



Yoni Levy

Arnav Prasad

Sharon Jaquez

Yoni Levy: Welcome 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 our asset management group based in Boston. On this episode, I'm joined by Arnav Prasad, a sixth-year associate in our private capital transaction group based in New York, and by Sharon Jaquez, a second-year associate in our health care group based in Boston. Hi, Arnav and Sharon—how are you? It's great to have you. I'd like to open with a bit of background about yourselves. Can you talk about your practice group at Ropes & Gray, and a little bit about how you landed in that practice and decided that that was an area you were interested in? Why don't we start alphabetically with Arnav.

Arnav Prasad: Sure—happy to. As you mentioned, I'm a sixth-year in the private capital transactions group here at Ropes & Gray. I do mostly leveraged finance transactions, and what that really means is that we help our clients who are looking to obtain loans to buy companies, raise those funds, and go out to the market and get people who will give them those loans. Prior to this, I was actually a lawyer in India. I did an LL.M. here six years ago. And during the course of my stint at Ropes & Gray, I also had the opportunity to work in the Ropes & Gray London office for a year, and practice New York law out of there. So, it was great to see Ropes & Gray across the world, across our global offices.

Sharon Jaquez: I actually landed in health care. I was really interested in health care starting in undergrad. I went to Northeastern University and studied health sciences, but I knew I didn't want to be a clinician—that wasn't really necessarily the path that I wanted to take. So, when I was looking into law school, I really wanted to go to a school that had a strong health law program, had opportunities within the health law sphere, which is why I decided to go to BU. And at BU, I really took advantage of the breadth of the health law program there and tried to take a lot of different courses within health law, and different experiential and internship opportunities, which taught me a little bit of what it's like to practice health law in a corporate setting. So, I knew I wanted to do health care, but I didn't necessarily know what that looked like at a big firm until I spoke to different lawyers at Ropes during the OCI process, where I learned about: What does a health care lawyer do for different clients at a large firm? And now, I'm here and doing that work—so it's all very interesting, and I wouldn't want to practice health care anywhere else.

Yoni Levy: I What does a health care lawyer do (now that you teed up that question for us)?

Sharon Jaquez: It really depends, which is the most classically lawyer answer ever, but especially at Ropes, the work in our group is faceted into three buckets. There's the transactional bucket, which is the breadth of our work—I would say most of our work is transactional. And that can range from doing diligence for transactions—large private equity transactions or other strategic investments—or sometimes, we'll actually act as the quarterback on the field, if it's between two health care entities, or two health care-related companies. Then we also do a lot of hospital transactions, or transactions between academic medical centers, and these are a little bit rare, just because these kinds of transactions don't happen very often. So, that's one subset of the work. And then, regulatory advising happens across all of the different types of work that we do. But

there's more traditional regulatory advising, where we would advise a variety of health care clients, physicians groups, hospitals, things like that, on a variety of regulatory and health care issues, be it if they want to set up any value-based care arrangement or any reimbursement issues that a client might be facing. That's another type of work. And then, there's the smaller bucket, which is investigations, in which we'll work across with our litigation colleagues on government investigations into different health care entities. So, it's definitely a very interesting group where you get to work on a lot of different kinds of matters, and I like that as a junior associate you get to really try your hand at a lot of different kinds of things. You don't become an expert on just one kind of transaction or one kind of issue—you really get to see health care play out in a lot of different environments.

Yoni Levy: Great. You mentioned the variety that juniors get to see—so, being that you're relatively junior in your career, have you had a chance to work on all of those different types of projects, or primarily focused on one or the other? And if you have had a variety of projects, is there one category of project that particularly interests you or speaks to you?

Sharon Jaquez: I would say in the past year that I've been at Ropes, I've done mostly private equity transactions and a couple of hospital transactions. I have gotten the opportunity to work on an investigation more recently, which has been a new challenge, I think, just because I've gotten very used to the deal flow and how a team might work together on a transaction. I haven't necessarily had the opportunity to work on that kind of investigation, so I'm happy to be getting that opportunity relatively early on in my career. I would say I have really enjoyed the transactional work a lot more than I thought I would initially, just because I didn't have a super business background, I didn't think that I would be the kind of person that would really enjoy transactional work as much as I do. But I have enjoyed really being able to work on a team to get to a goal—we all want the deal to close, so that's been really interesting. And working on a deal, especially as a junior, you are the closest to the primary documents, you are looking in the data room, and you are the point person for a lot of the issues. You'll be the first person to see them, at least, and I like having that responsibility, and being able to work with more senior associates on, "I've spotted this—it might be an issue. Is it

an issue? And how can we address it?" So, I think it's just been a really interesting opportunity, just being able to get so close to the nitty gritty, and really being relied on during a lot of the transaction.

