



**The Pre-Law e-Newsletter from Pre-Professional Programs & Advising**

\*Best viewed in HTML\*

**Vol. 5, No. 8**

Friday, February 3, 2012 – Thursday, February 16, 2012

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**1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.**

Welcome back! For those of you that completed intersession courses (and who have been back), welcome to Spring 2012 semester! I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and their break, and that the first week of classes went well.

Any of you that are considering studying abroad should note that the Annual JHU Study Abroad Fair is on Thursday, February 9, from 10 am – 2 pm in the Glass Pavilion.

The fair is an opportunity to explore your options for an international academic experience and meet representatives of universities & programs abroad, including:

- Hopkins Semester and Full Year Programs
- Hopkins Exchange Programs
- Hopkins Summer Programs
- Prestigious Universities Abroad
- Approved Programs from Distinguished Providers including Columbia, Syracuse and Boston Universities; Sweet Briar College, IFSA-Butler, CUPA, DIS, SIT, CIEE, and CET

**For more information:**

JHU Study Abroad

Levering Hall 04B

410-516-7856 / [jhuabroad@jhu.edu](mailto:jhuabroad@jhu.edu) / [http://web.jhu.edu/study\\_abroad](http://web.jhu.edu/study_abroad)

Resource Center Hours: Monday – Friday, 10:00 am – 4:30 pm

Advising Walk-in Hours: Monday – Friday, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

*Best of luck to anyone taking the February 11 LSAT!*

**2. THINKING GLOBALLY? STUDY ABROAD!**

Pre-law students cannot ignore how important it is to have a solid understanding of human behavior and diverse cultures within the United States and abroad. In fact, it is a wonderful, enriching experience for a pre-law student to study abroad! Studying abroad may permit a student to gain proficiency in a foreign language, which may not only garner the attention of law school admissions committees, but can lead to greater marketability once licensed as an attorney.



plans to move to Florida when he retires, but "imagine[s] [his] wife has already secretly bought property in Maine."

Jared Jaskot is admitted to practice in Maryland.

## Questions

### 1) Describe a day in the life of a Maryland Public Defender.

After a little more than four years, I've had plenty of trials (about 200) on both the winning and losing side. In the beginning, I used to order the tapes from each trial and journal about important cases. As I had more trials, that practice fell by the wayside. One trial I remember very well was my eighth trial. It was on my 29th birthday. I had eight clients and every case was "worked out" (dismissed, postponed, or the client accepted a plea bargain) except for one guy. He was charged with trying to steal a vehicle. While I talked to him through the bars of a jail cell behind the courtroom, he informed that he was going to "put me to the test" and "give me a chance to show him that I had skills." I was a bit taken aback by his desire to go to trial based on the overwhelming evidence against him, and I advised him that his chances at trial were not good. The eight other gentlemen in the cell with him noticed my reluctance to go to trial and started laughing and making fun of me. Bear in mind that two of them were clients whose cases I had convinced the prosecutor to dismiss an hour prior. Nonetheless, the accusations flew. "Are you going to be a real lawyer or a public pretender?" "He ain't even gone to law school." "That guy works for the state." Despite the catcalls about my abilities, the client decided to exercise his right to a trial.

The vehicle in question was a dump truck on a construction site. My client was caught in it at 1 am, with a screwdriver jammed in the lock of the driver's door, with the lights on. The police officer that arrested him was curious about the lights and went over to investigate. He asked my client what he was doing and my client said he was going to take his truck home for the night. The officer didn't believe him because he had no keys. An arrest ensued.

I was able to suppress my client's incriminating statements due to a Miranda violation. I asked very few questions on cross examination. My client, having multiple theft and car theft convictions was not going to take the stand because the judge would have heard about his convictions. Both side made impassioned closing arguments. The entire trial lasted less than an hour.

