

What a Jam-packed Week with Mediation Blitz' and Hearings

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Week two—what a doozy. I've been told once or twice that there's much more to litigation than one can conceivably learn in the classroom, but never has that advice resonated more than it did during the last week.

On Monday, partners Doug Ede and Scott Sarason summoned Andres and me to the conference room, where we discussed what they called a "mediation blitz," which is a phenomenon that happens only twice a year. As luck would have it, the first mediation blitz of 2021 overlapped with my second week. In essence, said Doug, a mediation blitz is about the client's bottom line, because we settle multiple cases at once and we reduce litigation costs. This mediation blitz was unique, though, because our client, a national company, would invoke statutory immunity to absolve itself of liability.

Listening to Doug and Scott explain these concepts in the conference room was one thing; watching them in action was a whole other ballgame. The first mediation was on Tuesday, and it was Doug's case. In a word, Doug's performance was smooth—silky smooth. No good magician will tell you about their techniques, and I won't out Doug's, but the result speaks for itself: our client was off the hook.

My week continued trending up from there. While I was bummed to learn that the appeal I was working on for partner Steve Smith would be put on hold for the appellant to refile the record, it was not long before partner Josh Lerner approached me about a fascinating case that, at the time, was set for trial on Monday, June 14. The plaintiff sued our client, requesting that the court eject our client from the property it inhabited for more than a decade. The stakes were high, and Josh entrusted me with an array of research assignments, even asked me to draft emergency motions for stay pending appeal if our client lost at trial. But, the best part was attending the charge hearing with Josh on Wednesday afternoon. Like Doug, Josh was in a league of his own, eviscerating every single one of the plaintiff's arguments before the court decided to postpone trial—a small win for our client, who remains on the disputed property.

Yet another highlight was Thursday afternoon's seminar with the Dade Legal Aid Leadership Academy. The seminar featured Paul Lipton, who serves as the firm's Director of Professionalism, Career, and Skill Development, who spoke at length about leadership and professional development. Paul told stories about influential leaders, many of whom were also veracious advocates, including the German Lutheran Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who, after fleeing Nazi Germany, returned and resisted Hitler's genocidal regime. Bonhoeffer died in a concentration camp just before the end of the war, showing the world what it means to stand up for what is right—the hallmark of an effective leader.

In short, week two taught me lessons that I could not possibly have learned in a casebook. I can't wait to see what's on deck for week three.