Yoni Levy: I think it's important to keep in mind that you had the category of work that you were interested in, but even within that category, it would be hard to have said that you were interested in a specific thing until you had the opportunity to try it, which I think is useful context for law students to keep in mind, that it's not like you have exactly what you want to do the second you walk in, even if you have a general sense. Arnav, back to you for a minute with the same question, which is: Can you talk to us more about the different types of projects that you work on within your group? What does the typical project look like? And what interests you about them?

Arnav Prasad: Most of our clients at Ropes & Gray tend to be private equity sponsors, and what we do is we help these private equity sponsors go out into the market and get money to buy the companies and the assets that they're looking at. What interests me about the leveraged finance practice, specifically, is that when a company gets a loan agreement in place, they have to live with that document for the duration of its term. If you think about it in terms of if you buy a house outright, you've bought the house, one and done—the relationship's over with the seller the second that the house sale closes. With a credit financing, typically, the financing document then defines the confines within which that company must operate, and what the financial metrics need to be for that loan to continue to be serviceable. Effectively, you have this long-lasting relationship with the company and the lender that you continue through the course of the life of that facility—and that makes this a very engaging practice area in terms of the fact that companies will come to you and say, "We're looking to do this kind of transaction. Are we allowed to do it?" And now, you have to find solutions within this credit agreement that let the company operate the way it wants to or gets them the solution that they're looking for. I like puzzle solving, personally, and it gives you a puzzle over time to solve, because you have this one document, and you have to operate within the confines of that—for me, that's a particularly engaging thing about leveraged finance. I

worked in M&A and capital markets before, and I enjoyed that I get to build these relationships with these companies, get to know the CFO, and get to know the industry—you really have to understand the business. And given the volume and the breadth of industries we operate in, you learn a lot about different businesses, different industries, how they work, what's important to them, what their pain points are, what liquidity concerns they'll have in the future—and that makes this really engaging as both a junior, a mid-level, and a senior attorney.

Yoni Levy: Interesting—that was a fascinating response. I think I said before on this podcast that part of what I like about my practice group in asset management is the ongoing-relationship nature of the transactions relative to, like you said, an M&A transaction, where it's more, "Here's my money. Here's the asset. Goodbye. See you later." When you invest in a fund, it's an ongoing 10–15-year relationship while the fund is investing, harvesting, and then distributing, so people tend to approach the negotiations slightly differently in a way that I really enjoy. So, it's interesting that you have that in your practice as well. Are we typically on the lender side it seems like—is that true generally at Ropes? Or do we do any portfolio company work in terms of being on the other side of the leverage equation?

Arnav Prasad: We're typically on the borrower side. We typically represent the portfolio company, which is the asset that the private equity sponsor owns, and we help the private equity fund then go and find the lenders who could service that debt. So, we're typically representing the borrower. It's also just very interesting to see how market dynamics change the equation in terms of who calls the shots, and who has leverage. And so, when markets are good and lenders want to participate in a number of deals, borrowers really start calling the shots—they can move market terms, and they can push specific things in the credit agreement that make the credit agreement more borrower-friendly. But when the market dynamic shifts, lenders now have leverage and can clamp down on some of the leeway they've given to borrowers over the last few years.

Yoni Levy: How big is the space in terms of practitioners? Do you find that you see the same people over and over again as you work through these projects, or is it pretty varied?

Arnav Prasad: The space is pretty big and it is pretty vast, and depending on the size of the deal you're going through, you'll typically see similar faces on the other side. Ropes has the advantage of being a market leader in this space, and that typically means that we get the pick of both lenders and lenders' counsel, so we do see the same faces. But ultimately, like most other jobs, this is a relationship game, and you realize that you are building relationships with opposing counsel on the other side just as much as you are building relationships with your own clients. So, when you see the same faces over and over again, they tend to become easier to work with as the deals go on, because everyone has the same objective, and that's getting the deal done and trying to get some sleep.

