? What year are you?

Blatz: I'm like, I don't know. So, like, when I get back, I’ll be into my senior year, so I guess technically senior.

Scott: OK, cool. Had you ever traveled abroad before going on this trip?

Blatz: No. This is my first time abroad. Yeah. First time. It's really great.

Scott: But what made you want to study abroad?

Blatz: Well, I wanted to study abroad specifically in Soresa, Italy, because my main painting is usually oil. And, you know, Italy is the born and raised of oil painting. So, I was super excited to like, see museums and see, like, you know, being in Florence while doing like painting and stuff. So that was like one of the main reasons why I wanted to go to Italy. And I've just always wanted to study abroad. I think I've always been telling my friends like, `I'm going to have a, what's it called, like, the book or whatever, filled with like stamps and stuff.’ I want to, like, in the future, once I graduate, you know, go to residencies or like have opportunities of like gallery openings in other states or other places because, because, you know, I want to be a full-time artist and have that availability.

Scott: Awesome. You mentioned Florence. So you're studying in, is the place you're studying in Florence?

Blatz: Yes, I am studying in Florence, Italy, with this school called SRISA, which is, oh, I'm trying to remember what the actual … I forgot. I just call it the abbreviation, so, I forgot what the actual name is, funnily enough. I could look it up, but I don't remember off the top of my head.

Scott: OK. No worries.

Blatz: I forgot. I always call it by the abbreviation, so … It's some San? Nope. Nope. Santa Reparata International School of Art. That's what it stands for.

Scott: SRISA. All right, cool. And it's a school of art, so I'm assuming I know the answer to the question, but what are you studying there?

Blatz: Well, like my classes? Because my major is technically the same.

Scott: Yeah, like what courses are you taking?

Blatz: I'm taking four, what is it called? Like, studio classes, and one like regular. It's Advanced Sculpture, Drawing Two, Book Arts. I’m, like, drawing a blank even though I just …

Scott: No, you’re good.

Blatz: OK, so Advanced Sculpture, Drawing Two, Book Arts. I’m forgetting one. Oh, Painting Three! Oh, my gosh. I feel bad. … And then, my last one is the Photo History, which I took more for fun because I don't really do photography, so I thought it'd be something. Also, technically, Book Arts I'd never done before. So those two were kind of, like, more for fun, but they’re still, like, within my major.

Scott: Cool. So, it's all, like, it's all art program, like art courses that you’re taking there.

Blatz: Yeah. And the art courses I am taking are all advanced because I'm in my advanced time period, I guess, because I'm basically a senior.

Scott: Yeah.

Blatz: All my teachers are great.

Scott: What's that?

Blatz: I said all my teachers are really great. I think they're all awesome.

Scott: Good. That’s great. How long is the program and how long have you been there already?

Blatz: It's four months and I’m basically almost am up with my four months, which is quite sad. I started January and I leave the end of April, so I'll be back in Texas in May, which is a little sad, but also, I'm a little sad about it. But, like, I imagine I'll sometime be back. I don't know when, but I will.

Scott: You mentioned that the professors have been great there. Tell me a little bit about kind of the program structure in terms of, you know, how is it different from taking classes in America and here at UNT?

Blatz: I don't know. I don't feel it's too different. Like, at least for me, you know, like art classes are kind of usually the same. You know, they give you, like, somewhat of a prompt and then you, like, interpret that prompt in how you think and how you feel. And then, you’re critiqued on that. I've been doing things material-wise differently, like painting with different materials or using different techniques that I'm taught differently. And, like, the structure, I think it's like kind of the same. I just feel like, you know, my workload might be a little bit less because, you know, I was like working and this and that. So, here I'm like, I'm still, like, stressed, but not as stressed because I don't have a million things to do. I only have to first focus on my classwork, which is good. But, at least for art-wise, it's similar, but it might be different for other, like, because there's other things you can't take at SRISA, like literature and stuff. But for, like, fine arts, it’s quite similar to, like, in UNT where like they give you a prompt, then you do that prompt, then you critique that prompt. Usually, I feel like most classes have, like, I would say, four or so projects, give or take. Maybe more. Actually, it's probably more than four. But, you know, you have your projects and your midterm. Then, you have a couple more projects and then your final.

