Criminal Prosecution

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CHAPTER 1
CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

A. Overview

Criminal prosecution in the U.S. is conducted at the federal level, predominantly by the Department of Justice through "Main Justice" in DC and the U.S. Attorneys' Offices (USAOs) that are scattered across the country. At the state and local level, District Attorney Offices (sometimes referred to as County or State's Attorneys), which are distributed across the major cities of most states, take the laboring oar, typically with some involvement of the State Attorney General's Office.

Many Yale law students are interested in finding summer employment at a U.S. Attorney's or District Attorney's (DA) Office due to the exciting cases, solid litigation experience, and public service that these offices provide. Careers in criminal prosecution attract many of our alumni, for reasons best expressed by them:

> *In this job, you never feel that what you do on a day to day basis does not matter; you are always working hard to help make communities safer and to represent fairly and objectively the interests and rights of those who are impacted by crime.*
>
> *There are very few jobs where young attorneys get so much responsibility so early in their careers.*
>
> *Quite frankly, this is not a job you take for the money. . .The real reward of this job. . .is in going to work each day knowing that what you are doing makes a real and positive difference in people's lives.*
>
> *In a typical day, I'll see something hilarious and something heart-breaking, something rewarding and something frustrating, but never, ever boring.*
>
> *Along with the pleasure of puzzle-solving come the same fascinating underlying facts in immense variety, and the satisfaction of litigating cases that matter.*
>
> *I wanted a job where I was doing work that mattered, where I was fighting about issues like justice and liberty rather than about money, and where the marching orders were to do the right thing rather than to win at all costs. I am happy to report that the job. . .is all those things and more.*

This guide will explore these careers and provide guidance in pursuing the path of criminal prosecution.

1. Summer Internships

a. Benefits

During the summer many U.S. Attorneys' Offices and District Attorney Offices employ first- and second-year law student volunteers. There are a number of reasons that these offices attract a large number of students year after year. First, volunteering at a criminal prosecution office for a summer provides students with an opportunity to experience the inner workings of the courtroom with some of the best trial lawyers in the country. For those who want to become prosecutors or other types of trial lawyers, these

jobs provide both helpful experience and valuable contacts. Even for students who choose not to continue in a related field, most USAOs and District Attorney Offices are widely respected places to work and the experience will be an asset in future job searches.

b. Qualifications

Hiring decisions rest heavily on outstanding references and a resume that demonstrates intelligence, commitment to public service, and good research, analysis, and writing skills. Trial experience is also a plus but not expected for summer positions. If you are a first-year student, you will probably not have had much of a chance to differentiate yourself from your classmates in terms of legal experience, but if you have handled a project for the Pro Bono Network, worked at the Temporary Restraining Order Project (TRO), or are planning to take a clinic in the spring, definitely include these experiences in your resume. Relevant experience also includes any paid or volunteer position in which you were called upon to research, write, advocate, present, exercise judgment, or use any other lawyerly skills. Also include activities that show an interest in government work, litigation, or criminal and civil justice including prior work, volunteer experiences, or your choice of law school classes.

c. Procedure

Your cover letter should state your strong interest in working for the particular U.S. Attorney's or District Attorney's Office to which you are applying. Detailed information about the unique qualities of each office can be obtained by contacting students who have worked in them, writing to the graduate mentors included in this guide, or contacting the offices directly. Refer to CDO's *Introduction to Career Development* for examples of resumes and cover letters.

The Interview

Summer positions are usually obtained through a short (20-30 minute) interview, either on the phone or in person. Interviewers are typically one or more prosecutors involved in the summer hiring program. Second-year students applying to DA offices which might consider making permanent offers after the summer should be prepared for a longer interview process, possibly involving a second round of interviews with a panel. Typical questions explore why the student wants to work in a criminal prosecution office, why they want to work in that particular office, and other general questions about law school and past experiences. The use of criminal hypothetical questions is rare at this type of interview, although commonly used in interviews for permanent positions.

2. Attorney Hiring

a. Qualifications

Law School

Because only experienced attorneys are typically hired for Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) positions, law school activities are usually eclipsed by subsequent employment experience. It is possible to get a District Attorney position just after graduating from law school, but law school activities will receive greater scrutiny. A new graduate without at least one clinic, summer job, or significant experience related to criminal justice work may be hard pressed to convince a DA office that they are truly interested in criminal law. Either way, law school experiences can help to inform students about the role of a criminal prosecutor, prepare the student for the duties involved in the job, demonstrate the student's skills and interests, and establish strong references. YLS offers a variety of experiences through student groups,

journals, moot court, clinical programs, externships, and CDO programs to accomplish these goals. For example, clinical work and membership in a student organization demonstrates strong interest in the criminal justice system.

The activity that probably best demonstrates a student's strong interest and ability to be an AUSA or to work with the DA's office is the prosecution externship. Students who participate in this externship assist either state or federal prosecutors in a variety of tasks, including preparation of appellate work and prosecution of both misdemeanors and felonies. Placement in a U.S. Attorney's Office for the externship must be arranged at least four months in advance so that a security clearance may be obtained. To learn more about this opportunity, contact Professor Jay Pottenger at (203) 432-4821.

One alumnus who is now an AUSA warned that some offices may be skeptical about applicants' commitment to working for the prosecution, especially graduates from highly-ranked law schools like Yale which are perceived as being "liberal" or "pro-defense." These offices may question whether you are really committed to working in the public interest and specifically for the prosecution. They will want to see that you're really "in it for the long haul," rather than just for the prestige or the excellent trial experience the job provides.

Experience

An USAO typically requires several years of experience for a permanent hire. District Attorney Offices are more likely to be willing to hire a graduating student and train them on the job, but will also hire laterally. There are three steps attorneys can take to obtain the best recommendations and experience possible for an application to the USAO or a District Attorney's office. First, do excellent work in all of your jobs so you and your employers will have no problem speaking of your skills, accomplishments, and dedication. Second, be aware that past employment and employer recommendations will be judged not only as to their content regarding your experience and character, but also by the perceived quality of the former employer's office. Knowing that you will be judged by your employment choices makes it all the more important to choose employers who do good work and provide solid training and an environment for excellence. Finally, choose employment or experiences that allow you to develop relevant skills and that demonstrate your commitment to public service generally, or to the criminal justice system specifically.

Because U.S. Attorneys and District Attorneys are responsible for their own hiring, and these individuals differ in what they regard as the best prior work experience for becoming a criminal prosecutor, it is difficult to describe any "correct" path. For example, a number of AUSAs have moved directly from the Department of Justice (DOJ), as the Honors Program hires directly from law school. Some U.S. Attorneys prefer candidates who have worked in a District Attorney's office because of the prosecutorial experience, while others question the quality of the training received at a given District Attorney's office because of the demands of their heavy caseloads. Working with a State Attorney General's office provides experience that may be valued in the hiring process. In addition, working in a litigation department of a law firm is often considered to be worthwhile, but working in the trust and estate or corporate department may not be highly valued. In developing your experience keep in mind that most USAOs and District Attorneys keep a strong emphasis on substantive trial experience, including extensive research, writing and analysis.

Summer or term time work in criminal prosecution is obviously highly relevant for several reasons. It not only helps you to develop relevant skills, but also allows you to get to know AUSAs and Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs), or even the U.S. Attorney or District Attorney. These individuals can then vouch for your ability and commitment, if not hire you themselves, when you are later looking for this type of work.

Judicial clerkships are also generally regarded as a plus since most employers feel they help develop research, analysis, and writing skills and provide their own brand of courtroom experience. For an AUSA, the federal clerkships have several other advantages. A law clerk will hopefully be able to obtain a solid reference from his or her judge, probably an individual who is highly respected in the U.S. Attorney community. In addition, a law clerk will have an opportunity to meet the AUSAs appearing before the court and to establish a working relationship with them that may serve him or her well later on. This is especially helpful if a law clerk is clerking in the district in which he or she plans to practice.

Character

A hiring criterion consistently emphasized by criminal prosecutors is the importance of a strong commitment to the criminal justice system and to public service. The unique and powerful role played by prosecutors in our criminal justice system requires that individuals who carry out this function have a strong respect for the process. While the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and District Attorney Offices look for individuals who are comfortable advocating the punishment of convicted defendants, they also look for individuals who will have the sense of fairness that ensures the credibility of the entire criminal justice system.

In addition, an AUSA represents the United States of America and an ADA represents the state. These prosecutors work closely with victims, witnesses, opposing counsel, defendants, juries and judges. All should be left with a sense of the competence and fairness of the individual and the office. Lest this leave you with the sense that you must present a Lincolnesque demeanor, prosecution offices, like most employers, really value a person of maturity and judgment who will "fit" in the office. A sense of humor, good interpersonal skills, and a sense of professionalism can go a long way.

b. Procedure

The Interview

Interviews for positions as a criminal prosecutor tend to be different from a typical law firm or even public interest interviews, both in rigor and content. Although each of these offices is independent in their hiring process and can follow their own unique procedures, it is common to find multiple rounds of interviews for a permanent hire and the use of certain questions to probe the candidate's commitment to criminal justice and ethics.

Rounds

For both USAOs and DA offices, it is not uncommon for there to be two to four rounds of interviews prior to an offer. These interviews can range from one-on-one meetings with the recruiter to five-person panel interviews. A very common element is a final interview with the District Attorney or U.S. Attorney. Although several rounds of interviews are common, it doesn't always mean they are on different days. If a candidate has traveled far for an initial interview, the committee may try to stack the rounds in one visit to spare the candidate travel expenses, especially since prosecution offices cannot cover interview expenses.

Below are examples of the interview process for several offices that are popular among YLS students.

Connecticut U.S. Attorney's Office, New Haven:
1. First interview with the hiring committee of 6-10 people
2. Second round with the potential direct supervisor(s)
3. Final interview with the U.S. Attorney

Eastern District of New York (EDNY):
1. First round with 3 senior AUSAs
2. Second round with the Division Chief
3. Final interview with the U.S. Attorney

New York County District Attorney's Office (Manhattan):
1. First interview with one Hiring Board member
2. Panel interview with three Hiring Board members
3. Executive Panel interview with the Director of Legal Hiring and two ADAs from the Executive Staff
4. Interview with District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr.

Suffolk County, MA District Attorney's Office:
1. One-on-one interview with an ADA
2. Second interview, typically with two individuals, usually including the District Court Chief

Philadelphia District Attorney's Office:
1. Prescreen interview with an ADA
2. Full committee interview (20 minutes) with at least five members of the Hiring Committee

Interview Questions

Before going into what will likely be a rigorous interview, candidates should familiarize themselves with the distinctive interview process for prosecutorial positions. In addition to possibly speaking to a CDO counselor or consulting with a classmate who has gone through the process, candidates can review the following resources available in CDO's Handout Drawer, which offer helpful suggestions about these interviews: *The Criminal Hypothetical and Other Unique Aspects of the Criminal Law Interview Process* and *Sizing Up the Prosecution: A Quick Guide to Local Prosecution*.

Typical interview questions attempt to probe four areas: knowledge and desire for the job, legal qualifications, ethical qualifications, and fit with the office culture.

To explore the candidates' knowledge and desire for the job, the employer will ask why the candidates want to be a DA or AUSA and why they want to work at this particular office. Prepared candidates should be ready to demonstrate their commitment to public service, interest in the criminal justice system, and knowledge of the particular office in issue.

The interviewer will try to examine the candidate's legal qualifications for the job by learning more about the specifics of their training in litigation skills and criminal justice. Not every candidate has solid litigation or criminal justice experience, but a successful candidate will be prepared to discuss how either their courses, legal experience, or other activities demonstrate their ability to take on this difficult practice. It is important to note that USAOs tend to focus more on practice experience since they almost never hire students immediately after graduation, but instead look to the intervening years as a more accurate assessment of skills and interests. For DA offices that hire right out of law school, law school courses, clinics, and summer jobs assume more importance.

Ethical qualifications are most commonly explored through the use of one or more hypothetical question(s). A prosecution office may choose a hypothetical to ask of every applicant to try to learn more about how they would handle a legal and ethical problem. They are looking at the candidate's thought process, communication skills, and judgment. Whether the answer is legally correct is of less concern at this juncture, although a grasp of the Fourth Amendment and criminal law issues will serve a candidate well. The hypothetical also allows the office to assess whether a candidate is able to think on their feet, ask the right questions, exercise judgment, and take responsibility. An example is as follows:

You are a new attorney with the office, having your first opportunity to act as first chair at a trial. There is no other USAO present in the courtroom. You put a cooperating witness on the stand and they testify according to plan. The Defense Attorney then begins his cross examination and your witness begins to say things you have never heard before. You think he might be making it up to bolster his story. What do you do?

Obviously the attorney could do nothing, probe this on redirect, leap up in court and call the witness a liar, or ask the judge and defense counsel for a recess. Verbalizing your thought process, which includes ethical standards as well as the goal of successful and fair prosecution, is the best avenue. According to NALP's *The Criminal Hypothetical and Other Unique Aspects of the Criminal Law Interview Process,* "Candidates should remind themselves that their thought processes and ethical awareness will be valued more than the 'correct' legal answer. If students engage in conscientious thinking about their own interests, skills, and understanding of the law, they will be well prepared to tackle the distinct challenges of an interview with a prosecutor's office."[1]

Fit with the office culture is largely determined by having several attorneys from the office talk with the applicant and assess his or her character and personality. It does not hinge on political party affiliations or conservative versus liberal ideology, but on character, judgment, collegiality, and perhaps even a decent sense of humor!

B. The U.S. Attorney's Office

There are approximately 5,800 Assistant United States Attorneys who work in 93 United States Attorneys' Offices located throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. While the range of litigation in which U.S. Attorneys' Offices are involved has grown over time, their activities are generally divided into the criminal and civil divisions. Each of these divisions is commonly subdivided for increased specialization. Within the criminal division, U.S. Attorneys handle the majority of federal criminal prosecutions, including everything from organized and white collar crime to child pornography, human trafficking, drugs and firearms offenses. Within the civil division, the U.S. Attorneys are responsible both for pursuing affirmative litigation, such as the enforcement of federal housing regulations, and for defending the government in cases involving the interests of the United States. The civil cases handled by AUSAs represent more than one-third of the workload of the U.S. Attorneys' Offices. Although this guide will focus on the criminal work, additional information on the civil divisions can be found on the DOJ website (www.justice.gov) and from our students and alumni who have pursued those avenues.

1. Summer Internships

a. Type of Work

The work of each USAO is influenced by the office's geographic location and its resulting size and focus. For example, although many YLS applicants apply to offices in large cities where they feel the criminal division tends to prosecute the biggest cases, some medium-sized offices in smaller cities also have a significant criminal practice with a full range of size and complexity of cases. Additionally, smaller cases can provide greater opportunity for interns and new attorneys to take on significant responsibility and a broader range of experience.

Because of the variations among offices, students should contact interns from prior years to get a feel for each office's individual policies. Current YLS students who summered in a USAO are listed in Chapter 2.

[1] *The Criminal Hypothetical and Other Unique Aspects of the Criminal Law Interview Process,* (NALP Bulletin / Nov 2006), pg. 9.

In addition, the summer evaluations of YLS students (available online) provide further information on summer work in U.S. Attorneys' Offices.

b. Demand

Each summer the U.S. Attorneys' Offices are among the most popular destinations for Yale law student summer employment and for law students generally. The number of law students hired by each USAO varies by the size of the district and their attitude toward student assistance.

For example, the projected number of summer volunteers needed for summer 2016 for these popular offices is:

- the District of Columbia—120
- the Eastern District of New York—90
- the Southern District of New York—55
- the Eastern District of Pennsylvania—20
- the District of Connecticut—17 (New Haven 9, Hartford 4, and Bridgeport 4)

Projections for these and other USAOs are available in *Volunteer Summer Legal Intern Positions*, produced by the DOJ in December preceding the summer in question and found on the CDO reception area shelves or on the Internet at www.usdoj.gov/oarm under *Legal Careers at Justice*, then *Opportunities for Law Students& Entry-Level Attorneys* and then under *Volunteer Legal Intern Opportunities*.

c. Procedure

If your goal is to work at a U.S. Attorney's Office as a summer volunteer, you have the best chance of obtaining a position if you are willing to explore a variety of geographic options. Although the competition at some offices can be quite stiff, there are a number of things you can do to increase your chances of receiving an offer. While none of the offices will accept first-year resumés until December 1 (in compliance with NALP guidelines), they tend to move rather quickly after that date, so applicants should send in their cover letters and resumes as soon after December 1 as possible. If you wait until mid- to late- January to apply, finding open positions in popular cities may be difficult. Second-year students should make their first contact in the fall and comply with the individual office's hiring timeline.

d. Requirements

Security and Suitability Clearance

All law student and lawyer applicants to a U.S. Attorney's Office must go through a security clearance like those who apply to work for the DOJ in Washington, DC. You will be asked to fill out a standard form (SF) and to submit to checks regarding your credit, fingerprints, name, and drug use (although typically drug testing is only required of paid summer interns, not of volunteers). The form will be mailed to you after a tentative offer of employment is extended. No candidate will be hired without successfully passing the suitability review. The forms are available in the *DOJ Security Form* binder in CDO or at www.opm.gov/forms/ under *Standard Forms*.

USAOs typically require summer interns to complete the most basic form, SF-85. This requests information regarding illegal drug activity, including use, sale, possession or manufacture. The other forms, which may be required by your USAO, especially if you will be working in a highly sensitive area, are SF-85P, SF-85P-S and (in rare cases) SF-86. These forms request more extensive information on illegal drug activity, and may include inquiries regarding a police record, use of alcohol, financial records,

foreign countries you have visited, and consultations with a mental health professional. In addition, a few USAOs have added their own suitability form. The *DOJ Security Form* binder in CDO has some examples of this.

You should review the relevant forms prior to applying to the U.S. Attorney's Office to make sure that you are comfortable with the questions and to address any concerns you may have in a timely manner. You should also read CDO's *Before You Apply: Understanding the U.S. Government Security Clearance Procedure*, available online at www.law.yale.edu/student-life/career-development/students/career-guides-advice/you-apply-understand-us-government-security-clearance-procedure.

Although the Department of Justice and USAOs generally want law abiding citizens to work for them, they are most concerned with recent or current illegal activity. The standards regarding past misdeeds will be determined at the discretion of the staff at the Office of Attorney Recruitment and Management (and possibly at the USAO) on a case by case basis, but in our experience, it appears that any illegal drug use within one year of application will disqualify an applicant for a summer intern position. Additionally, students have been precluded from obtaining a security or suitability clearance based on credit problems, conflicting information on their security forms, or residency issues (interns compensated by the DOJ are subject to a residency requirement). Any candidate who has lived outside the United States for a total of two of the past five years may have difficulty being approved for appointment by the Department's Security Staff. Federal or military employees, or dependents of federal or military employees serving overseas, are exempted from this requirement. The Office of Attorney Recruitment and Management will take anonymous phone calls regarding background information and suitability issues after an offer of employment has been extended. Call the Office at (202) 514-3397 and ask to speak with an attorney for advice regarding background checks.