Yoni Levy: I've said before in the asset management space that it is a lot of the same players over and over again, which is great because you end up building rapport with people, and it helps to move projects along. So, that's great. How do you see the different roles of associates at different seniority levels and the partners in your group? What's the relationship like on a project? How much oversight is there? What types of roles might associates of different seniority levels be playing in a project?

Arnav Prasad: I think our deal teams tend to be leanly staffed. I don't think it's because of a lack of resources—I think we kind of prefer it that way. That way, juniors get a lot of responsibility very early on in their careers, and I think that makes them more invested in the final outcome—that makes them more invested in the outcome of the deal. They're not just coordinating and running point on ancillaries, but they're really getting into the nitty gritty of it. It also means that our mids, and as they become more senior, our seniors are therefore given more opportunities to look at big-picture stuff, and really be able to zoom out and know that a junior, who has a couple of years under their belt of doing this, already has the experience to push the ball forward and keep the documents moving along. That means, because the seniors are really being able to zoom out and get the deal done, our partners then become a resource where they're available for any kinds of questions you have, but they let the teams run themselves, which is great because it means that the deal is always moving along. But whenever there's a roadblock, whenever there's

a hiccup, the partner is always around, always available, isn't stuck in the weeds in some other deal that we can't approach them and ask them to get us out of whatever bind we're in on that specific deal—and that way, we're able to get a lot more volume of work done as well. So, I think it helps that our deals are leanly staffed, and it gives a lot of exposure to our junior associates. By the time they're mid-levels, we hear this constantly when we have people who've lattered out, is that at other places they go to, their other firms are marveling at how much responsibility they had, and it's because we give them that responsibility pretty early on.

Yoni Levy: I think that's a big part of the Ropes culture overall is to really try to push you to what your maximum potential is and be on the outskirts of your comfort zone—not leave you out hanging to dry, but trying to give you as much responsibility as the person supervising you thinks you can handle, because it's good for your growth. And like you said, it's good for productivity—it's really a win-win all around. Sharon, maybe you could give us your perspective of what it's like, from a junior, how you see the varying roles, and what interactions you've had with other associates and partners in your group.

Sharon Jaquez: Our teams, again, depending on the size of the deal, it would usually depend on how big or how leanly staffed our teams tend to be, but it does usually end up being at least one junior, a mid-level, and then a partner. On some of the larger transactions, a senior associate might also be thrown in or it might be a couple of juniors. But I will say, I always feel like I am given a lot of responsibility and a lot of ownership over the items that I'm responsible for, and I feel like all of the attorneys that I've had the opportunity to work with have really made it a point to make sure I understand what role we're playing in the bigger transaction. Especially as part of a specialist group, sometimes our piece might seem very ancillary to everything else, but it really plays a big role, and it's helpful to see the role that our work plays in the larger transaction. And then, I also have had more senior associates really make a point to show the role that the juniors' work is playing in the greater deal, and I think that's really helpful. Having that mid-level to work more closely with you, I think, has been really helpful for me at least, and it tends to be the way that our group operates—it's very much a junior and a

mid-level. And then, on those smaller deals, it might even just be me working and then a partner, and the partner will be more involved. It really just depends on what the client might need or the transaction might need.

Yoni Levy: That's great—thanks, Sharon. You mentioned a bit about the relationship you have with your various partners in your group. Can you talk a little bit more about mentorship in your group and at the firm generally, both formal and informal, and how that experience has gone for you?