Scott: Let's see here. You've kind of already answered this, but just in case there's anything you want to add: Talk about how what you're studying there relates to your degree program or what you want to do in the future as an artist.

Blatz: In the future, I want to be, like, a self-artist. Like, whether I'm, like, in galleries or in museums or like, you know, I'm kind of making my own things in my own studio and have showings of that. And I feel, like, for SRISA, it's kind of given me a little bit of like an outsider view of, like, working on something, producing something. Like, here especially … they kind of give you a prompt, but you're kind of like more independently than, like, in beginning years of, like art. The professors are, like, teaching you. They're teaching me. But, you know, in beginning, they're, like, holding your hand. Like,`OK, this is what you need to do, this and this, blah, blah, blah.’ Where here, it's like, `OK, you have this and this. It’s due this. Go have fun, do whatever you need to do.’ And then, you talk about, like, what you're working on and then you're working with other people. I also feel like here I'm like connecting with more the artists because there's, like, I would say, like, depending on the class, like, 20 max, probably less than that, working one-on-one with students talking about, like, what we're doing and everyone's doing different things, but we're all studying, coming from different parts of the States, studying in Italy. It's really fun and really fascinating, like, talking about what other people are doing and that's kind of, like, basically what I want to do. I, like, want to talk to other artists, connect with other artists, collaborate. Like, you know, not just solo. Like, yes, solo, but like, but I want to like, be around other artists constantly because that's, that's more fun. That's, that's I feel like how it should be. Artists should be always around each other, like, what's the word? Influencing, not influencing each other's work, but being inspired by others. Like, saying, `I like that idea. I'm going to, not steal it, but take inspiration from that idea.’ And, yeah. I don't know if I answered the question.

Scott: Yeah, no, for sure. Yeah, totally.

Blatz: I got off of the rail.

Scott: Yeah, you did great. Well, let's see here. What has been the biggest surprise about your experience so far?

Blatz: That's a good question. I don't know. There's some things that I thought I would like, you know, like, let's say my teacher would be like, `Oh, we're going to try this new technique.’ I would be like, `This is probably going to suck. I'm probably going to hate it.’ And I actually end up liking it. Like, `OK, wait, this is actually really cool.’ Or, or I've found, like, different techniques or something. I don't know, like, with, I've learned a couple of, like, materials here. Like, I've been introduced to … which was really interesting and I was like, telling the teacher, like, `Ugh. Why are you teaching me this? I'm probably going to hate it. It probably sucks.’ But I actually found it really interesting. And then, when for my painting, we were talking about like non-materials and like working with canvas and stuff. And then I was like,` No, I’m used to my canvas.’ And then, I started painting on like cardboard and paper and this and that. I was like, `This is actually really fun and cheaper, too, so I don't even have to spend money on this.’ Yeah, just different things surprising that of, like, trying new things, which I guess is more easier when you're not in a comfortable space. Like, you're comfortable, I guess, here, but it's like not what you used to do. So, it's easier to like, go beyond your comfort zone here, so it’s easier to be able to try new things and see new things because you're already out of your comfort zone. So, you might as well continue doing that.

Scott: Yeah. What has been the biggest challenge so far, whether it was, you know, before the trip, getting everything organized and making it all line up, or the logistics of getting there or, you know, coursework once you've been there?

Blatz: I already know what’s the biggest challenge.

Scott: OK.

Blatz: I already know what’s it’s going to be because it hasn’t happened yet. But I know it’s gonna be really hard, is shipping all my stuff back home. I have no idea how I’m going to do that. I have. I'm going to do it after our students show because our student show is the 19th. So, right after that, I'm going to take everything, put in into a box. Hopefully won't be a million dollars. There's one thing that is way too big, because I made a sculpture and it's really big. And I honestly, I don't think I can ship it, but I'm debating I might. But if I don't, I'm scared they're going to throw it away and I hope they don't throw it away. So, if I don't ship it, I hope they keep it or something. I don't know. We'll see. I know that's going to be really difficult and I'm not excited for that part. I already know it's going to be … I've been, I've been, what's the word? Like, anxious to this part because leaving and then packing it.b Because I didn't have anything. I literally came here with like almost no supplies. And now I have all these paintings and stuff and sculptures that I've made like, `OK, great. Now I have to put all that in a box and ship it home.’ I've been dreading it since I got here, and I’m still dreading it. I'm not excited but, I mean, I guess it's worth it, but I know it’s gonna be a pain. I’m not excited.