Despite these difficult questions and unhappy consequences: DON'T LIE ON THE SECURITY FORMS! You are required to sign these forms attesting that they are true and acknowledging that a false statement can be punished by fine or imprisonment under federal law. Beyond that, you do not want to start your legal career by lying in writing to the federal government. If you have an issue of concern, discuss it with a law school career counselor or give a call to the DOJ. Because of the look-back period, simply waiting a year to apply may solve your problem.

Also note that from time to time a student will report to their summer job at a USAO only to discover that they cannot start work since their security review has not been completed. To avoid this unfortunate event, we suggest that you request and fill out the Standard Form immediately upon receiving a tentative offer from the USAO. Return the form to the USAO, and request, ever so politely, that they FEDEX it to the DOJ for review. Some of the delay problems may occur when a USAO holds the forms until all summer interns are selected and have returned their forms. Feel free to tell them that your Career Development Office suggested that you request these procedures to make sure you would be able to start on time.

U.S. Citizenship

Although some DOJ positions will occasionally consider a non-U.S. citizen applicant, U.S. Attorneys' Offices will not. The U.S. citizenship requirement is a policy of the Executive Office of United States Attorneys. Dual citizenship is handled on a case-by-case basis.

e. Salary

Because all summer positions at U.S. Attorneys' Offices are typically volunteer, second-year students will probably enjoy an advantage at many offices because of their more extensive experience. While some compensated positions have been offered through special grant funding for certain USAOs, summer

internships have been unpaid by the DOJ in the past and are expected to be unpaid again for future summers. Luckily, Yale's Student Public Interest Fellowship Program will provide funding for students interested in working for a U.S. Attorney who need the grant to cover expenses for the summer.

f. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

Students should be mindful that in every jurisdiction the Rules of Professional Conduct, or other applicable ethical rules, impose the obligation to avoid conflicts of interest. This could arise in a clinic or internship if you are "on the other side" from your future employer in a case or transaction. Legal employers are responsible for inquiring about possible conflicts of interest, but you should consider whether your past legal work (e.g. cases you handled during your 1L summer) or ongoing legal work (e.g. clinic or externship casework in which you are currently involved) may present a conflict. Bring any potential issue to the attention of the hiring attorney as soon as it is feasible. This is especially true if you are planning to work for the USAO. If you have questions as to whether your specific situation could possibly be a conflict of interest with your employer, make an appointment to talk it over with a career counselor.

2. Attorney Hiring

a. Demand

In Fiscal Year 2013, 276 attorneys were hired and 317 attorneys left the collective USAOs. In the previous Fiscal Year, 154 attorneys were hired and 284 attorneys left the collective USAOs. Regardless of the year, there are many attorney hires in the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and competition is fierce for these highly sought-after positions.

In general, large U.S. Attorneys' Offices are more likely to have positions available. Large offices also tend to be in major cities and often experience higher turnover rates because of competition with private firms that may offer higher salaries. The District of Columbia is the largest United States Attorney's Office in the country because the office handles federal legal matters and also legal matters that normally would be handled by state and local prosecutors. The Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, Southern District of Florida, and Central District of California also are very large offices.

For example, in 2014 the offices below had the following number of attorneys working with them:

- the District of Columbia Office had over 300 attorneys;
- the Eastern District of New York had over 150 attorneys;
- the Southern District of New York had over 200 attorneys;
- the Central District of California had over 230 attorneys;
- the Southern District of Florida had over 220 attorneys.

The average age of an AUSA is 47. The average length of service for non-supervisory attorneys is 12.6 years. Over one-third of non-supervisory attorneys have six years of federal service or less. The average length of service for supervisory AUSAs is 18.6 years. These numbers indicate that although some attorneys may briefly pass through a USAO to gain valuable experience, many more are pursuing a significant part of their career in this environment.

b. Procedure

Some AUSA positions are listed on the websites of the specific offices, which can be found through the DOJ website at www.justice.gov/usao/districts/. This site also lists contact information for each office. In addition, the DOJ requests that all USAOs post their job listings with the DOJ at www.usdoj.gov/oarm under *Legal Careers at Justice*, located on the left side bar. However, not all offices have a website or post their vacancies on the DOJ site, so you should also contact the office of interest to learn about openings and to submit your material.

c. Requirements

All AUSAs must be residents of the districts to which they are appointed, or live within 25 miles thereof. However, they need not be residents at the time of application.

The U.S. Attorney in charge of each office, or his or her designee, has the authority to hire the Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the office. Generally they will only hire experienced attorneys, typically lawyers with at least two to three years of experience. In addition, several USAOs require a specific longevity commitment from new hires. For example, DC requires a four-year commitment, while the Eastern District of Michigan and the Southern District of New York require three.

An AUSA recruit must go through a more in-depth security clearance than summer volunteers and interns. This requires a more intrusive form, a credit report, fingerprint and name check, drug test, and tax record review prior to receiving a temporary appointment. After an FBI background investigation is successfully concluded, the appointment becomes permanent.

d. Salary

AUSA positions are paid under an administratively determined pay system which is approved by the Attorney General. They are not a part of the GS pay system, which covers most other attorneys in the Department of Justice. Base starting salaries for non-supervisory AUSAs with up to three years of experience range from $45,027 to $68,667. These figures do not include additional locality pay, which is the same as that paid for GS attorneys, and which is based on the geographic location of the position. Locality pay varies from a low of 14.16% to a high of 35.15% added to basic pay. For specific information about the locality rates for a given location, visit the Office of Personnel Management website at www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2015/general-schedule/. Each year, AUSAs receive a pay review in which their performance rating, pay range, and experience will be evaluated to determine if a salary increase is appropriate. The maximum rate of basic pay, i.e., not including locality, for a non-supervisory AUSA is $132,849.

C. The District Attorney's Office

In a typical state, criminal prosecution cases are prosecuted by a District Attorney's Office, with the exception of a few cases handled by the State Attorney General's Office. District Attorneys' Offices may be organized by county or judicial districts, and are typically led by an elected or appointed District Attorney. In some states, the attorneys in these offices may be called "prosecuting attorneys," "state's attorneys," or "county attorneys." Because this structure is determined by state law, the jurisdiction and organization of these offices vary greatly. Some also handle civil cases and other responsibilities such as providing legal advice to county officials. Some are free-standing, while others may be incorporated into the State Attorney General's Office or under its oversight. Descriptions of the organization and legal jurisdiction of the 50 states' prosecuting attorneys' offices, and contact information for the offices, can be

found in the *National Directory of Prosecuting Attorneys* in the CDO library. Information regarding District Attorneys can be found at the National District Attorneys Association website at www.ndaa.org.

1. Summer Internships

a. Type of Work

The model of the Summer Intern Program varies greatly from one office to the next. Some offices, such as the Philadelphia DA Office, administer different first-year and second-year law student programs. The first-year law student is assigned to one of the twenty-two units. The second-year law student program consists of three three-week rotations and a one-week training period, and it allows students the opportunity to try cases and advocate for crime victims.

Some offices also have an educational program, such as the New York County DA's Office, which conducts a weekly lecture and field trip series to expose law students to various aspects of the criminal justice system. In many offices, second-year interns interested in full time work after graduation will be granted an interview at the end of the summer.

Due to the variations among offices, students should conduct research on specific DA offices. Many of the offices list details of the Summer Intern Program directly on their websites. Students are also encouraged to contact current and former summer interns to get a feel for each office. In addition, the summer evaluations of YLS students (available online) provides information on summer work in District Attorneys' Offices for your review.

b. Demand

In the summer of 2014 hundreds of law students worked in District Attorneys' offices across the country. The number hired in a particular office varies by the size of the district and their attitude toward student assistance. For example, the number of summer volunteers for summer 2014 for these popular offices are listed below:

- the Suffolk County, MA District Attorney's Office—35 1Ls, 35 2Ls
- the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office—43 1Ls, 26 2Ls
- the New York County District Attorney's Office—50 interns

c. Procedure

Although many of the DA offices have a deadline of March 1, first-year students are encouraged to apply in early December since interviews are conducted from January through March, with offers being made up to and well into April. Second-year students should apply in early fall as interviews in many DA offices conclude by mid-December.

d. Requirements

Security Clearance

Once a student has accepted a summer position, they must go through a security clearance. The background check usually includes a criminal record check at the internship level. Some offices will also ask interns to be fingerprinted. The clearance for internships at District Attorney's offices does not typically include a drug test, auto violations search or credit check.

U.S. Citizenship

Typically, a student without U.S. citizenship can work in a District Attorney office for the summer as long as they have the proper working papers. We recommend that you discuss this issue with the office prior to applying.

e. Salary

Although salaries will vary from office to office, the majority of District Attorney offices do not pay at the intern level. Students should, however, check with any office(s) of interest, as there are weekly stipends at some offices.

Below are some examples of internship salaries:

- the New York County District Attorney's Office—receive a stipend of $500/week
- the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office—first-years are unpaid; second-years (who are not in work study) receive $460/week
- the Queens District Attorney's Office—unpaid both years
- the Suffolk County, MA District Attorney's Office—unpaid both years.

2. Attorney Hiring

a. Demand

Assistant District Attorney positions are extremely competitive. Like most employment opportunities, there will be more openings in larger cities.

As mentioned earlier, 2L DA interns interested in post-graduation employment often receive interviews at the end of their summer, thus giving them an advantage over other applicants.

b. Procedure

Since deadlines for ADA positions can be as early as late October/early November and most DA offices do not usually participate in FIP, students interested in these opportunities are encouraged to check with the DA office they are interested in for specific timelines. It is not uncommon to apply in the late summer of the second year or early fall of the third year. Most applications require a cover letter, resume, official law school transcript, writing sample, and a list of professional references. Lateral hires are taken throughout the year.

c. Requirements

All ADA positions require bar passage eventually; however, most do not require bar passage prior to hiring a new graduate and commencement of work. New graduate hires, however, are expected to have taken the Bar in the summer prior to starting work. Since DA offices in different states are governed by different practice laws, they may differ in whether new hires can handle cases in court between the time they take the bar exam (usually the July after graduation) and when they receive their results (usually October). Some offices, like Suffolk County, MA require candidates to secure certification under a specific provision of a court rule (Supreme Judicial Court Rule 3:03 in MA) during their 3L year once they have accepted an ADA position. This certification, which basically allows the recent graduates to practice in court before receiving their bar results, is considered a "good standing" certificate of character.

Attorneys must go through a thorough background check which can include a criminal record search and possibly a drug test, auto violations search, and a credit check. If you have outstanding auto violations, you could be required to make sure all accounts are up to date before starting employment. Although it will be unlikely to pass the background check with a juvenile or adult felony conviction on your record, there may be misdemeanors that could be explained, depending on the situation. In all cases, disclosing all information in the beginning and explaining everything up front is the best course of action.

U.S. citizenship is required to work as an attorney in a District Attorney's office. Some District Attorney offices require that you are a resident of that particular state before starting employment. Others require a commitment to stay with the office for several years. For example, the New York County and Queens offices require new ADAs to serve the office for a three-year minimum.

d. Salary

Salaries for ADAs vary depending on the location. For more information on a range of salaries for ADAs, refer to the *NALP Public Sector and Public Interest Attorney Salary Report* in CDO's Library.

Below are some examples of salaries for 2014:

- the Suffolk County, MA District Attorney's Office—$40,000
- the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office—$50,199
- the Manhattan District Attorney's Office—$60,000
- the Bronx District Attorney's Office—$55,500
- the Queens District Attorney's Office—$59,500.

CHAPTER 3
PERSONAL NARRATIVES

A. Attorneys

1. District Attorney

SUFFOLK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE[2]
Stephen Kerr '07

After graduating from law school, I worked for a year as an Assistant District Attorney in the Appellate Unit of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office in Boston, Massachusetts. I consider the job one of the best jobs I have ever had. What first impressed me about the job was how quickly I was given responsibility for cases. The day I moved into my office, I found that I already had two appellate briefs assigned to me. A couple of weeks later, the Chief of Appeals asked me if I wanted to argue a case before the Massachusetts Appeals Court. Within four months of starting my job, I had authored numerous appellate briefs, argued before the Massachusetts Appeals Court, second-sat trials in district and superior court, and argued motions against the founding partner of a Boston law firm in a district court case of first impression concerning the constitutionality of a Massachusetts criminal law. I don't know where else I could have gotten as much courtroom experience or otherwise been entrusted with as much responsibility so early in my legal career.

Because I was thrown almost immediately into work, most of my training took the form of learning-by-doing. Fortunately, all of my colleagues in the Appellate Unit had an "open door" policy and the more senior attorneys were able to answer most every question I thought to pose. Also, every brief produced in the Appellate Unit was reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Appeals, who would sit down with the drafting attorney to discuss useful edits and general ways to improve the attorney's writing. The tutelage of my colleagues at the District Attorney's Office was extraordinarily helpful to my development as an attorney.

Given that I will spend much of my life at work, it is important to me that I love my job. In my experience, there are a few factors that most determine my job satisfaction: 1) whether I am working for a cause I believe in, 2) whether I am intellectually stimulated by my work, and 3) whether my work environment is pleasant. I was fortunate to find all three factors present in large part in the Appellate Unit of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office. First, I was able to take pride in the work that I did. Assistant District Attorneys represent the state in criminal cases, fight to protect the public, and advocate on behalf of victims of crime. While the adversarial nature of the American legal system, institutional pressures, and the hierarchy of decision in an office may occasionally require an Assistant District Attorney to prosecute a case or make a legal argument that he or she would not otherwise have chosen, taking official positions which may diverge from one's personal views is part of being an attorney and Assistant District Attorneys are perhaps called upon to do this less frequently than other attorneys.

Second, working in appeals afforded me ample intellectual stimulation. Legal research and writing was the bread and butter of my day, and the breadth of legal issues I worked on was amazing. Not only had I to familiarize myself with the laws of evidence, the Massachusetts penal code, and the federal and state constitutional issues most common in criminal cases, but I had also to learn any other rules of law that might apply to the specific facts of a case I was working on. For example, I found the answer to one of my appellate criminal cases in the law of property, specifically in the law of implied easements arising

[2] Stephen Kerr left the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office in 2008.

from necessity. Even when a case I was working on involved the same general area of law as a previous case, the facts of the case were always different and required that I learn something new, furthering my understanding of the law.

Finally, the Appellate Unit had a great office culture. Most of my colleagues were exceedingly friendly, expressing a genuine interest in my life, well-being, and professional development. The Chief of Appeals was generous in giving younger attorneys opportunities to take on important cases. Four days after being admitted to the bar of Massachusetts, a colleague of mine argued before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court a case that was the subject of a BBC documentary. Within eight months of starting work at the office, he was again before the Supreme Judicial Court, this time on a case involving a quadruple homicide arising out of a dispute over territory between rival crime families in Boston. Both of these cases and the case of first impression I worked on raised significant legal issues and garnered major media attention in Boston. In many other organizations, perhaps including other district attorney's offices, more senior attorneys would have claimed such cases for themselves.

The Appellate Unit of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office also allowed attorneys the flexibility of alternative work schedules. Due to family obligations, a number of my colleagues took advantage of this. One colleague worked four days a week, another worked three days a week, and a third worked at 87.6%-time. Even those of us who worked full-time were given leeway in our work hours. Some attorneys came to work a little later in the day while others, who had to pick up children from school, came and left earlier. A number of attorneys broke up the day with a walk in downtown Boston or a trip to the gym. Our work had to get done, however, and my colleagues and I regularly took work home with us.

I highly recommend work as an Assistant District Attorney, whether in an appellate unit or a trial unit, and whether for one's whole career or just to begin one's career. The job provides a great opportunity to feel good about what you do, be constantly stimulated, and work alongside caring and committed people.
2015

NEW YORK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Martha Bashford '79

I am the chief of the Sex Crimes Unit in the New York County District Attorney's Office, supervising more than 50 lawyers handling sexual assault and human trafficking cases. Before that, I was chief of the Forensic Sciences/Cold Case Unit, and before that I had been one of two attorneys in the Sex Crimes Cold Case DNA Project.

While at Yale, I had been a summer associate in a Wall Street firm and in a small firm in upstate New York. The people were nice, the pay was spectacular, but I found the work to be deadly dull. Robert M. Morgenthau, then the Manhattan DA, came to Yale my third year to do recruitment. He offered low pay (I believe back then it was around $17k) and long hours. But this was the clincher: he promised I would never be bored. I took him up on his offer, intending to fulfill the three year commitment and move on, with solid trial experience under my belt. It's been 35 years, I'm still here, and he was right; I have never been bored.

Many colleagues have moved on over the years. When we get together, the universal refrain is that this was the best job they ever had. The working atmosphere is unsurpassed. People are supportive and encouraging. Your colleagues take pleasure in your successes and commiserate with your setbacks. Unlike firms, where only a few partnership positions may be available, internal competition is not part of the daily environment.

There are very few jobs where young attorneys get so much responsibility so early in their careers. Is a witness truthful or not? Is a witness' identification accurate or mistaken? Given this set of facts, what crimes, if any, have been committed? What is the appropriate resolution of this case? Who should I pick for this jury? What am I going to say in my closing argument? These are all questions ultimately answered by the attorney assigned to a particular case.

It hasn't always been easy juggling work and family. My husband also is a public service lawyer, so money can be tight, particularly with getting a daughter through college, and now law school. When I am on trial, the trial is all-consuming. When I am not on trial, I have a great deal of flexibility in my schedule. In a typical day, I'll see something hilarious and something heart-breaking, something rewarding and something frustrating, but never, ever boring. Few lawyers can say that.
2015

NEW YORK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE[3]
Jorge Xavier Camacho '10

When I applied to the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, I did so largely based on the reputation of the office as perhaps the premiere prosecutor's office in the country and on the recommendations of people I knew who had worked there. I was told by countless people how their time at DANY, as it's commonly known within the office, was the highlight of their careers. I, myself, had never previously worked there, so all of my knowledge of what to expect came from what others told me. In light of the constant stream of praise heaped onto the DA's office, I expected a lot out of my career there. As I write this narrative, two things are true: first, I'm about nine months into my career there, and second, all of my expectations have already been exceeded. Without exaggeration, I cannot imagine a better place for any lawyer to work, particularly those looking for a job that affords them independence, immediate responsibility, and most importantly, interesting and fulfilling matters to work on.

