

A day in the life of a Commercial (Business and Property) Pupil: Part Four

Since returning to work after a short Christmas break (and the BSB ethics exam), my time in pupillage has passed by at terrifying speed. As I write this, I have about four weeks until my first day of second six.

My supervisors and clerks are revelling in the countdown, barristers keep making comments like “you must be on your feet soon”, and there are already three hearings in my diary... eek!

Everyone warned me that first six is a rollercoaster of emotions. Each week I have swung wildly from feeling like I will never be able to stand up in court, to wishing I was working on my own cases right now. Today, I am somewhere in the middle of those extremes.

I am not sure if anyone ever feels 100% ready to start second six and I think that is probably a good thing. It is important to accept that you don't know everything – and that no one expects you to, either – so you remain open to making mistakes and learning from them.

A healthy dose of nerves will also spur you on to prepare your cases thoroughly. One member of chambers always says that your first brief will be the best prepared case you will ever do. Whether that is out of excitement or sheer terror I am not sure, but it must be true.

I spent the last few days shadowing one of my supervisors at a three-day multi-track trial. We were robed so I got to wear my wig and gown for only the second time during my five months in pupillage. This probably sounds mad to criminal practitioners, but such is the life of those of us doing business and property work.

The trial was heard in a relatively small court room and there were eight witnesses plus solicitors and mini-pupils in attendance, so space was limited. As a result, my supervisor invited me to sit next to him on the front row. After five months of watching the backs of people's heads in court, it felt strange to sit right in front of the judge and his clerk.

Sat there as I was for three days, without the protective shield of Counsel sat in front of me, made it truly hit home that it is only a matter of weeks before I go into court in my own right, to advocate on behalf of my own clients, as Ms Cross of Counsel.

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