Sharon Jaquez: I've found a lot of mentorship at Ropes, and I think that's something that I really value so much, especially as an attorney that joined during COVID. I joined the firm remotely—didn't really have a full traditional summer experience. I think those mentorship opportunities have really helped me learn how to be a Ropes & Gray attorney. Some of the more formal mentorship opportunities have been through the partner mentorship program, through the [Ropes Multicultural Forum](#), which has been a great opportunity for me. I personally have been able to learn so much from my partner mentor, who is the most senior partner in my group, and who I wouldn't have had the opportunity to really get to know the way that I have if it weren't for this mentorship program. And then, there is more informal mentorship that I've found at Ropes, especially within the year right above me and my group. So, it's also been really great to have them really teach us, “These are the expectations. If you get this email, respond X, Y, Z way.” Just the little things that you don't learn through PowerPoint presentations—it's really through those relationships that you make with people in your practice group and who you're working with. So, I think mentorship is just a thread at Ropes & Gray, and everyone wants to be helpful. It's just within the culture to be really helpful, and to be helping your colleagues—and I've really felt that, especially starting out not really knowing anyone really well. A year in, I feel like I've been able to really find my place within my practice group and within the firm, so I think it's just been really helpful.

Yoni Levy: That's great that you were able to get that informal mentorship in particular, especially around COVID time. Those informal conversations can really end up being the most enlightening, even though we have lots of

formal mentor roles, and they're all great. Really some of the informal relationships, especially like you said, with people who are close to you in seniority but just above you, can really be helpful. Arnav, how about you—what's your experience been like?

Arnav Prasad: I agree with Sharon entirely on that. I think the informal mentorship, for me personally, has been invaluable, more so than the formal mentorship programs we have. I think it's because when partners work with you and they get to know you, they already have a vested interest in developing you as an attorney—and the more you develop as an attorney, the less they have to oversee your specific work product. The informal mentorship happens while you're working, and after you hang up a conference call—you have to discuss what was said, what wasn't said, and who was behaving annoyingly on that call. So, in our group, we have this thing, which I think goes to the culture of the group, which is we have “Scotch Wednesdays” in the office in the New York finance group. It's great—everyone gets together within the group, usually either in a conference room or in a partner's office. It used to be scotch only, but after several rounds of protest amongst non-scotch drinkers, including myself, we now have vodka, wine, and seltzer, and just a chance to get to know everybody. I think before COVID, it was great because we would just unwind and everybody would talk about what they were working on, the annoying things that they were dealing with, and how to solve some of the problems they were facing. But after COVID, it's been even better, because a lot of people joined during the last couple of years—we'd been working with them, but we hadn't gotten to meet face to face, and so it's great. Our private capital transactions group is comprised of the finance practice, the private equity practice, and the capital solutions practice—so, private equity, seeing that we have Scotch Wednesdays, decided to do “Tequila Thursdays.” So, everybody has their own little space to interact and bond, and the focus is just really getting together, meeting in person. And I think the mentorship that comes out of that process is, to me, the culture that really solidifies Ropes in terms of getting people together, getting people to like each other and really bond over shared experience.

Yoni Levy: That's awesome. How many leveraged finance projects do I have to do to come to Scotch Wednesdays?

Arnav Prasad: You have a permanent invite, Yoni.

Yoni Levy: Amazing, thank you. That was the right answer—that's awesome. I know you mentioned that you've practiced elsewhere before, so without asking you to speak pejoratively of other firms, can you compare what's the culture like here relative to other places? I'm always curious when I meet people who have worked in other environments, what's the feel of Ropes relative to other places.

Arnav Prasad: I practiced in India before, and I think just culturally, corporate law is practiced just very differently over there. There are a lot of similarities. It's also just very different in terms of culture. And I also practiced at Ropes London. It was interesting to see the differences and the similarities between Ropes New York and Ropes London, where Ropes is still very much one firm globally, but obviously in every country, there are also just cultural idiosyncrasies.

Yoni Levy: Yes, absolutely. Sharon, you mentioned the Ropes Multicultural Forum when I was asking you before about mentorship. Can you talk a little bit more about what the Ropes Multicultural Forum is and your involvement in it?

Sharon Jaquez: The Ropes Multicultural Forum (RMF) is the forum, also consisting of smaller specific identity forums, but it's for our Ropes attorneys who identify as racially or ethnically diverse. And it's an opportunity for attorneys throughout the different Ropes offices to come together and discuss different diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at the firm, discuss our own experiences at the firm, or opportunities for professional development programs and series. The different forums within the RMF put together different programs throughout the year. So, for example, I am also a part of the Latinx lawyers group, and we put together the programming for Hispanic Heritage Month, which was a success. We had Maria Hinojosa come and speak to us, and we also had a cooking class for the Latinx lawyers. I am also serving as an RMF circle liaison in Boston. So, I liaison between our circle and the greater RMF to put together different circle events, just making sure that everyone is coming together, and making sure that, especially for our incoming associates, they feel that they have support—and especially that our diverse associates feel that they have support and someone that they can come and speak to about

their experiences, if they have any questions, or anything like that. I've found a lot of great mentorship there, a lot of great opportunities there, and talking about my experiences with different attorneys at the firm who have gone through it before, who have been a diverse associate in these spaces, I think has been really helpful.