Scott: Yeah, that's really interesting. It’s something I never would have thought of because, like, you know, most study abroad, like, if you're going to learn a foreign language or like learn about different cultural stuff, you don't end up with a bunch of, like, stuff that you to bring home besides, like, souvenirs. But it’s a little different when you’re doing art.

Blatz: Yeah, it's a lot of stuff I have to send back home and hopefully it’s not too much money. I don't think so, because it's not heavy. It's a lot of like canvas or like paper or something, so I feel like it should be fine. Yeah. I'm worried it's going to be like, `OK, here's your box. That’ll be 1 million dollars.’ I'm like, `OK. I'm just going to go cry in a corner, give you my credit card and just look away.’ I don't think it'll be that much. But I'm not excited for that part. So, yeah, not at all.

Scott: What's been the best part? What's been your favorite part of this trip so far? Whether it's school work, or just a cultural or personal experience. What's been the best part for you?

Blatz: There's so many good parts. I don't know. There's different good parts. There's parts that’s definitely good about SRISA. There's parts that I've experienced art-wise. Like, I, I'm a nerd. I kind of love doing my, I love like going to the studio and like working on my stuff. So, when I'm like, even though I love … like, SRISA gives you, like in your tuition, like a certain amount of field trips, which is really fun. So, I went to all of them. I think it was like four or five. So, that was really fun. I got to go to different places in Italy. I went to Venice, Modena, Lucca, Tuscany, a lot of great places, which that was really fun. And then, I met a lot of great people. I know I already said this, but I'm saying it again. I've met a lot of great people here at SRISA. I, like, made a lot of friends. All my roommates are great, all my like classmates are great. I love like talking to people about art and doing art stuff with other art people. That's really fun. There's another thing, but I kind of forgot what it was. I don't know. There's been like a lot of things that have been really great about studying here. Yeah, I don't know. I love doing art. I love talking to people about doing art and then exploring new places, which is a plus one. Yeah.

Scott: Yeah, that's great. You mentioned all that travel around Italy. Have you gotten to travel outside of the country at all since you've been there?

Blatz: No, I … Actually, yes, I forgot I did. OK. The only thing that's a little silly is that since I'm here and I'm doing a lot of stuff, everything kind of blurs. Everything blurs together and I forgot I went here, but I went there. But I went to, for spring break, I went to Amsterdam, which is in the Netherlands, and then I went to Berlin, Germany, both for like about almost a week each.

Scott: Wow.

Blatz: Amsterdam was really beautiful, very quiet. And Berlin was very chaotic and silly. And the German people are interesting. They were interesting. They just have a very direct tone, so they could be really happy but sound really annoyed. I'm like, `Are you mad at me?’ but that’s just how they speak. That’s just how they speak. While it’s the opposite for Amsterdam people, where they just sound nice all the time. I'm like, they could be yelling at me. I'd be like, `Aww, thank you.’ It was so weird going from one to the other. It was like a total culture change within like a couple days. So that was fun. I wish I went to more places but didn’t have the opportunity to.

Scott: Yeah. Beyond the educational experience, how has this trip impacted you?

Blatz: I don't know. So, there's a lot of things that I've been impacted by. So, one, in home in Texas, I don't do like dorms or anything. I've never done that. So here, like almost basically having my own space, because I live with my parents and stuff like that, was really interesting. I mean, I technically do at home. Like, my parents are chill and stuff. But like, it was different. My parents weren’t there. They weren't even in the same country with me. So, like, that was like new. I know most people do that an early age, but I did it. I'm sorry. So that was new for me. But had my fun share of partying moments, I guess. But I've also studied really hard. So, do both. Have a fun life, be fun, but also do hard work, you know?

Scott: Yeah, that's good. Great advice. What, for any students who, you know, hear this interview and have thought about studying abroad but not sure if they can make it happen or not sure if it's worth it, what advice would you have for them?

