

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT | THE LAW IS A PEOPLE BUSINESS



Yoni Levy: Hi, and welcome back to *Scope of Practice*, a podcast that opens the window for an inside look at different practice groups and the lives of attorneys in those groups here at Ropes & Gray. I'm Yoni Levy, a partner in the asset management group in Boston. And today, I'm joined by Liz McInerney, an associate in our D.C. office, who's focused on government enforcement within our litigation group, and Zane Fernandez, an associate in our Boston office, who works on private capital transactions. Hi, Liz and Zane.

Zane Fernandez: Hi, thanks for having us.

Yoni Levy: Thanks for joining. I'd like to open with a bit of background about yourselves personally. Can you tell us a little bit about your practice group at Ropes & Gray and how you landed in your practice group and decided that that's where you wanted to work?

Liz McInerney: Yes, I'm Liz McInerney, and I'm in our litigation & enforcement practice group. I focus primarily on government investigations, and I do a bit of civil litigation, as well. And this was very natural for me, as I knew that I liked to write and I liked to research and that really puts me squarely in litigation practice.

Zane Fernandez: For me, I found my way into the private capital transactions group for two reasons. One, during my law school process, I had been meeting a lot of people that were in that group at Ropes, and so naturally gravitated towards that—I got to learn more about their work on the day to day. And then, also, in law school, I took classes like

secured transactions, bankruptcy, all these corporate-focused classes and found that I was really interested on an intellectual level in debt finance and how debt functions in the global economy. I followed that intuition and really wanted to see how private capital transactions work, how these entities like private equity firms use leverage to get the most out of their investments, and how the global economy works. So, that's how I found my way here.

Yoni Levy: Great, thanks. I think this episode is a bit different from some of the episodes from season one in that we really tried to start with practice groups that we felt people knew very little about. And I think people—at least law students that I've spoken with in the past—seem to feel like they know a little bit more about what litigation work is, and what private capital transactions or M&A transactions are like. But could you give us a sense, with a bit more accuracy probably, of the scope of the types of projects you work on—what does a typical project look like in your practice group? Why don't we start with Zane this time?

Zane Fernandez: From the first-year or second-year perspective, as an associate, I'll be helping with representing our client, a private equity firm, trying to make an investment into a company/purchase a company. And so, from that junior perspective, you're doing a lot of due diligence, looking through the contracts of the target company, flagging anything for the deal team to consider, and then, on the debt finance side of things, helping draft the ancillary documents that need to get in place in order to facilitate the loan and make that happen for the purchase. So, I like that PCT (private capital transactions) group is a mix of both the private equity side and the debt finance side, so you get to see how the two work together—and you get a wide range of work rather than just being siloed into one narrow-focus group.

Yoni Levy: Last season, we talked about a lot of the other groups at the firm, all of which work hand in hand together: tax and fundraising. And I'm in the asset management group, which focuses more on fundraising, but, of course, the ultimate goal of that fundraising is the deploying of the funds

into investments—and that’s what Zane’s group focuses on, is taking that pool of capital, then going out and making investments, buying companies and hopefully successfully selling them. So, that’s great. With no offense intended to Liz, I think we all hope to avoid having to necessarily have our clients interact with the government enforcement end of it, but it is also part of the same life cycle on a broad level. But Liz, maybe you could talk a little bit more about that?

Liz McInerney: Sure, and I think that’s right. When you think about litigation, we work somewhat on the opposite end of the spectrum of corporate. I think of corporate as an incredibly creative practice. And litigators are as well, but often times, we’re very responsive—we are reacting to what others are doing, especially here at Ropes. A lot of my practice these days is in government and internal investigations. So, it really is exactly like what it sounds—what happens is the government gets involved with a company and they say, “We want to learn a little bit more about a particular transaction.” So, it might be the buying or selling of a company, it might be specific actions taken by a board member, it could be a whole host of things. And then, that company comes to Ropes and says, “We need your help,” and off we go.

My day to day, and what my practice looks like, is looking underneath the covers of the company—so, reviewing what the company does on a day-to-day basis, looking at what was said, who did what, and then determining whether or not there’s any liability there. Does the government’s question, inquiry or their investigation have any merit? When the government is on the other side of the table and we’re trying to understand the scope of the investigation and what they’re looking for, a lot of what we’re doing is just trying to set the stage for our client, to put them in the best possible light.

