

Weekly Report 3

9/3 - 9/9

A Bump in the Road

This week included extensive research into subtopics of criminal law. It was especially difficult this week to find a topic suitable for research because my goal was to really dig deep into a topic that was unfamiliar rather than collect basic knowledge of criminal law. On top of that, this week was also spent searching for people in the area that could help expand my knowledge of the law as well as finding people to interview as a potential mentor. Researching for lawyers was surprisingly simple as there was a surplus of lawyers available in the Dallas area. However, to make sure that criminal law is the most fitting topic, my contact list also included lawyers that do not specialize in criminal law. For example, there are corporate lawyers and personal injury lawyers also on the contact list. One issue that presented itself was all the lawyers that were available were criminal defense lawyers since criminal prosecuting lawyers work for the state and are therefore more difficult to find. Interviewing both criminal defense and prosecuting attorneys would provide the most diverse and complete base of knowledge required to go into this field. In addition, the job of a prosecuting attorney is more aligned with the aspects of trial work that I enjoy.

The topic that was researched this week pertained to forensic evidence and witness testimony in court cases. More specifically, the research indicated the fallibility of forensic evidence and unreliability of witness testimony, including expert witnesses. The facts and opinions on this topic were so interesting that it was difficult not to include all the information that was presented on this topic. The first time the research assessment was completed, it included too many summaries of the new knowledge gained rather than analyzing the effect of that research. It was difficult to cut out information that was so fascinating and replace it with how it affects lawyers. After many attempts to insert my opinion in the assessment, I ended up getting rid of many of the paragraphs and attempting to rewrite the paragraphs so they included how the information gained was relevant to me and my pursuit of criminal law. However, the experience of forcing myself to analyze information rather than simply restate it will hopefully make future research assessments more sophisticated. Next week, my goal is to contact some of the people on my list and to set up interviews. As enlightening as doing research can be, nothing measures up to the potential information that can be gained through exposure to real world experience like talking to professionals and witnessing the work that goes into being a lawyer.