

# On commencing practice\*

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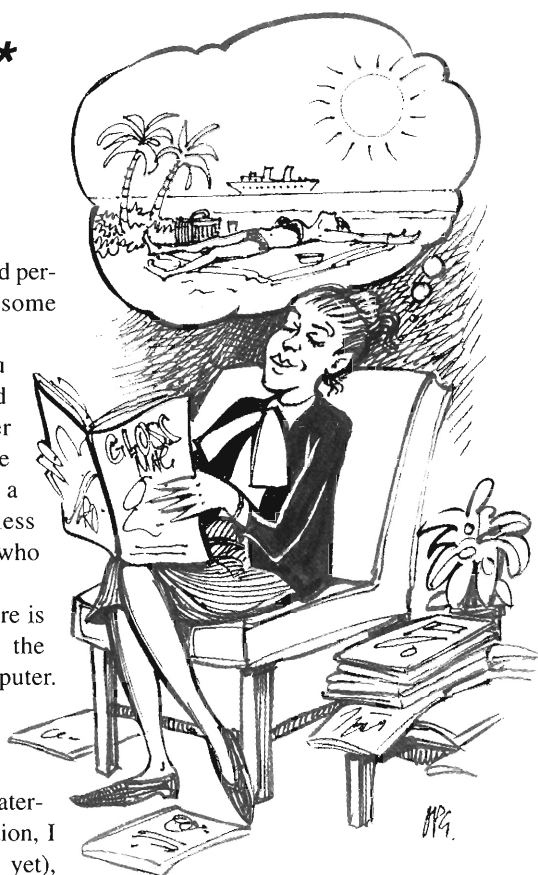
You haven't been here long, but you've bowed to pressure and done the right thing. You have blacklisted all the firms of attorneys that haven't paid you. Of course they will never brief you again. Your colleagues have done the same thing. Now you can't accept briefs from the attorneys they've blacklisted either. And nobody has paid you. What are you to do?

Never fear, all is not lost. There are useful ways to fill those empty days with activities that don't cost a cent, but might even further your career. Who knows, you could meet some attorneys not on the blacklist while you're at it. Here are a few hints:


- Take an old brief cover with you to Third Division and sit in the back row pretending to wait for the divorce of, for example, Wyngaardt. That way people see you in court, but nobody will be around at the end of the roll to wonder why you don't actually have a client.
- Save on newspapers by taking a trip to the Brazilian and reading them there while pretending to wait for somebody. If you can't slip out unobserved, pretend to be in a huff about being stood up when you leave. Good free exposure. Somebody, perhaps an attorney, might even offer you coffee.
- Venture forth to the Long Street Café, but pretend to be on diet. Order only water (with a hint of lemon of course). You might meet an attorney or two there as well. More exposure on a shoestring.
- Read all the law reports as soon as they hit the shelves. If that's not enough read all those that have come out since you left university. This could keep some struggling folk busy for a long time. When you finally get a brief you can accept you'll be astonishingly well informed.
- Introduce, or reintroduce, yourself to every member of the Bar (this in fact does need to be done more than once in some instances) and hope somebody offers to take you to lunch or at least

invites you in for coffee. You could perhaps leave with the names of some attorneys who do indeed pay.

- Stroll around the Gardens. You could meet a judge. Be reminded that not all attorneys wear sober suits and white shirts so never write off anyone even if they do bear a marked resemblance to a homeless person. They might be the ones who actually pay.
- Surf the internet – apparently there is some interesting stuff under the favourites on the library computer. Definitely for adults only.
- Take up an alternative form of employment to supplement your income. For example, enter the catering market (there's stiff competition, I know, but nobody's doing fudge yet), do headnotes for Juta, write a trashy novel, do some court reporting. The possibilities are endless.
- Visit the 2nd floor of 42 Keerom Street



(yes, there are chambers there) to read the impressive collection of recent glossy magazines in the reception area so that you can dream about all the things you could buy or do if somebody actually paid you.

- If you're really desperate, give in and do legal aid work. Jail appeals are always going begging.
- Help Heima Porter with Bar Council matters, eg licking stamps, closing envelopes, etc.
- Draft your own sequestration papers. Just in case.
- But don't lose all hope. I am told of three former members of the Bar who used to sit around drinking coffee while waiting for briefs when they were new here – they still drink coffee, but in rather different circumstances. 



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