



MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

Member Name : Raj Vijan

Year of Call : 2018

Twitter Handle: I don't tweet – only birds do...LOL!

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QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

Many of our members will probably know that I was a courtroom clerk for the Ontario Court of Justice for 14 years. I started my clerking career at Metro West Court (80 The East Mall) and then moved to Old City Hall Court in my last 8 years with the Ontario government. I always had an interest in criminal law since I was

in high school and working in the courts for the years, I was a court clerk only solidified my desire to practice criminal law.

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

This is a hard question as I am still too early in my career to say which cases I like vs which ones I don't. I find the Impaired Driving by Drug cases the most interesting as the law is really evolving in this area. I also enjoy doing drug cases (even though I haven't had too many) and cases involving firearms. I really think clients who are charged with these offences really need our help to defend them as the state has a significant amount of power in this area over our clients.

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

I realized the hard work many defence lawyers put in day and day out for their clients. As courtroom clerk you are more or less a spectator watching the arguments in court however, now working as a lawyer I have gained a real appreciation for the work our members do every day. It is one thing listening to an argument in court however, it is completely different making an argument while on your feet in court. It was pleasure to watch many of our members making arguments at the OCJ while I was courtroom clerk.

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

The biggest change I would like to see is courts having a better understanding of immigration consequences that flow for some accused when they have criminal convictions. The other change I would like to see is a return to a world before Bill C-52 changed the sexual assault provisions.

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

Don't leave yourself vulnerable. We are in many ways rescuers for our clients however, we need to develop clear boundaries with our clients about what we can do vs what we cannot do.

6- How do you deal with bad work days?

Spending time with family and friends. I especially enjoy spending time with my niece Jiya and my nephew Jaison, and they together make me forget about my bad day at work. I also enjoy cooking myself a nice meal and listening to music.

7- What do you think of Zoom court?

It has some great benefits for cases where witnesses are professional witnesses (such as police officers). However, if your client requires the assistance of an interpreter Zoom doesn't work that well.

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

During a trial I was having a real case of a gassy tummy and I ended up farting loudly in court! Thankfully no one noticed and we just kept moving on!!!

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

There are too many to list here.

10- What's your favourite song?

Sade – Ordinary Love or Phil Collins – Against All Odds

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

Taking time away from work when needed to spend time with family and friends. If the stress becomes too much it is important to engage in counselling.