Blatz: When I first applied to this program, I wasn't even sure I was going to get in. I was like, `I don't know if I'm going to get in. I don't know. I just want to see if I can.’ And then it was like, boom, I did. And then it was like, `OK, great.’ That opens the opportunity for scholarships, for this, for that. I didn't obviously get every single scholarship I got, but since I was like going out the country, you know, my, my financial aid did go more up. You know, if you really can like, if you know, especially if you're planning like, like, I still knew I wanted to do it, so I still was saving. So, you know, saving the money if you can. If you can't, then you can't. Who knows? Even if you do try and you get in and you don't have the money, the worst that you have is you don't go. But it opens opportunity that if you fly again and do have money, that you have a more opportunity to be accepted because you were already accepted once. So, they're probably going to be like, `Yeah, you were accepted this time, but you know, you weren't able to go.’ So, honestly, I would totally recommend it. I think I never thought I would be able to, you know, I'm a first-generation student, so even going to college in the beginning is pretty crazy for my family. So, studying abroad is even crazier. So, if you have the opportunity, have the availability, please do it. It's super great. I don't know. I think it expands your mind, it expands your experiences. Like, it changes you a little bit. You're like, I know when I get back to Texas, I don't know that much Italian, but I'll be like, `C'iao, c'iao bene.’ People will look at me upside down with me, like I’m crazy. But I’m like, `You don’t get it. I was in Italy for four months. Can’t you see it? I’m a whole new person.’ I don't know. I think it's a really great experience, especially if you like, if you're doing something you love, like art or something like, whatever you're doing and you really love it, to experience it in a new place is really great. And being surrounded by people, I mean I already am at UNT, but it's just like a different experience. I don't know. New experiences are always great and I say if you have the opportunity, definitely take them.

Scott: Very nice. All right, last question: Do you have any other fun stories from your trip that you'd like to share with us?

Blatz: Well, there's a lot of there's a lot of ones. But other than like meeting new people, I've met a lot of great communities here. I've met a great queer community here. It's really a great queer community here, actually. Surprisingly. Met a lot of people, like, I don't know, there's been a lot of people, like, even my professors. They're, like, really good at what they're doing. They know what they're doing. I’m like, `What? No wonder you’re teacher. You know what you're doing.’ They've all had different experiences and different lives. Most of the people here are usually born in America and they’ve come here. So basically, almost done what we've I've done where they’ve like come to America, studied abroad, and then they were like, `I want to do this again,’ but taught it and taught it for years, have been doing what they want to do in art for decades. So, some of them have like 30-something years of like whatever they're doing experience. Or, I have a teacher that's done residencies in I think Antarctica or something like and then have galleries and this and that. I'm like, `You guys are amazing. Like, how do you like all that's crazy.’ Like, they all have different experiences and different like, so even learning from them and then seeing other people like doing new things or trying new experiences and building a community that like you can like talk to and see like what they're doing and, who knows, maybe you'll come and like, I don't know. I feel like building a community is, like, good and then building almost like, in a business aspect, like building, like, people you know, and like …

Scott: Networking?

Blatz: Yeah, networking in a way. Like, you know, talking once … I can't think of the word. Amongst each other, like going back and forth, like having those connections, having the availability to talk to people. Yeah, I don't know. Trying new experiences, doing new things, eating new foods. Yeah. And, you know, I didn't drink wine before this, and now I drink a lot of wine. It's really interesting when in when in Italy, you learn things. You learn things. I know the difference between a dry and smooth wine now. It's fascinating. The pizza here is great. Some of some food I do miss. I do miss some, like, barbecue sauce and Mexican food in Texas. But, I'll get there. The food here's quite nice and people here are good. One thing, though, because you know the movies, you think a certain place is going to look like a certain thing. Florence is more city-like than you would think. I was expecting lots of land, this and that. It's small but quite city-like. A lot of like people walking around, biking around, this and that. Not a lot of trees and such. I was expecting more nature. Not a lot of nature. You would think from the movies there's like so much nature. There is in some parts of Italy.

Scott: Yeah. You picture like Italian countryside type of thing.

