

Everybody does

## Pro Bono

Benjamin Litman

Here, I am a lawyer, not an associate

The first pro bono case I actually took on was this housing matter that we got through the Metropolitan hospital. We have a long-standing relationship with them. My client is probably facing more problems with her specific apartment and relating to her specific apartment than anyone that I've ever come across, whether in clinical work I've done previously and so forth, and this relates to the health of her children, the infestation of mice in her apartment, the infestation of insects in her apartment, the over-crowded nature of her apartment, being too small for the size of her 7 person family, and now, most recently, the unfortunate sexual assault that was perpetrated at the apartment by a family member against one of her daughters.

As I wrote in one of the letters to the New York Housing Authority, who again is our adversary, it's more than anyone can reasonably be expected to handle, and she's done as best she can to this point, but its reached a breaking point.

This is one of the cases I refer to when I talk to respective applicants who are interested in coming to the firm and with whom the firm is actively recruiting, and I say that at Patterson I feel like I'm a lawyer, not an associate and it's a distinction that I haven't heard before and I don't think it's a distinction that, technically, is really different, but to me, it makes a really big difference. And one of the things I point to again is this specific case where I say, look, I'm in charge of the case. I talk to my client all the time. I give updates to the supervising partner once every month and a half, or for when, obviously, any ethical issue or some sort of strategic decision comes to the fore, but for the most part, it's all me.

In a sense, it's actually a great preparation for the rest of the work I do at Patterson, for the billable work as well, because even in those situations, I find myself working just with a partner.

