

I was told I had to look older, 17 would do they said. I woke up the next day at 5:30. At 7:15 my dad drove his colleague and I into town. My dad works opposite Selfridges in Duke Street. At around 8:00 I arrived at my dad's desk having parked the car in his car park. I was already shattered. I was told that Lynton, the man I was shadowing for the day was arriving between 8:45 and 9:00, time had passed and having been sitting talking to my dad's secretary 9:20 hit me and Lynton had arrived to pick me up.

We walked to Bond Street station and got the Jubilee line to London Bridge, at this point Lynton had talked to me about the cases that are going on at the moment, why I wanted to be a lawyer, especially a criminal one, what my interests were and he offered to take me into a big case next week, unfortunately I am at school but the fact that I was offered an experience like that really opened my mind.

We walked from London Bridge station to Crown Court. Lynton and I discussed debating as that is the thing I enjoy most at school. He gave me a challenge and we argued a motion. Unfortunately I lost but he gave me a real go at it. We arrived at the court, it was very daunting, camera men outside I felt like a celebrity. We queued to get in, criminals, solicitors', barristers' and the public. Then you walked through a security scanner, luckily it didn't bleep and the security men checked my bag. The court was full of boards, about 25 names and court rooms listed on them. The fact I was in a building of criminals really scared me, but Lynton reassured me that I was fine, and to be honest he was right. The criminals were very nice, normal people, they had done something wrong but in reality they were just like me.

We found the case that Lynton was prosecuting and went in the lift to court room 9. I felt very intimidated as I walked in, everyone looking at me as if I was an alien, but eventually I got used to it. I sat myself in the public gallery and Lynton went to sit with the solicitors/barristers. Everyone was wearing a black cloak, barristers and solicitors were slightly different, just to show their status, but speaking to Lynton I realised there was not much of a difference between them both, except a barrister is self employed. I listened to many cases including; domestic violence, fraud, theft and assault. It was very interesting but confusing at the same time. There were interpreters, clerks and the judge of whom all spoke and sometimes the judge would make a joke in which everyone would laugh which I found very strange as court is quite a serious matter. I did not see anyone be sentenced, however every case I saw got bale.

I was starting to get hungry at around 2:30, but I was still in Crown court and the restaurant was closed. Then Lynton met his friend and he thought that he would give me a challenge and give me some criminals to talk to. So he went off and left me with these 'criminals'. However I started talking to these two girls and I asked them what they did for GCSE's and A Levels and they said their choices. Then I asked them whether they went to uni, and one of them said yes and she studied law. At this point I was beginning to wonder whether these people were really criminals, then she went on to say she was studying to be a solicitor, it was amazing how we both had made an assumption of something that was completely wrong.

I then went back via train to the office and had my lunch. I was knackered. The jobs in the court were roughly equal, men and women were employed, this was because it is a job that anyone can do if they put their mind to it. The majority of the people in the office were between young and middle aged, there was no one near retirement. It was hard to decide whether some people were busier than others, as it depended of the situation they were in. In the office the staff were all friendly to each other, however in court everyone kept themselves to themselves and were very private. In court the judge makes the discussions about the matter of law, the advocates about the running of the case and the presentation and in the office everyone is responsible for their discussions. Teamwork was obvious within the office. I felt very intimidated in court, but out of the room it was all very relaxed and everyone's attitude changed towards each other. In the office everyone was professional but personal but they were all quite stressed. No disabled people were employed.

I could definitely see myself working in a similar place; Lynton encouraged me and said that being an advocate would really suit my personality. The advantages of this career would be that the profession is very respectable, it is a trustworthy position to hold in society, people will always need solicitors, there are many different types of areas you can go into and focus on within the profession, you help people- both privately and through legal aid, you deal with people from all different backgrounds, religions, countries and social classes, you can work your way up through your profession to become a judge, you are a professional in lots of different ways. The disadvantages are that a lot of time is taken up with it; you have to work very hard, to become a solicitor, passing professional exams and work very hard on day to day bases. You are accountable and can be sued if you make a mistake. You are dealing with people's lives and vast amounts of money; you cannot afford to make mistakes. The government are always trying to make the job harder by making demands and bringing in new legislation, you have to keep up to date with new laws. The skills and qualifications needed to be in this profession could be empathic, caring, organised, intelligent, patient, unbiased, fair, honest and trustworthy and overall a good hard worker. You would need a degree and a law conversion or a straight forward law degree, do your articles and become a trainee solicitor in a law firm.

Overall I had a really good day and would love to become a solicitor.



**By Daniella Freeman**