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I spent the majority of my summer working in San Francisco in LGBTI Refugee law, but spent a life-changing three weeks in The Hague during the month of July when I studied at The Hague Academy of International Law in its Summer Program in Public International Law.

This was an academic program where I attended courses at the Peace Palace. We prepared readings daily and attended lectures and seminars on various topics in public international law. The general course was taught by the one and only James Crawford and went on the entire three weeks. Otherwise, we had six additional courses taught both in French and English. The courses included: The International Law of Global Governance, What Normativity for the Law of International Monetary and Financial Relations?, Article 103 of the United Nations Charter, The Role of Domestic Judges in the Development of International Law, The Law of Nationality and the Law of Regional Organizations for Integration, and The Protection of Individuals in the Event of Catastrophes.

Although all of the courses were extraordinary and thought-provoking, living in the mecca of international law led to other, equally fulfilling, or even more motivating practical experiences. While there I was able to visit in the Special Tribunal for Sierra Leon, the ICTY, sit down and talk about career goals with the US ICJ Justice Donoghue. I was able to visit the Swiss Embassy, where I was able to talk with the Swiss Ambassador to The Hague about the Swiss and US role in the ICC or at least ICC policy. I was able to meet the legal counsel at the US Embassy in The Hague and visit the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal, where I was able to meet multiple employees and learn about their interests in international law.

Out of those experiences, sitting in on the Karadzic genocide trial at the ICTY was probably the most memorable experience. Seeing a person who was indicted for two counts of genocide and sitting only 10-20 feet from me was almost surreal. This really reinforced my belief in the power of international law. Somewhat more minor, it also reinforced the importance of procedure. Since Karadzic is acting as his own counsel, we were able to see him make very elementary mistakes during a direct examination that resulted in redaction of a substantial amount of witness

testimony. Karadzic referred back to his brief numerous times during the direct examination but never properly referred to footnotes, so the prosecution successfully moved to have that testimony struck from the record.

The entire experience was overwhelmingly positive. I had roommates from Quebec, Brazil, and Bolivia. We all hung out and alternated between English and French as our common language. In addition, the weather was unbelievable; I never would've imagined that my locale in The Hague, Scheveningen, could be so beautiful. Almost every day was around 80 degrees, sunny; so, after long, studious days we normally watched the sunset over the North Sea.

Living in an area where international law isn't acknowledged nearly as much as it should be, this entire experience reinvigorated my own career aspirations. I debated taking a step back from refugee, human rights, and international law, but ultimately changed my mind after this experience. I'm still leaving all doors open, but my search is no longer limited to this specific geographic region, but instead to all over the world.