Yoni Levy: We had a great conversation recently with [Christina Ravelo also on the podcast](#), and she's great. She also talked a lot about RMF, the Latinx subgroups, and her involvement in that, so that was great. Thanks for sharing that. So, Sharon and Arnav, I understand you're both members of the [LGBTQ+ Forum](#). Maybe you could talk a little bit about what your experience has been like being part of that forum, what it's meant to you, and how it's contributed to your time at Ropes & Gray. I'll open the floor to either of you first.

Arnav Prasad: I've been part of the LGBTQ+ Forum since I joined the firm. I've actually gotten to see it evolve over the years. But I think really what's the best part about the LGBTQ+ Forum is—aside from the fact that you're obviously meeting people who are like-minded in terms of trying to focus on LGBTQ+-specific issues, and pro bono work that we do at the firm for LGBTQ+ individuals—that you also get to meet people in other practice areas, both within your office and outside of it. And to be honest, we don't get that many opportunities to interact with people who are in completely different practice areas. So, there are litigation associates who were not in my class year who I wouldn't necessarily cross paths with, but at the LGBTQ+ Forum, it's a smaller subset of people within the firm, and it becomes much easier to interact. We also get some great programming—one of the partners is an executive producer of one of the Broadway shows this year, and so, the entire Forum got to go out for this Broadway show that had LGBTQ+ themes in it. It was really extraordinary to be part of that, to know that our partnership is also involved, cares about these topics, and cares about the value of the diverse views that it brings. We get to discuss the pro bono opportunities that are available within the firm at LGBTQ+ Forum events and what excites all of us—and that, I think, is really what makes the LGBTQ+ Forum so great is meeting people internally, but also discussing all these topics that we all care about.

Sharon Jaquez: I completely agree. I think having that group of really supportive, like-minded people is so beneficial. To see the firm really support its LGBTQ+ attorneys is great. I think, for me, in particular, coming into the firm, I was a little nervous. I knew it was going to be okay—I knew no one was going to be not understanding, bigoted, or anything like that, just because I knew going into the firm the kind of place that Ropes was, but you're entering a new space, and I think being able to join a place where my identity is celebrated and I'm encouraged to be myself. You have people throughout Ropes who are in the Forum, participating in the Forum, and are active members in the Forum. It's just so great to see that who I am doesn't stop me from being a valuable part of the firm, and that will be celebrated, and I can do great things here. You get to learn so much from people who are in different practice groups and also at different levels of seniority who, again, I wouldn't just sit down and casually chat with all the time. I think having that opportunity is really great, and you get to learn so much from people who have, again, been in this space for much longer than I have, and learning how to tackle some issues that are still really prevalent now from people who have been through it before, has been awesome.

Arnav Prasad: I just wanted to add to what Sharon just said because I think I echo that entirely, but it's also just great seeing people before you who've led the path. You see partners who are both part of RMF and the LGBTQ+ Forum, and you get to see these intersectional people who've made it all the way to the top. And seeing the visibility is very important, but also that they're not necessarily saying, "This is the only way to get ahead in this profession." They're more than happy to talk to you about other opportunities, opportunities even outside of Ropes & Gray. I think what's great is that you're getting encouraged by them to both stay within the firm, grow within the firm, become partner within the firm, but also, being told that that's not the only way to succeed at being an attorney. Also, they will always reaffirm your gender expression, the way you would like to express yourself. Anecdotally, I got a tiny ear-piercing about a year and a half ago, and I was very concerned about how that would be perceived within the firm. And so, I used to wear a little plastic thing to hide it so that it just looked like my ear, and one of the partners asked, "Why are you doing that?"

