

September 4, 2007

Mr. Dan Ruben, Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23122

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I enjoyed my summer internship at the Lawyers' Committee For Civil Rights Under Law.

While I was an intern at the Lawyers' Committee, I worked on cases that involved discrimination against African-Americans and other minorities. In particular, I worked on a case that involved discrimination against African-American contractors who were trying to find employment in the predominately black community of Roxbury. I also researched cases that involved the Boston Police Department's (BPD) hair drug testing procedure. I found it interesting that the BPD's hair drug testing is considered discriminatory toward African-Americans because African-American hair is predisposed to giving a false reading of illegal drug use because of its texture. In addition, most federal agencies use urine to test their employees for illegal drug use.

The majority of my time was spent researching the Boston Police and the Boston Fire Department's by-pass of potential candidates applying for positions in these agencies. The Boston Police Department (BPD) and the Boston Fire Department use a procedure known as by-pass to skip a potentially eligible candidate on the civil service list for the next eligible candidate on the list. The Lawyers' Committee was investigating the by-pass procedure because many African-American candidates were by-passed for arbitrary reasons.

I was fortunate to work on the by-pass issues because I handled the case from its inception until the time that I left the office. I interviewed potential clients, prepared affidavits, summarized witness statements, managed clients, reviewed documents from law

firms working with the Lawyers' Committee, and researched the relevant law for the case. I developed an understanding of how an attorney builds facts into a case that can be litigated in court.

The client management was one of the most interesting aspects of the internship because the clients added human faces to the research and hard work that I did. The clients' personal stories of discrimination made me want to work harder to help them. The clients were always very concerned about their cases and they usually needed some reassurance that their attorney or legal intern was zealously advocating for them.

It was personally satisfying to work with people from Boston's inner city because many of them were African-Americans from the community that I grew up in. I felt as if I were making a positive impact in my community and that I was an example to younger black youth that I encountered. Although, I was familiar with many of the issues that impacted Boston's poor communities, I learned about a few new ones as well. Many of the clients seem to feel very comfortable with me. The Massachusetts Association of Minority Law Enforcement (MAMLEO), and other African-Americans clients suggested that I keep in touch and represent them when I finish law school. I also reconnected with some public officials and community activist that I had met previously, when I worked in politics.

Thank you for the Equal Justice America Fellowship. I appreciate the opportunity. I would have not been able to participate in this type of internship without it. It was a pleasure working with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Duane Brown".

Duane Brown
Suffolk University Law 2010