

Life is what you make of it — an idiom to which I abide. Having faced some setbacks, I've decided my solution involves law school.

I would like to understand the substance and procedure of American law. I have lived in the United States since entering for undergraduate studies in 2001, from Malaysia. In the process of becoming a naturalized United States citizen, which concluded in May 2017, I became acutely aware of the power that is the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which prescribes freedom for and equal application of the law to everyone. It provides for the kind of environment that I want to live in, that is a tolerant one with the rule of law so that individuals can plan and build towards their goals thereby producing happiness for themselves. It must be continuously upheld in practice or it would become nothing but artifact. For this we need people trained in the means, and it is my goal to join this cadre for myself and for society.

While I'm interested in all aspects of the law, I would like to focus in intellectual property (IP) law, and business law such as in financing, contracts, and negotiations. There are two reasons for this. The first is that IP law would usefully leverage my education in the natural sciences and computer science, as well as my work experience as a software engineer. I am accustomed to reading and applying technical documentation. My experience over multiple industries — healthcare information technology, finance, and online advertising with internet media — provides a wide perspective from which to analyze innovations. The second reason is entrepreneurial. I hope to formulate a sustainable business model around my engineering skills and my interest in media and entertainment; licensing and trademarks may be vital in this regard. It is my dream to run a digital media production house that produces great art and hits — hopefully the two may collide.

I also wish to study the law to learn what makes good policy. In college I joined the Habitat for Humanity organization, which helps people below the poverty line obtain home ownership. In Pennsylvania I organized groups of volunteers to local Habitat construction sites, where we enjoyed performing tasks like installing drywall and insulation. In 2007 I moved to New York and realized that home ownership there is a mirage for most salaried workers above

the poverty line. Then when I moved to San Francisco at the end of 2015, I was shocked at the exorbitant rents and homelessness, with its accompanying stench and criminality. Downtown I was attacked by a lady who ran up to me, hit my face, and pulled my hair. The social juxtaposition borders on ridiculous — in the ‘hip’ neighborhood south of Market Street, espresso at \$9 a cup directly faced homeless encampments. There in the neighborhood park in the mid-weekday sun sat men guarding their nooks and conversing none. In college economics I learnt that minimum wage tends to increase unemployment, and rent control for some increases the rent for the rest. Both these panacea are common today. Where can be found discussions on these issues, and the building blocks for effecting change? I think that law school could provide intellectual kinship from an economic lens.

Near the end of 2016 I was ill. Although I had received a great performance review only three weeks prior, I was suddenly terminated by my employer, Google. While I was ill and at home my manager took offense at my absence and so Google terminated my employment by email. This event heightened my awareness of how easy it is for regular people to slide into homelessness. It is ironic that because I was ill I was fired thus terminating my health insurance; and that I had been subscribing to Google’s employee legal access plan because I didn’t personally know any lawyers, but that plan terminated upon the very incident where I would have benefited from a lawyer. Moreover, I had recently submitted my application for United States citizenship, the N-400, and was waiting for the federal government’s response. I doubted I could pass the citizenship interview as an unemployed individual. With determination, I withdrew my retirement account to temporarily sustain myself, formed my own company — an aspiration which I’d had for some time anyway, and eventually passed the interview and became a proud United States citizen. Naturally I’m interested in labor law. My legal education would also inform my new business, a creative and multimedia enterprise.

While I am a first-generation American, I’m what you could call a third-generation Malaysian. My grandfather emigrated from China to Malaysia as a laborer at age fourteen and eventually established himself in a small town as a trader of plantation goods. My father related

to me stories of helping grandpa load his lorry with tobacco crop for transportation to market. My father's mother did not learn reading, writing, or arithmetic — and while she got along by speaking and transacting in multiple local languages, my sense of her limitations has made me a strong advocate of education. My parents worked as professionals. Malaysia is today a harmonious society of a few rather distinct racial groups, while the United States is more heterogeneous but probably also more of a melting pot. I may bring to the law profession diverse perspectives on immigration and multiculturalism.

I am applying to Rutgers because of its esteemed and historic reputation. Additionally, I enjoyed my residence of about eight years in the metropolitan regions closest to the school: I lived in the Philadelphia suburbs, and then in Jersey City while commuting to New York. I know the culture, I like the people, and I can certainly see myself integrating into the legal community and serving the region from that respect.

With my clarity of purpose, strong educational foundation, and resolve borne of past learnings, I am confident that I will thrive in law school. I will use my empowerment to advocate realistic and compassionate policy through the years to come.