And I said, “Because I don’t want to be the person who’s different.” And he said, “If this is what you like, wear it. The firm has absolutely no problem with it. Nobody’s going to hold you back for it. Nobody has any objections to it. If that’s how you want to express yourself, that’s how we want to celebrate you.” I think that’s an incredibly important thing, and it made me really value the diversity contribution of Ropes & Gray.

Yoni Levy: I definitely appreciate the opportunity to cross paths with people who you don’t otherwise meet at the firm. The firm is a very interconnected place, but inevitably, there are people who are of very different class years, very different practice groups, and in a different office, and so, through a combination of all those things, you don’t really have the opportunities to connect with them. I had to concoct a whole podcast setting just so that I could hang out with the two of you, and so, I totally understand and can relate to that. Can you tell us more about the Broadway show, just because that sounds super interesting? Who made the Broadway show? What was the Broadway show? How was the Broadway show?

Arnav Prasad: It was amazing. For every summer, Ropes will organization one Broadway show for all of the summers at least, and then, I think, different practice groups can do different things. So, [John Sorkin](#), who is a partner in PCT, is an executive producer of a show called *Take Me Out*, which was a fairly controversial show for many reasons, but chief amongst them was the male nudity in the show, and so, it got pretty famous. It has Jesse Tyler Ferguson and a bunch of really big names—it was a great show, and I think we all got to meet them. But also after the show got over, we got drinks, and we all got to discuss the show, what made it great, and what we thought of it. It’s a good opportunity to have a basis for interaction with somebody maybe who you haven’t crossed path with, who you may not have a lot to talk about, but it was also just great to be in a work setting talking about something completely unrelated to work, and everybody having very strong opinions on.

Yoni Levy: I understand that you’ve both taken on buddy roles within the Forum—Arnav, as a volunteer buddy to the 2021 incoming associates, and Sharon, as a summer buddy through the Forum. Can you share a bit more information about what that’s like and what that experience was like?

Sharon Jaquez: Sure—I can go first. I was a buddy this summer, and my buddy I actually went to law school with. So, it was really great to get to shepherd this person throughout their summer, just getting to teach her the ropes, I guess, when she had questions, or just talk to her about her experiences, and really get to know her on a different level than just, “I was a 3L when you were a 1L.” Getting to actually know, “What are you interested in? How has your identity played a role in your summer? How are you feeling? Are people being nice to you?” Things like that. And it was really nice to get to form that relationship with my summer buddy, especially because she’s joining the firm next year, so it’ll be great to get to see her journey at the firm when she starts next year.

Arnav Prasad: I was a buddy to an incoming associate for the 2021 season. I’m also a buddy for one of the incoming associates who’s just started in the 2022 year. And I think what’s fun about this is I think first-years walk into the firm as deer in the headlights—just everything is a little bit like, “What is going on?” They’ll sit in on calls, people will throw acronyms around, and I think that for the first couple of months, you’re just a little bit of, “What have I gotten myself into?” Until it all starts making sense and you realize that a lot of the acronyms are very basic things. But what’s cool about being a buddy is just walking them through that, taking them for coffee, calming them down, telling them, “Everyone’s been through this.” I think there’s a little bit of competitiveness when they all start, even though it’s a cohesive unit, but everyone finds their place. I think it’s just having someone they can confide in and talk to, and someone who can tell them, “Don’t worry about it. The firm’s got your back. There is a huge safety net for you. You don’t need to be the one outperforming everything.” I think having that resource is just incredibly valuable. The buddy program has just been a great way to meet people, get to know the new first-years, and have the first-years have someone they can confide in.

Yoni Levy: Have you stayed connected with your now-second-year buddy from last year?

Arnav Prasad: I have—we’re actually getting coffee at 4:00 p.m. today.

Yoni Levy: That was conveniently timed. I'd also like to say, *nota bene* [take note]—I usually use Latin when I want to feel important, not acronyms, but anyway, that was all great. Maybe you could each tell me what made you choose Ropes & Gray. I'm sure you each had a tremendous number of options before you when you were looking for jobs, and you chose Ropes. Why Ropes?