One of the best parts of working at DANY is the fact that, even if pressed for an answer, I would not be able to describe what a "typical" day would be. On any given day I might be conducting arraignments, drafting criminal complaints against newly-arrested defendants, conducting investigations into any of my 200 or so open cases, sitting in on a particularly interesting trial, conducting a hearing over someone's status as a sex offender, meeting with witnesses, victims, or even defendants, or preparing for my own trials. What makes this job so exciting, and equally terrifying depending on your outlook, is the fact that your day can change momentum without a moment's notice, going from zero to sixty and back within a matter of minutes.

I had a day where, in the middle of interrogating a domestic violence defendant, I was called to court by a judge who was threatening to dismiss one of my cases because he thought I was beyond the time limit imposed under law for bringing the case to trial. I had to take a break from the interview, run to court, argue (successfully) that I was in fact nowhere near the time limit, then run back to the interrogation room to continue my investigation. Another day, while in court, I received a message that a case I had agreed to cover for my officemate while she was on trial was itself proceeding to trial in a few minutes, forcing me to rush out, gather the case file, educate myself as to what the case was about, gather the witnesses who were waiting at our office, escort them to the trial courtroom, then start the trial, which itself consisted of doing preliminary hearings, jury selection, and pre-trial motions practice, all within the span of an hour or so, before even beginning the trial itself and on a case I had little prior familiarity with. On other days, I've had to run out of my office to meet with victims who suddenly showed up to the office unannounced or to cover another ADA who had to leave court to deal with any one of their unexpected crises. Every day is filled with uncertainty, and every day poses its own unique, unexpected challenges that need to be

[3] Jorge Xavier Camacho left the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in 2013.

dealt with on top of the everyday responsibilities that ADAs are entrusted to undertake. Needless to say, this job is not for those who do not deal well with such uncertainty or who are unable to think quickly and decisively on their feet. Every single day is filled with decisions that have to be made immediately and with imperfect knowledge, decisions that will have impacts on defendants, witnesses, victims, and on you.

Despite the fact that so much of your day is spent putting out fires, so to speak, the first-year experience at DANY is perhaps the most formally structured out of all the class years at the office. The trial division of the DA's office is divided into six different trial bureaus, each with their own chief and assigned ADAs. Each month, each bureau is assigned to staff certain institutional assignments, like arraignments, the complaint room, community court, the domestic violence court, or various other courts. It's the rookies at DANY who actually staff these assignments, with your assignments varying month-to-month depending on your bureau's schedule. For example, in one month, your bureau might be scheduled to staff arraignments on the weekends, the complaint room at night, and the felony arraignments court. This means that each day, rookies from that bureau are assigned to staff each of these assignments. The next month, the rotation may take you out of felony arraignments but put you in community court instead. After your rookie year, you no longer have to staff these assignments, leaving you mostly with free days where you're unassigned and are able to dedicate the bulk of your time to investigating and pursuing your cases.

This set up effectively means that the rookie year tends to be the busiest in terms of workload and number of hours spent at the office, because after you're done staffing whatever assignment you have for the day, you'll usually return to your office and actually do work on your caseload. Because institutional assignments take up the entire day, this means that you'll arrive at work between 8 and 9, be in court until around 5, then return to your office and deal with the ever-growing caseload assigned to you. I've settled into a routine of spending anywhere between 2 to 4 additional hours at work after my assignment for the day just to try to keep on top of my cases, which means that I usually leave work sometime between 7 pm and 9 pm. In slower months, I may leave closer to 5. As you become more senior, however, your caseload goes down and you staff many fewer assignments, leaving you with more time during the day to work on your cases. Of course, the more senior you get, the more serious your cases, which is the reason for the heavy assignment load for rookies. More senior ADAs need more time to do thorough investigations for their higher-stake cases.

But this is not to say that rookies themselves do not have serious cases. Currently, I have cases dealing with assaults, menacing, sex abuse, drug sales, weapons possession, child endangerment, thefts, and drunk driving. Each case has its own story, its own cast of witnesses, its own set of evidence, and, of course, its own unique set of legal and factual problems that make them exciting to work on. While the caseload itself can get overwhelming, the office entrusts you with the responsibility to do what needs to get done to make sure that important cases don't fall by the wayside, and expects you to be able to prioritize your cases accordingly. No one expects you to be 100% on top of all 200+ cases, but they do expect you to exercise sound judgment when determining which cases to pay attention to. Luckily, the office is full of wonderful support staff who help us investigate cases, reach out to witnesses, and provide victims with much needed services and support.

I could honestly continue for pages and pages about my experience at DANY, but I'll sum up with the following: there is simply no better job for a young lawyer (or any lawyer, for that matter) to have. District Attorney's Offices all over the country, and especially in New York, have their finger on the pulse of their respective cities. There is something uniquely satisfying about seeing the work of your office making the front page of every area newspaper, and many national newspapers, on a daily basis. You will read about familiar cases or familiar people, and may even have the fortune (or misfortune) of reading about one of your own cases or defendants in the paper, which drives home the point that the

work you're doing is meaningful, important, and noteworthy. I have no regrets about my decision to become a prosecutor or to make the Manhattan DA's office my home, and I encourage all law students to explore this career path. I'm sure that they will not be disappointed.
2015

NEW YORK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE[4]
Mark Dwyer '75

I graduated from law school in 1975, spent a year as a federal law clerk, and thereafter took a one-year position as a legal writing instructor at a New York law school. I began work for the New York County District Attorney's Office in 1977, and stayed through 2009. My expectation was that I would try cases, but the Office initially placed me in the Appeals Bureau. I never asked for a transfer.

Why did I stay so long? It was not the money. The starting salaries are now around $60,000, which is of course not quite what they pay at the big firms. The pension plan and other benefits are notable, and while I was there I typically received a yearly $5,000 or $6,000 raise during good behavior. But one does not go to a DA's Office expecting to get rich. You go for the fun. In whatever part of the office you work, you almost immediately begin to make the decisions in cases. There is no senior partner to ruin your plans for the weekend. Rather, you make the choice to go to the office on Saturday because you care about the cases (your cases) and you want to do what needs to be done. And it adds a lot that you are not settling how much A pays B in damages after a slip and fall. You are helping determine whether a crime victim and an accused will receive justice. If you were born to litigate, then for you that is fun. The typical ADA ultimately leaves the office not because he or she wants to, but only because life circumstances compel that decision.

That is not to say that the rookie prosecutor is handed the Son of Sam case and told to wing it. In the Trial Division there is a natural progression through the innumerable simple cases, typically misdemeanors like minor assaults and petty thefts, through the robberies and burglaries, to the sex crimes and homicides. You are trained and watched. But the invaluable opportunity at an office like this one is to become a veteran trial lawyer by doing the job: by picking the juries, questioning the witnesses, arguing the law and the facts—and by making both mistakes and brilliant moves. You will not be carrying anyone else's briefcase.

It helps as well that Manhattan is the home to just about every kind of depraved behavior that can be imagined, including the biggest white collar frauds, the most organized of criminal conduct, and the most gruesome street crimes. ADAs take incredible satisfaction from ensuring that those who commit such crimes are incapacitated. And it must be said, the facts can be simply fascinating. That is why "Law & Order" elected to "rip" so many scripts from our headlines.

As I noted, however, I personally did not do the trial work you see on TV shows. I did appellate work. What suits me about that work is that every case presented a unique legal puzzle. Typically Appeals ADAs defend convictions, and the appellant has filed a thick brief making the case against the prosecution evidence, the judge's rulings, the defense attorney's trial strategy, or any number of other things. The job of the appellate prosecutor is to search the trial transcript, the law, and the imagination to find the most persuasive answers to the questions posed. Along with the pleasure of puzzle-solving come the same fascinating underlying facts in immense variety, and the satisfaction of litigating cases that matter.

[4] Mark Dwyer left the New York County District Attorney's Office in 2009.

On that front, make no mistake: an appellate prosecutor is a litigator. He or she is engaged in legal combat with an opponent, and has the same instinct to "crush" the opponent that moves every successful litigator. Appellate litigation is simply a bit more civilized in form. ADAs submit briefs, and then argue cases in front of appellate panels made up of smart judges looking for holes in the prosecution presentations. Trial lawyers speak "at" the jury in summation, perhaps pounding the podium while doing so; but during appellate arguments the judicial audiences talk back, challenging the premises of the parties' positions and keeping the lawyers nimble. And that challenge too is fun.

Appellate work is not for everyone. For example, some lawyers will prefer constant and hectic interaction with jurors, witnesses, police officers, and defendants. But I submit that appellate work is often an overlooked career path, and one that is very well-suited for the litigator who loves the law and loves to persuade through the written word. You might consider it.

Two notes: from the years I spent on our hiring board, I would recommend that any applicant to a district attorney's office make sure that his or her resume refers to at least one clinic or summer job related to criminal justice work. There are so many applicants that some are rejected simply because the interviewers are not sure that they are truly interested in the criminal law. And if you might want to do appellate work, mention it in the interview. Every office is looking for more good appellate lawyers.
2015

NEW YORK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Olivia Sohmer '86

I worked as a prosecutor under Robert M. Morgenthau at the New York County District Attorney's Office from 1990 to 2010. The experience was challenging and rewarding, and I worked with many skilled attorneys and fine human beings.

I was bitten by the DANY bug during the summer after my first year in law school. I was fortunate enough to get a position in the summer intern program—not quite a volunteer position, but hardly a lucrative one. I spent that summer in a Trial Bureau, assigned to work with two senior Assistant District Attorneys on their homicide investigations and trials. I still remember watching, dissecting, and trying to reconcile the contradictory videotaped statements of three men arrested for beating a fourth with sticks and bottles.

After law school, I spent a year clerking for a magistrate judge in the federal court, and then 2 ½ years in the Litigation department at Willkie Farr & Gallagher (where I had worked the summer after second year), before returning to DANY as a lateral hire. The availability of lateral hire positions has varied over the years, and changes with budget and administration concerns. By working in four different bureaus at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, it was as though I had four very different jobs.

Coming to DANY as a mid-year lateral, I did not follow the usual path of a rookie: intensive training and orientation followed by writing up and handling misdemeanor cases. Instead, I started in the Career Criminal Program, a bureau that is now essentially dissolved. At the time, CCP was referred cases from a Career Criminal Squad of the NYPD Detective Bureau, whose mission was to gather supporting evidence to strengthen the prosecution of recidivists. I spent three years there, trying pickpockets, robbers and burglars. Almost every case I had was one that I handled from the moment of learning that the police had an arrest—or even just a suspect who needed to be put into a lineup—through to sentencing. That "vertical" assignment of cases, which is the paradigm throughout DANY, provided an invaluable education in how to assemble a case. There's nothing like discovering in the middle of a trial that you don't know a fact or have a piece of evidence to teach you what you should have asked at the first interview.

After three years with CCP, I moved to the Labor Racketeering Unit, where I would spend seven years investigating and prosecuting organized crime influence on the trade show industry in New York, unemployment insurance fraud, and bribery of various types of inspectors. The pace there was very different. In the trial division, the life cycle of a case averaged 6-8 months. In LRU, the grand jury presentation itself could take that long, and might be preceded by a year or more of working with undercover officers and confidential informants, applying for and supervising wiretaps, and sifting through the proceeds of meticulously drafted search warrants. Then, once arrests were made, there would follow complex pretrial litigation of all the issues that we had tried to anticipate during the investigation. Many of the cases in LRU were disposed of by pleas, but when they went to trial, the trials were long and complex, with eavesdropping evidence and financial analysis.

My next position was with the Family Violence and Child Abuse Bureau, prosecuting felony charges of physical and sexual abuse of children under the age of 14, usually committed by those entrusted with caring for those they victimized. For six years my job was almost as much social worker as lawyer. I listened to children describe horrific allegations and tried to help them discover that, through the criminal justice system, they could be more than powerless victims. At all times, it was essential to be alert to the very real possibility of false accusations. The hours were long, the work was emotionally draining, and it is no hyperbole at all to say that I consider the work that is done in that bureau to be the most valuable and rewarding work that a prosecutor can do.

Finally, I spent four years in the Appeals Bureau, handling and arguing cases in the Appellate Division and Appellate Term, and occasionally trying to reach—though usually trying to stay out of—the Court of Appeals. Once again, the pace is dramatically different: it is generally a month from case assignment to printed brief. In Appeals, an ADA has an opportunity to become an expert in a wide variety of issues, both substantive and procedural. Every case affords the chance to learn from the example—and the mistakes—of judges and attorneys. Of course, Appeals is the place to hone your writing and editing skills, since almost all briefs are written by one ADA and edited by another. And, presenting a legal argument in six minutes, with five judges peppering you with questions, and white and red lights alerting you to the expiration of your time, is an in-court experience utterly different from trial work.

Quite frankly, this is not a job you take for the money. You will probably be paid more even at the smallest personal injury law firm, and you might even get into court as often. But, in the grand scheme of things, compared to non-legal careers, the pay is not bad at all. And the position is secure, since there is, unfortunately, no shortage of work to be done. The real reward of this job, however, is in going to work each day knowing that what you are doing makes a real and positive difference in people's lives.
2014

EL PASO COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Rebecca Tarango '96

I didn't graduate law school with the intent, or even imagine the possibility, of being a career prosecutor. My husband and I had a baby during my third year of law school, and while we always wanted to return to El Paso, having a baby clinched the decision for us, as our entire support network was here. El Paso's a great place to live and raise a family, with warm, friendly people and the best Mexican food in the world. After graduation in 1996, we came home and I started working at a private firm in their international/ immigration law section. I was not happy with the work, and felt that being an advocate for our clients at times conflicted with my own values. I also felt more like a secretary than a lawyer. I'd spend 12 or more hours a day at the firm, often being told to just sit and wait for instructions, which was hard not only on my ego, but also on my baby.

When a high school friend who was working at the El Paso District Attorney's Office told me that they were hiring, I asked my supervisor's permission to take a lunch hour the following week—and used that hour to interview at the DA's Office. That was one of the best decisions of my life. I was nervous about being a real trial lawyer, because I didn't have any prior trial work experience and I hadn't even taken any trial advocacy classes during law school. However, when I started, I didn't have time to be nervous anymore, and the on-the-job training began. There was a lot of work to be done, and the way to learn it was by just being thrown in and doing it. The DA's office also sent me, along with the other recent hires, to what we call "Baby Prosecutor School" in Austin. Our boss, District Attorney Jaime Esparza, is wonderful. He's demanding and expects the best of us, insisting that we always work hard and be fair in service to our community.

When I started in July of 1997, I was first assigned to screening misdemeanor and felony cases for prosecution. At first, I was a little worried that my pay cut would hurt our family, but at $37,000, I was still making more than most El Pasoans, and much more per hour than I was earning at the firm. I generally worked 8 to 5, and still do, unless I'm in a big trial. After a few months, I was moved into a misdemeanor court where I tried a case my first week. After another few months, I was moved up to a felony trial attorney position. I tried a couple of murder cases along with other felonies within my first few months as a felony trial lawyer. Then, I took a year and a half off after having our second baby. Our District Attorney hired me back once I was ready to return to work, and I've been here since 2000. During my years as a prosecutor, I have made some of the best friends of my life. There is something to working with people who, despite cultural, political, and religious differences, all have a common goal—to see that justice is done. I have also tried dozens of cases, from misdemeanor assault cases all the way to capital murders. Trial is challenging, exhilarating, and incredibly fun. Every case is different, and every trial evokes powerful emotional responses, ranging from sorrow to hilarity, from fear to rage. It is very freeing to be able to do the right thing, always, despite whether it helps or hurts our client, the State of Texas. As a prosecutor, I've never felt I had to compromise my beliefs or do anything distasteful in furtherance of a goal. Because our aim is justice, all we have to be is fair and truthful.

I have spent the largest portion of my time with the DA's Special Crimes Unit ("SCU"), handling predominantly homicides. There, my job was to ensure that murder cases were ready for trial by assisting detectives with various types of search or arrest warrants and serving as a sounding board for investigative strategy, reading final police reports and witness statements, analyzing the collection of evidence and taking of confessions for legality, organizing and presenting cases to the grand jury, preparing all the written discovery to be filed in court, and writing briefs or doing research pertaining to legal issues that affected each case. My work involved daily dealings with law enforcement officers, other prosecutors, defense attorneys, forensic experts, and judges. I tried several of the more complicated or difficult murder cases. Being in trial is absolutely, without a doubt, the greatest part of this job.

A couple of years ago, I was promoted to the position of misdemeanor Trial Team Chief. In this position, I supervised 6 misdemeanor trial attorneys. Guiding and training new lawyers was a lot of fun; their eagerness and youth infuses energy into the office. After that, I was made a felony chief. Now, I am back in the SCU as a co-chief. My dear friend and co-chief, Denise, and I supervise the two SCU lawyers—one does murders and one does intoxication homicides—and 2 regular felony lawyers. In addition to the general SCU duties from before, we now train these four lawyers to prepare and try homicide cases. I love our team and the challenging work we do.

Over the years, my skills have improved through experience and watching my fellow prosecutors in trial. In El Paso, my job as a prosecutor helps my family enjoy a good life, and mostly, time together. My third year baby is now a junior in college, and I feel lucky that I got to be fully there for her, and for her younger brother. I also have the great satisfaction of knowing that I've helped to put away serial killers and other dangerous felons, and helped the families of the victims receive some measure of justice. While

it can be very emotionally draining to deal with the victims of crime, particularly abused children or families of drunk driving victims, there is still nothing I can think of that's more rewarding than to be able to tell them that you're fighting for justice on their behalf. I love wearing the white hat. I think I have the best job in the world, and I am very grateful for it.
2015

2. U.S. Attorney

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
Carol Chen '00

I am an Assistant United States Attorney in the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) section of the United States Attorney's Office in the Central District of California. I have been in OCDETF for about three years, after having completed the requisite stint in the General Crimes section, which is the boot camp/training/trial section for new AUSAs (referred to as "rookies"). As a line assistant in the OCDETF section, I primarily prosecute cases against high-level, international drug trafficking organizations, cartels, and criminally active street gangs for violations of federal drug, money laundering, and racketeering statutes. Because criminals oftentimes tend to be opportunistic "jacks of all trades," these investigations may also implicate issues relating to public corruption, national security, and fraud.