Internal investigations are slightly different—the government is not there, so it’s really just a matter of trying to really seek and understand what the company is hoping to learn. Sometimes that can be an internal policy violation, sometimes it can be someone else coming—a whistleblower saying, “There’s a problem,” and the company needs to learn very quickly what’s going on. And so, we act as the “boots on the ground,” really as a neutral observer, to present the information that we find.

I’ll just add, another part of my practice is civil litigation—so that’s what happens when the investigation doesn’t go as well

and we actually end up having to go to the court. For all the law students listening, think about what you read in textbooks and that’s a lot of what I do—everything from arguing in court (although many of our partners take care of that), writing briefs, to really homing in on the issues at hand and determining, again, whether there’s any merit to the claims being brought. Again, our side is a little bit more reactive, but we do work hand in hand with our corporate department, and so many of the matters and cases that we get are actually from our corporate counterparts. So, it’s good for us to know what’s going on in the corporate world and to be kept abreast of everything that’s happening on the other side of the aisle with corporate.

Yoni Levy: I’ll say, I’ve found that’s a two-way street in that a lot of times when I’m drafting contracts, I am in contact with litigators to understand how will this indemnity provision be interpreted by a court, or a client is pushing for an unusual position in a document, and we’re going to squint and try and read it this way: “Do you think that that’s going to hold any water?” And so, we all work hand in hand, and each of the groups complement the others in the same overall ecosystem. Liz, I think you touched a little bit on this, but maybe you could expand a little bit on what are the skill sets that you think are activated, developed and necessitated by your group that really attract you to the kind of work that you do? We’ve talked in the past that asset management lawyers, for example, really like negotiating, really like drafting (but drafting contractual language, not technical language or that kind of stuff). So, what is it that really draws you to litigation, government enforcement or any of your other sub-specialty areas?

Liz McInerney: If you’re someone who likes details, who really likes to know what’s going on and is happy to wade through a lot of it, and then the most important thing, issue-spot “where are the concerns?” then I think government investigations is really something that you should consider. In many ways, like our corporate counterparts, we’re thinking of creative solutions for our clients to address any issues that might come up, but, really, we just want to know what’s happening, because, again, we react. So, we’re coming in after the fact, we’re coming in after something has already occurred, and our job is to get to the bottom of it. So, I would say also if you’re a big fan of detective stories, come on over to litigation—that’s where it’s at.

Yoni Levy: A regular Sherlock Holmes here, great. Zane, how about you?

Zane Fernandez: I would say for corporate practice generally, I think creativity and precision are big. Now that I've been in this role, I'm currently seconded to a client. And in this role, I'm mostly drafting NDAs, and so I've gotten really comfortable with marking up a document, specifically, confidentiality agreements, and I've been finding that it's so important how precise you are when you're drafting a contract. So, attention to detail, of course, is key. But also, creativity—when you start, you have your position of, “This is how we would, ideally, like the contract to look.” And then, the other side reviews, gets back to you, and you have to get creative if the other side doesn't really like how you worded a provision. Now, you have to work together to see, “How can we get both of our interests to meet in the middle, while also not exposing ourselves to too much risk?” So, I find that part fascinating. And then, I also think people skills are a big thing on the corporate side as well. Because you're, again, going to be negotiating with people, you're going to see repeat players over and over, and so I think how you speak to people, how you treat people and how you can ultimately reach a deal at the end of the day is really important, as well.

Yoni Levy: That's great. How do you see the varying roles of associates at different seniority levels and the involvement of partners in your group in your work and in the work that they're doing for clients, versus how involved you are in things? What's it like being, from your perspective, on different levels of seniority in your group? Maybe we'll start with Zane this time.

Zane Fernandez: I think in a big law firm and probably in law firms generally, everybody sort of knows their role based on seniority. And I think that can be really beneficial, especially now that I'm going through this junior role and really learning what it's like to practice law on the day to day. It's a supportive environment because you have people who have been right where you are at at one point. Especially the mid-levels and senior associates that I've worked with, they've given me so much advice from the practical day to day—how to respond to this type of email and how to mark up this sort of document. And so, it's comforting to know that when you're starting off, you don't really know how to practice law, you just got done with law school, which was very theory-based and big picture.

