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# Internship at the Jackson County Public Defender's Office

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## WHY I CHOSE TO DO AN INTERNSHIP

As a student of the Honor's Program at Southern Illinois University (SIU), I am required to fulfill certain obligations. One of these obligations is to finish twelve semester hours of classwork; the other is to write a thesis or complete a hands-on practical senior project. Having fulfilled my first requirement, my internship at the Jackson County Public Defender's Office fulfilled the latter. Making the final decision to work at this office may have been perhaps the most difficult aspect of the project. The range of possibilities was virtually endless.

Midway through my junior year at SIU I realized that I had to determine what I really wanted to do to complete my Honor's Program requirements. Faced with this dilemma (which, as I look back on it, is what it seemed to be) I finally elected to complete a project rather than write an in-depth research paper. I wanted to be involved in something more than just "book-learning." There seems to be such little opportunity to get practical experience in school that I felt I should take advantage of it. I felt that first-hand experience with a real life situation would prove to be more satisfying to me and hoped that a project would give me some valuable experiences to "draw on" later in my life. These were the primary reasons for my choosing an internship rather than a research paper.

The next step, then, was to choose the right project. Did I want to utilize my mathematical skills--my major--or did I want to expand into an area that might be of some interest to me after my upcoming graduation.

Since I had been considering the possibility of entering law school after receiving my bachelor's degree, I thought that perhaps my project could involve some aspect of the legal profession, although I still wasn't sure exactly what that would be. I had very little knowledge of what all the "law" pertained to or if I really wanted to be a lawyer. I decided to use my project as a means of exploring this career opportunity--to help me decide if I really wanted to go to law school.

### **STEPS I TOOK TO GET THE INTERNSHIP**

Since I was not sure about what I was going to do, I began my project by sending out letters to various legal agencies, telling them of my interest in being an intern for a legal organization and asking them if they accepted interns in their offices. Soon, I was contacted by the Jackson County Public Defender's Office, Land of Lincoln Legal Services, and the SIU School of Law Legal Clinic. I called and set up interviews with the Public Defender's Office and Land of Lincoln Legal Services. After interviewing, my choice for the internship went to the Jackson County Public Defender's Office. Although I feel Land of Lincoln Legal Services would have been an interesting and fulfilling experience, I felt that the Public Defender's Office would offer more variety.

## WHAT MY INTERNSHIP INVOLVED

### JOURNAL

\*\*Since providing a journal of the entire summer's events would become redundant, I decided to provide enough journal entries to give the reader a good idea of what my internship was like. I then supplemented this with a case study. Also, since the first couple of weeks of the summer left the greatest impression on me, these were the entries I included.

#### Monday, June 5:

Today was the first day of my internship. As with any new job, I was pretty nervous. I went in at 10:00 a.m. The public defender, Bob VanDerhoff, and I sat down in his office to talk. He told me that since he felt that this internship was primarily for my benefit, I should decide how much effort I want to put into it in order for me to have a beneficial experience. He said that he will recommend things for me to do, and if I want to do them, I can. Basically, we decided that I will do the following tasks:

1. My share of office duties
2. Conduct preliminary jail interviews
3. Act as a witness for more in-depth interviews  
conducted by Bob
4. Go to watch trials
5. Any research that I am capable of doing
6. Anything else that may come up as I go along.

As we were sitting in the office talking, we were interrupted several times by other attorneys asking different questions of Bob. I came to the realization that in this particular profession, other people are the best resource. The question, "What do you think about this?" seems to be extremely important. (I guess that if you are going to try to convince a judge or a jury on a point, it is best to see if you can convince others or even just get a differing opinion first.) It is crucial to look at all the angles of a situation. By asking others, you may be able to realize a different perspective. They even asked my opinion, which made me feel good.

After we talked, I got an office tour. We decided that since it was a slow day, I should go ahead and leave early. Tomorrow is a jury trial. I have never seen one before, so it should be interesting. On my way home, I served subpoenas to Memorial Hospital and the Carbondale Police Station for the release of records.

Tuesday, June 6:

Today started with a tour of the Jackson County courthouse. I would say that since courthouses represent the core of our legal system, a tour was a pretty important step. There is certainly much more to a courthouse than I would have imagined. In addition to the four courtrooms, there are judge's chambers, the State's Attorney's Office, the Circuit Clerk's Office and several other offices as well. The Circuit Clerk's Office is where recent case files are kept. These files are open to the public and are also a source of research.

