

Shadowing [Old Bailey Solicitors](#) - 3 Week Update

The past three weeks shadowing at [Old Bailey Solicitors](#) have been invaluable. For someone in their final year of law school, who had never stepped foot into a law firm before, this experience solidified my confidence in pursuing a future career in law.

In the first two weeks, I had the pleasure of shadowing [Jeanette Appleton](#), a Chartered Legal Executive Advocate, who graciously walked me through the court system and introduced me to a particularly interesting client. After first meeting with the client it was apparent they faced challenges when coping with stress and often had emotional outbursts that could potentially hurt their credibility court. It was evident that the client deeply mistrusted the justice system and was desperate for their story to be heard. As a result, this led to a lengthy meeting with [Richard Cherrill](#), the Barrister, due in part to the client's tendency to dwell on irrelevant facts or evidence. However, both Ms. Appleton and Mr. Cherrill made a supreme effort to instill confidence in the client whilst encouraging him to focus on the relevant information.

I discovered that, in some cases, lawyers must go above and beyond to make their clients feel appreciated and understood. Ms. Appleton demonstrated a productive amount of empathy that aided in a successful meeting overall. From what I have observed, empathy in a lawyer-client relationship can only be obtained by remaining entirely honest. In an article written by Dan Defoe, he confirmed my understanding of client-lawyer relationships and illustrated how empathy is a powerful tool for client satisfaction.¹ This was further supported in an academic article written by Robin Wellford Slocum, where he expressed that effective lawyers have developed a wide empathetic range where they can meet the client emotionally while remaining attentive to the relevant facts of a case.²

In my second week I observed a client meeting where the accused was facing a significant prison sentence. The client was adamant that he had no intention to commit the offence, but was questioning whether he should be seeking a plea bargain. Though Ms. Appleton and the barrister, [Archie Mackay](#), were unable to make the decision for the client, they prudently explained the potential consequences of his choice should he plead guilty.

What I have taken away thus far is a considerable understanding of the challenges criminal lawyers must face on a daily basis. I witnessed extremely vulnerable people, in a seemingly hopeless position and who believe themselves to be at a dead end. I have also witnessed others who are determined to fight for freedom. Though I have only been to two court proceedings and experienced a typical office day, I am very grateful for this opportunity to allow me to shadow a job that not many have the privilege to experience.

- Sarah Gallagher, University of Sussex

¹ Dan Defoe 'Emotional Intelligence, Lawyers and Empathy- Using The Power of listening With Care to Build Better Professional Relationships and Satisfy Clients (Psycholawlogy, 25 November 2012) <<https://www.psycholawlogy.com/2012/11/25/emotional-intelligence-lawyers-and-empathyusing-the-power-of-listening-with-care-to-build-better-professional-relationships-and-satisfy-clients/>> accessed 19 November 2019

² Robin Wellford Slocum, 'An Inconvenient Truth: The Need to Educate Emotionally Competent Lawyers' (2011) 45 Creighton L Rev 827