And so, now, you're going into an environment where there are people that you clearly know, “Okay, this person probably generally has this amount of knowledge because they're mid-level, senior or partner, and I can go to them for this piece of information or this advice.” And then, you never have to feel the pressure of, “I'm sending something out to the client or opposing counsel,” and I don't have to be nervous to the full extent because I know people are going to review ahead of me or that are above me and that it will be marked up correctly. Rather than—I can imagine if you start as a sole proprietor right out of law school—that there's probably a lot of anxiety involved there because you don't have that infrastructure involved. So, I think it's really helpful to know that there is this level of seniority in the structure of law firms that helps your development as an attorney.

Yoni Levy: Yes, we definitely have a deep and wide bench of resources, both in terms of the ability of other people to mentor you and watch over what you're doing, but also, like we're showing on this conversation generally, people of different specialty areas that you can talk to. You don't have to try to figure out exactly how the indemnity might be enforced in Delaware on your own—you can call a litigator and talk to them about that, and I think that that's really helpful. How about from the perspective of your amount of client-facing work and client interactions? I noted that you said you're on secondment, so for now, I bet it's 100%. But even when you're directly at the firm, what was your level of direct client engagement like?

Zane Fernandez: Yes, that's correct—right now it's 100%. It's as much client engagement as I've gotten my whole career so far. But at the firm, I was surprised because I'd always heard in law school that, “In a big law firm, you'll never talk to the client until you're a partner or a senior associate.” And that's not what I've found at Ropes at all. I've really found that I've had supportive groups that will definitely give you the support, where they'll say, “Feel free to send me a draft email before you send to the client or opposing counsel.” But you're the one facing and sending those emails and those documents, and so, that's really helped with my development as an attorney—building my confidence and speaking to other attorneys and sending coherent emails and everything. So, that's been a pleasant surprise during my time at Ropes so far.

Yoni Levy: Great. Definitely matches my experiences. How about you, Liz? On the whole question—I know I followed up with Zane, but the whole question to you?

Liz McInerney: Yes, I think you're right though—they go hand in hand. Because, like Zane mentioned, I think you get a lot of support here at Ropes—from our training programs, which are some of the best in the country, to just the amount of hands-on but supported activity that you get to do as a junior associate. I think in litigation, and I'm sure it's the same for corporate, Ropes tends to take a leaner approach. So, maybe our matters aren't 100 attorneys, maybe they're only a handful, and that gives you the opportunity to really practice and try some new things, but you're never alone. There's never, ever a time where I have felt like, "Oh, my goodness, I have no idea what I'm doing, and there's no one I can ask." There's always someone who's willing to reach out their hand and help me and share their experience with me so that I'm not walking into a situation without some support. And I think the structures that are in place—like Zane mentioned, we have mid-levels, senior associates, counsel and partners at every step—there is someone who's willing to extend the hand and help.

For me, for some of my larger matters, it's been great because, again, there's someone to review my work and pass it on. But then, there are other matters where it's been myself and maybe one other person, and no partner, and the amount of exposure I get to clients is quite large, I would say, for a junior associate and a mid-level associate. And I think the partners here at Ropes are really good at giving you that exposure early on, and that's different than, I think, a lot of my peers at other firms in that I'm on a first-name basis with now probably half of my clients—they know who I am when I email, and I know who they are and what they're about. It's nice because I'm getting to develop the skills not only of client interaction but how to manage expectations, which is really important as you progress in your career. So, I will just echo and really support what Zane said, that I think Ropes is a really supportive firm—you get to do a lot, but you're never alone, and you have a lot of backup wherever you go and whatever you do.

Yoni Levy: That's great. Maybe you could speak a little bit more about that to just tell us about the culture of your group specifically, maybe litigation or government enforcement, whatever it is that you view as your group, Liz, how well-integrated you feel into the group, and what mentorship is like on a formal and informal basis, too?