Blatz: Yeah, but that's only in some parts of Italy, not in Florence. Florence is like the central, it’s, it's like the New York of Italy. It's very, yeah, it's very crowded with tourists and people and this and that. So just so you know, it's not like the movies. Any place you go, it's like a movie star. Don’t listen to the movies.

Scott: All right. I really appreciate you taking the time, Stitch. Thank you so much.

Blatz: Of course.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Alicia: Scott, the Eagles Abroad are giving me travel envy again.

Scott: I know. We'll have to see if we can set up some kind of “Happy Friday North Texas” world tour. We expense that, right?

Alicia: LOL. Totally. But, while we're getting that figured out, I'm going to move us along to our first Q&A of 2025. What are we talking about today, Scottie.

Scott: Well, after we got to enjoy a couple of rare snow days last week, our question today is, what's your favorite snow day activity?

Alicia: Well, my favorite snow day activity is getting cozy in bed, lighting some candles, maybe open up a book, pop some popcorn, put on a movie, preferably “Twilight,” because it's very moody and nostalgic for me. And what about you, Scott?

Scott: I’ve got to go with sledding. We get the opportunity so rarely around here, but we've got a pretty decent hill near our house. So, when there's enough snow or even ice, which is what we usually get, the sledding is pretty good. Plus, the kiddos are at the age now where they can get up and down the hill themselves so they get nice and worn out for an afternoon nap. I was able to take them sledding three days in a row and they had a blast. Only drawback: I may or may not have cracked a rib on one of my turns down the hill. Our student reporter, Anthony Simone, trekked out to campus to see what some of our students like to get up to on a snow day.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Anthony: So, last week there was very cold weather. We're expecting more next week. What are, what is something or some things you like to do during a day off because of the cold weather?

Student 1: I mean, probably the main thing is sitting inside with friends and just kind of relax, you know, not have to worry about anything outside and just sit around, talk, maybe play a few games or something. Just kind of do nothing, you know?

Student 2: OK, so for me, on my day off, I typically like to watch movies and hang out with my family, especially if it's snowing and I can't be outside. That's the best option for me. But hopefully, we'll stay safe next week.

Student 3: I mean, building a snowman, of course, is one thing. Hanging out with your family, doing board games, because I know I'm not sure if there’s going to be power out or the electrical grid is going to go out. So, mostly you’ve just got to stay in and make hot chocolate, make teas. But I feel like after the cold, it's going to go back to hot. So, I know for a fact it's going to go from 29, I think 29 or 20 degrees, then it’s going to go up to probably 70 degrees. So, I don't think it's going to be a problem in the cold since the hot is going to come anyways.

Student 4: I like to lay in bed and watch movies, unless it snows. And I'll go outside and I'll build a snowman and make a snow angel.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Alicia: Well, now that you've heard from us and some students, we want to hear from you. Tell us all about your favorite snow day activities by emailing us at podcast@UNT.edu or calling us at 940-565-4341 and stay Mean Green Ready. Next week's forecasts are looking chilly and are saying we might get some snow flurries, so be on the lookout.

Scott: And remember to tell a friend about the show. Share it on social media or leave us a rating and review wherever you listen. Until next time, we hope you have a Happy Friday, North Texas.

Alicia: And go, Mean Green.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Scott: “Happy Friday, North Texas” is a production of the University of North Texas. Today’s show was produced and edited by Scott Brown with original reporting by Scott Brown and Anthony Simone. For more information, visit UNT.edu/podcast.

Scott: And it's going.

Alicia: I’m speaking Dutch today.

Scott: Well, I'm not going to sniff that loud. With Law Enforcement Appreciation … Appreciation …

Alicia: Dang, man. OK, I’ll start over.

Scott: Sorry.

Alicia: You're going out. Sorry. Doing it again. La, la la la la la.

Scott: I know. I'll see if we can get.

Alicia: But that's pretty much it. That's, that's what I enjoy to do. La, la la la la la. Cut it off. When I start yapping like that, cut it off.

Scott: I like, legit, hurt myself sledding so, like, it hurts to laugh.

Alicia: You can add that in the bloops.

Scott: Yeah, we’ve got some bloops now. You said it, `And stay Mean Green ready!’

Alicia: You like that? Mean Green ready

Scott: It was good. You sold it. You sold. OK, we're almost there.