



MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

Member Name : Andrew Bigioni

Year of Call : 2015

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QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

I assisted with a 1st degree murder trial for a 2L internship. I was immediately taken in by the gravity of the proceedings, the competition between defence and Crown counsel, and just how reliant the accused is on the professionalism and skill of their lawyer. The acquittal didn't hurt, either.

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

We need to dramatically reduce the time it takes to get to trial. Accused who want to publicly refute the allegations made against them and prove their innocence should have the opportunity to do so within months of being charged. Also, we need to develop and implement a restorative justice option for the handling of sexual assault cases.

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

Do more for your mental health – exercise, get fresh air, sleep; it will make the adversity you face early on easier to deal with.

4- How do you deal with bad work days?

Mutter endless profanities under my breath, replay the worst parts of the day in my mind ad nauseum, visualize my enemies receiving their comeuppance, then catch my breath and forget all about it.

5- What do you think of Zoom court?

Great for set dates, but give me an in-person trial every time.

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

When I was articling, a senior lawyer (who was evidently unaware I was still articling), asked me to speak to a matter for them in practice court at 361 University. Somewhat wary but wanting to seem competent and helpful, I walked into practice court and when the matter was called I walked, ungowned, past the bar and started in. As I continued talking and looking at the judge, it became clear something was amiss. "Are you a lawyer, sir?" "Not yet, Your Honour, but getting there", I replied. At that point a Crown walked over to me and quietly advised there were a number of protocols I had failed to follow. Everyone in court was very kind about the situation but I remember being mortified.

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

I've started to try and force myself to take more time for things outside of work. Defence lawyering can and will consume every second of your time if you let it. Don't. Life is short.

8- What do you do outside of the law?

Spend time with friends and family, take canoe trips, read fiction, play hockey, swim, cycle, golf, travel and lie on the beach.

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

I believe the sooner the courthouse lounges are again teeming with defence counsel, the better. While the safety of all involved is paramount, a great disservice is done to junior counsel who don't have the benefit of learning from their colleagues over lunch, on break from the day's proceedings. The collegiality and passion for the work among our bar is really what sets it apart, and nowhere is it more evident than the courthouse. That may not come as a surprise, but I wanted to get it in anyhow.