Liz McInerney: Sure. I think this is, again, something Ropes does really, really well. So many of the opportunities I've gotten here at Ropes to do big and great things have been as a result of different mentors offering them to me. I have had the privilege of having both formal and informal mentors. I have a mentor in my current office who has put me on cases, has given me supporting roles, and really has given me critical feedback that has allowed me to progress and grow as an associate. And then, I have those informal mentors—the women and men who I'm able to call and ask maybe the questions that I'm not quite sure how to broach with other partners or other associates. I get to draw upon the wealth of their experience and their time, and they are more than willing to give it. For me, that's allowed me to, I would say, integrate into Ropes's culture quite seamlessly, because, again, I come back to that place of, I feel supported, I feel that I have the opportunity to either make mistakes and be okay, or succeed and be recognized. And I think that, for me, especially as a young litigator who sometimes has a lot of experience in certain areas, but none in others, I can take on responsibility with confidence because I know that I have both mentors and other associates and partners who are willing to support me and give me feedback, and, I would say, sometimes guardrails to make sure that I'm staying on a track that's good for my career and my development.

Yoni Levy: That's great—thanks for sharing that. Zane, how about you?

Zane Fernandez: I've found the culture at Ropes to be very collegial, especially in the PCT group. Everybody's very social—there's a lot of happy hours, a lot of dinners, lunch panels where we get to mingle, and I think that builds those bonds between each other. So, it's not just you're working with people and emailing a stranger in your office that you've never met—it's people that you're building these connections with, and I think that's makes all the difference, especially when you're learning and receiving training from people, because you have that core bond at the center of it. I also think that, as Liz said, mentorship at Ropes is incredible, both informally and formally. You feel safe to make mistakes, which leads to growth and learning the bigger picture and the context of everything. And so, that's been wonderful for my development as an attorney, and I think that culture probably is in all practice groups at the firm, not just PCT.

Yoni Levy: Yes, I'll say that's definitely been my experience, too. People are very cognizant of the fact that we're all human beings, and human beings make mistakes. Also, I've just found, at least in my experiences, everyone's very forward-focused—there's no reason to even dissect what went wrong unless it's helpful for a growth opportunity. For instance: "If there's something that we can figure out that we could change next time, that's fine, let's discuss what went wrong. But, otherwise, let's just talk about how we can fix it, and there's no point in pointing fingers." And one of the things I've always most appreciated about working at a place like this, where people respect each other so deeply, is I can't think of a single time I've been "thrown under the bus," as they say.

You spoke a little bit about mentorship, formal and informal. I understand you're both members of the RMF—for listeners, that's the [Ropes Multicultural Forum](#). Would you mind talking a bit about your experience, what it's like to be a member of the RMF and how meaningful it's been to you personally, professionally or both during your time at Ropes & Gray?

Liz McInerney: Sure, I'm happy to jump in on that. I think it's important to just acknowledge it's really awesome to be an attorney of color at Ropes & Gray. And I think Ropes is what I call "the best in Big Law," especially on this topic, because I think that Ropes does a lot to support the RMF and really all of the offshoots that we engage in to create community in this firm. I'll just say that being a part of RMF has just been a blast—I've had a lot of fun times going to events, talking to partners about their experience and really sharing what I think is necessary in order for associates who are younger than me to succeed at this firm. And it's created, I think, this chain—we talk a lot about "pipelines," we care a lot about these buzzwords, but I get to see it in practice here at Ropes. For example, when I came back from my clerkship, now almost two years ago, I came back and something that was really important to me was creating a space for Black women at this firm. As a Black woman, I knew that they are an underrepresented population at law firms generally and, I knew from my time as a first-year and just meeting with our summer associates, that there were a ton of Black female associates coming in as first-years. I thought it was really important to create a group for that community specifically, and so I went to the firm and I said, "I want to create this group. I want to create the Black Women Lawyers Group, and I want funding, and I want time." And everyone was like,

"Go for it. Whatever you need, go for it." Without any type of bureaucracy, I was able to start that group right off—I was able to get funding for events, and talk through speaker ideas and event ideas. At no point did I receive any pushback or be told that maybe it "wasn't the time" or there "weren't funds"—the firm was incredibly supportive. I got to create this intersectionality of both the [Women's Forum](#), which is another one of our offerings to Ropes & Gray associates, members and partners, and the RMF—and it's been a blast. We have a lot of Black female associates at this firm, and I credit some of our retention to the ability, and the firm's willingness, to just allow us to create the space for that community and for that population. So, I will just say, this is a firm that I think puts their money where their mouth is for these communities, and I think it's important to just highlight that because I know that's not always the case. And so, for me, my experience has been nothing short of amazing with the RMF and all the subgroups.

