



THE **VOICE** OF  
THE **CRIMINAL**  
**DEFENCE BAR**

### MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

#### INTRO:

**Member Name :** Aakanksha Chauhan

**Year of Call :** 2020

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#### QUESTIONS:

##### **1- How did you get into criminal law?**

I first got excited at the prospect of practicing in this area when I attended a court hearing and witnessed a great defence lawyer in action. I also thoroughly enjoyed all of my criminal law internships and realised over the years that I couldn't see myself doing anything else but this.

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

Lawyers never stop learning, but as a newbie the learning curve is incredibly steep and at this stage every case that comes my way brings with it something new and exciting. At the risk of sounding like a cliché, I have truly enjoyed working on all of my cases.

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

Criminal law did the opposite of changing me – it helped me become more comfortable in my own skin instead. I was always labelled the “rebel” as I was usually the one at the table who did not share the “popular opinion”. Over the years in this field, I felt that I could be more true to myself as I saw criminal lawyers around me not just surviving but thriving by going against the current.

## **4- How do you deal with bad work days?**

By treating myself to a crime documentary paired with piping hot and spicy food.

## **5- What do you think of Zoom court?**

I started my legal career as a lawyer in Zoom Court and it has its perks. My snoopy-print pyjama pants definitely have no complaints about this arrangement! Having said that, as a defence lawyer in India, I enjoyed the process of going to court, meeting my colleagues and advocating in person. I look forward to doing that in Canada!

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

During one of my hearings, I was having issues with the sound as it seemed to be lagging. Without taking a minute to explain the situation, I began to speak very slowly in an attempt to reduce the echo created by the lag. After 10 minutes of me over-enunciating every word, the judge jumped in very concerned, she probably thought I was having a stroke! I finally clarified the situation and we laughed it off but it remains an embarrassing moment!

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

Indira Jaising

**8- What's your favourite song?**

Harry Belafonte : Jamaica Farewell

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

I am good with compartmentalising, so when I find the need to switch off from work I make sure to really enjoy my downtime and when it's time to work, I jump right back in and give it my all. I think maintaining a perfect balance, is a stressful goal in itself!

**10- What do you do outside of the law?**

I enjoy spending time with friends over board games or at the movies. I also spend a fair amount of time engaged in mentorship activities remotely with young women in India who don't have access to good education or job opportunities.

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

My mother is a chef and I inherited her culinary skills. I have no trouble whipping up a delicious Indian spread with almost any set of ingredients (this is of course subject to me having my trusty-spice bag on me).