

## Entry One

So, it begins. Pupillage. After years of navigating a possible route to the Bar, I sat on a train from Liverpool to Manchester the week before starting in Chambers, thinking about my journey (not the one with Northern Rail!). When thoughts turned to my upcoming start date I felt a mixture of apprehension, curiosity, lots of excitement and a good helping of disbelief at getting this far.

In the previous week, I had met with my pupil supervisor, Chloe Fordham. It was a great introduction to what was to come. Chloe mapped out my first week and we talked through some practical points, including a discussion about keeping an accurate pupillage diary and regularly cross-referencing the Professional Statement.

Week One began in Crown Square, Manchester. Chloe was working on a lengthy fraud trial in London which was overrunning, so she had arranged for me to join the formidable team of Paul Hodgkinson and Harriet Lavin. They were representing the Defendant in a 5-week trial. Down the row sat their equally formidable colleagues from Chambers, Alaric Bassano and Hannah Forsyth, acting for the Prosecution.

The indictment contained various counts covering attempted murder, rape, making threats to kill and counts for section 18 causing grievous bodily harm with intent, amongst other offences. The array of offences offered a good opportunity to remind myself of the elements the prosecution must show to the criminal standard of proof and how a detailed timeline and the sequence of events could offer opportunities for probing evidence.

However, the people on the ground and how the trial unfurled were what captivated me. Immediately, I was able to observe the leader/junior relationship between Counsel on both sides and how tasks were completed as a team. I saw how a leader might work through parts of the case theory with their junior, continually sculpting strategy and argument as the evidence is gradually adduced by witnesses. It was fascinating to see how some of the 'puzzle pieces' fit together.

A question of ethics presented itself soon into Week One - not having discussions with the Complainant partway through their evidence. Ethical conduct underpins everything at the Bar — that much you are taught at Bar school — but it was useful to see how these questions appear in real time rather than in abstract. It allowed me to think broader than just 'what should I do/not do?' but also 'if I'm not sure, who might I ask for advice?', 'do I know anyone who has experienced this before' or 'what could happen as a result of this ethical problem?'.

Several days, witnesses and points of law later, I finished Week One away from the trial with Tom Farr, a recently admitted tenant to Chambers (and writer of previous Pupillage Diary entries). Tom allowed me to shadow him for a day of Sentences and a PTPH (Plea and Trial

Preparation Hearing) for a trial in October. A patchwork of different tribunals and court rooms saw us navigating around Crown Square. Tom was consciously updating ushers and clerks as to his whereabouts and, when defending, whether he needed more time with clients before the case was called on.

The day with Tom presented lots of useful learning points, but one I wanted to highlight for this diary entry was the importance of excellent people skills. Prompt communication with court staff and sensitivity to their roles is key to a smoother running court. Concise, clear language is a must when in conference with a Defendant. Readiness to explain anything in simpler terms is also crucial. It made me think about the need for practice and to continue trying my own ways to find what feels natural... and check my knowledge on procedure and the law!

A real treat was attending a Chambers event on the Saturday evening to celebrate several members going to the Bench. Events like this are a great way to meet lots more members of Chambers than you might meet on a normal working day, particularly from different disciplines and different cities. I got to sample the collegiate, supportive environment that I had heard so much about, but seeing is truly believing!

Week Two sped by as I continued my observation of the trial. Every day was different and presented its own challenges to the advocates: managing the feeling of the room during questioning, being alive to every answer given, managing the expectations of the defendant before him giving evidence – the list goes on.

It was nearing the close of the prosecution's case. Counsel were required to negotiate at length over the 'Agreed Facts' in the case. This is a written document, read to the jury, containing facts that can be taken as 'conclusive evidence' as they are admitted after agreement from the defence. This means they are not disputed. The parties need to consider the specific wording in the document and how it could be perceived by the jury. It underlined the duty to act in the best interests of the client and the need to possess excellent written skills.

If you have gotten this far, I hope you have found this diary entry useful, interesting or a mixture of the two. In an attempt to make it more useful, I will offer an insight as 'food for thought' at the end of each of my entries, for anyone thinking over the process of Pupillage.

Here goes: pupillage is a marathon, not a sprint. You will be far from the finished product on Day One – that's ok. At first, turn up on time, be nice, be receptive, be *respectful* and take it one step at a time (but with some hustle if you're moving between courts).