

Asaf Rashid Law Student Report 2026

Introduction

My practicum placement with a private criminal and human rights lawyer -Asaf Rashid, he provided a practical introduction to legal work that differed significantly from my initial expectations. I anticipated an in-person office environment; however, the placement was primarily remote, with occasional court appearances and client meetings. Despite this change, the experience offered valuable insight into legal research, case preparation, client interaction, and the daily realities of legal practice. This report outlines the agency's nature, the work I completed, and the key lessons I learned.

The Agency and Its Work

The placement was with a private practice handling both criminal defence and human rights matters. The work is broad and often unpredictable, shaped by court schedules, client needs, and ongoing case development. The practice emphasizes advocacy, legal strategy, and ensuring clients understand the processes affecting them. As a small practice, Asaf Rashid manages all aspects of the work, including research, documentation, court appearances, and client communication.

The agency's work includes:

- Representing clients in criminal matters across multiple court levels
- Preparing and advancing human rights complaints

- Conducting legal research and drafting submissions
- Ensuring clients understand the legal processes affecting them
- Maintaining rigorous documentation and ethical standards

The Work

Section 1: Criminal Case Brief Assignment

My first major task involved curating criminal cases for briefs, which required extensive research on CanLii across multiple court levels and provinces. Supreme Court decisions were particularly lengthy and time-consuming to review. The process often resembled searching for specific details within a vast amount of information. To ensure a balanced perspective, I identified cases where an issue was handled effectively and contrasted them with cases where the same issue was addressed poorly. This approach demonstrated how legal principles are applied differently depending on the context. It also highlighted the potential challenges in criminal cases and the pressure on police and legal professionals to adhere to evolving rules. Although challenging, I appreciated breaking down legal issues into smaller components and finding cases that addressed each aspect. This reinforced my interest in legal reasoning and the interpretive nature of case law.

Section 2: Human Rights Case Brief Assignments

Curating human rights cases proved more challenging due to differing search parameters and less centralized information. It took time to determine where to search and how to identify relevant cases. Once I adapted, the process became more manageable, and I located strong examples from various jurisdictions. As with the criminal briefs, I divided the issue into

categories and found cases addressing each one. This approach helped me understand the structure of human rights decisions and the common arguments used within them.

Section 3: Weekly Meetings and Remote Communication

Most communication occurred through email and weekly meetings. Although I prefer in-person interaction, remote work was effective for the assignments I completed. Asaf responded promptly to emails and provided clear instructions. Meetings were held on Wednesdays at 3:00 PM, which made my work schedule feel unusual. I prefer starting tasks at the beginning of the week, so having the main meeting midweek often made me feel behind until Wednesday. As a result, I often completed most of the work on weekends, which was not ideal but ultimately manageable. Initially, confidentiality restrictions limited my knowledge about the cases I was researching. Over time, more information was shared, which helped me understand what to look for and how to tailor my research more effectively. Meetings typically lasted around 30 minutes, providing sufficient time to receive instructions and ask clarifying questions.

Section 4: Court Appearances

I attended court once to observe a plea. The experience was both informative and overwhelming. The courtroom was a formal, sterile environment, and observing individuals in their professional roles was insightful. There was a sense of individuality as well as collective issues present. Having taken the sociology of law course at Dalhousie, I appreciated witnessing the interconnections within the courtroom environment. While taking notes, I found it difficult to keep up, as legal references were made quickly and often sounded like jargon. Despite this,

observing the process helped me understand the structure of a plea and the importance of ensuring the client comprehends the proceedings. The client spoke highly of Asaf, and it was evident that he communicated with clients in a direct and supportive manner. Although I would have liked to attend court more frequently, scheduling conflicts and the location of most cases made this difficult. Writing a full case brief was one of my most meaningful assignments. Although the term 'brief' suggests brevity, the document was fifteen pages long. I reviewed second-year law materials to refresh my approach. The brief was used in court documents, which was rewarding. This assignment allowed me to analyze a case in depth and present structured, persuasive information. It reinforced my interest in legal writing and felt highly meaningful. I attended one in-person meeting for a human rights matter. The client was well-prepared, and the meeting progressed efficiently. I took approximately ten pages of notes, which was demanding but valuable. What stood out was Asaf's approach to questioning the client; he investigated details I had not considered. This demonstrated the importance of gathering comprehensive information before developing a strategy.

Rashid Case Notes + Communication

Reviewing real case documents for the private practice provided insight into the level of detail required in legal documentation. Asaf maintains thorough written records of conversations, decisions, and developments. This organization protects both the lawyer and the client and ensures clarity throughout the case. His communication style is direct, clear, and honest, which was particularly notable. He addresses difficult topics directly, and even in writing, he communicates in a straightforward manner that clients can understand, making his position clear in court. This practicum provided a realistic perspective on legal work. I prefer structure, routine,

and a predictable schedule, whereas private practice often involves irregular hours and frequent changes, which may not align with my preferences. I also value team environments, which are more common in larger firms. However, I recognized the benefits of private practice, such as flexibility, autonomy, and client choice. Observing Asaf demonstrated that lawyers require not only legal knowledge but also strong communication skills, emotional intelligence, and a balance of firmness and empathy. Although I did not have the opportunity to ask many questions about his career path, I learned significantly by observing how he interacts with clients, colleagues, and the court. I recognized the importance of being direct yet respectful, listening more than speaking, documenting all developments, and maintaining a proactive approach. The practicum also demonstrated that court work often involves travel and may not align with student schedules. Many of Asaf's court appearances conflicted with my classes, and those I attended were brief administrative matters. Overall, the experience prompted reflection on the type of legal environment I may wish to work in and the kind of lawyer I aspire to become. I am grateful to Asaf Rashid for providing an excellent practicum experience. For those interested in criminal law or law in general, I recommend considering Asaf Rashid as a potential mentor.

Conclusion

Although the practicum was different from what I expected, which is a good thing in itself, it provided valuable insight into legal practice. I gained practical skills in legal research, legal writing, and note-taking, and I developed a clearer understanding of the realities of criminal and human rights law. The experience confirmed my interest in pursuing law while also helping me identify the work environments and professional habits that suit me best. I am grateful for the opportunity and will carry these lessons forward as I continue my academic and professional

journey. A big thank you to both Margaret Denike and Asaf Rashid for providing me with this first-hand, valuable experience.