



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

MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

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QUESTIONS:

1. How did you get into criminal law?

I aspired to become a criminal lawyer from a very young age. There was no “plan b” for me and so in that respect I guess you could say I manifested this version of myself into existence by leaving myself with no other option but to succeed. I quickly learned there was a level of prestige and respect for the criminal lawyer standing alongside vulnerable people when they were at their lowest point in life. Having come from a traditional Italian, middle class family, there was a sense of pride that came with defending those in need. I was also privileged to have had a relative who practiced law and I was able to meet many senior lawyers, who in more ways than one, provided me encouragement and insight into the profession. And allowed me to stick with my childhood decision to become a voice for those in need of an advocate.

2. What types of cases do you enjoy defending the most and why?

I operate a diverse criminal defence law practice so none of my clients are from a particular social or economic background and so I have had the privilege of defending a wide variety of cases. Anything with a good Charter argument will get my attention and in general any case where the Crown thinks they have a “strong case” and I can prove otherwise.



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

It has undeniably made me more jaded and in certain circumstances more abrasive to the harsh realities which exist in our society. In the alternative, it has made me more aware of how our institutions, namely, the criminal justice system have the ability to change the long-term trajectory of a person's life.

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

Less pre-trial hurdles. I say this more specifically in relation to bail hearings. I've noticed an increased reliance on measures, such as pre bail conferences, which promote efficiently over an individual's constitutional right to bail within a reasonable time. The unfortunate reality is, these measures are being implemented to address issues with capacity and not because they are necessary for an accused in need of a bail hearing.

5. What advice would you give your younger self when you first started practicing criminal law?

Don't get overwhelmed by the big picture. Take things one step at a time, pace yourself and don't be afraid to pivot even if it means detouring from your original plan. There is no one size fits all in criminal law.



6. How do you deal with bad work days?

I am fortunate enough to run my practice with an incredible friend and business partner, so bad work days quickly become better when you have someone to talk it through with. I also have an incredibly supportive spouse and family who remind me that things could always be worse. Alternatively, an Italian amaro on ice tends to also do the trick.

7. What do you think of Zoom court?

I think it was long overdue in regards to its use for routine court appearances, pre-trials and less complicated bail or trial matters. However, like everything else in life, its use is best suited in moderation. As a society we tend to become reliant on things that make our lives easier at whatever cost and I think we should be careful in ensuring we do not dilute the stature of the Court and its traditional practises.

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

I was an eager summer student attending a busy set date court in Brampton on short notice to assist a senior lawyer. I was not anticipating having to address the court that day. I approached the podium and executed my adjournment speech perfectly. The Judge complimented me on being so thorough and proceeded to remind me that his court was not a disco-tech and to wear a tie next time. We shared a laugh and ever since I have carried a spare tie in my briefcase just in case.



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9. What's your favorite song?

My favorite song depends on what I'm doing. On an average day I will listen to anything from old school rap to euro house music, but if I had to pick one song that hits the spot regardless of my mood, I would say Bryan Adams – Summer of 69.

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

I am not someone to take advice from in this area. My wife often jokes that my phone/laptop forms part of my anatomy. I am fortunate enough to be someone that genuinely loves and believes in what I do so I don't feel the need to divide work from my personal life. Taking a call at 3:00 a.m. from someone requesting rights to counsel at a police station or appearing in wash court on a Sunday is not something I consider an inconvenience. Thankfully my wife and family are accepting of the fact that I am so devoted to my clients, mainly because I don't treat it as "work" AND because they know I am just as devoted to them. When I can't get out of town for long I resort to periodic short-term vacations, time with friends and family or watching soccer.



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11. What is your biggest legal inspiration?

My clients and my colleagues. Our clients provide us with the ability to use the shortcomings in their lives as an opportunity to collectively work together and potentially change the landscape of criminal law. I have been inspired by the fact that we are all part of the same eco-system, playing different roles with one unified intention – justice.

12. What do you do outside of the law?

I watch soccer religiously on weekends, in the summer I enjoy the occasional cigar and more recently I have taken up golf with no intention of becoming good.

13. What would your defence bar colleagues be surprised to learn about you?

This is definitely no surprise to those who know me, but for those who don't - I enjoy cleaning and find it therapeutic!