



MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

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Year of Call : 2019

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QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

I was a first year law student looking for summer work. I applied to several summer positions across the spectrum of the legal field. It was a criminal lawyer, Colleen Clark, that took me on for the summer. And then she took me back for the second summer, and then for articling. Criminal law had been my preference from the start because its an area of law that I knew I could practice in my hometown North Bay.

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

Any case with apparent *Charter* breaches or the potential to advance the dialogue on reconciliation. I enjoy holding the state accountable for its actions and inactions. When I look around the world I see an alarming rise of authoritarianism and despots. The best cases are the ones in which I feel like I have safeguard our Canadian democratic values and the rule of law.

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

Made me more empathetic. These days I often tell clients that they are not a bad person, rather, they made a bad choice.

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

Oh, where to begin? I guess at the top of the list would be the legalization and/or decriminalization of all controlled substances. "Your body, your choice."

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

Keep better dockets on a minute by minute basis. Trying to recreate the day in your docket sheet after the fact is just too hard and time consuming.

6- How do you deal with bad work days?

Stoicism.

7- What do you think of Zoom court?

I think Zoom court is great for anything short of a trial. I think Zoom court is certainly helpful for many self-reps and people that live in rural areas. When some client is being held for bail, it is much nicer that nowadays I simply ask the proposed surety to keep their phone on them and be ready to call-in on short notice. Before the pandemic, I can remember having grandmothers sitting in courthouses all day waiting for a bail hearing that ultimately did not get reached in time.

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

I make mistakes everyday but I do not think they are embarrassing so much as they are examples of the learning curve. In sentencing submissions recently for a manslaughter case, I frequently struggled to pronounce the victim's last name. That was a name that I now wish I had practice saying aloud before attempting to say his name in the courtroom.

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

I have a few that are still alive and well. So, lets go with Nelson Mandela or Chief Justice Brian Dickson.

10- What's your favourite song?

Tough question! The Swimming Song by Loudon Wainwright III.

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

Going to the gym at 6:00am helps.

12- What is your biggest legal inspiration?

Um... this lawyerly clip from the 2nd season of Fargo (TV)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wjfywwpQ4Q>

13- What do you do outside of the law?

Run, hike, kayak, fish, guitar, chess, volunteer on some boards, watch movies, play poker, and periodically travel to Cape Breton to visit kin.

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

That I do not peel kiwi fruit. I eat them with the skin on.