



### MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

#### INTRO :

**Member Name :** Alex Karapancev

**Year of Call :** 2016

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#### QUESTIONS :

**1. How did you get into criminal law?**

Growing up I always wanted to be a trial lawyer. I loved watching courtroom dramas and movies involving litigation. I have also always been an advocate for personal liberties and the need to keep state power in check. As I got older, I realized that the area of criminal defence suited my personality and career goals as I wanted a large part of my day to be spent in the courtroom, advocating for my clients.

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

I love classic credibility cases. Cases where the cross-examination of the lead witness makes or breaks the case. I love spending time carefully crafting surgical cross-

examinations and then executing them in court. There is no better feeling than seeing your client experience vindication after you expose a perjuring witness on the stand.

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

Practicing criminal law has revealed to me the adversity and hardship that individuals face when they have been wrongfully accused of a crime. The fear and desperation that I have witnessed in the eyes and words of my clients have inspired me to fight my cases with conviction. It impresses upon you the stone-cold reality of how anybody can be falsely accused and experience the horrors that come with that.

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

Our Supreme Court needs to take a stand against government overreach in enacting legislation that erodes the right to make full answer and defence. The recent changes to the s.276/278 regime are a prime example of this. Those changes make it harder to effectively impeach dishonest witnesses, make trials more unaffordable for defendants, and make defences less effective when they need to be divulged in open court to the opposing side in a pre-trial application.

The elimination of the age-old common law right to peremptory challenges in jury trials is another example of government overreach, infringing upon the fair trial rights of the accused. The fact that the Supreme Court deemed this constitutional is equally unfortunate.

These legislative changes do nothing to advance procedural fairness, rather they raise the realistic possibility of more wrongful convictions.

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

I do my best not to let difficult days get the best of me. I have learned long ago not to let rude judges or Crowns rattle me. When you feel down, it's always helpful to remind yourself that there is much more to your practice and life than that one particular file.

**6- What do you think of Zoom court?**

I was a huge skeptic until I agreed to do a virtual trial since the complainant was statutorily entitled to appear via a CCTV room. My fear going into a virtual trial was that I would have difficulty cross-examining a witness virtually. However, that fear evaporated once I was able to impeach the witness on multiple occasions, just as I would have been able to in a brick-and-mortar courtroom. With that being said, I still prefer the in-court experience.

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

I love the legends of the criminal defence world. Lawyers like Gerry Spence, F. Lee Bailey and Thomas Mesereau in the US, and Eddie Greenspan, G. Arthur Martin, and Marie Heinen in Canada.

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

Too many old-school rap songs to list.

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

I am still working on this. Working out, reading stoic philosophy, and a good night's sleep help.

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

As much as I try to be a tough as nails litigator, my girlfriend will tell you that I am a complete softie around my kitten.