Yoni Levy: That's fantastic. How about you, Zane?

Zane Fernandez: I'll echo Liz's comments, as well. I think it's been a very supportive environment in my experience. Even last night, I just attended the Black associates' happy hour in Boston. We're always reaching out, trying to have events every so often. I think firmwide, we have a yearly Black attorney dinner—not just associates, but with partners—and everybody from across the country or even internationally comes in. We really just get to bond in community, give bad advice, pick each other's brains, get to know each other on a friendship level, and so that's been amazing to me and a big reason why I chose Ropes, as well.

I think, to Liz's point about the firm putting their money where their mouth is, being a recipient of the [Roscoe Trimmier Scholarship](#) has helped me so much, and I'm super grateful to the firm for that opportunity. So, the scholarship was created in Roscoe Trimmier's legacy—he was the first Black partner of the firm. And it's an honor to be a part of that legacy, and so, I get a lot of formal and informal mentorship from that group of former scholars, partners and associates at the firm that are associated with the scholarship. You get that financial support, as well, which is very important for recruiting diverse law students into the firm and becoming attorneys. And so, all the opportunities that are presented to you as a scholarship recipient are very important, and I think it just goes to the firm's commitment and not just saying,

“Diversity is important; let’s have these diversity events.” They’re actually creating programs that bring money to people from these communities that really need it, supporting that development in their career as an attorney.

Liz McInerney: We talked a little bit earlier about mentorship, and, for me, the mentorship aspect, the RMF, and just Ropes’s commitment to diversity in general, go hand in hand. I have a formal mentor through the RMF—his name is [Chong Park](#), he is a partner in D.C., and he does a lot of government enforcement work and civil litigation. I’ve had the opportunity to work on multiple matters with him. He gives me direct feedback, and we talk a lot about what it means to be at a large firm and to have representation at all levels. I’m so grateful for that relationship because he understands a lot of my experience that maybe not all other associates or partners can understand. And I can go to him and say, “I got this feedback” or “I had this question” or “I’m not sure how to phrase this to a client,” and he gets it—without question, he gets it, because sometimes it’s just a different perspective that I’m looking for.

I’ll also just mention two other partners who operate for me in similar capacities, so they’re more my informal mentors—one is [Ama Adams](#) and the other is [Alex Rene](#), both D.C. partners. And I will say, all these partners are partners of color, and they have a unique perspective, but all are members of the RMF and really active in that group. I feel comfortable going to any of them about questions that I have, whether it’s firm policy and I’m just wondering about how to approach something to “I just sent this email and I had a typo in it, and I sent it to a client—what do I do? Do I email right away and correct it?” Those are real questions that I’ve had going to them, and for them to be able to just say, “It’s okay, you’re fine, you got this”—that type of, I would say, assurance, is something that I needed. I needed that extra help, and they were there because they know and they understand my experience and my perspective. So, I’ll just flag that for me, those relationships are real, and those people are very important and crucial and have been very crucial to my career development.

Yoni Levy: Yes, I think that’s a great point overall about diverse backgrounds and diverse experiences. And, maybe to that point, I heard through the grapevine, Liz, that you’re a certified sommelier. Is that right? How does that come to your aid in various work-related environments?

Liz McInerney: Yes, I can confirm that I am a certified somm. Being a sommelier has actually really worked out in my favor as an attorney. It’s funny because that experience prior to law school was something that has carried me through and has been a really great conversation starter with a lot of different people, from partners and associates to clients, frankly. And I will say that I’ve even had the pleasure of hosting wine events for our summer associates, for clients and for partners. It’s been a great way to connect with different people that I maybe never would have spoken to previously—people I didn’t work with, corporate folks, other litigation partners specializing in areas I wasn’t familiar with, and so on and so forth.