The judge decided to sum it all up before she made her ruling: "I just don't see why your client would want to steal a dump truck, it would be very unwieldy to drive it around. It wasn't on, he was just sitting in it." NOT GUILTY. Ha! I have no idea why the judge thought this. I did a pretty good job of keeping some evidence out, but this was crazy. My colleagues still talk about the dump truck defense. The client was very happy. He was released two hours later and begged some bus fare off me to get home. He told me that the judge was right, he wasn't actually trying to steal the truck. He had seen someone try to steal it earlier and fail, so he went to sit in it to be out of the elements for a bit, as he was homeless at the time. The time in jail between the arrest and the trial had given him some time away from drugs, and he was going to his sister's house and make a go at living drug free.

Sadly, I've seen him again in that cell behind the courthouse. One day the full complement of critics was laying into me yet again about being a public pretender when he interrupted them. He told them they were all lucky, because today they had a lawyer who was "a straight up wizard."

### 2) What initially attracted you to this field? What are some of the rewards of this area of law and the legal profession?

Friends dragging me along and my having nothing better to do have been the key to many of my major life decisions. A friend took me to a meeting for the Peace Corps on the way to a happy hour. It sounded exciting, and I made the leap. At Georgetown, a friend took me to a talk given by some public defenders. The passion they had for their job and the adventure they spoke of moved me to clerk for a public defender office the summer after my first year of law school. The excitement of working with criminal defendants, the esprit de corps in the office, and the way that each public defender seemed like a lone cowboy against the system drew me in.

The legal profession is so varied in the type of work you can do. Many of my law school classmates never even see the inside of a courtroom or talk to clients. I've probably represented 13,000 clients and am in court nearly daily doing trial work. The common thread is that the law is complex and requires constant study to succeed. Knowing the law makes you feel like you know the rules to the game everyone is playing but many don't even know exists. It makes you the butt of jokes at family reunions and then after the laughter dies out, the dispenser of free legal advice. A common thread is that most lawyers are dedicated to being ethical and thoughtful; people trust us to keep their secrets and give them sound advice.

**3) What are some of the downsides of this area of law? How would you compare the reality of your profession to the picture you had of it while in school?**

Public Defenders make very little money. We often represent ten to twenty times the number of clients represented by private attorneys and have less resources to devote to each case. Some clients, judges, police, and prosecutors have a false conception that the public defender's office offers inferior legal representation. I find this to be untrue, but the perception persists. Despite all this, it is incredibly difficult to get a job in the field. Many people volunteer for the office for months before they get hired. Also, in criminal defense in general, you need to have a thick skin. Some of the issues and people you're working with are both hard to deal with and make you unpopular in society as a whole.

**4) Do you have any advice for an undergraduate interested in pursuing this body of law and the legal profession?**

Volunteer or intern for a Public Defender's office before you go to law school. You will be able to do interesting and substantive work and will get a feel for the way public defenders live and work. Do a little living before you go to law school. It will improve your law school application, and you as a person. Many of my colleagues that went Kindergarten-JD express regret that they didn't do other things before law school. Once you graduate from law school, it is very difficult to do things other than be a lawyer based on your debt and desire to develop professionally.

**Contact Information:**

If you would like to learn more about the Maryland Public Defender's Office or if you have additional questions for Jared Jaskot, you may contact him by email at [jaredjaskot@gmail.com](mailto:jaredjaskot@gmail.com) or by phone at: 321.212.8623

**5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Upcoming LSAT Administration for 2011/2012**

**Location: Check with LSAC for testing locations (next on campus/JHU LSAT administration – Monday, June 11, 2012).**

**Date: Saturday, February 11, 2012/Monday, June 11, 2012**

**Time: Registration begins at 8.30a for the December exam – consult with LSAC for all controlling details.**

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The Administrative Coordinators are available to answer questions regarding your file:

Carolyn Mae Krause, Administrative Coordinator, [ckrause@jhu.edu](mailto:ckrause@jhu.edu) 410-516-6744

For students whose last name begins with A-L, contact Mrs. Krause.

LaTonia Sanders, Administrative Coordinator, [ladytee@jhu.edu](mailto:ladytee@jhu.edu) 410-516-4140  
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Angie Decker, Office Manager, [decker@jhu.edu](mailto:decker@jhu.edu)

Please feel free to use the resource library between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. every day or visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.

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