After the tour, Bob took me over to the jail, where yet another courtroom is located. Bob was there to conduct a post-trial motion. A motion is a formal, written request which regards a question of the law. The

motion is submitted to the court and a motion hearing is set. On the set date and time, each side argues before the judge as to why the motion should be granted or denied. The judge listens to each side, and then makes his final ruling on the motion. Today, Bob was motioning for a retrial of a sexual abuse case on the grounds that the jury had been subjected to hearing too much inadmissible evidence. He argued that since the jury members are only human it was too much to ask them to forget the testimony of three witnesses. I agreed with Bob; however, the judge did not. The motion was denied. This was the first time I had seen any courtroom action.

Later on in the afternoon, one of the assistant public defenders, Kari, was involved in a jury trial. She was defending a client who was accused of theft by association. The defendant apparently was responsible for transferring some stolen compact discs (CD's) from one party to another. The question of this trial was not whether the CD's were stolen, but whether the defendant knew the CD's were stolen when he transferred them between the parties.

Since this was a jury trial, the first event that took place was jury orientation. The prospective jurors were given instructions as to what was expected of them and how they were expected to conduct themselves throughout the trial. Finally, they were shown a film to emphasize the instructions they had received.

Next, jury selection occurred. The attorney's questioned successive panels of prospective jurors. The types of questions they asked were designed to determine if a particular juror had biases or prejudices which might influence him/her in determining the defendant's innocence or guilt. Each attorney is allowed to accept or reject a set number of jurors. After

the questioning of several panels, a jury of twelve members and one alternate juror was selected.

Finally, the trial was under way. Each attorney makes an opening statement. The opening statement is a speech or presentation which summarizes the facts that an attorney intends to prove during a trial. After the opening statements, the state's attorney called his witnesses. First, the witness is directly examined by the state's attorney. The public defender is then allowed to cross-examine the witness. Finally the state's attorney re-direct questions and the public defender re-cross examines the witness. This whole process is repeated for each of the state's witnesses, and again for each of the defense witnesses. (The public defender is allowed to direct examine the defense witnesses and so forth.)

Once the questioning was complete, each side offered a closing argument. The closing argument is a final statement given by an attorney summarizing the evidence he has established and what he thinks the other side has failed to establish.

The judge read instructions to the jury as to the law which governed this case. The jury was given a written statement of the law, and the bailiff led them out of the courtroom and into the jury room. The jury was still deliberating when I left to go home.

It was really interesting to see this trial, as I had never seen a jury trial before. I wasn't really sure how it would go, and I was surprised to see how different it was from L.A. Law. There were no loud outbursts or tears and the attorney's were very civil (even friendly) with one another, even though they were on opposite sides.



Wednesday, June 7:

I found out that the defendant from yesterday's trial was acquitted of the charges against him. Kari was really happy about that because she really believed her client was innocent of the charge and she had done her best to defend him.

The morning was pretty boring because there was nothing in court for me to go watch. I photo-copied a very large file for Bob so that he could give a copy of the file to his client. Bob has a really big trial coming up. His client has been charged with murder (by stabbing). The defendant admitted that it was he who was responsible for the death of the victim. He contends, however, that he killed the victim in self-defense. So, Bob is really concerned about this trial.

During the afternoon, Bob took me along over to the jail so that I could watch him talk to the murder defendant. This was the first time that I went to the jail. We were asked to leave our personal belongings in the lockers located in the lobby of the county jail. We were led through a metal detector and we were frisked. That was certainly a new experience for me. We were taken down a corridor to a series of small interview rooms. The brought the defendant down to the room and we were locked in the room with an accused murderer.

As Bob was talking to the defendant, I was surprised at how nice this accused murderer seemed to be. I guess I have always had this stereo-typical image of what criminals should be like. It was kind of surprising to find out how wrong these images are.

Bob asked the defendant to explain what had happened the night the victim was found dead. The defendant explained his story. It was not surprising to me to find that this death revolved around drugs and money.

Those factors almost always seem to play some part in the commission of crimes. Bob took a lot of notes and asked a lot of questions. I left the jail feeling as though the defendant had killed the victim in self-defense.

Monday, June 12:

During the morning Bob asked me to read through the medical reports which dealt with the victim of the murder trial. There was a complete written description of the victim's body, as well as a labeled diagram which illustrated what the written description related. He wanted me to take notes on the descriptions stating which stab wounds seemed as though they were caused intentionally and which indicate a person defending himself. I tried to determine this by analyzing the angle of the stab and the width, depth and position of the wound. For example, the wound that was twelve centimeters wide, was located between the fourth and fifth ribs and was at an upward angle seemed to be caused intentionally. On the other hand, the wound on the left wrist was the result of a slice rather than a stab or a thrust and could have been the result of fending off an aggressor. Thus, this could indicate self-defense.

