



**Rupert Jones, barrister at Citadel Chambers**

**Year of Call: 2011**

**Practice Area: Criminal & Media Law**



**06:40**

I catch the train to Birmingham, which is where my chambers is based, but my work takes me to courts all across the Midlands.

**07:50**

I arrive in Chambers and access the digital case file for the wounding with intent trial, in which I act as the prosecutor. I'd never been on the case before, but was instructed last-minute. This is completely normal and you soon get used to absorbing huge amounts of information in a very short space of time. I go through the papers one last time, and finalise my notes.

As well as prosecuting the trial, I've got two other hearings. I'm making a bail application and a plea in mitigation (defending a sentence).

**09:00**

I walk over to Birmingham Crown Court and head to the robing room, where I sign in electronically. The room is full of familiar faces – I can't remember the last time I went into any court and didn't recognise someone. It's one of the great things about the Bar. I make the most of it by taking some time out to chat to a friend about football the latest legal issue.

**09:30**

I speak to witness care. I am informed that the prosecution witnesses have arrived, so I make my way over to them, to introduce myself.

Afterwards, I try to find my client who is being sentenced for Affray. His mum is with him, and it is evident that they are both nervous. I have a quick chat and try to put them both at ease by pointing out the mitigating facts of the case. He's a young man with no previous convictions, and the pre-sentence report recommended a suspended sentence. This is helpful but you can't guarantee the Judge will agree.

**10:00**

The defence barrister in the trial approaches me outside court to inform me that his client is thinking about pleading guilty, but puts forward a slightly different version of events. We discuss it – the difference between his account and the prosecution case is so minimal that it's unlikely to make any difference to the sentence. In any event, I phone the CPS lawyer to update and get their view on the matter.

**10:30**

I'm called into court for the bail application. My client is refused bail. I call the solicitors to let them know.

**11:00**

My sentence hearing is called, and in court, my client gets a suspended sentence. This is a relief to him, and his mum can hardly contain herself and bursts out in tears.

**11:30**

I go and speak to the witnesses about the proposed basis of plea. They have no issues with it. I pass this information back to the CPS lawyer.

**12:00**

The trial is called. The defendant pleads guilty on a basis which the prosecution have accepted, and the Judge is satisfied. The defendant is sentenced to 4 years imprisonment.

**13:00**

I head back to chambers, eat some lunch and catch up on other work. Two of my upcoming trials have work that needs doing: I need to draft Agreed Facts and a Bad Character Application in one, and I need to make proposals for edits to an ABE video interview with a child in the other.

**14:00**

I receive a call from my clerks at my desk. A defendant who absconded after being convicted has been arrested. I head back to court, read the papers as quickly as possible (again, it's not a case I've been on before) and go into court. The Judge adjourns the sentence so that the original Judge can deal with it.

**15:00**

Back at my desk – working. My chambers is friendly and sociable, so I take this opportunity to chat to other members as they come and go.

**17:00**

My clerks call to inform me of my work for tomorrow. I have a new trial. This time, I'm defending in a robbery trial in Worcester. I read the papers and familiarise myself with the facts of the case.

**18:00**

I get on the train and travel back home. I eat dinner and end my day by going through the papers for tomorrow's trial for a second time.

**Best thing about practice:** Every day brings something new, interesting and often unexpected.

**Worst thing about practice:** Every day brings something new, which often means working late into the evening.