I think the other thing about being a somm that’s been really beneficial for me as a lawyer is that I’ve heard it said that “the law is a people business”—and I think wine is a people business. So, being able to walk into a room and feel confident about what I’m going to say and how I’m going to say it is a direct result and product of my time spent selling wine. Because the reality is there are different people with different tastes that want different things in a wine bottle, and it’s the same with a client—no client is the same, no problem is the same, even if it is the same client. And it’s being able to be adaptable and respond to what the client is saying—not what I wish they would say. It is so much about listening and responding in an effective way, and then learning how to communicate with them in a language that they understand—that’s wine, and that’s the law—so, I think there’s a lot of overlap between the two. And, frankly, now that I’m an attorney, I can afford the wine that I was selling to customers, which is really the best benefit of being an attorney.

Yoni Levy: That’s great. I think it’s really interesting also how different backgrounds really that you would expect to be completely divorced from legal skills really do give you a development of soft skills that are relevant in ways that you wouldn’t expect. It actually harkens back directly to the point we were discussing earlier about diversity and how you can’t really in the abstract assess how different diversity of backgrounds can affect the way people think about things. Recently, I was interviewing someone who spent a bunch of time as a wedding coordinator, and I was thinking going into it, “I’m going to ask them a really tough question and say, ‘What does this have to do with your job here?’” And their answer, at the end of it, I was thinking, “We should send all associates to be wedding coordinators.” It’s all about

listening to your client needs and coordinating among a whole bunch of different things that are pulling you in different directions and working with specialists. That's what I do at my job all day is talk to tax and ERISA and try and get them to talk to each other—and that's the same thing that they were doing as a wedding coordinator, and those skills really would be portable from one to the other. So, it's really amazing, and it sounds like a wine sommelier even more so.

Liz McInerney: So much of what we do is in the details. And I think you can see when you start law school that so much of our time is spent focusing on the little stuff and making sure that we're getting everything, we're picking up all the pieces. I always tell any associate I can, "Trust that whatever experience you're bringing into this job will be valuable as long as you find a way to translate the skills." And I think there are so many skills that translate to this job.

Yoni Levy: Can you tell us about what was the summer program you worked on? I'm just curious about that.

Liz McInerney: It's funny—I was asked by our amazing recruiting staff to lead a wine-tasting for our summer associates. It was great, they asked great questions, but I also tied it into the fact that, "You don't have to drink wine. You don't have to drink any alcohol to engage with others about some of these, I would say, small-talk, soft-skill issues. It's just a matter of being passionate about what you love." Because we had people who liked beer, and we had people who didn't drink. And so, we were talking about, again, how these skills translate into your job, and how small networking receptions or talking to clients over a drink or over food all matter as to what you do on a day-to-day basis and you're just building up skills. So, it was a great event.

Yoni Levy: That's great, that sounds awesome—lucky summer associates. And what you said about not being a big wine drinker resonated in that I'm not a big wine drinker and I also keep kosher, so I have a hard time connecting with people about just random restaurants in Boston that people want to chat about because I can't eat at any of them—but I drink whiskey, I love baseball, and I find other things to talk to people about. All of us are well-rounded people with lots of interests, and so are our clients, and so are the more senior attorneys, and so you can always find, as long as you're—as you said, Liz—passionate about things and willing to share your passions, I think you can always find ways to connect.

Zane, you're up against a big challenge here since you're opposite a wine sommelier, but what can you tell us about your hobbies and what you do in your free time?

Zane Fernandez: I know, it's a big challenge. I love what you said, Liz, about the comparison between wine and practicing law—it's very poetic and very interesting as well. So, for me, my hobbies are I love working out. I got away from it for the past couple months and I need to get back to the gym, but I used to be working with a personal trainer and getting very much into weightlifting. And I really liked that hobby because it was very much where you're intentionally putting yourself under this extreme, intense pressure, and it's like, "Why would anybody do that? Why would anybody want to bench-press all this weight and be struggling?" But then, when you get on the other side of it, you really feel proud about yourself—self-actualized, like, "Wow, I can do a lot when I'm under pressure," and I feel great after physically. So, that's one of my hobbies because I just love the feeling that you get after a good workout and the progress that you can see yourself make over time. I love hiking. I have a little year-old puppy, so we're always hiking—my partner and I are always hiking around the nice spots in Boston with him.

