



### MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

#### INTRO:

**Member Name :** Harpreet Saini

**Year of Call:** 2004

**Twitter Handle:** @SainiLaw

**LinkedIn Page:** I mean.... I HAVE a LinkedIn page. but I never check it. It isn't a good way to get a hold of me. You're far more likely to find me talking non-law related, non-professional, nonsense on Twitter

**Photo:** Do I need a picture? Just imagine the best-looking person you can think of, multiply THAT by 10, and just pretend that the person you're imagining is what I look like.

**QUESTIONS:****1. How did you get into criminal law**

A whole lot of luck. During law school I didn't summer with any law firms and so when it was time to article I didn't really have a lot of ideas for what to do with myself. I applied EVERYWHERE and managed to score but one articling interview. I lucked out. I articulated with the office of 'Hicks Block Adams' (as it was then but is now 'Hicks Adams'). Once I began I was quickly hooked. You don't have to be in criminal defence for very long before you realize that corporate lawyers aren't even real lawyers. That's right corporate lawyers! I said it. Come at me.

**2. What type of cases do you enjoy defending the most and why?**

My favourite cases involve fights in bars for the sheer insane chaos of it all. You never know which witnesses will show up, they were all drunk at the time of the incident (and when they gave their statements), everyone involved is unsavoury, the surveillance videos never point in the right place, and the witnesses always give contradictory and unexpected evidence. You have to think on your feet and your well drafted cross examinations always fall to the wayside. Fun times.

### **3. How did the practice of criminal law change you?**

Absolutely. How could it not? Throughout my undergrad and during law school I knew that the 'administration of justice' treated people differently based on factors such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc etc etc. But being immersed in it has taught me exactly how the tiny machinations of the court systems can work to prevent people from escaping a cycle of poverty and criminalization once they've been exposed to it. It is easy for well-meaning people to see that racist police officers beating a person of colour is wrong and horrible. What is more subtle though is how something as small as scheduling a bail hearing can disproportionately affect some people. The practice of criminal law has allowed me to appreciate these subtleties.

### **4. If there is one thing only you would like to see change in criminal law, what would it be?**

'Access to Justice' and 'Diversity'. These are not just buzz words. They are the keys to addressing many (although not nearly all) of the problems that people who find themselves before the courts face. Much ink has been spilt about both so I won't do so here but I will say that all the legislative and common law changes to the law will not help reform criminal law if these two basic principles cannot be incorporated into those reforms.

### **5. What advice would you give to your younger self when you first started practising criminal law?**

Do your dockets. Try to focus more on the business aspects of being a lawyer. Knowing the law and winning cases is great but that isn't enough to sustain a lengthy career and it doesn't pay bills. I'd tell myself to also

learn about billing properly, marketing myself, and even how to reduce my tax liability. Also, I'd tell myself to get my dockets done.

#### **6. How do you deal with bad work days?**

Not well. But you have to try. Play with my kids. Take care of the dog. Sculpt artistic masterpieces from large slabs of marble using a hammer and chisel. Some 90's hip-hop always helps salve the pain though. Also, one of those things I just listed isn't true.

#### **7. What do you think of Zoom court?**

It is great for set dates/remands. I don't even mind it for submissions. In fact, allowing me to appear in court from home helps me balance my work with my childcare responsibilities, which is very important. But I can't run a trial like this. I know reasonable people disagree with me here, but Zoom cannot replicate the drama of a withering cross of a police officer in person.

#### **8. Any embarrassing court story you're willing to share?**

I have no shortage of embarrassing stories. Just recently, I was remanding matters in Zoom court when my puppy started chewing on my toes. It hurt. I picked her up, put her on my lap and started to pet her. I looked up at the screen and realized that you couldn't see Lilah the Pup but you could see my hand moving and it did appear that I was being VERY inappropriate. I immediately raised Lilah into view so that everyone would know that in fact, I was petting the dog. Of course, when I put it that way, it doesn't sound much better.

**9. Who is your role model/inspiration in criminal law?**

Perhaps one of the greatest lawyers of all time. Vincent Gambini. You may know him as 'My Cousin Vinny'.

**10. What's your favourite song?**

'Kiss' by Prince. I famously brought down the house in undergrad when I performed a horrid karaoke rendition of it at 'Peel Pub' in Montreal.

**11. How do you maintain work life balance and how do you deal with the stress of the job?**

Have interests other than the law. Don't let it consume you. It is so easy to burn out if you let it. Love your work but be able to walk away from it from time to time.

**12. What is your biggest legal inspiration?**

In addition to the aforementioned, 'My Cousin Vinny', I'd say the classic 80's sitcom 'Night Court' is an inspiration.

**13. What do you do outside of the law?**

Outside of the law, I truly am an overgrown child. When I have a few spare moments I enjoy playing with Transformers and reading comics. Preferably Batman but I'm also a huge fan of Aquaman and Wonder Woman. This is how I try to maintain my youthful outlook on life.