I made a chart which showed the actual size of each wound and stated where the wound occurred. I also labeled them as intentional or self-defense so that Bob could easily know what I thought about each wound. This goes back to what I discovered last Monday about how the attorneys use other people as resources. Bob wanted to know what I thought because it is likely that other people might have the same feelings as I do.

Later in the afternoon I was taught how to conduct preliminary jail interviews. These are the interviews that law clerks conduct to provide the public defender with very basic information about their clients. For example,

this information includes addresses and phone numbers where the client could be reached. It included criminal history, drug and alcohol abuse history, and a history of the client's mental health. It also includes a statement by the client stating his/her side of the story. I was told that within the next few days, I would be conducting preliminary jail interviews on my own.

Tuesday, June 13:

During the morning, Bob had Grover (another intern) and I read through the case file concerning the murder trial. The file contained everything--police reports, police interviews, newspaper clippings, preliminary trial transcripts, diagrams and charts, and various court documents. There were many transcripts of tape recorded interviews that were made by the Carbondale Police Department. As Grover and I read through them, we tried to pick out statements made by the various witnesses which could be used to support the self-defense theory. We noticed discrepancies in many of the stories. Because of the conflicting stories, it was apparent that people were lying--possibly to cover the defendant or possibly to cover themselves, as drugs were involved. We didn't really notice anything of any significance. Bob had already discovered everything that Grover and I found. It was interesting reading through the files though.

Since Bob is having so much trouble putting together what happened at the scene of the crime, he took us along with him to the crime lab at the police station. There we looked at the pictures taken at the scene of the crime and the autopsy. It was really neat to see the pictures. It's one thing to read about a bloody room in a police report, and it's quite another thing to see the pictures of it. At first, I don't think Bob really wanted to show me the pictures (being as I'm a girl and all), but I think I showed

enough enthusiasm and interest that he finally handed over the pictures and let me see for myself. The pictures of the autopsy were really neat. I was able to see everything I had read about the day before. Once I saw the body, the self-defense story was a lot less believable. I guess that's because the victim just looked like he had been butchered. It was hard to imagine that all of that damage could have come out of a fight. I couldn't wait to call my mom when I got home to tell her that I had seen pictures of "real lungs and intestines."

Wednesday, June 14:

The morning was pretty quiet. There was nothing going on in court and the office work was caught up, so the other interns and I pretty much just sat around the office until lunch. I guess that's the way it goes any place you work. There are busy times and slow times. The secretary did first appearances at the courthouse during the morning. A first appearance is where a person who has been charged with a crime appears before a judge to determine if he can afford counsel or if he needs to be appointed a public defender.

After lunch Lisa (another intern) and I went over to the jail to interview the defendants for whom the public defender's office had been appointed during the first appearances. The first man we interviewed was really old. He was charged with theft. He was telling Lisa and I how he had to get out of jail in order to pick up his food stamps. When he told us his side of the story, we felt really sorry for him. It seemed like he was being picked on. Later when we got back to the office we told the secretary to get someone on his case right away so that he could get out of jail. She kind of laughed at us. It turned out that he was a real con artist, and he was always in some

kind of trouble. He had faked Lisa and I out. I felt pretty gullible, but I guess that's what I get for believing the best in people.

The second person we interviewed was a middle-aged man who was charged with sexually abusing his step-daughter. I guess I made up for being gullible with the first client, because I didn't believe this guy for one second. This is a terrible thing to say, but he just looked like he would sexually abuse little girls. I know that's the wrong thing to think, but I was just glad it wasn't me who had to defend him, because I don't think I could have done a very good job.

The third person we interviewed was a young lady who had her probation revoked because she had violated the terms of her probation. She seemed to be telling the truth. She knew what she had done was wrong. Her problem, she realized, was that she was addicted to drugs. The biggest problem with that was that she was far too poor to support her habit. That forced her to commit other crimes in order to get the money to buy her drugs. She seemed to want help, but she didn't seem to know how to get it. I hope that there is something that the public defender's office can do to get her some help--something more strict than probation. She needs a sentence which will also force her to kick her drug habit.