Since the fourteen years that I have graduated from Yale, I have had many legal jobs—Ninth Circuit law clerk (for the late Pamela Ann Rymer), district court law clerk (for Lourdes G. Baird), litigation associate for a large LA-based law firm (Latham & Watkins), and an Assistant United States Attorney in the Civil Division of the United States Attorney's Office—each of which I greatly enjoyed both professionally and personally. Indeed, I have been blessed with the privilege of working with and learning from two brilliant, well-respected, and fair jurists and unlike many others, I actually enjoyed the big firm life. But, I can say without a doubt that my current job as a federal criminal prosecutor is the best and most satisfying legal job I have ever had.

You never forget or doubt what your goal is each day on the job, which is to always do justice, always do what is right, even when it is politically inexpedient to do so or the criminal defense attorney on the other side seemingly is engaging in every possible underhanded tactic. Though it may sound pollyanna-ish and self-serving, it means something to be a member of the Department of Justice—you do justice. That in and of itself is a reward that is absent from most other legal jobs.

In terms of intellectual stimulation and excitement, you cannot find a better job. No two days are ever the same. On any given day, you work with a variety of individuals and entities, from federal agents in different law enforcement agencies (the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Department of Homeland Security, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, just to name a few) to task forces made up of both local police and sheriff's departments and federal agents created to combat violent criminally active street gangs and major drug trafficking organizations (including the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force) to various units within Main Justice in Washington, D.C., to United States Probation Officers, United States Marshals, and Pre-trial Service Officers. At any one time, you may be juggling a couple of applications to intercept wire and electronic communications of several high-level, Mexican-based drug cartel members or Mexican Mafia-affiliated gang members; read the line sheets of wiretap calls between drug traffickers and/or violent gang members speaking in coded terms about drug transactions, gang "business," and murders, attempted murders, and assaults; write a warrant to obtain judicial authority to put a GPS tracker

on a target's vehicle or to get GPS coordinates of a target's telephone; draft a search warrant or a complaint; present an indictment to the grand jury; handle multiple arraignments for several of your defendants; do a change of plea; and/or sentence a defendant—perhaps all while preparing for a multi-defendant, multi-week trial and writing an appellate brief.

The work is definitely fast-paced and the opportunity (or challenge of having) to think on your feet presents itself on a daily basis. Because you have a mix of both large-scale pre-indictment investigations and cases which have already been indicted, you will be both in court, on your feet arguing something, and working closely with different federal agents and local task force officers to formulate strategy and further pending investigations on any given day. You do exciting, interesting work that matters. No matter what section you are in—whether in OCDETF or Major Frauds or Environmental Crimes or Violent and Organized Crimes or Cyber and Intellectual Property Crimes—you know that what you do has a practical and immediate impact on real individuals—the victims and their families, the defendants and their co-conspirators, and the constituents of the city in which you live (and sometimes, even the nation as a whole). Indeed, especially as a gang prosecutor involved in taking down violent, criminally active street gangs from the very top of the hierarchy right down to the "foot soldiers" on the streets with 50 to 70-defendant racketeering indictments at a time, you will literally change the landscape of cities and reduce violent, major crimes across neighborhoods. Knowing that you actually have contributed to a small part of keeping the streets safer is a feeling like no other—you know you have put that Yale Law School degree to good use and that you have kept in mind all these years the school's creed of public interest and public service.

Of course, no job is completely perfect (even though this one comes pretty close to it). I, for one, took a 6-figure pay cut when I left my big law firm as a fifth year associate to come back to the federal government; if your goal is to maximize your earning power or lead a lavish, glamorous, and/or carefree lifestyle, this job is probably not for you (though this job might help you land a partnership position at a law firm or a judgeship later on). The hours are long and the job can be, and often is, extremely stressful; you get a lot of responsibility starting from your first day on the job and there is an awful lot at stake. Indeed, you literally have someone's liberty/life in your hands and you never ever take that for granted. There is also a lot of scrutiny; courts (at least here in the Central District of California) are much tougher on the government than they are on the defense and you often have to travel the proverbial "high road" more often than not. But I will happily take these "negatives" of the job because there is nothing comparable to being a federal criminal prosecutor armed with the ability to effect immediate change for the better and the freedom to formulate legal strategy and run your own cases from the beginning of the investigation all the way through the post-trial conviction and appeal stages.
2014

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
Wesley L. Hsu '96

Control of your cases, going to trial, and always trying to do the right thing. These are, in my view, the best parts of being an Assistant United States Attorney. The U.S. Attorney's Office does not overstaff cases, so AUSAs have a great deal of decision-making authority in their cases. Criminal cases go to trial far more often than civil cases, so AUSAs get excellent trial experience. Not as much as in a district attorney's office or even a city attorney's office, but I think AUSAs get a healthy balance between considering legal issues, which DA offices often have too many cases to do, and trial experience. Finally, AUSAs are tasked with doing justice, not just what the client wants, and that is perhaps the best part of the job.

There are other benefits as well. AUSAs do not have to bill their time in six minute increments, and you should not underestimate how nice that is. Because AUSAs have control of their cases, AUSAs also have

more control of their schedules and time than in private practice. AUSAs work hard—as hard as law firm associates lots of times, but it is rare when an AUSA has to work over the weekend or late into the night unexpectedly. Generally, AUSAs have some control over when they will have to put in overtime. More time in court, in front of the bench, also provides AUSAs an excellent opportunity to build their reputation in the legal community (OK, this last one can be good AND bad).

The primary drawback to being an AUSA is the pay. In most cases, AUSAs make far less than their private practice counterparts. Also, AUSAs have to do a lot of their "grunt" work for themselves as USAOs simply cannot afford to have the armies of support staff that law firms do. The most challenging part of the job is, not surprisingly, trial. Trial is extremely hard work, and getting it right is pain-staking. On the other hand, for a litigator, trial is also the most rewarding aspect of the work.

AUSAs have many other responsibilities other than trial. We advise federal law enforcement agencies on conducting investigations into crimes. We often train these agencies, and other AUSAs, on legal developments and certain subject matter areas of the law. We also spend a great deal of time doing pre-trial motions practice. In these situations, of course, we always have our eyes on the trial ramifications of our advice and motions work. In the Los Angeles USAO, we also handle our own appeals. We handle guilty pleas, sentencings, and post-conviction collateral attacks.

I think the "typical" candidate for an AUSA position is someone who has clerked for a federal judge and who has spent a few years at a law firm as a litigator. An externship at a USAO is a great thing to have on an applicant's resume—it demonstrates early interest in a job at the USAO. Trial experience in any form is a huge plus. Trial experience can take many forms. Take trial advocacy. Candidates should also try to get trial experience while at their firm. In Los Angeles, for example, the City Attorney's Office has "TAP," or trial advocacy program, where young law firm associates spend time in the City Attorney's Office trying misdemeanors. That type of program boosts a candidate's application. Not all AUSAs take that path, of course. Our USAO also hires from the district attorney's office and the military.

My path was "typical." I was an extern in the USAO in New Haven while at Yale. I graduated from Yale Law School in 1996. I clerked for the Honorable Mariana R. Pfaelzer in the Central District of California. I then worked at Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher in their Intellectual Property and Appellate groups. I joined the USAO in Los Angeles in 2000. I joined the Cyber and Intellectual Property Crimes Section when it was created in October 2001. I became the Deputy Chief of the Section in 2005, and in 2008 I became the Chief of the Section.

I guess I wish I had known before I started my career path that 1) clerking for a district judge who was an AUSA or even the U.S. Attorney in a particular USAO is helpful toward getting hired in that USAO, 2) working at a law firm with former AUSAs and USAs will give you a leg up on applying (provided they like you, of course), 3) evidence is an absolutely critical subject area that I use every single day, and 4) everything you do in every case you ever work on can affect your reputation in the legal community.

I'll conclude with a story. I was in court one day waiting for a court appearance. My colleague was before the court for the sentencing of a defendant who had defrauded dozens of people out of their life savings by selling them bogus medical insurance. Several of the victims addressed the court during sentencing, telling the court what incredible harm this defendant had done. These victims did not know that their medical insurance was bogus until they had terminal cancer and no way to pay for treatment. After these heart-rending stories, my colleague asked the court for a significant sentence of imprisonment. The court imposed a significant sentence, but, even more powerful, the court also ordered the defendant taken into custody immediately (he had been released on bond). The victims had the opportunity to see this truly evil defendant taken into handcuffs to serve his prison sentence. I was incredibly proud that day to be an AUSA, to be part of a team trying to do justice.

I went to law school to be a prosecutor, and I enjoy almost every day of it. I strongly recommend it. Everything in this description is, of course, my own personal opinion and does not reflect the opinion of the U.S. Department of Justice.
2015

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
Damali Taylor '02

I am an Assistant United States Attorney in the Strike Force Violent Crimes (SFVC) section of the United States Attorney's Office in the Northern District of California. I have been with the office for almost three and a half years. As an AUSA in the Strike Force section, I prosecute cases against violent criminal street gangs for violations of federal murder, firearms, and racketeering statutes. Before joining the United States Attorney's Office in 2011, I was an Assistant District Attorney in the San Francisco District Attorney's Office, where I prosecuted domestic violence cases.

Before becoming a prosecutor, I worked at big law (Davis Polk in New York and O'Melveny & Myers in San Francisco). I actually enjoyed big firm life both professionally and personally and I was blessed with some of the best mentors anyone could ask for.

That said, being a prosecutor is, without a doubt, the most personally rewarding and most important job I have ever had. Coming from a lower-income community plagued by crime, words cannot express how much it means to me to attempt to do justice for crime victims—especially when my work affects under-represented communities. As I always say, defendants have lawyers. No one speaks for crime victims. No one, that is, except prosecutors. We each take an oath to in some small way do our part to give voice to the folks who are truly voiceless. That is an incredible privilege.

I have tried over a dozen cases (both at the USAO and when I was an ADA). I am regularly in court, drafting briefs and interacting with federal agents. A given day may involve any combination of the following: drafting a wire application; reading the line sheets of wiretap calls between drug dealers or gang members; writing a warrant to obtain judicial authority to put a GPS tracker on a target's vehicle; drafting a search warrant or a complaint; presenting an indictment to the grand jury; examining civilian witnesses before a grand jury as part of an investigation; arguing before a magistrate that a defendant should be detained pending trial because he/she is a risk of flight and/or danger to the community; opposing a motion to suppress evidence; preparing for trial.

My piece of advice would be this: if you don't believe in the work that federal prosecutors do (which includes regularly putting people in prison), then this is not the right job for you. It is a meaningful life but an enormous responsibility. It is not for the faint of heart. If, however, you have a passion for protecting people and helping communities, you will find no better job.
2014

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Stephen Gripkey '92

I have been working as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of Columbia since the fall of 1998. More recently I have been assigned to the Violent Crimes and Narcotics Trafficking Section, which handles cases primarily in federal court. I started my legal career through the Attorney General's Honor Program at Main Justice, working in the Civil Fraud Section of the Civil Division. Although my job duties have varied a lot through the years, I have been working for one overall agency, the Department of Justice, since graduating from law school in 1992.

My opening gig at Main Justice was fantastic. In the Civil Fraud section, I was given enormous responsibility from the start in handling a variety of affirmative civil cases across the country, suing individuals and corporations to recover monies defrauded from the government, and often working in parallel fashion with criminal investigations. The people were great, the work was great, and I learned a lot. However, I rarely saw the inside of a courtroom. Most of what constitutes civil litigation, such as paper discovery and depositions and negotiations and motions preparation, etc., happens outside of a courtroom, and very few cases ever make it to trial. I probably spent a total of about six hours of elapsed time in a courtroom over the six years I worked there.

Given D.C.'s unique jurisdictional status, the USAO has traditionally handled adult criminal matters both local and federal. A considerable portion of our work is done in Superior Court, the local courthouse that sees criminal trials of everything from misdemeanor assaults to murders. Work in Superior Court involves various stints or "rotations" in a variety of sections at the USAO that handle everything from grand jury work, appellate work, and bench trials of misdemeanor cases, to jury trials of street-level drug and gun cases and jury trials of more serious violent offenses. My stint as a "senior" prosecutor involved about six years in the homicide section, which was intense and very rewarding.

Most AUSA's here work on the Superior Court side for a number of years—with a brief "rotation" on the federal side of the house—before leaving the office, and courtroom experiences abound. In my 17 years here (which includes two years of non-trial section work), I've tried about 21-26 bench trials and about 30 jury trials, and have argued about 6 appeals before the local appellate court. These numbers do not include the many additional sentencing hearings, evidentiary hearings, motions hearings, and status hearings for which I've had responsibility. At this point in my career, the courtroom is still a scary place, but I've gotten more used to it.

My current assignment involves working with agents on longer-term investigations that often involve wiretaps and multiple co-defendants. The work is more legally and logistically complex than what I have done before. But my experience from working through the various "rotations" in our office has been of great service as I work through the "rookie" years yet again in my current section.

Working as a criminal prosecutor is hard work. Unlike television, you can't really tell jurors to put themselves in the shoes of the victim; you can't really make passionate TV arguments about justice; you can't really indict a ham sandwich; and the only unilateral power you have is to dismiss a case. Everything else you try to accomplish depends upon convincing someone else to please go your way—whether it's law enforcement agents to do certain work, judges to sign warrants, witnesses to appear and to tell the truth, grand jurors to indict, judges to rule your way on motions, petit jurors to convict, and judges to sentence. You are not just a paid mouthpiece: your job is as much to make sure the trial is a fair one as it is to try and "win" it. You more than anyone in or out of the courtroom have to care about and fight for the truth, as much if not more when that means letting the innocent go and when dismissing cases that rely on obviously "bad" seizures and stops. Tough and practical ethical situations can arise on a daily basis, many of which involve the very lives and safety of witnesses and defendants. To do the job of a criminal prosecutor well at the trial level requires not only writing, research, and verbal skills, but people skills and "street" sense and common sense. To do it really well demands integrity, ethics, honesty, honor, tenacity, mercy, hard work, and humility.

The best trial work is at least a craft and at times an art. To have been able to participate in that craft through the years on behalf of a cause that is larger than me and for the benefit of the community, has been—and continues to be—a privilege and an honor. If you find yourself drawn to working as a criminal prosecutor, I highly recommend it.

Years ago I failed to fully appreciate that deciding to go to law school is not quite a career choice. There are as many "law jobs" as there are lawyers. The choices come after law school. And these choices often depend more on the ensuing day-to-day than what was decided while pausing at the proverbial "fork in the road." In short, like anything else, what you get out of a choice depends very much on what you put into it after you have made it. I have no illusions that my contributions are making the world safe for democracy or "winning" the "war on crime." Although my community needs folks that "stand on the wall" as ethical law enforcement, certainly no matter how hard we work there will be a new wave of criminals and outrageously cruel acts that will come along and replace the current crop. Whether one continues to approach the job of a prosecutor with some measure of idealism versus a large dollop of cynicism, ultimately, is a very personal choice that you make every day when you get up in the morning.

But it is a real blessing to have a job, much less a lawyer's job, where that choice is even a possibility.
2015

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT
Liam Brennan '07

I had given up on the idea of law school when I met a prosecutor who loved her job. She made her work sound meaningful, rewarding and exciting and convinced me that I should re-consider the law as a profession. By the time I came to YLS, I was pretty certain I wanted to leave being a criminal prosecutor. I graduated in 2007 and was accepted to the Honors Program at the Department of Justice, Criminal Division.

Honors Program applicants apply to specific divisions at the DOJ (criminal, civil rights, environmental, antitrust). Once accepted to the Criminal Division, the new attorney chooses three Sections of the Criminal Division that he or she is interested in. That attorney is virtually guaranteed one of the three sections and most people usually get one of their top two choices. When I applied, the attorneys had to give both a three-year commitment to the DOJ as a whole and a three-year commitment to their section specifically. (Currently, I believe, Honors Grads in the Criminal Division give a four-year commitment to the DOJ and a three-year commitment to their sections. In their fourth year, they are given the option to try a different section, if they wish.)

I started with the Fraud Section in 2007 and was immediately sent to Houston to assist on a trial. I was told the trip would consist of one week of trial preparation and two weeks of trial. After two months of trial prep and two months of trial, I finally returned to DC. (In fairness, I returned on most weekends, too.) I had not considered that, having national jurisdiction, Main Justice employees would often have to travel the country (and sometimes the world) for significant periods of time. It was both daunting and exciting. Early on in the Fraud Section, I was able to handle significant matters and have real responsibility that my friends at firms would have to wait years for. I also got to handle large, complicated cases that some attorneys never see.

However, large complicated cases can make for slower cases, as does the fact that Main Justice Trial Attorneys often have to coordinate with local U.S. Attorney's Offices. When I applied, one of my interviewers told me that in criminal prosecution Assistant District Attorneys were in court the most, followed by Assistant U.S. Attorneys, and finally, Main Justice Trial Attorneys were even one more step removed. I found this to be true. Some new attorneys in the Fraud Section get to try cases early on, others can wait a couple of years before trying cases. Supervisors will often try to arrange for attorneys to be on cases going to trial, but ensuring that it happens quickly is not guaranteed. Main Justice Trial Attorneys also don't get the same grand jury practice that AUSAs get.

What they do get is the opportunity to see cases that some AUSAs never get to see, see how law is practiced across the country, and better pay. The GS scale used at Main Justice is one of the most generous scales of pay for public interest work. It is not Big Firm pay (or even as good as the SEC's pay scale) but it is decent and better than the AD scales used at U.S. Attorney's Offices.

The Fraud Section was a great experience that I would do again without question. I traveled to various states and countries to collect evidence and interview witnesses. I got to handle significant, interesting cases. And I got to be in court more than I would have in most other jobs.

In 2011, I left the Fraud Section to go to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Connecticut. I currently handle mostly securities fraud cases. I happily took the downgrade in pay for a host of reasons. After having a baby with my wife and trying a month long case in 2010, I didn't want to risk having to try another case in a state far away from my family. I also wanted to be in court more than was possible at the Fraud Section. I currently have basically the same job, but the cases move faster, I don't travel regularly and I make less money.

Being outside of DC, the bureaucracy is significantly reduced and I get more quality time with supervisors, who are all excellent. Our jobs are goal-focused, which allows for decent workplace flexibility; if I have to work late, I can almost always make it home to have dinner with my family and put my kids to bed before logging in again. My colleagues are excellent attorneys and dedicated public servants. I may never travel the world again looking for witnesses, but I do get to know the local Court, the judges and the special agents in a way that I never got to do when the courts, judges and special agents were spread all over the country. I cannot overemphasize how happy I am with this office, my supervisors and colleagues, the responsibility I am given, and the quality of cases I see.

