



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 did my undergraduate degree in Life Sciences because I wanted to be a veterinarian. I found my passion for Anthropology in my last year of undergrad, so I added a 5th year to take more courses. I then did a Masters degree in Anthropology where my thesis focused on Canadian-Pakistani Muslim Male Masculinity in a post 9/11 context. While doing my Masters I realized that I did not want to take a top-down approach to issues sitting in an "ivory tower". So rather than applying for a PhD I applied to law school. In law school the social justice aspect of criminal law pulled me towards it. I wanted to work with vulnerable, marginalized and stigmatized people and be able to make a difference in someone's life even if it was in a very small way.

### **2. How did the practice of criminal law change you?**

I am generally an empathetic person because of the adversity I have seen first hand growing up in an immigrant household but the practice of criminal law has exposed me to so many aspects of people's lives and circumstances that consistently challenge my worldview. Criminal defence work has taught me not to be judgemental or paternalistic. Seeing people struggle with poverty, addiction, mental health, isolation, precarious immigration status etc. constantly makes me humble and grateful for all the blessings in my life.

### **3. What advice would you give to your younger self when you first started practicing criminal law?**

You may not feel like you fit into the criminal defence community right now but you don't need to desperately try to assimilate. One day you will learn to embrace your



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Otherness, be authentic and be unapologetically you. With time you will build a voice of your own. You are enough.

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

It depends on what makes it a bad work day but generally after most bad work days I talk to my very supportive spouse and “unpack” the events of the day. This is probably torture for my spouse, but it makes me feel so much better. I also remind myself of my personal reasons for doing this work. And, I try to do something totally unrelated to the law.

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

I like zoom court for the efficiency it provides for non-substantive appearances. I also like that in zoom court everyone has the same amount of “physical” space in a box versus me usually being the “smallest, darkest thing in a courtroom” as noted by Janani Shanmuganathan and other racialized women lawyers in our field.

#### **6. What’s your favourite song ?**

It's very hard to pick one but I'll go with a Pakistani song from my teenage years, "Aadat" by Atif Aslam. I also love "Always" by Bon Jovi.



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

The work of criminal defence consumes us. I struggle with work/life balance. I have worked so hard my entire life and I'm so used to giving everything I do my 100% that I cannot seem to shut this aspect of myself off. But, now that my parents are getting older and because of some other rude awakenings I am realizing that life is passing by and that life is in the NOW so I must make time to live a more holistic life NOW.

**8. What do you do outside of the law ?**

I volunteer, mentor, make abstract paintings, workout / zumba, watch cricket, spend time in nature, hangout with my family (including my cats) and friends, travel the world.

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

I speak 4 languages, English being the one I learned last at age 10.

If I hear Punjabi music playing anywhere, I cannot control myself and MUST start dancing/ doing bhangra to the beat.

In the early part of the virtual court era I did many court appearances from an iron stand using it as a table, because I had no other choice. It's really portable... this setup always cracks me up. I must confess I have done this recently as well under desperate circumstances!