Later in the afternoon, we all went over to the courthouse to watch Bob at a sentencing hearing. The court was sentencing the man who had been convicted of sexually molesting his daughter. It was the same person whose motion for a retrial had been denied. The way that a sentencing hearing works is that the state recommends a sentence--usually a very high sentence--presenting an argument as to why this sentence is recommended. The the defense attorney makes his recommendation for a sentence--usually very low--arguing why this lower sentence is sufficient. The judge makes

the final ruling and usually takes somewhere around the average of the two suggested sentences. In this case, however, the state recommended a sentence of forty-two years at Menard State Penitentiary. Bob recommended a total of twenty-four years. The judge surprised everyone when he made the ruling for a total of fifty-seven years in the state correctional facility. The daughter of the convicted defendant was sitting next to us, watching her father get sentenced. She was so happy to see her father get sent away for so long. She started laughing and crying. She seemed absolutely speechless. This was one case that I was glad that we lost!

Case Study: John Howard 89-CF-32

On January 3, 1989 Melvin Howard, a Carbondale resident was stabbed to death in his bedroom. The evidence at the scene of the crime indicated that the victim had probably been in his bed or had just gotten out of his bed when he was stabbed. Blood spatters laced the room, suggesting that quite a struggle had occurred.

The Carbondale Police Department was overwhelmed by a number of possibilities--what had really taken place? Melvin Howard was a known drug dealer in Carbondale. He also owned and operated a very run-down boarding house where about ten young black men lived. The fact that Melvin Howard was a drug dealer who had contact with so many impoverished people provided more than a few suspects, as well as various motives for committing the crime.

After questioning several witnesses and pursuing an investigation, the police department came to the conclusion that John Howard (no relation to Melvin), one of the boarders at the house, was their most likely suspect. John Howard had been seen arguing with Melvin a few days prior to the incident. According to witnesses, John owed Melvin money for drugs and rent. Melvin had threatened John, demanding that John pay the money back. To make matters worse, John had a drug habit, and was constantly in need of drugs--Melvin was John's supplier. These circumstances provided the police department with enough evidence to charge John Howard with the first degree murder of Melvin Howard.

On January 25, a warrent was issued for John Howard's arrest. He was charged with three counts of first degree murder, and was taken into the custody of the Jackson County Jail. Later that afternoon, the defendant

made his first appearance before Judge Watt. The defendant's financial status made him eligible for state-provided legal assistance. He was to be defended by the Public Defender, Robert VanDerhoff. The judge set a preliminary hearing for February 9. Bond was set at \$100,000.

John Howard remained in jail until the time of his preliminary hearing. He appeared before the court on February 9, and at that time the state's attorney filed for a continuance and the preliminary trial was waved until March 2.

During the preliminary trial, evidence was presented by Officer Barrett of the Carbondale Police Department. This evidence established probable cause for John Howard to have committed this murder. The defendant pled not guilty.

A jury trial was scheduled for May 8. Once again, the time approached and a motion for continuance was filed, bumping the trial date up to June 26.

It was at this time when I began my internship with the Jackson County Public Defender's Office. Robert VanDerhoff, who conducted the jail interviews with the defendant, would often allow me to attend these meetings with him. By listening to the defendant and by working with the attorneys, I was able to relate somewhat to both sides of the case. The defendant's version of the story was as follows:

The defendant had been playing cards with some of the other boarders who lived at Melvin Howard's boarding house. Melvin Howard, who was known for his violent temper and frequent mood swings, walked into the room carrying a gun. He became angry and knocked over the card table, spilling cards and beer onto the floor. He waived the gun around in a threatening manner, angrily shouting because the kitchen was not clean. The young men



who were playing cards told Melvin to "take it easy"--they would clean the kitchen. At that point, Melvin left the room and the others decided they would leave the house until Melvin had some time to calm down.

The men then went over to another friend's house where they drank beer and used cocaine. They had only a little money and a small amount of cocaine. After the cocaine was gone, one of the men took the money back to Melvin Howard's house to buy more drugs. Melvin was still angry from the earlier incident and refused to sell the man any cocaine. Furthermore, he told the young man to give John Howard a message that he had better return to the house and pay off his debt to Melvin.

The young man returned to his friends and repeated what Melvin Howard had told him. The friends stayed together long enough to finish their beer and then they left, each going their separate ways (some went to see girlfriend's, some to find more cocaine, etc...).

John Howard returned to the boarding house and found the screen door locked. He was forced to pry it open, making a substantial amount of noise in the process. When he got inside, Melvin was standing there in his pajamas, once again with his gun. The following conversation took place:

Melvin: Who is there?

John : Melvin, don't shoot man, it's me, Cookie.