About two years ago, a friend who was thinking about moving to a U.S. Attorney's Office from a firm asked me what I didn't like about my job. I had no response, which was more telling than any answer I ever could have given.
2015

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT/
FORMER DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ATTACHÉ, ITALY
Bill Nardini '94

The motto of the Department of Justice is "Qui Pro Domina Justitia Sequitur"; and truly enough, the best reason to be an AUSA is to "prosecute on behalf of Lady Justice." Some years ago, I was reading a defendant's appellate brief and realized that, due to an error in calculating his sentencing guidelines, the judge had improperly doubled his prison term. Everybody had missed the error at the time of sentencing. I double- and triple-checked the law. The defendant was right. We probably could have defended the result, since no objection had been preserved, and the error was based on an obscure advisory note in the guidelines. Yet as an AUSA, the solution was a no-brainer: Call the defense lawyer, congratulate him on spotting the mistake, and stipulate to vacatur and remand of the sentence. How many other legal jobs let you confess error, just because it's the right thing to do?

During most of my time at Yale Law School, I never dreamed of working in criminal law. I liked Crim Pro with Steve Duke, but it wasn't until my last semester that I took Crim Law with Kate Stith and my interest was piqued. After graduation, I clerked for Judge Cabranes, who had just been named to the Second Circuit but was still sitting by designation on the district court in New Haven. What struck me about the criminal proceedings is that the AUSAs seemed unlike most other lawyers who appeared—they acknowledged a duty to serve the public interest. Plus, pleadings from the U.S. Attorney's Office were

usually head and shoulders above those of most other litigants. That year, and the next two years I spent clerking (first for Judge Calabresi on the Second Circuit, and then for Justice O'Connor at the Supreme Court), it always saved time to read the government's appellate brief first, even if they were the appellee. You could count on their red brief to set forth the facts and the law most thoroughly, including all the warts. After clerking, I wanted to be one of those lawyers who wore the white hat.

I didn't go straight to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Instead, I moved to Italy for three years, first on a Fulbright fellowship and then working at the Italian Constitutional Court in Rome. All this time, though, I had kept in touch with the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Haven, and was lucky enough to be hired as a line AUSA in the criminal division upon my return in 2000.

There are few better jobs than being a criminal AUSA. Connecticut is a mid-sized district, with about 65 attorneys spread through offices in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven. At first, I handled a hodge-podge of smallish cases to get my feet wet: bank robberies, identity theft, drug importation, mail theft, tax fraud. These were thin case files that gave me an opportunity to work with all kinds of agents: FBI, Postal Inspectors, Secret Service, Customs, IRS. I soon found myself preparing search warrants, issuing subpoenas, questioning witnesses in the grand jury, drafting indictments, negotiating plea agreements, and appearing in court a couple of times each week. Within a month of my arrival, I was second-chairing a five-week mail fraud trial. Six months later, I had already first-chaired two small gun-possession trials. The pace and responsibility were exhilarating.

Because U.S. Attorney's Offices can't afford to overstaff cases, junior lawyers often find themselves working on high-profile cases. In my third year, I tried a case in Boston with our Deputy U.S. Attorney, charging a former state police officer with leaking electronic surveillance information to a mobster. During trial, I had dinner with a law school friend. She was flabbergasted to hear that the following day, I was the one making the closing argument; that I had argued back-to-back appeals in the First and Second Circuits just weeks before; and that I was going to try another two public corruption cases in Connecticut that fall, involving the State Treasurer. Nine years out of law school, she was still finding that big firm "litigation" rarely involved courtroom work.

From 2004 to 2010, I was the Appeals Chief for our district. About two-thirds of my time was spent managing our appellate work, with a much-reduced district court docket taking up the rest. Primarily, I reviewed briefs written by others—sometimes doing little more than proofreading, but usually making substantive revisions that could amount to an entire re-write. (This is when journal-editing skills come in handy.) Working on so many cases before the court of appeals offers a real opportunity to contribute to the shaping of the law, in a way that few other jobs can. I chatted with colleagues in other USAOs in my district, at Criminal Appellate or other DOJ sections, or at the SG's office, in an effort to build a long-term litigation strategy for key legal issues. Being at a USAO lets you operate at both the micro and macro level.

As the Appeals Chief, I was in court much less than my colleagues, but the flexibility of appellate work was very convenient when I had young children at home. I could generally get out of the office by 6:00 p.m. and crank up the laptop or edit a hard copy of a draft brief after the kids went to sleep. One of the great advantages of working at a USAO is that everyone's door is open—people are constantly in and out of your office, talking through legal issues, debating whether to charge a defendant or to appeal an adverse decision. The downside of that open-door environment is that you rarely have an uninterrupted block of time to crank out a brief—at least, not until you're home and the house is quiet. Still, you're the keeper of your own schedule and "face time" is a foreign concept.

From 2010 to 2014, my career as a prosecutor took an unusual turn. My family and I moved to Italy, where I served as the Department of Justice Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Rome. For four years, I was

on loan from the U.S. Attorney's Office to DOJ's Office of International Affairs, which is based in Washington. The Attaché serves as a liaison between U.S. prosecutors (state and federal) and Italian judicial authorities, including the Ministry of Justice, prosecutors, and judges. Much time is spent on extraditions and mutual legal assistance requests, when U.S. or Italian prosecutors need help gathering evidence abroad. Half my work was in Italian, and all of it involved getting two very different legal systems to work together. I was also the legal adviser to federal law enforcement agencies based at the Embassy in Rome. The job required travel up and down the peninsula, sometimes nudging our more complicated requests through the Italian bureaucracy, sometimes facilitating meetings of AUSAs and agents with Italian counterparts to coordinate cross-border investigations. One day might involve debriefing a terror suspect or a mafia witness; the next day might involve negotiating the return of stolen antiquities to Italy.

I returned to the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2014, where I now serve as the Chief of the Criminal Division, overseeing all of our District's criminal prosecutions, in areas ranging from violent crimes and drugs to national security and white-collar fraud. Much more of my time is spent as a manager, and much less litigating case of my own.

Being a DOJ prosecutor opens doors to a host of career possibilities. You can concentrate on being a trial lawyer in gun and drug cases; focus on longer-term cases like public corruption and terrorism that might require lengthier investigations and few trials; spend time as an appellate lawyer doing much more research and writing, and long-term litigation strategy; or go abroad to help with the Department's international work. What all of these jobs have in common is that you're always a federal prosecutor, committed to seeking justice in the name of the American public. It's hard to find a better job than that. *2015*

MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
Jay Hoffer '80

During the fall semester of my third year at the law school in 1979, I was fortunate enough to stumble into something that has made my career as an attorney most rewarding and satisfying. At that point in my law school career, I had no idea what area of the law I might want to specialize in; all I had was my experience during the two preceding summers as a government agency law clerk and then as a summer associate at a Manhattan firm. Fortunately for me, a classmate had worked as a student intern in the United States Attorney's Office in New Haven the semester before and told me about his experiences. As a result of that conversation, I decided to spend part of the fall semester of my third year as an intern with the office of the United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut.

What resulted from the brief but extraordinary experience was a lifelong career as a prosecutor. After graduation from the law school in 1980, I joined the Office of the District Attorney of New York County (Manhattan). I served as an assistant district attorney in that office from 1980-1989, working my way up from handling the simplest misdemeanor cases to working on major felony crimes and homicide cases. In 1989, I was appointed an Assistant United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida and joined the Tampa division of that office. I have been there since that time, working in both the Major Crimes and Bank Fraud Sections of that office.

The responsibilities of an AUSA in the criminal division of a U.S. Attorney's Office include the investigation of criminal matters and their preparation for trial. In that capacity, an AUSA works regularly with a number of different federal law enforcement agencies on a wide variety of federal criminal allegations and charges. The average case load of an AUSA may include the more "reactive" types of cases (for example, drug trafficking, bank robbery, and counterfeiting matters) or long-term, more

complex investigative matters (for example, tax fraud, and other "white collar" crime matters which entail more investigative work and analysis). Depending upon your assignment and responsibilities, the average AUSA can expect to be involved in a wide variety of cases and factual situations.

An equally important part of any prosecutor's education is learning how to deal with the most divergent and challenging array of potential witnesses. These may include disinterested witnesses, cooperating defendants, informants, and law enforcement agents. From early on, a significant part of any prosecutor's work is developing the skills to be able to relate to, and get the most out of, the kinds of witnesses that your cases present to you.

One of the main attractions of being a prosecutor (either on the state or federal level) is the ability to learn early on the basics of both the investigation and preparation of cases for trial. From the earliest stages of my career as a prosecutor, I had extraordinary discretion in handling my own cases and making my own decisions about them. I also learned, from watching other colleagues with whom I worked and by my own trial and error experiences, how to try a case to verdict. The latter skill is one that attorneys in private practice may take years, if at all, to learn. The development of your own trial and advocacy skills is a significant part of the work of being a prosecutor at any level. Those skills, which law school clinical and forensic programs can only begin to teach in an academic environment, are useful to any attorney in any type of practice.

Aside from these purely "vocational" benefits of being a prosecutor, the job itself has an additional benefit which, in my view, makes it perhaps the most satisfying of career choices. The ability to make use of one's legal skills and intelligence in the service of law enforcement makes a job as a prosecutor emotionally rewarding and enriching. Perhaps that is why, unlike most members of my law school class, I have had only two employers in the 20 years since my graduation, and each of them in the same field of legal endeavor. A career in criminal prosecution is "public service" in its highest form and is one that many more Yale Law School graduates should consider strongly.
2015

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
Matthew Axelrod '97

From 2003 to 2009, I served as an Assistant United States Attorney in Miami, Florida. From 2009 to 2013, I was on detail to Main Justice, where I worked as a Senior Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division and then as an Associate Deputy Attorney General. After spending 2014 in private practice, I returned to DOJ in February 2015 to serve as the Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General, responsible for helping the Deputy Attorney General run the day-to-day operations of DOJ.

I graduated from the Law School in 1997 and then spent two years clerking, first for the Hon. Ralph K. Winter on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and then for the Hon. Janet C. Hall on the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut. After the clerkships, I moved back to my hometown of Boston, where I spent a little over three years working as a litigation associate for the now defunct law firm Hill & Barlow and then six months working at a litigation boutique, Donnelly, Conroy & Gelhaar.

Perhaps because SDFL is one of the larger U.S. Attorney's Offices, there is a dedicated Appellate Section. A number of AUSAs work there permanently, but it is also the section to which all new AUSAs are assigned for a few months when they first start in the office. Spending a few months writing appellate briefs gives new AUSAs a chance to acclimate themselves to the office and to begin to familiarize themselves with some recurring issues that arise in federal criminal practice.

After the short stint in appeals, new AUSAs typically move on to the Major Crimes Section. Major Crimes handles all of the cases that come to the office reactively, rather than as the result of a long-term investigation. For example, drug couriers attempting to bring cocaine in through the airport, bank robberies, felons found in possession of a firearm—all of these are typical matters handled by Major Crimes AUSAs. The section is incredibly fast-paced and AUSAs are in court virtually every day. In my two years in Major Crimes, I had 15 jury trials (at the same time, the folks in the Appellate Section let me argue three cases before the Eleventh Circuit). I'm not sure of the exact statistics, but I've heard it said that the Major Crimes Section alone tries more cases each year than most entire federal districts. I don't know why that is, but I do know it offers an unparalleled opportunity to learn how to try cases.

After Major Crimes, AUSAs in SDFL are typically transferred to the Narcotics Section, the Economic Crimes Section, or the Special Prosecutions Section. In Narcotics, AUSAs work larger drug cases, usually involving wiretaps and multiple defendants. The district is unusual in that many of the narcotics defendants are not here in the United States, but in Central or South America. Because these individuals have shipped large amounts of cocaine or heroin to the United States, they are subject to the United States' criminal laws. SDFL AUSAs will indict them and then seek to have them apprehended in their home countries and extradited for trial. For example, during my time in the Narcotics Section, I was part of the team that convicted two founders of the Cali cartel, who had been extradited to Miami from Colombia. In Economic Crimes, AUSAs work mostly document-intensive fraud cases, such as bank fraud and healthcare fraud. The Special Prosecutions Section focuses its work on combating violent crime and crimes against children.

After my tenure in the Narcotics Section, I worked in the office's Public Integrity/National Security Section. The Section conducts national security and terrorism investigations as well as corruption investigations of public officials, including corrupt law enforcement officers. As one example, I was part of the team that convicted the Sheriff of Broward County on fraud and tax charges related to undisclosed private business dealings he had with people who were also doing business with his office.

In short, I cannot imagine a better job as a lawyer than being an AUSA. When I applied to work as one, I wanted a job where I was doing work that mattered, where I was fighting about issues like justice and liberty rather than about money, and where the marching orders were to do the right thing rather than to win at all costs. I am happy to report that the job of an AUSA is all those things and more.

As a final note, if you really want to be an AUSA, do not let repeated frustrations with the application and acceptance process deter you from your goal. I started applying for an AUSA position in my hometown of Boston as far back as 2000, but was unsuccessful in landing a position. In 2003, despite the fact that my wife and I had bought a house that we liked and despite the fact that we had a one-and-a-half year old toddler, we decided that I should broaden my search. Accepting the job in Miami meant uprooting my family and leaving Boston. At the time, it was not easy to take that leap. But, looking back, it was the best thing I ever could have done.
2015

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
Evelyn Baltodano-Sheehan '02

I am an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of Florida. As the Deputy Chief of the Southern District's Asset Forfeiture Division, I currently represent the United States in criminal and civil asset forfeiture actions and supervise AUSAs in the Asset Forfeiture Division. Representative matters include the criminal forfeiture in the case of *US v. Scott W. Rothstein*, a Ponzi scheme which resulted in the forfeiture of approximately $28 million worth of assets, in addition to multi-million dollar criminal and civil forfeiture cases involving Medicare, mortgage and investment fraud. While a member of the

Major Crimes and Appellate Divisions, I represented the United States in a wide range of criminal prosecutions, including narcotics and immigration offenses, access device and health care fraud and bulk cash smuggling.

While at Yale, I had been a summer associate at a small boutique firm in Georgetown and then at a large corporate firm in New York City. I then practiced corporate and bankruptcy law for almost two years before moving to Miami and joining the complex commercial litigation department of another corporate firm and a brief stint at a boutique plaintiff's litigation firm. The seven years of private practice do not nearly compare to the pride, excitement and challenge that comes with being an AUSA. The experience, comradery and pride I take in my current position outweigh the financial sacrifice that comes with public service.

I have now been here for six years and I can wholeheartedly say that it is the best job I've ever had. As many others I'm sure will say, I can assure you that you will never be bored. No two days will ever be alike. A day will not pass when you will not encounter something new to learn. You will be surrounded with smart, committed colleagues who generally have an open door and who will not hesitate to sit and brainstorm through any particular legal or logistical challenge. Although many colleagues choose to move on over the years (most often strictly due to financial pressures), most of them will always look back fondly at their time at USAO/DOJ.

My "typical" day can include complex criminal motion practice, including forfeiture jury trials or contested sentencing hearings; coordinating with the U.S. Marshalls Service or other federal agencies on the disposition of real estate or complex business assets; working with Criminal Division AUSAs and agents on ongoing criminal investigations; drafting and presenting seizure warrants for planes, cars, or bank accounts; drafting interrogatories or deposing claimants in civil forfeiture proceedings; conducting criminal evidentiary hearings related to forfeited assets; arguing dispositive motions on novel issues in federal court against name partners at major law firms, etc. I have found it extremely rewarding to either be recouping fraud proceeds for the benefit of victims of crime or protecting the public fisc.

I cannot stress the lack of emphasis on face time enough. It is a stark contrast with life at a law firm, which often rewards inefficiency because of the constant pressure to bill hours. Everyone operates at a high level, work is always plentiful and my supervisor's unflinching focus on work quality and timeliness over face time has made a huge difference in my ability to balance work with life's commitments (family, health, whatever you hold dear). The lack of pressure to bill leads to rewarding results and efficiency.

I have found the training available to DOJ/USAO employees to be excellent. The National Advocacy Center provides top caliber training and in-house training conducted by experienced AUSAs serves to supplement my trainings at the NAC. And after six years of experience, I'm now training AUSAs and federal and state law enforcement agents.

In all, I cannot recommend it enough. Complex work, amazing colleagues, unparalleled responsibility and a firm commitment to do justice. Simply unmatchable. For me, despite the financial sacrifice and inevitable stress, a total dream job.
2015

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
Olivia Choe '04

I am an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Miami, where I have worked for the past four years. After graduating from YLS in 2004, I clerked twice, first for Judge John Walker on the Second Circuit, and then for Judge Rya Zobel in the District of Massachusetts. After clerking, I worked in the Litigation Department at

Ropes & Gray in Boston for almost four years. Since joining the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2010, I have worked in the Appeals Section, where I had the opportunity to argue before the Eleventh Circuit, and in the Major Crimes Section, where I prosecuted a range of case, including violent crime, narcotics offenses, child pornography offenses, tax fraud, bank fraud, identity theft, and immigration fraud. For the last two years, I have been assigned to the Special Prosecutions Section, where I focus on violent crime, child exploitation offenses, and human trafficking matters.

As an AUSA, I get to do a variety of things. Part of my job is to conduct proactive investigations, which involve close work with agents from a variety of law enforcement agencies (the FBI, DEA, Homeland Security, Department of State, IRS, Secret Service, as well as local police departments) to develop evidence supporting charges against individuals who are believed to be committing federal offenses. During the investigative stage, I work with agents to review the evidence that we have, to interview witnesses, including cooperators, as well as victims, and to determine what if any additional evidence we might need or be able to get through grand jury subpoenas, court-authorized wiretaps, search warrants, or tracking devices, or through other means.

My job also involves a lot of court time. During an average month, I will typically appear before one of our grand juries to present evidence, have a witness testify, or seek an indictment. Once a defendant is arrested, I appear before a magistrate judge for the defendant's initial appearance, at which he is advised of his rights, as well as a hearing on his bond. As the case progresses, the assigned district court judge may hold status conferences to discuss discovery or evidentiary issues with the parties. Depending upon what the defendant decides to do, I appear in district court to handle either the defendant's guilty plea or trial, and, ultimately, sentencing.

My clerkships and my years at Ropes & Gray provided great preparation for my work as an AUSA. As an appellate clerk and a law firm associate, I had lots of opportunities to hone my legal research and writing skills, which provided an excellent basis for the briefs, memoranda, correspondence with defense attorneys, and other legal writing that my job requires on a daily basis. As a litigation associate, I also learned the importance of meticulous discovery practices, which are—if anything—even more crucial in criminal matters, where someone's liberty is at stake. As a district court clerk, I spent a year observing parties in a variety of cases, civil and criminal, appear before my judge, whether at a sentencing, discovery hearing, or lengthy trial. I learned the importance of earning and maintaining credibility with the bench, the value of exercising good judgment and being reasonable at all times, and the virtue of brevity.

