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Perhaps it’s an idiosyncrasy of the lawyer, but, yet again, I spent my summer being asked if I had been dissuaded from the profession yet. Every attorney I met, it didn’t matter if they were prosecutor or defense, federal or private, happy or distraught, always wanted to know if they had scared me off yet. And sure, to an extent I understand their joking hesitancy about their profession: it’s a profession that has been rendered down from its former days of theatrics and argumentations to one essentially driven by a paper war, where the side with the most exhibits wins.

But, in working at the US Attorney’s Office, I found this view slightly pessimistic, simply looking at the small picture and the day to day operations of the place. Sure, the Criminal division is propelled through the week by doing the same case over and over again: linking firearms possession to convicted felons in order to secure them federal time, as opposed to a state sentence, which despite the time amount on paper, is actually quite malleable. But as these cases begin to build up, they sentences become harsher, and can be used to extend the jurisdiction of one case, linking the firearm to everyone around said individual, bringing in a whole group of career criminals. Of course, they may go through twenty or so cases before they will have the ability to do so, but in the long run, they’re taking criminals off the streets for longer.

The internship really showed me that from the petty everyday tasks of sifting through witness reports, prior case histories, and compiling and collating them that eventually something larger could emerge from all of the grunt work. Of course, at the same time, it showed how hard the agency had to fight and claw to get to that point, but at least something, in the end, could be done to give the government more teeth against violent crime.