Melvin: Where's my God damn money?

John : Melvin, I'll get the money, I swear I'll get the money. Calm down.

Melvin: I want my God damn money!

John : Just relax, man, I'll get it.

At this point, Melvin raised the gun, frightening John into believing Melvin would shoot him. John managed to get a large pocket knife out of his jacket pocket and proceeded to counter-attack. This attack resulted in the death of Melvin Howard. John Howard, shaken and afraid, fled the scene.

The prosecution's theory claimed that John Howard had most likely been attempting to rob Melvin Howard while he was asleep. Melvin, a light sleeper had probably heard John enter the room. They argued that Melvin, in his self-defense, had taken the gun from a metal heating grate found opened on the floor by the bed, and that John had stabbed Melvin in the process of a struggle which occurred during the robbery.

John Howard countered this by asking that if he had been trying to commit a robbery, why wouldn't he have taken the money after he stabbed Melvin? After all, he knew that Melvin kept his money in a brown cloak bag in his closet. (The police found over \$1,000 there.)

While I was working at the Public Defender's Office during the month before the trial, many different theories evolved (i.e. John Howard simply murdered Melvin with no motive, in cold blood; John Howard's girlfriend had been doing sexual favors for Melvin Howard in return for money, angering John into committing the murder; etc...). The many witnesses all had conflicting stories, making it very difficult to determine who was telling the truth.

As I observed Robert VanDerhoff, I noticed that he built his entire case around the self-defense theory. He believed in his client, taking large measures to ensure that a jury would believe in him, too. Mr. VanDerhoff was also very honest with John Howard. He explained to John that the odds

were against him--that a drug-addict with prior criminal history did not stand much of chance of being found innocent. The jury simply would not believe him.

John maintained his story until the time of the trial. He became increasingly nervous at the thought of life imprisonment. On the opening day of the trial, the state's attorney and the public defender reached an agreement. The state would reduce the charges from three counts of first degree murder to one count of second degree murder and one count of theft over \$300. John Howard, knowing how easily he could be found guilty of first degree murder, accepted the state's offer and changed his plea to guilty.

John Howard is currently serving fifteen years for second degree murder and five years for theft over \$300. He is incarcerated at the Illinois State Department of Corrections at Menard.

#### ADDENDUM:

To be honest, I don't know whether I really thought John Howard was innocent or not. It was very difficult for me to make that decision because I never knew who to believe. Also, I never got to hear the evidence the state had against John Howard, I only heard the evidence which was in his behalf. I think that if I had heard the evidence presented by the state, there is a good chance that I would have been convinced (beyond a reasonable doubt) that this was indeed first degree murder. I will never know for sure.

## WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY EXPERIENCE AS AN INTERN

### What I Learned About Legal Professions:

My intention, as I decided to undertake this internship, was that I would find out a great deal of information about a profession which I hoped to pursue as a life long career. In this aspect of the internship, I must admit that I was somewhat disappointed. There are so many facets of the legal profession which can be considered, that I would say (even in my limited experience) that there is no feasible way that they can be discovered in a single summer at the Public Defender's office. I feel that the question "What did I learn about legal professions in general?" could better be answered within the confined of the question, "What did I learn about the Public Defender?"

### What I Learned About the Legal System in General:

Since, as I have stated before, I knew so little about the legal system previous to my experience as an internship with the public defender, everything I experienced this summer could be counted as something I learned about the legal system. This particular topic, however, is comparable to the topic of "What I Learned About Legal Professions."

My experiences were limited to those aspects of the legal system dealing only with criminal law. There were no cases that I studied or observed where civil claims were involved. So, once again, I did not gain quite as much insight as I had hoped I might. I did, however, learn a substantial amount about criminal justice, specifically, criminal justice where a public defender is involved.

## What I Learned About the Public Defender's Office

As a provision of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, and accused person has the right to "...have the assistance of counsel for his defense." Originally, in 1791, this only guaranteed the accused the right to retain a lawyer--a right which had commonly been unobtainable by English law. The right was further established in 1932 in the notorious Supreme Court decision in Powell versus Alabama. This famous decision states:

The right to be heard would be, in many cases, of little avail if it did not comprehend the right to be heard by counsel. Even the intelligent and educated layman has small and sometimes no skill in the science of law. If charged with a crime, he is incapable, generally, of determining for himself whether the indictment is good or bad. He is unfamiliar with the rules of evidence. Left without the aid of counsel he may be put on trial without a proper charge, and convicted upon incompetent evidence, or evidence irrelevant to the issue or otherwise inadmissible. He lacks both the skill and knowledge adequately to prepare his defense, even though he have a perfect one. He requires the guiding hand of counsel at every step in the proceedings against him. Without it, though he be not guilty, he faces the danger of conviction because he does not know how to establish his innocence.

