



MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

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Year of Call : 2015

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Photo :

QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

I sort of fell into it. I went to law school having no idea what I wanted to do, but knowing with what I thought was absolute certainty that I did NOT want to practice criminal law. My first year criminal law class changed all that. I was in a small class of amazing people with a fantastic professor (Blair Crew). I became intrigued by not only the human element of criminal law, but also by the

complexity and creativity of defending or prosecuting cases. After my first year of law school, I managed to get a summer job working at a really great criminal law firm in Ottawa, and from there I was totally hooked and haven't looked back since.

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

I don't have a specific "type". The cases I end up having most fun with are the ones where I initially think that I have no shot at winning, but end up developing a tenable argument. Even if I lose the application/trial/appeal/ORB hearing, working through the case and convincing myself that we have a chance at success is incredibly satisfying. Even better if we win.

3- How did the practice of criminal law change you?

I am more empathetic, but also have a much lower tolerance for BS.

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

No more mandatory minimums. They don't serve anyone's interest.

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

It gets easier. The stress doesn't go away, but you'll get better at managing it. You'll gain more confidence and the imposter-syndrome will start to fade. And you cannot do this without colleagues to run ideas by, to commiserate with about the bad days, and to celebrate the great days.

6- How do you deal with bad work days?

There's a sliding scale of bad days. There are the days when court or a hearing doesn't go the way I had envisioned and I spend the rest of the day/night replaying it in my head. There are the bad days when I lose but really think I should have won and I share my frustrations with colleagues. And there are the bad days when nothing bad actually happens but I'm in a horrible mood. Having a strong support network at work and personally has been key for me, along with learning to let go of the guilt of losing or messing up, and just being patient with myself.

7- What do you think of Zoom court?

When the technology works, I love it. Yes it has limitations. Yes it is more suited for some proceedings than others. But on the whole, it's helped the system tremendously and there are aspects of it that I hope we keep long past COVID-19. That being said, the enormous downside to Zoom is that not all of our clients have the resources or ability to use Zoom, which creates an access to justice issue. Additionally, losing the ability to connect with some clients in person in courts, particularly clients experiencing mental health issues, has been a huge challenge that Zoom courts cannot correct.

8- Any embarrassing court story you're willing to share?

Ouuuuf great question. I think the reason none come to mind is that I've repressed them!!! But trust me, there have been many!

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

Fierce female lawyers. The first time this happened was when I was watching an ONCA appeal during articling. I was totally inspired by the lawyer for another appellant. She was so prepared. She was so knowledgeable. She had such a compelling way of speaking (which I later described to my articling principal as being like "paint by numbers"). And she had really cool style. It was my first legal FAN GIRL moment. I've had this happen to me so many times since, watching other fierce female counsel do an incredibly bad-ass job, and it really inspires me every day. It brings a huge smile to my face to say that if I named all of these women, it would fill this page many times over, so I won't. But the first was Jill R. Presser (and yes, I have told her this story!)

10- What's your favourite song?

I'm one of those people who has a favourite song every day/week/month. Right now, the song stuck in my head is "Man Listen" by Belly.

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

I definitely maintain the attitude of work hard, play hard. I am lucky in the sense that I can completely switch off from work when I let myself (which is sometimes easier said than done). I've figured out that I don't always have the luxury of time at the end of the day, so I wake up early and workout every morning. I've always found physical exercise to be incredibly therapeutic. I also try to sneak in an episode or two of something at the end of the day to just totally zone out – I just finished re-watching The Wire. Highly recommend if you haven't seen it yet! And on the weekends, I do my best to connect with family and friends – virtually or in person!

12– What is your biggest legal inspiration?

The challenge of it all. One of my favourite things about my job is the variety of it– trials, applications/motions, appeals, Ontario Review Board hearings and Consent and Capacity Board hearings. There's always work to be done, but there's also always a challenge to be better than you were at your last hearing, or to learn from it. That motivation to keep learning from the wins and the losses drives me every day.

13– What do you do outside of the law?

I run. A lot. But my favourite thing to do is to see friends and family. COVID really messed that up, so until that lifestyle returns, I just try to find things to do that don't involve a screen – making pizza dough, walking through trails in the forest, anything!

14- What would your defence bar colleagues be surprised to learn about you?

I love gardening. I know how that sounds, but try it. Seriously. It's weirdly therapeutic.