I love my job. Although being a government attorney involves financial sacrifice, I feel lucky to get such great satisfaction out of my work. My office is extremely friendly and collegial, and I find my work varied, challenging, and worthwhile.
2014

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS
Michael Tabak '75

I graduated from Yale Law School in 1975. I spent the next year clerking for Hon. Irving R. Kaufman, who then was Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. I was a litigation associate at Davis Polk & Wardwell in New York City from 1976 to 1978, and then was Deputy Chief Counsel to the Special Commission in Massachusetts that investigated, held public hearings about, and drafted reform legislation to address corruption related to the state and county government building process.

I was an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York from 1980 to 2004, starting in the Manhattan office and then moving to the White Plains division in 1986. Since late 2004, I have been an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, working from the main office in Boston. (This involved an entirely separate application and selection process, not a transfer.) It has been a terrific professional experience. I have investigated and prosecuted challenging and complex terrorist, mafia, corruption, fraud, tax, environmental, and many other kinds of criminal cases. On a personal level, I have found it extremely rewarding to feel that I am serving the public, rather than feeling as if I am merely a "hired gun." Moreover, it is a privilege to work in an environment where my colleagues not only are extremely bright, motivated, and willing to help each other, but also are steeped in the long tradition of the office to "cut square corners"—to do things the right way, the ethical way, the honorable way.

I have handled a wide variety of cases, which keeps the work continually interesting. Moreover, an AUSA in this office handles a case from the beginning of the investigation, through the Grand Jury and trial (or plea), and within the U.S. Court of Appeals. This gives us many different roles to play. In the investigative phase, we work closely with the Special Agents from the FBI, the IRS, and the many other federal (and sometimes state and local) investigative agencies. In many sophisticated and difficult investigations, we often play a leading role in shaping strategy, creatively overcoming obstacles, questioning witnesses, and negotiating with their attorneys. We handle the motion practice, the trials (or, more often, the guilty pleas), and the sentencings of the cases we have investigated, and we also draft the appellate briefs and do the oral arguments in the U.S. Court of Appeals of any appeals in such cases. The Solicitor General's Office in Washington, DC handles the relatively few criminal cases that reach the Supreme Court.

Salaries at the U.S. Attorney's Office are good by government standards, but they are substantially less than one could earn as a partner in a major law firm (which is probably particularly true in metropolitan areas). AUSAs are given great responsibility, significant independence, and substantial caseloads, and being an AUSA is a very hands-on job. Demanding cases and tight deadlines may necessitate working long hours and doing a significant amount of unglamorous—but important—work, but that can be true for litigators in private practice as well.

Although beginning AUSAs are given training and mentoring, they quickly start handling cases and appearing in court. Thus, they must not only be bright, hard-working, honest, and ethical, but they also need good judgment, self-confidence (but not arrogance), the ability to express themselves orally in a clear and persuasive manner, strong research and writing skills, a good strategic sense (including understanding and anticipating potential defenses), the ability to see not only the "big picture" but also to master the details, the flexibility to overcome setbacks, the ability to think on their feet, skill at negotiating, and the ability to relate to and interact with a wide variety of people—including victims, bystander witnesses, cooperating defendants, defendants, defense attorneys, colleagues, support staff, supervisors, trial judges, and appellate judges. While many of these skills are learned and improved on the job, the hiring process seeks to select people who are likely to do well in these areas, and thereby effectively and honorably represent the United States. Prior prosecution experience is not necessary and probably is not typical, but it is important that applicants have been able to handle responsibility well and have strong references.

I have earned far less money working at the U.S. Attorney's Office than was available in private practice, but I would make the same career choice if I were starting out again. It is a privilege to work with such smart, decent, dedicated people, to have a steady stream of interesting and challenging cases, and to feel that you are contributing in your own small way to furthering the public interest.
2015

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
Winston Y. Chan '00

Although I had an inkling during my time at Yale Law School that I wanted to be a federal prosecutor, I became absolutely convinced of it during my clerkship for Hon. Leonard B. Sand of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. I spent most of that year assisting Judge Sand as he presided over a lengthy criminal trial involving four defendants who ultimately were convicted of participating in the 1998 terrorist bombings by Al Qaeda of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Fresh out of law school, I spent that trial in awe—not just of Judge Sand and his brilliance and kindness—but also of the assigned AUSAs, who worked tirelessly in the cause of justice, all without ever compromising themselves or the office that they represented.

And so, after a second clerkship for Hon. Chester J. Straub of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (who, by graciously letting me work on as many criminal appeals as I wanted, taught me more about constitutional and criminal law than I could have ever learned in a classroom), I joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York in the fall of 2003, just three years into my career as an attorney. There, I first served in the General Crimes Section—as all new AUSAs do for their first 12 months in the job—and then moved to the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, where I have been ever since and where I prosecute traditional (Cosa Nostra) and emerging (Eastern European) organized crime cases.

I can think of no better way to describe how amazing my job is than to tell you what I've been doing for the last few weeks: preparing for a two-month racketeering trial against the acting boss of an organized crime family who committed and attempted to commit numerous crimes of violence, including the murders of other mobsters and the solicitation to murder a federal prosecutor and federal judge in this district. That preparation has included my debriefing of witnesses relocated to secret locations as part of the Witness Security Program, writing and arguing motions and rehearsing my opening statement, which I'm scheduled to deliver in less than one week (yikes!). The point of all this is to say that each of you can just as easily be doing the same and in just a few years after graduating from law school—that is, actually litigating cases, representing the public good and doing work that is both exciting and that matters. This is why, if you ask AUSAs how they feel about their jobs, their answer, including mine, will always be that they love it and couldn't see themselves being any other kind of lawyer.

But don't just take my word for it. The best way to see if this job is right for you is to see it for yourself up close, either by working alongside an AUSA as an intern or by watching AUSAs as a law clerk to a federal judge. In particular, make sure that the particular internship program lets you work intimately with AUSAs who will give you responsibility over assignments more than just research memos and who will even let you appear in court (like our internship program does), or that the particular judge permits law clerks to work on criminal cases (some do not). Additionally, U.S. Attorney office internships and federal clerkships, although not prerequisites, can be helpful down the road if and when you actually do apply for an AUSA position.

Once you're convinced that you do want to become an AUSA, the application process is straightforward: a standard form, writing sample, transcript and reference letters. There is no "right" time to apply, although our office generally requires at least two years of post-graduation legal experience. There are three rounds of interviews, each conducted by a panel of three AUSAs, and, at bottom, we're looking for smart, articulate and personable lawyers who have good judgment and a demonstrated commitment to public service, and who would represent the United States with the highest professionalism and integrity.

Good luck, and feel free to contact me directly if you want to talk more in depth about becoming an AUSA in general, or working for the Eastern District in particular.
2015

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
Nicholas Lewin '04

I've served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of New York since 2007, working principally on terrorism and other national security cases (such as espionage, counter-proliferation, and counterintelligence). I graduated from YLS in 2004, and then clerked for two wonderful years--first on the Southern District of New York, then on the Second Circuit. I came straight to the U.S. Attorney's Office from my second clerkship. Between clerkships, I worked for about a year at a twenty-odd-lawyer litigation firm in Manhattan, Lankler, Siffert and Wohl.

(A brief aside: I had a terrific experience at Lankler, Siffert and Wohl. This firm, like a handful of other small litigation firms in New York, is comprised largely of former prosecutors. The firms are structured and oriented in a fundamentally different way than the larger firms, but are often involved in the same cases as those firms. As a result, the work, the people (and even the quality of life) were truly excellent. But this is no non-sequitur: working at a small firm like this one—where many of the partners had been AUSAs—significantly advanced my application to the U.S. Attorney's Office.)

My time at SDNY has been typically interesting, challenging and fun, but atypical in other respects. As with almost all AUSAs in SDNY, I started in the General Crimes Unit. There, AUSAs are exposed to a broad range of cases, from immigration to housing fraud to violent crime. The caseload is heavy. And the learning curve was steep—at least it was for me. I conducted two jury trials during my general crimes year. Most SDNY AUSAs spend the next year in the Narcotics Unit; I spent only about six months there, trying one jury trial before transitioning full time to terrorism prosecution.

In March 2009, I took a temporary assignment in Washington DC to serve on the Guantanamo Review Task Force. The task force was charged with reviewing the then-241 detainees still held at the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. My role, along with about a dozen other federal prosecutors from around the country, was to assess which Guantanamo detainees could be feasibly prosecuted in an Article III court.

In June 2009, Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani became the first—and, to date, only—Guantanamo detainee to be transferred from Guantanamo Bay for prosecution in federal court. I returned to SDNY to prosecute the Ghailani case. Ghailani was charged for his role in al Qaeda's August 1998 attacks against the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people and injured thousands more. After his 2004 capture in Pakistan, Ghailani was held in a CIA black site—during which time he was subject to so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques"—before being transferred to Guantanamo Bay in 2006. For more than a year, we prepared for trial; I spent months traveling across the world with our truly extraordinary FBI case agents, including to Guantanamo Bay, Mombasa and Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. I met with dozens of the victims and their families. We briefed and argued multiple dispositive and complex pre-trial motions, including ones based on alleged violations of the speedy trial clause and of outrageous government conduct. After a five-week trial, the jury convicted Ghailani of one count (which carried a life sentence) but acquitted him of 284. Nevertheless, I cannot imagine that I will ever prosecute another case in which I will be prouder to have played a role.

In May of 2012, I accepted another long-term assignment, as Special Counsel to FBI Director Robert Mueller, and served for about a year-and-a-half as his advisor on a wide variety of national security

matters. After Director Mueller left, I served briefly as special counsel to Director James Comey, before returning to SDNY. Serving as the Directors' Special Counsel was just as interesting as it sounds. And it was a personal honor to serve Directors Mueller and Comey.

Upon my return to SDNY, I was fortunate to help conduct two lengthy trials, in 2014 and 2015, of senior al Qaeda leaders: first as part of the team prosecuting Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, who was charged with a variety of crimes relating to his activities, in 2001 and 2002, as a senior leader of al Qaeda; and more recently, as part of the team prosecuting three defendants charged in connection with the 1998 Embassy Bombings: Adel Abdel Bary, Anas al-Libi, and Khalid al-Fawwaz. Each case was an extraordinary opportunity to work closely with some truly outstanding prosecutors and amazing investigators.

I feel privileged to work at the U.S. Attorney's Office. The work has been extraordinary. In addition to working on fascinating cases, I've had the opportunity to develop real litigation, trial and appellate skills, and to hone those skills by working with some truly extraordinary investigators and lawyers—and great people.
2015

DISTRICT OF OREGON
Hannah Horsley '92

I have been an Assistant United States Attorney since 1997. I have practiced in three different districts, and have worked in many different areas of criminal law. I am currently an AUSA in Portland, Oregon and have been here since 2005. I was an AUSA in the San Francisco office of the Northern District of California from 2001-2005, and in the Seattle and Tacoma offices of the Western District of Washington from 1997-2001. Each of the moves has required a new application, rather than a simple transfer, but one has an advantage as an experienced AUSA with a current FBI background clearance. I have also worked with attorneys from several different litigating sections at Main Justice, so have some limited information about some of the sections in the Criminal Division at DOJ as well.

My practice as an AUSA has primarily involved criminal prosecution as a trial attorney. I have handled cases ranging from civil rights, human trafficking, organized crime, public corruption, tax defiance/sovereign citizens, drug trafficking, and a full array of fraud and violent crimes. I have loved the substantive variety, and the ability to shift around from time to time in order to try something new and expand the scope and nature of my professional experience. I also spent three years as an Appellate Chief, where I focused almost exclusively on appellate work in the Ninth Circuit. This involved an extensive amount of brief writing and oral argument, but also a lot of editing and training of other AUSAs whose appellate work I supervised.

In each of the different areas I have practiced in, I have also appreciated the remarkable variety of legal work I engage in on a regular basis. Because AUSAs typically handle several cases at a time—and handle their own cases from the investigative stage throughout the appeal and post-conviction habeas process—there are a variety of tasks that I am handling at any given time. I work closely with investigative agents from the FBI, IRS, ICE and other federal agencies and local police departments to provide strategic advice and obtain court approval for any investigative techniques that require it (e.g. wiretaps, search warrants). Once a case is ready to be charged, I handle all phases of the prosecution and appear in grand jury, district court, and the court of appeals (in cases that go to the Supreme Court, the government is represented by the Solicitor General's office). Any given day, I could be meeting with agents about an investigative plan in one case, appearing in a motions hearing in another, and working on the appellate brief in a third case.

For people who want trial and other complex litigation experience, a U.S. Attorney's Office does offer unique opportunities. Because the government has initiated the case as plaintiff and has the only burden of proof in a criminal case, we typically determine the pace and scope of the trial and put on the vast majority of evidence that is presented. In my experience, defense attorneys get the benefit of learning how to cross-examine witnesses (among many other things), but they do not develop the same experience of learning what it takes to build and manage a complex case from its inception, or to put a case together for trial so it is presented to the jury in a coherent and compelling manner. The prosecution typically questions more witnesses and presents more exhibits at trial, and is also usually responsible for anticipating and briefing issues that need to be brought to the court's attention for rulings or otherwise. All of this is challenging and satisfying in its own right, but is also of great value as a litigator even if one is not a trial lawyer later in one's career. I have never worked in a DA's office, but believe it offers much of the same experience. There are fewer trials in federal court than one would get in a DA's office, but they can be longer and more complex. And there is typically more substantial pretrial litigation and appellate work in a USAO.

In addition to the litigation experience, there are several other good things about this job. I am still very proud to stand up in court and say I am appearing "on behalf of the United States." I also feel lucky to work in a law office that is very collegial and supportive, and with colleagues I have the utmost respect for. For a period of time I worked part-time so I could spend the afternoons with my children when I was not in trial or otherwise had to be in court. This was not easy as a trial lawyer, but it was great to have the flexibility to do it and I think several USAOs and litigating sections at DOJ allow some flexible scheduling options.

I never thought I would be a career AUSA, but I have loved this job and would highly recommend it. I'd be happy to talk to any current or former students about what the job involves and how to increase their chances for getting hired. Prior prosecutorial experience can be very helpful, but is not essential. After graduating from law school in 1992, I clerked for a year on the Tenth Circuit, practiced at Covington and Burling, and worked at the United States Sentencing Commission before joining the U.S. Attorney's Office.
2015

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
Jay Weimer '99

I am an Assistant United States Attorney in the Northern District of Texas. Although I handle mostly white-collar cases, I have prosecuted virtually every category of federal crime during my nine years with the Department of Justice.

One of the great things about this job is that what we do is interesting to non-lawyers. I began my career working at a big law firm. And while some of my work (though certainly not all) may have been interesting to other lawyers, few non-lawyers cared to hear stories about my latest discovery dispute. Now when I travel and meet people outside the legal profession, I can talk about my job and not see eyes glazing over as I speak. Curiosity about crime and criminals keeps TV shows like Law & Order and CSI at the top of the Nielson ratings. And while my day-to-day isn't always "ripped from the headlines," many of my cases are interesting enough to receive media attention.

Another great part of this job is that it is intellectually challenging. We have a dedicated appellate section in our district but many trial AUSAs volunteer to handle appeals. During my time in this district I have argued as many appeals in front of the Fifth Circuit as I have tried cases to a jury. And many of our appeals involve cutting-edge constitutional issues, some surprising. As one would expect, we regularly handle Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendment claims. But we also handle issues involving religious liberty,

citizenship, voting rights, the right to bear arms, and the freedom of expression. In fact, if you enjoyed courses like Akhil Amar's Bill of Rights, I can think of no better place to work on the issues you discussed in class than in the appellate section of a U.S. Attorney's Office.

But perhaps the best part of working in a U.S. Attorney's Office is the environment. In a big law firm, lawyers are constantly mindful of the clock. The need to bill hours cuts short casual conversations and inhibits collaboration across sections. If you can't bill for it, you can't afford to spend time on it. Here, however, we have no billable hours. We watch each other's trials, gather informally to discuss interesting cases, and talk sports and politics. I may be putting too much blame on the billable hour—the selection bias produced by a job that requires lawyers to spend so much time standing up in court may result in a high percentage of extroverted personalities—but U.S. Attorney's Offices are much friendlier places than big law firms.

There are a few downsides to this work. The pay is low relative to the private sector. The federal bureaucracy can be stifling at times. And, particularly if you are coming from the private sector, you may be surprised by the number of incompetent employees that remain employed despite their incompetence (see last sentence). Nevertheless, the job satisfaction rate for AUSAs is stellar. I've heard dozens of federal prosecutors call this "the best job you can have with a law degree." I haven't had a broad enough experience in legal professions to be able to verify that statement and I am sure other legal jobs make the same claim. But if this isn't the best job you can have with a law degree, it's certainly on the short list.
2015

B. Summer Interns

1. District Attorney

NEW YORK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Medha Devanagondi '08

My summer at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office was very rewarding and a lot of fun. I applied for the job through the Spring Interview Program, and joined a class of 50 interns. There were no typical days for me at the office, and this made the job interesting throughout the entire 10 weeks. The environment at the office was very laid back, even though all of the attorneys I worked with were strongly committed to their work. I worked about 40 hours each week, until 5:00 p.m., and most attorneys did the same. Of course, they would stay as late as necessary when they were on trial, and I also had a couple of late nights when I was second-seating a trial. Overall, I was pleasantly surprised to be on my feet for much of the day, in and out of court continuously, and taking "field trips" to get a more well-rounded view of the criminal justice system.

The summer program is very well run. There is a half-day orientation before the interns are sent to work. Interns are responsible for obtaining assignments from one of their 8 assigned attorneys. Assignments were usually legal research memos or parole letters. I did legal research on issues involving internet identity theft, investigation of a defense attorney for fraud, attorney-client privilege issues, sexual assault, domestic violence, prostitution, and homicide. Every intern also gets to second-seat a trial, which is an invaluable experience because you participate in witness preparation, jury selection, evidence gathering/organization, last-minute legal research, and trial strategy.

In addition to the trial, interns are welcome to observe sentencing hearings and summations, and are alerted to particularly interesting cases. At the end of the summer, 2L interns conduct a mock suppression hearing and are given feedback about their performance. Some of the other activities included standing on arraignment, working in the Complaint Room, accompanying the NYPD on a 6-hour ride-along,

attending brown-bag lunches on specific topics in criminal justice, touring the lower Manhattan jail, and visiting the police officers' training school.