Then also, I'm really into strengthening my Spanish skills—I didn't grow up speaking Spanish, although I'm half Dominican. And so, once I started getting paid as a summer associate, I made that my goal to just put that money towards learning Spanish with a Spanish teacher from Latin America. So, we Skype every other week, and I still have kept that up even through practicing law, even though my schedule's busy, I've found a teacher that's very flexible and so that's been great to use a different area of my brain to be able to connect with people in Latin America and Spanish speakers all over the world. And it's actually been great for my pro bono practice because now I'm at this level after three or four years doing this, I'm able to help migrants and undocumented people with their immigration process and then connect with people in that way, where maybe it wouldn't be as organic if you're using a translator. So, those are my interests. Reading, as well—I think all lawyers have that nerdy side of them that loves to read, so that's natural for me. But that's about it.

Yoni Levy: Wow, who knew a discussion of hobbies outside of work would be so replete with deep metaphors about how

it applies directly to the practice of law? I certainly agree with you about the amazing strengths that can be forged in the crucible. I've found that also here at work, although I typically enjoy my day to day at work, but I've had certainly challenging situations. Some of my greatest learned lessons are from that, and certainly my strongest friendships here at the firm are all formed out of times of particular adversity, so that definitely resonates with me. And you mentioned the pro bono work that you're doing: Is that with the Dorchester House initiative or through some other program at the firm?

Zane Fernandez: Yes, the Dorchester House initiative as well as Rosie's Place. I've done a bit of work in both those areas.

Yoni Levy: That's great. Yes, the firm does a lot of pro bono work and it's a major focus of ours. We're hoping to have a future episode focused on some of the pro bono work at the firm, so keep your ears out for that. Maybe, in conclusion, you could tell us a bit about why you personally chose Ropes & Gray—what attracted you to pick this firm? I'm sure you each had many options to choose from, so what was it about Ropes that spoke to you?

Zane Fernandez: For me, it was that I had been meeting a lot of people. I went to BC Law, so I met a lot of people that went to BC at Ropes and it reminded me a lot of the BC culture—the culture at Ropes reminded me a lot of the BC Law culture, where it's very collegial, you're always having events, you're getting to know each other, and so, it's not always just about the work. Although we do prioritize that, it's also about the social aspect, that we're all humans, and we want to be treated with respect and actually get to know each other and have a good time, as well. So, I found that to be really telling of just

following my gut intuition there of, "I like these people, and I want to keep figuring it out and seeing where I fit in all this."

Liz McInerney: Yes, and I'll jump in and just say that I remember so distinctly coming to Ropes to interview, and I had had the fortune of interviewing at other firms. Every firm has a vibe—you all know what I'm talking about. And when I came to Ropes, the vibe was "really smart," "very kind" and "very studious." For me, that was the perfect combination. As much as I am extroverted, I really liked that everyone here was just incredibly warm and friendly and clearly very intelligent. Everyone that I spoke to was just very well-spoken, they were very thoughtful, and they were kind.

Yoni Levy: Thank you, Liz and Zane, both for joining us today and sharing your insights on the government enforcement specialty and on the private capital transactions group, and especially just your experiences generally at the firm, and your involvement with the Ropes Multicultural Forum. It's really been a great pleasure talking and learning from you, and I'm sure our listeners learned a lot, too. And thank you to our listeners—we hope you found this to be a helpful and insightful episode. If there's a specific topic you'd like us to cover in a future episode, please just reach out to me directly, I'd love to hear from you. If you're a law student or recent graduate who'd like to learn more, please visit our website at www.ropesgrayrecruiting.com or check us out on Instagram at [@ropesgray](https://www.instagram.com/ropesgray). You can subscribe to this series wherever you typically listen to podcasts, including on [Apple](#), [Google](#) and [Spotify](#). Please look out for future episodes and share with your friends. Thanks again for listening, and see you on the next episode.

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