

## **Ashlan Hilden**

King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

This summer, I had the valuable opportunity to extern at the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. I specifically worked within the Economic Crimes and Wage Theft Division. This division is subdivided into three distinct units, each handling a diverse range of felony-level cases, and I had the chance to contribute to projects in all three.

The first unit is the High Impact Repeat Offenders Unit, which targets prolific burglars and car thieves. My role here allowed me to engage directly with the trial process for the first time. I assisted in various aspects, including jury selection, organizing witnesses, and preparing for each day of the trial. This hands-on experience provided me with a comprehensive understanding of trial procedures and significantly enhanced my litigation skills. It was an influential experience that sparked my interest in pursuing a career as a litigator after law school.

The second unit is the Economic Crimes Unit, which deals with complex organized criminal activities such as fraud and identity theft. During my time here, I was involved in drafting several legal memorandums, focusing primarily on issues related to the Fourth Amendment, including search and seizure matters. This work required extensive legal research and writing, allowing me to deepen my understanding of economic crime legislation and its applications within Washington State.

The third unit, the Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Unit, addresses cases of financial exploitation and neglect involving older and vulnerable adults. In this unit, I also engaged in legal research and writing, particularly for a case concerning elder financial exploitation. I prepared two detailed memorandums addressing specific legal questions related to marital privilege and the *Bruton* rule. As the case evolved, so did the legal issues, which provided me with insight into how cases can develop and the legal questions that arise as a case progresses toward trial.

Beyond working on these projects, I had the chance to observe a range of legal proceedings at the courthouse, including pre-trial hearings, trials, and sentencing. The internship also organized field trips to the King County Medical Examiner's Office and the downtown King County jail. These additional experiences enriched my summer internship, offering a broader perspective on the criminal justice system and the role that a prosecutor plays in the community.

Overall, my time at the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office was immensely educational and rewarding. I acquired foundational skills and practical experience that will be invaluable in my future legal career. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn and contribute in a public service-oriented environment, which has solidified my commitment to pursuing a career in law.