Working at the DA's office is a great learning experience whether or not you think you will ultimately end up working in criminal justice. During my summer, I felt as if I was doing important work and that I got a real idea of what working as an ADA would entail. I cannot speak more highly about the quality and passion of the attorneys at the DA's office. That summer provided me with greater insight into the challenges of the criminal justice field and also helped me to figure out the characteristics of the type of lawyer I would like to be.
Summer 2006

2. U.S. Attorney

DISTRICT OF ARIZONA
Dylan Keenan '13

The summer after my 1L year I worked as an intern at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona. I did not have any connection to Arizona. I knew I wanted to work for the government during my first summer, and a U.S. Attorney's Office sounded like a good option. The reviews were universally positive and the legal work sounded interesting and rewarding. I was not disappointed.

I applied to Arizona among many other offices. They mostly followed the same hiring process. I heard back from an Assistant U.S. Attorney or secretary who asked to set up a phone interview. For some offices in the Northeast I was asked to come and interview in person. The remaining offices conducted interviews by phone. The interviews were rarely challenging. In one case (not Arizona) I got hypothetical questions (drawn from real life examples), but most offices simply asked about my resume and why I wanted to work at a U.S. Attorney's Office. Keep in mind that different offices have very different timelines and different levels of competitiveness. Some offices finish interviewing prospective interns in January, while others begin in March. Don't assume that because you don't hear quickly, you won't get an interview or an offer. The internship competition is not as bloodthirsty as FIP, but there is competition and you don't get an offer from every office just because you go to Yale.

There was no typical day at the U.S. Attorney's Office. I got to observe several trials, even sitting at counsel's table during one. I also watched sentencing proceedings, arraignments, plea allocutions and plea negotiations (which are fascinating). The assignments were equally varied. Every intern in the office got to work on an appellate brief. Many of my assignments were motions. I also drafted an indictment as well as several intra-office memoranda. I researched *Daubert*/expert testimony issues, civil asset forfeiture, criminal procedure issues both trial and pre-trial, and venue for tax cases, to name only a few issues. An assignment about the Confrontation Clause provided the seed for my SAW, which I ultimately published as a Note in *YLJ*.

Arizona is distinct from most other U.S. Attorney's Offices in several ways. First, it is larger than the average district. Every state has at least one district, but there is no rhyme or reason beyond that. Arizona has one district covering the entire state while Oklahoma has three. Second, Arizona has a very large Native American population. Consequently, U.S. attorneys prosecute a large number of crimes traditionally handled at the state level—for example, murder, rape and domestic violence. Arizona does not hear the most sophisticated white-collar crimes or terrorism prosecutions (although they have a lot of white-collar crime, many in the form of mortgage fraud cases). But the legal work was diverse and interesting.

Even with the challenging legal work, U.S. Attorneys in Arizona have excellent work/life balance. I stayed past 8pm exactly once—on the first day of a trial, to research a *Batson* challenge that came up during jury selection. Otherwise, I left most days by 5pm and the AUSAs usually left at around the same time.

One final point is that you don't need an interest in criminal prosecution, or even criminal law, to have a positive experience. Most of the other interns did not intend to pursue careers as prosecutors. Many of the AUSAs had experience in civil practice prior to becoming prosecutors and they were happy to provide all varieties of career advice. I would highly recommend the U.S. Attorney's Office to anyone who wants to see the judicial system from the inside while researching and writing about exciting legal issues.
Summer 2011

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA (SAN JOSÉ)
Joseph Kanada '07

For anyone interested in working as an Assistant United States Attorney, a summer internship with a U.S. Attorney's Office will provide valuable insight into the nature of the work and inside information regarding hiring procedures and standards. I worked with the Criminal Division in San Jose. This particular office has three distinct benefits. First, as a branch office it is smaller which provides for a lighter caseload and more interaction with the AUSAs. Second, because of its central location in the Silicon Valley, the office handles unique casework related to technology and has a Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property (CHIP) division. And third, perhaps because of its location or size, the office has a relaxed atmosphere.

As summer clerks, we were responsible for our own cases. Misdemeanors and felonies which the office chooses to prosecute as misdemeanors are assigned to law clerks who handle every aspect of the case. Clerks determine whether or not to bring charges, deal with defense counsel, and appear in court for arraignments, status hearings, plea agreements, and sentencing. The most common cases assigned to law clerks in the San Jose office are postal theft, driving under the influence on federal property, and bank embezzlement. The clerks are also responsible for the petty offense calendar. This calendar occurs once a month and involves low-level traffic crimes that occur on federal property. The law clerks, in cooperation with Federal Public Defender law clerks, negotiate with the defendant in an effort to arrive at an amicable settlement.

In comparison to the San Francisco law clerks, the San Jose law clerks have fewer cases and more work related to legal research. Although we had fewer court appearances because of this, it allowed us to work on the larger felony cases and gave more exposure to AUSA responsibilities. The research I worked on involved the Sentencing Guidelines, RICO, child pornography, international search warrants, and death threats to federal officials. I also had the opportunity to write a Memo in Opposition to a Motion to Dismiss, which was ultimately filed in a copyright violation case.

And finally, this office provided numerous opportunities for "field trips." We watched our supervisor argue in front of the Ninth Circuit, participated in a police ride-along, had a potluck with several District judges, had a tour of Alcatraz, and watched trials in both state and federal court. Watching the trials was particularly insightful for those interns considering working both as a District Attorney and as an AUSA.

Because of these educational opportunities both in and out of the office, I would highly recommend working at the San Jose office.
Summer 2005

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Marisa West '13

My application process was an unconventional one that I caution students who actually want to work during their 1L summer to avoid. In the chaos of finishing my first semester, taking exams, and beginning a new semester, I ignored the "Apply For a Job" bullet point on my to-do list. Per CDO's advice, I signed up for the NYU Public Interest Job Fair as a backup plan months in advance, but between the time that I signed up for the fair that I hoped I would not need to attend and the weekend of the fair, I had only applied to one job. Much to my surprise, the Friday before the job fair I received a "Congratulations" email from the DC U.S. Attorney's Office. It turns out that the résumé that I had uploaded to the NYU Job Fair website to register was selected by the DC USAO internship coordinator and a job landed in my lap.

I could not have been luckier. My summer at the DC USAO was incredible. The unique thing about this particular USAO is it handles both local and federal crime, making it the largest and most diverse USAO in the country. After 10 short weeks I was able to sit second chair in a criminal trial, aid an Assistant U.S. Attorney at counsel's table in a federal criminal hearing, gather critical evidence with FBI agents to indict a co-conspirator, and write a brief that ultimately decided the course of all subsequent issues related to a particular aspect of DC criminal trials. As an intern in the Sex Offense and Domestic Violence section, I worked on both federal and local trials. I participated in the trial process from intake (police officers arriving in the morning with the list of arrests from the previous evening), to witness interviews, to trial, to sentencing. In an office where there is always too much to do and never enough resources, the interns worked alongside Assistant U.S. Attorneys to research legal issues and prepare for trial. We were encouraged to go to court as much as possible and frequently went to watch some of the best prosecutors in the country in action. I was in DC Superior (local) or DC District Court (federal) every day and learned so much just from observing.

Although there are over 100 interns working in the DC USAO, the sections were mostly separate and I spent a majority of my time with the seven interns in my section. We had a wonderful time together and greatly enjoyed our office, but I did hear that some interns in other sections were not as happy. My impression is the interns who reached out to attorneys, fostered relationships, and asked for meaningful work were rewarded; those who were less active may have been disappointed. I highly suggest that if you work in this office, you take initiative and seek out opportunities to work on interesting cases and go to court as much as possible.

One thing many of the interns and I wish we had done was taken Criminal Procedure before the summer. All of us had taken Criminal Law our second semester of 1L year which was *extremely* helpful, but we would have been saved a lot of time working on projects if we had a better understanding of the procedure. Taking Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure together may be a tough endeavor, so I am not convinced that is a viable solution.

Interning at the DC USAO is a wonderful experience that I highly recommend. If you have an interest in criminal trials, this is the place to be for the summer.
Summer 2011

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT (NEW HAVEN)
Lisa Wang '17

I spent the summer after my 1L year working as a law intern at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut in New Haven. I knew I wanted to stay in New Haven for the summer, and that I wanted

to work for the federal government, having never done so before. The reviews from past YLS interns were overwhelmingly positive, and the experience certainly did not disappoint.

I applied to the office and some other local options in December. Since it was still early on in the cycle, I called to request an interview since I hadn't heard back yet. They had me come in right away and I interviewed with the paralegal and attorney who would be supervising the summer interns. The interviews were not challenging and were focused on having you understand the position and getting a sense of your personality and work ethic. I heard back with an offer after about two weeks and began the security screening process in March. Make sure to complete the security screening diligently and as quickly as possible, as several interns were not cleared until a few weeks into their internships.

After a half-day orientation, I began work right away. The office does not match interns to attorneys, allowing students the chance to experience criminal work on a variety of topics (insurance fraud, mortgage fraud, national security, human trafficking, immigration, etc.) as well as civil work (civil defense and affirmative litigation). Attorneys are great about giving substantive legal work. I have written appellate brief arguments, drafted responses to memos, rebutted habeas petitions, and performed targeted legal research. There's also plenty of opportunities to observe arraignments, plea hearings, trials, and sentencings at the District Court next door. Each intern is also afforded the opportunity to make an appearance; I did a guilty plea and others second-seated at trials or represented the government during arraignments.

The office has a friendly and open-door but hardworking atmosphere. As opposed to US Attorney's Offices in New York, the prosecutors tend to be older, career prosecutors who are family-oriented. Most prosecutors follow a 9-5 schedule and are happy to give interns career or life advice. The intern program is also quite robust; we had the opportunity to watch Second Circuit arguments, tour a federal prison, meet the Attorney-General and U.S. Attorney for Connecticut, have lunches with judges, watch an FBI bomb demonstration, and go on social outings such as happy hours and baseball games.

I strongly recommend this position to any YLS student looking for a great substantive experience. You don't have to be interested in litigation or government work to enjoy it; the exposure to criminal law is invaluable to any legal career. You also shouldn't refrain from applying if you are interested in defense work. Many prosecutors have moved in and out of defense work, and the office culture is very conscientious of the duty to do justice and deal with the defendant fairly, and there are so many community policing programs and compassionate prosecutors that have completely shaped how I have understood the profession. I am very grateful for the opportunity to work at the USAO Connecticut this summer and strongly recommend it.
Summer 2015

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT (NEW HAVEN)
Anonymous

I worked as a summer intern in the New Haven U.S. Attorney's office after my 1L year at YLS, and could not have been happier with my experience. In fact, the great experience I had at that office made me reconsider what I wanted out of a career in the law. I would especially recommend interning at a U.S. Attorney's Office if you have not had any experience with litigation before (for example, you weren't a paralegal, or your parents are not lawyers) because it will give you an excellent perspective into that side of law. For me, it convinced me that litigation was the most exciting part of law and it's made the rest of law school much happier for me as I've been able to choose courses and clinics that fit this newfound interest.

My internship was ten weeks long, although I voluntarily stayed on for an extra few weeks to help with a trial. At first, assignments were coordinated through our supervising attorney. The research assignments were very specific legal research questions. Sometimes the assigning AUSA would request a memo, but more often they would prefer to simply have the cases printed out and a verbal report from me as to the results of my research. It turns out this was a very good skill to have honed in this internship, because I have had to do the same thing at my firm this summer and having that experience has helped tremendously. Our experience extended beyond the office as well. We took multiple field trips (including to an FBI bomb training explosion demonstration, the FBI, Danbury Correctional Institution) and had presentations from the District of Connecticut, U.S. Marshals' office, the United States Probation Office, and the Court Clerk. We also met the district and magistrate judges in the District and took a trip to see two AUSAs argue in front of the Second Circuit.

I'll admit that I knew nothing about criminal law or criminal procedure before I began my internship, so there was a bit of a learning curve. However, I quickly learned whatever law I needed to as I went, and my WestLaw skills improved greatly. Because the office conducted a number of trials that summer, I often was asked to research a last-minute question that had come up in the trial proceedings. For example, I had to research the law on opening statements two days before trial began when the judge created a new rule for opening statements—nothing like crunch time! Other assignments had more flexible time frames, like working on an ineffective assistance of counsel claim, or working with the court to correct a mistaken sentence. I also had the opportunity to draft a Second Circuit brief in a response to an appeal. I worked with many different attorneys, which was also good exposure to the diversity of lawyering and mentoring styles that I've experienced at my firm this summer. At the New Haven USAO, interns do not have to choose between criminal and civil divisions—while I chose to only take one civil assignment, my fellow interns took on more civil assignments and participated in a number of interesting and substantive assignments, including depositions and civil rights investigations.

Because the office had so many trials, I was able to observe many of the attorneys in action over the course of the ten weeks. Being able to spend so much time in court, just watching different prosecutors and defense counsel, was a chance that most law students won't get (unless they clerk for a district court). I learned a lot from watching the AUSAs about how to communicate with opposing counsel as well as argue in court. The office is committed to having every summer intern appear in court at least once during the summer. I had the opportunity to appear twice—once for a presentment, and once in trial.

Far and away, the best experience I had that summer was participating as a second chair in a trial. Granted, it was a one-day trial on a very simple matter, but I have not been able to get over the exhilaration of that experience. It's very rare for an intern to participate in trial and I committed to staying on part-time for three or four weeks after my internship ended. As a result, I was able to prepare witnesses, participate in a suppression hearing, visit the DNA laboratory, write motions and briefs for the trial, and perform a direct examination on both a fact witness and an expert witness. Standing up in court to represent the United States was one of the best experiences of my life, and I have never been more nervous than waiting for the verdict (even when opposing counsel objected to my direct examination closing question). The attorneys I worked with were amazing mentors who prepared me to be successful and were generous with their time and support. That was true for almost every attorney I met at the USAO—they all loved their jobs, wanted to share what they did with others, and were committed to doing the right thing, in a just and fair manner. It was a truly collegial environment where doors were open and attorneys conferred on case strategy or how to approach this issue in front of that judge. It made me excited to be a lawyer.

What I did at the USAO my 1L summer changed the way I thought about many aspects of the law, large and small—from the federal criminal justice system in the United States to how I want to spend my days as a lawyer. I learned a surprising amount about myself and found interests I did not know I had, like

being a trial attorney. The level of substantive work I did at the USAO gave me plenty to talk about in FIP interviews, and gave me some ideas of what practice areas of a large law firm I wanted to experience my 2L summer. I would especially recommend this experience to anyone who is interested in a ground-level look at litigation, whether civil or criminal, and encourage you to consider interning in a USAO wherever you'd like to spend a summer.
Summer 2014

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT (NEW HAVEN)
Michelle Morin '08

Working at the U.S. Attorney's Office over the summer is a great opportunity to see what being a federal prosecutor is like. It's different from the typical law firm experience in several ways. No perks or frills are included when you work for the government. The attorneys may take you out to lunch once or twice, but chances are that it's on their own dimes if they do. You won't have a secretary or support staff, and there won't be an "assignments chair" or other such person looking over your shoulder to make sure you have the right quantity and quality of projects to do over the summer (though the summer program coordinator does get things started for you). You may not even have your own computer. All that means is that you'll have to be a self-starter—introduce yourself to the attorneys, ask what they're working on, and ask what you can get involved in. You'll get plenty of work if you do, because there's plenty to go around.

Trials are more frequent in a USAO than in a firm, and in New Haven you'll have the opportunity to observe trials in the various courthouses, starting with the one next door. You'll probably be involved in legal research and in other methods of assisting the attorneys prepare for trials, and there's a good chance you'll be assigned to write an immigration brief if you're in New Haven. The office is small enough that you don't necessarily get assigned to work only in civil or only in criminal, which I enjoyed. Many interns enjoy the opportunity to appear in court to do a guilty plea or other simple appearance for the government. The office also sends the interns out to several educational events, such as talking with federal judges over lunch, or visiting a state courthouse and talking with state judges.

I really enjoyed working in the New Haven USAO, but I think there are things about working for the federal government that don't rub everyone the right way. The salary (non-existent for summer intern "volunteers") is one. Two, you may or may not enjoy that the prevailing practice is to work from 9 to 5 except in the very specific case where you have a trial coming up. I've heard that this is more characteristic of USAOs in locations outside the Southern District of New York or other big metropolitan offices, where the pace, the intensity, and the workload is more similar to that of the big law firms in those cities, but I have no personal experience in such an office.

The easiest way to get a summer job at the New Haven U.S. Attorney's Office is to genuinely want to be there (both at that job and in that office), and to have previously demonstrated your sincere commitment to and desire to continue government service. One way to have done this is through pre-law-school government work; another is through the Prosecution Externship during the school year. I'd say this continues to apply if and when you seek a full-time job after law school. People who stay at law firms too long, and have no prior record of wanting to be at the USAO, may be perceived as "refugees" from BigLaw. The USAO wants people for whom it is a first choice, not a fallback.
Summer 2006

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS (CHICAGO)
Alexander Berlin '08

During the summer of 2006, I worked for the U.S. Attorney's office in the Northern District of Illinois (NDIL). I heartily endorse the experience. The job will, of course, be of particular interest to those

interested in criminal law and criminal procedure, but frankly, the job should appeal to almost anyone. One of the best aspects of the job is that interns are not assigned to a particular division or a particular attorney; instead, interns do a wide range of work, both criminal and civil, and are encouraged to work with a number of different Assistant U.S. Attorneys. I researched and wrote memos on issues ranging from specifics of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts to the appropriate procedures for obtaining financial records to various aspects of criminal procedure and substantive criminal law. I wrote numerous motions and an appellate brief. I was also able to assist with pre-trial and trial work. I talked with defense attorneys, strategized with prosecutors, assisted in proffers, helped prepare defendants for the grand jury and the witness stand, and sat in with Assistant U.S. Attorneys at every stage of the criminal trial process: from initial appearances to detention hearings to probable cause hearings to trials to sentencing hearings. Interns who have finished two years of law school can also play a more active role in the courtroom than I was able to, not only assisting the prosecutors but also questioning witnesses and gaining other trial experience. Likewise, interns who have finished two years of law school can act as full-fledged prosecutors at the monthly petty offense days.

The quality of life is also quite high. Interns are required to work 40 hours a week for twelve weeks, and given the assignment-based structure of the job, while some days one can expect to stay late, most days I was able to leave the office by 6 p.m. or so. Chicago is also a wonderful city in which to live and work. If you live outside the Loop, the rent is much cheaper than in East Coast cities like New York, Boston, and Washington, DC. Commuting is also pretty easy, as the "L" runs frequently, and most residential areas are in close proximity to at least one "L" stop. Chicago's neighborhoods are fun and distinct. It's beautiful, and there's great food, theater, and museums. And, of course, there are two storied baseball franchises that play there during the summer months. With about 12 other interns, from a number of different law schools, and lots of friendly Assistant U.S. Attorneys, the social scene is great both inside and outside of the office.