(Hermann, Single & Boston, 12)

The right to an attorney was even further established by such landmark cases as Johnson versus Zerbst, Betts versus Brady, and Gideon versus Wainwright (id at, 12-13).

Here enters the public defender. The idea of the public defender was introduced as an attempt to guarantee all Americans, rich or poor, the rights granted in the Sixth Amendment.

Many Americans believe that our criminal justice system is far too lenient on those individuals who are accused of committing crimes. For example, it angers tax-payers that their hard-earned dollars are being "wasted" on people who are accused of committing crimes. These accused people (often guilty) are provided with defense counsel, free of charge. Moreover, some people who commit crimes eventually get acquitted or receive very lenient sentences. They are free to go, often committing future crimes.

Admittedly, at the beginning of the summer, I was among the angry tax-payers. However, upon inspection of the very foundation of what America stands for, one will find that the Public Defender is an essential part of our judicial system.

When I first began my internship, I found myself quite distraught over the fact that my supervisor, Mr. VanDerhoff, was defending a man accused of repeatedly sexually abusing his young daughter. In talking to Mr. VanDerhoff, he confidentially told me that he actually believed his client was guilty. I was shocked to hear this, and in my disbelief, I actually became angry. Here was a man I respected--someone I looked up to--who really believed this man was guilty of child molesting yet he was still trying to get him off the hook.

When I recovered from my initial shock, I said, "Bob, I just don't understand it. If you really believe this man is guilty, how can you--in good conscience--defend him?" He thought about it a minute and replied, "Sandie, this is the way I look at it. The state has charged this man with a serious crime. It's not my job to defend him from receiving the punishment he deserves. It's my job to make the state prove what they have claimed. If they didn't have to prove it, they could just accuse anyone of doing anything. Do you understand?"

After thinking about what he said and putting it in the proper perspective, I came to the realization that the public defender is the link in the chain which secures the equality of justice to all--rich and poor, strong and weak, accuser and accused. The public defender is the guarantee that the state will guard the innocent, as well as convict the guilty. It is also the insurance that the state will maintain the "presumption of innocence" of accused persons.

My attitude towards public defending changed substantially over the summer. I would no longer categorize myself with the angry tax-payers who feel the idea of public defending is a senseless waste of money. I understand the premise of and the need for a public defender.

Another thing I learned is that even though I came to the realization of the purpose and need for public defenders, I could never be one. I know that is unfortunate, but I also know my personal beliefs would never allow me to defend someone I thought was guilty.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE INTERNS

### What I Would do Differently and Additional Points to Consider:

1). I think that some of the greatest lessons in life we learn when we least expect them. One of the biggest lessons I learned from the process of getting an internship came as quite a surprise to me.

I had typed my cover letters to send out to the various agencies in a hurry. I was anxious to get my project off the ground, and in my haste, I neglected to run one of my letters through a spelling check on the computer. I sent the letter out--spelling errors and all. When I received a reply from the agency, I was advised that it would be a "good idea to check the spelling in the letters (I) send out." Needless to say, I was embarrassed, and even a little bit hurt.

The next week, I was talking to my dad. When I told him what had happened I fully expected his sympathy and fatherly understanding. What I got as a reply instead was, "Good for him for telling you that--now you'll never make that mistake again." As always, dad was right--I will never make that mistake again.

If I were to do this project over, I would spend more time in preparation, rather than hurrying to get it done.

2). One thing I would definitely change is the amount of hours I worked. I would do an internship alone, rather than trying to take a summer class and do an internship at the same time. I think I would have gotten more out of it.



3). I think it would have been a good idea to have taken a class which dealt with the content of my internship prior to the time when I actually experienced the internship. I would have been able to spend more time benefitting from observing the attorneys, rather than trying to figure out what they were doing or saying. Even a legal terminology class would have been helpful.

4). This was a wonderful project. I am quite happy that I chose to do this rather than write a paper. I don't think there is any amount of research I could have done or any amount of books I could have read which would have provided me with the knowledge I have today. I think the Honor's Program should encourage others to participate in internships. I would be happy to answer any questions for other students who may be interested in doing a similar project.

SOURCE

Hermann, Robert; Single, Eric & Boston, John. Counsel for the Poor.  
Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, 1944.