Sharon Jaquez: I chose Ropes primarily for the people and for the opportunities within the practice group that I was interested in. So, I knew I wanted to do health care—Ropes has an amazing health care group, and an amazing health care practice. And everyone that I met during my callback, which was, I think, almost everyone that's in the health care group, except for a couple of people—but everyone that I met was just so wonderful. I left my callback really hoping that I would get an offer, because I just really felt that I made a connection with a lot of really great people. So, once I did get an offer, it felt like a no-brainer for me, just because I felt it was the place where I wanted to be.

Yoni Levy: That's been a pretty consistent theme. I've asked this question at the end of every interview, and I think pretty consistently the answer has been "the people." It's why I've stuck around at the firm for so long, and also part of why I chose the firm in the first place. Arnav, how about you (after that brilliant answer)?

Arnav Prasad: I think you're going to hear the same no matter who you ask: it is the people. Ropes, reputationally, and both in my lived experience, has a no-nasty-guy policy—I would use another word, but this is a family-friendly podcast. So, it has a very strict no-nasty-guy policy, and that means invariably, whoever you're working with very much understands that we're all in the trenches together, and we're all getting through the days together. We all have the same objectives at the end of the day, and so, I think that that means it makes this job just a little bit easier to do than anywhere else, and I think that is a huge deal. For me, one of the other big factors was Ropes' pro bono program—the fact that Ropes has unlimited pro bono hours that are available as credit to associates. For me, that was particularly important, because there were specific types of pro bono things that I wanted to work on. Being an immigrant from a developing country and being LGBTQ+

from that country, it was just important that I got to be able to work on those cases, and I've gotten a lot of opportunities to do that. And I think that, to me, it also makes Ropes stand out amongst the vast milieu of options that are available to every incoming law associate.

Yoni Levy: That's awesome. What kind of pro bono work have you been involved in?

Arnav Prasad: There's been a bunch, but the one that was closest to me was we partner with an organization called Out Leadership, that effectively works with American businesses that have operations in other countries, and provides them with a summary of both the laws, but more importantly sometimes, the culture around LGBTQ+ rights in every single country that they operate in. And then they tell those CEOs that, "Here's ways that you can use your businesses to enact change in that country," whether it's cultural or whether it's more at the policy level—things like in your subsidiary in whatever country, giving equal access to different kinds of health care rights. I think that makes a big difference, just from an impactful perspective, having worked in those jurisdictions. I got to write the report on India, how we're now trying to vie for the legalization of same-sex marriages in India, and Ropes has a bunch of pro bono partners that are helping with that cause. So, those things are pretty important to me personally.

Yoni Levy: That's great that you were able to find projects that really speak to you personally. Why don't you share a little bit about what it is that you do in your spare time. Why don't we start with Sharon: What is it that you do in your free time?

Sharon Jaquez: I lived in South Florida with my parents for a year, for my 3L year. I took up tennis just because it was nice all the time, and I was not used to that, being from New Jersey originally. So, it was really a very fun game to learn, especially to do in a group. And my partner and I actually learned—we took tennis classes together, and it was really fun. It was really very hard, and I am not very good, but it was fun to learn something new and start watching tennis more regularly—it was actually really cool. And I think it's brought me a lot closer to her family, and also just something new to learn about, so it's been great.

Yoni Levy: Arnav, how about you?

Arnav Prasad: I've always wanted a dog, and right at the beginning of COVID, when they told us in March 2020 that we had two weeks, I thought, "This is my window of opportunity. I have two weeks at home, so I'm going to do this." And so, I got a dog. And two and a half years later, every time I go back to the office he's just like, "What is happening? I don't understand." Which I think is happening to a lot of COVID dogs right now, who are all going through an existential crisis, so I feel for them. But it's honestly the best thing I've ever done in my life. He forces me to get up, drop what I'm doing, and go for that 15 minute walk, when it's sometimes exactly what I need to just clear my head, and get out of the head space for a little while—nothing is not so important that it can't wait for him to do his business for 15 minutes. It's been the best thing. He's made me more active. He's made me more social. He kept me sane for the last two and a half years. So, he's been the best. I highly recommend getting a dog.

Yoni Levy: That's awesome. Thank you, Arnav and Sharon—it's really been a great pleasure listening to you. And thank you to our listeners—we hope you've found this to be a helpful and insightful episode. If there's a specific practice area, or area you'd like us to cover in a future episode, please 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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