The only note of caution is that obtaining the internship involves a few procedural hurdles. At least for the summer of 2006, applications were due very early for 1Ls (the first week of December), the requirements were somewhat daunting for a student in his or her first semester of law school (three letters of recommendation, preferably legal), and the responses came quite late (March), which can be a problem when other jobs want to know your plans in early February.

Once the hurdles are jumped, however, the job can't be beat. The work is interesting, fun, and diverse. Interns are given a lot of responsibility, and the learning opportunities are endless. The people are smart, friendly, and eager to share their knowledge and experience with interns. I can't recommend it highly enough.
Summer 2006

DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY
Adam Yoffie '11

Five rabbis and three mayors walk into a courthouse . . . No, this is not the start to a bad joke but rather a description of the Newark Federal Courthouse last July during my summer with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey. Although I did not have the pleasure of working on the top secret case that involved bribes in cereal boxes and the selling of kidneys, I did get to witness the office break one of the largest public corruption cases in state history.

I cannot say enough good things about my experience last summer when I had the opportunity to work on an appellate brief for the Third Circuit and on a separate response to a motion for severance in a high profile murder case involving a former Assistant United States Attorney. Working with experienced counsel committed to mentoring, I learned about the practice of law on behalf of the federal government

both inside and outside the courtroom. Although prosecution is not for everyone, I felt right at home and delighted in visiting the courtroom whenever I had the chance. Staying in touch with my appellate mentor, I even traveled to Philadelphia later in the fall to attend the oral arguments.

In addition to the structured work assignments, the summer program also included field trips to Fort Dix where we fired semiautomatic pistols and to the Newark Airport where we met with ICE officials. We met with local law enforcement officials and the head of the Newark branch of the U.S. Marshalls program. Yet the best part was actually the end-of-the-summer Mock Trial program when I finally had the opportunity to conduct my own direct and cross-examination.

Most importantly, my fellow group of interns provided support and amusement in our crowded "office"—and I not only benefited from the direct support of my supervising attorneys but also from the two AUSAs specifically in charge of running the summer internship program. For any law student interested in engaging in substantive work after his/her first year, I cannot recommend a better experience than a United States Attorney's Office—especially the office in Newark, New Jersey.
Summer 2009

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
Samuel Adelsberg '13

Spending my 1L summer at the U.S. Attorney's Office was an unbelievable experience. I came in knowing little about prosecution and left with a whole new appreciation for our federal criminal justice system.

I had a strong preference for working on terrorism prosecutions and I expressed that during my interview. Luckily, I was placed in the division that focuses on terrorism and violent crimes. Perhaps even more fortuitous, however, was the fact that I was able to work on two separate terrorism trials during my summer—one a plot to blow up JFK airport while the other was a plot to blow up the NYC subway system.

My bosses were fantastic. They always kept me in the loop and gave me substantive litigation assignments. In fact, I was asked to author the major section of our brief in the subway plot case. This was a true highlight for me as the topic was cutting-edge and the fact pattern was fascinating. I was also able to get up in court and argue in a bail hearing which I believe only EDNY interns are able to do.

Apart from the direct work I was able to do on those cases, the internship program was also very well structured and informative. We had brown bag lunches with different DOJ divisions, defense lawyers and judges. We had day trips to courts, prisons and forensic labs. There was also a neat social element that made it very easy to make friends among the different interns.

All in all, I highly recommend spending a summer at the U.S. Attorney's Office—especially in Brooklyn!
Summer 2012

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
Diana Kane '11

If you are interested in exploring criminal prosecution or civil litigation, developing your legal writing, creating effective work product that benefits from the feedback of highly skilled attorneys, and gaining trial practice experience, then you should consider an internship in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York (EDNY).

An extremely collegial and friendly working environment, the EDNY office is comprised of a Civil Section, a Criminal Section, and an Appeals Section. The Criminal Section has several prosecuting units: General Crimes, Narcotics, Civil Rights, Organized Crime, Violent Crimes & Terrorism, Business & Securities Fraud, Public Integrity, and Appeals. In the Criminal Section, an intern may request assignment to a specific unit and the Summer Intern Committee will try to accommodate it, based on availability. Each intern is assigned to a supervising Assistant U.S. Attorney, who works one-on-one with the intern on research, writing and investigatory projects from their active case load. I was invited to observe court appearances, meetings with FBI, DEA, ICE and other law enforcement agents, and to participate in defendant and witness proffers. I researched and wrote prosecution proposals, memoranda, motions, briefs, and sentencing recommendations. Interns are encouraged to supplement their primary assignments with additional assignments in other areas of interest. For instance, I was assigned to Violent Crimes & Terrorism (by request), but I had a chance to work on cases in Narcotics, Organized Crime, Business & Securities Fraud, and Appeals.

The office organizes a weekly brown bag lunch series that features informal presentations and Q&A sessions with the chiefs of each unit, as well as with specialists from support agencies such as the FBI, the Medical Examiner's office, and judges from the District Court. The office also organizes two field trips. During my 1L summer we had an excellent, all-access tour of the Metropolitan Detention Center (the federal jail) and were hosted by Judge Reena Raggi (former U.S. Attorney for EDNY) at the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Because the District Court in Brooklyn permits law clerks to appear in court under the supervision of an AUSA, the office encourages summer interns to take as many opportunities as possible to represent the government. In the first week of my internship, I argued a sentencing before Judge Weinstein in a narcotics courier case. By the end of my internship, I had appeared in court five times (sentencing, detention hearing, two status conferences, and a Daubert hearing) and was second chair in an appeal before the Second Circuit. I was also very fortunate to be assigned to a high-profile securities fraud case. Participating in a trial from pre-trial motions and jury selection, through the presentation of evidence, to verdict was an exciting and invaluable experience. I learned more substantive law and procedure supporting the trial team than I have in two years of law school.

If you are interested in regulatory practice, prosecution or law enforcement (SEC, DOJ, FBI, CIA), then an internship in the Eastern District is an excellent opportunity to gain experience on national-level cases and make connections with government attorneys, federal prosecutors and law enforcement agents. If you are interested in pursuing litigation, the breadth of cases brought in the district affords valuable exposure to both major corporate litigation and white collar defense. Whatever your interest, during a summer at EDNY, you will make valuable connections beyond the prosecutor's office. The attorneys I worked with who represented defendants and corporate witnesses turned out to be the partners and associates I interviewed with at FIP. While working at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. during my 2L summer, I benefited from the patronage of several EDNY AUSAs who were detailed there on national assignments. I can say without reservation that my summer in Brooklyn was the best work experience I have ever had, legal or otherwise.
Summer 2009

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
Kate Heinzelman '09

Working at the U.S. Attorney's Office was the perfect job after my first year of law school. The day I arrived, I met the Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) with whom I would be working and was immediately whisked off to attend court. A few days later, we were in the midst of a trial. As soon as that ended, we had to catch up on the rest of the AUSA's caseload.

Every day was exciting and the breadth of the experiences I was able to have over those few weeks was incredible. I attended many, if not all, of the meetings the AUSA attended, assisted on a full trial, observed at court regularly, drafted sections of briefs and completed preliminary evidence review. Although I worked in the international narcotics and trafficking unit, I had exposure to many of the other departments as well.

The office atmosphere was very collegial and, in addition to spending a lot of time with the AUSA for whom I was working, I had the opportunity to get to know many of his colleagues. The AUSAs are—not surprisingly—a highly impressive group. It was also great to be with the other legal interns. The office would frequently organize programs for the interns as a group. The AUSAs do a very good job of helping students become better writers and researchers. At the same time, they make sure that all of the assignments are substantive and interesting.

On the whole, working at the USAO was a fantastic experience and a great window through which to observe federal litigation.
Summer 2007

EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA
Heather Coleman '07

I spent a wonderful summer after my 1L year working at the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (EDPA), located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I will attempt to give a fairly comprehensive description of my experience below, but I would still be happy to talk to anyone interested in spending a summer at the EDPA USAO.

The EDPA USAO summer program typically begins in early June and runs for a mandatory ten weeks. Interns generally work from 9 to 5 and are assigned to work on criminal, civil, or organized crime ("strike force") matters, although you can request to try more than one area during the summer. In all divisions, interns work on cases from the investigatory stage through trial and appeal. The program coordinators strive to give each intern at least one trial experience (including trial preparation) and one appellate brief assignment.

I spent all 10 weeks of my internship working on criminal matters. My assignments included numerous research memos, a habeas response, one trial, and two appellate briefs. In general, most of my summer was spent researching and writing. In between assignments, interns are encouraged to observe trials and appellate arguments at the federal courthouse directly across the street from the USAO. There are few restrictions—as long as you get your assignments done you are free to allocate your work time however you like. I spent at least half a day each week at the courthouse.

The EDPA USAO has a unique structure. AUSAs are assigned to the Criminal, Civil, or Strike Force Divisions, but there is minimal specialization beyond that level. This means that an AUSA might work on bankruptcy fraud litigation one month and a drug conspiracy case the next; the U.S. Attorney feels that this keeps lawyers refreshed and on their toes. The summer program takes a similar approach. Interns are not assigned to a particular attorney or area of criminal/civil law. This structure enables interns to gain exposure to numerous fields; however, it makes it more difficult to develop a strong relationship with any particular attorney. On the other hand, interns have the opportunity to view the varied approaches of different AUSAs, and the lawyers are always happy to discuss their work regardless of whether or not you are completing an assignment for them.

The "field trips" are one of the best parts of this internship; they take place about once every other week. During my internship, we spent time in city and state court as well as the Third Circuit, and the USAO

arranged for us to meet privately with judges in each. Furthermore, we visited a federal prison where we spoke with Bureau of Prison lawyers and participated in a full day training session at a federal firing range (where, among other things, we fired fully automatic machine guns.) In addition to the field trips, the office sponsors many in-office lunches and speeches.

I feel that the USAO summer program provided me with ample exposure to prosecutorial work while strengthening my research and writing skills. Above all else, my fellow interns and the office's attorneys were the best part of my summer experience. The size and structure of the program fosters close relationships within the summer class, and I still keep in touch with some of the other interns. I would highly recommend this program!
Summer 2005

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
Joshua Johnson '09

During the summer after my 1L year, I worked for twelve weeks at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Texas in Dallas. At the beginning of my 1L job search, I knew that I wanted to work for the federal government or a public-interest organization, and I was also interested in criminal law. I am from the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, so I was interested in working in Texas, although I had not ruled out the possibility of interning in Washington, DC, or New York. Through Career Connections, I contacted Leigha Simonton, a YLS graduate who works on appellate matters at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Dallas. Originally, I had not planned to apply to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Dallas and had simply wanted to speak with Mrs. Simonton about legal job opportunities in the North Texas area. After hearing Mrs. Simonton talk about her work, however, I quickly accepted her offer to forward my resume to the AUSA in charge of summer hiring. I drove to the Dallas office for in-person interviews while I was home for winter break, and I received an offer shortly afterward.

During my summer at the USAO in Dallas, the office had less than ten interns. Unlike some larger USAOs, such as the USAO for the Southern District of New York, the Dallas office did not divide interns between the criminal and civil sections; instead, interns were free to work on both criminal and civil projects. Given my interest in criminal law, I chose to focus almost exclusively on criminal assignments, but civil projects were available for those who were interested.

Interns at the USAO in Dallas receive high-quality assignments and are entrusted with a substantial amount of responsibility. I wrote a couple of sentencing memorandums that were submitted to the court with little revision, and I also drafted a motion to dismiss an appeal that was granted by the Fifth Circuit. In addition, I drafted a trial brief and a motion for summary judgment in a civil forfeiture action, and I worked on a number of interesting research projects, mostly relating to sentencing, evidentiary, and procedural issues.

My favorite part of working at the USAO in Dallas was the ability to observe court proceedings firsthand. The USAO in Dallas is located in the federal courthouse downtown, and interns were regularly encouraged to attend trials, pretrial hearings, and sentencing proceedings. In fact, as the summer progressed, I would sometimes turn down offers to observe courtroom proceedings so that I could focus on the interesting work I had been assigned.

The highlight of my summer was being assigned to the trial teams in a counterfeiting case and a white-collar prosecution. In both cases, I assisted the attorneys with pretrial legal research and also had the opportunity to discuss the prosecution's trial strategy. I then observed the trials and helped the attorneys with last-minute legal research issues. Once the trials ended, I waited with the attorneys as the jury deliberated and then watched the jury announce its verdict. Since criminal prosecutions move more

rapidly than civil cases, working at a USAO provides summer interns with a unique opportunity to work on and observe cases over the full course of the litigation life cycle. If you are interested in doing trial-level litigation, it is hard to think of a better place to work as a summer intern than a USAO.

The summer I worked at the USAO in Dallas, we had an incredible intern coordinator who dedicated an extraordinary amount of time and energy to ensuring that we had a memorable summer. Nearly every week, the interns went on a different "field trip." We had the opportunity to tour the local FBI, DEA, and Secret Service buildings, along with the federal penitentiary in Seagoville and the state DA's office in Dallas. We also received shooting lessons from ATF agents at a local firing range (although I had never shot a gun in my life, the ATF agents were incredibly patient with me, and it was great to have the opportunity to spend an afternoon with real federal agents).

I would highly recommend an internship with the USAO in Dallas. The AUSAs at the office are incredibly friendly, bright, and dedicated people. The office did not feel ideologically charged, and I found that the AUSAs held a range of political views. In fact, I was happy to see that many of the AUSAs were excited about the upcoming Democratic primary season and enjoyed discussing Democratic politics. Also, the work-week at the USAO in Dallas is hard to beat. I usually arrived at the office around 8:30 a.m. and left by 5:30 p.m. I never worked weekends and rarely worked past 6:00 p.m. When I did leave the office a little past 5:30 p.m., I noticed that many attorneys had already left for the day. Although the AUSAs in the Dallas office work hard and are extremely committed to their jobs, they also seem to enjoy a healthy work-life balance.

If you have any questions about the USAO in Dallas, please feel free to contact me. It is a great place to work, especially for anyone interested in trial-level litigation.
Summer 2007

EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Joshua Bone '13

I spent the summer of 2011 working at the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia. I decided to work in EDVA for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, I was attracted by their diverse docket. Not only do they handle a wide variety of national security cases, but they also handle many securities fraud cases because the SEC servers are located in EDVA and the Fourth Circuit has ruled that this gives EDVA venue over basically all cases involving securities registered with the SEC. Thus, the docket is very similar to the SDNY docket. Additionally, I knew that the intern class was reasonably small, at least compared to DC, SDNY, and EDNY, so I suspected I would be less likely to fall through the cracks and more likely to receive substantive work.

The job didn't disappoint. The office was desperate for assistance—it handles a huge and complicated caseload, and I interned in the midst of a hiring freeze—and the Assistant U.S. Attorneys I worked with were all very grateful for the help. They also made a significant effort to incorporate summer interns into the day-to-day operations of the office. We felt like part of the team, at least for the matters on which we worked.

I came into the job with a particular interest in criminal law, which likely made the assignments more enjoyable for me. That said, the types of issues I researched presented complex and interesting questions that would excite almost anyone: I examined everything from extraterritorial jurisdiction to the Federal Rules of Evidence. An internship at a U.S. Attorney's office is probably valuable for most rising 2Ls, regardless of their long-term professional interests, mostly because the job provides a lot of opportunities for legal writing.

Another perk of the job in EDVA—and, from what I understand, in many other offices—is the proximity to the courthouse. If we had a slow afternoon, we could wander over to court and observe various types of hearings in criminal and civil matters. I learned as much from this sort of observation as I did from my own research. In law school, you learn the law through reading appellate opinions; if you have any interest in trial work, it might behoove you to seek out a job that will give you an opportunity to observe courtroom action first-hand.

In terms of quality of life, the job really can't be beat. I was supposed to be in the office for 40 hours a week (9 to 5, Monday through Friday). While I occasionally had to stay late, I never had to bring work home, and I never worked on weekends. The attorneys I worked with were always respectful of my schedule and avoided loading me up with so much work that I became overwhelmed. Additionally, the intern coordinator arranged approximately one field trip a week for us. Among other things, we received a private tour of the CIA headquarters and got tickets to observe the Supreme Court announce opinions.

A final note about the application process: while these jobs are competitive, you have a good chance of getting one if you apply as early as possible after December 1. At least in EDVA, it also helps to have a Virginia connection of some sort (it doesn't have to be that strong; my connection was that I lived in Arlington for a while between college and law school). Offices like EDVA have smaller intern classes, so they tend to be a bit more selective.
Summer 2011

3. U.S. Department of Justice

US DOJ, Criminal Division, Office of Enforcement Operations
Gregory Kimak '17

My summer experience at OEO was very rewarding and I recommend it to anybody interested in complex criminal issues at the federal level. The office supports U.S. Attorney's offices throughout the country by providing approval and advice on a variety of specialized tools and programs including: wiretaps, witness security, and subpoenas of attorneys, journalists, and public officials. The small number of interns (~5) generally work on research assignments related to these topics through short memos and similar products. The program is relaxed and flexible, the people are nice and supportive, and D.C. is a great city to spend a summer in. If you're interested in criminal law, an internship at OEO will expose you to programs and problems that you probably can't find through a class or externship at Yale.

The summer program is well run. My supervisor made sure that we always had something to do and was being exposed to all aspects of the section. Additionally, we were each assigned a mentor within the office that also provided general feedback and career advice throughout the summer. The office organized a special tour of the FBI for us, and each of us went on a ride-along with the DC police. The Criminal Division at DOJ organized weekly lunches for all the interns from each section of the Division. Highlights included a presentation on social media tracking by the Computer Crimes Section, as well as war stories from a member of the Organized Crimes section about prosecuting gang members in Maryland.

The relatively few downsides of the program had more to do with the DOJ bureaucracy than the OEO internship itself. Interns are prohibited from assisting with active wiretap applications or anything involving grand-jury testimony. We ended up working on more of the policy aspects of different programs rather than specific cases that were flowing through the office. Also, the office has a generally high workload so interns need to be proactive in seeking out specific career advice from the attorneys in the office.

Overall, I would recommend a summer at OEO. I feel that the experience I received working at the criminal division cannot be replicated by a summer in a U.S. Attorney's Office. I feel that I now have some unique experiences and knowledge that will translate to new opportunities for next summer and after graduation. Like other individuals have said, this internship provided me with greater insight into the lawyer that I want to be.
Summer 2015

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