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MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

Member Name : Cassandra Geeta

Year of Call : 2023

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QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

What started as mere interest eventually turned into pure passion. I have always been fascinated by our criminal justice system and that is partially what led to pursuing my



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degrees in Criminology. What sold me into believing that I could do this as a career was an introductory course to criminal law that I took in my third year at U of T. It was essentially a 1L criminal law equivalent, and it made me realize how much I enjoyed learning the nuances.

When I got into law school, at the request of my mom, I studied everything else, trying to carve a different career path. Although I did well, nothing lit my fire quite the same.

In fulfilment of my American law degree, a criminal trial clinic provided the human side of law and I found myself moved by the clients. I wanted to help them navigate through and OUT of a system in which they found themselves trapped. That desire still burns the fuel for my work today.

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

At this point in my career, I find joy in every case that comes my way. Each individual client and case comes with its own unique set of facts and complexities. With these distinctions, no workday will ever be exactly as the others, which keeps things interesting, all the time.



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

Like many, the practice of law has undoubtedly made me more cynical. Not of the law itself, but of the outcomes it can deliver. Witnessing the complexities and inefficiencies within our justice system has provided a sense of realism that tempers my idealism.

Moreover, this journey has been a catalyst for personal growth, maturing me in ways I never anticipated. Each case has become a lesson in empathy, resilience, and adaptability, pushing me to evolve both personally and professionally.

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

There is obviously more than just one thing that needs to change but we have been complaining for years about the wheels of this system grinding slowly, impeded by a lack of efficiency and reluctance to adapt to the evolving social need. I believe relief could be partially attained through eliminating bureaucratic inertia and more funding for alternative



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paths to justice.

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

Given that I am still in the very early stages of my career, I'll elaborate on the things that I've improved upon since my time as an articling student:

- Ask questions – for clarity, comprehension, and curiosity. There truly is no such thing as a stupid question, especially when you are learning but more so when you are making a conscious and genuine effort to understand what is new to you.

- Your first draft will never be perfect – you're doing certain things for the very first time and sometimes the issues you're dealing with are so unique that no precedent can cover everything. Keep writing and improving. Make your own precedents that you'd be proud to share.



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6- How do you deal with bad work days?

Through one of two extremes: discussing it obsessively to death with my colleagues, or not thinking of it at all.

7- What do you think of Zoom court?

Although I appreciate never knowing what my day would be like having to drive to Newmarket just for a set-date, as a COVID lawyer I lament the fact that I also do not know what it may have been like to be in a bustling courthouse filled with other lawyers, scrambling over a sign-up sheet, and picking each other's heads about cases while we wait to address our speak- to's. I think Zoom has made some types of court appearances more efficient but at the cost of some collegial experiences (and maybe putting some faces to the names I see on the Listserv).

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

Every time someone addresses me in court as "Ms. Greta" I internally (and hopefully not externally) cringe.



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

I have been fortunate, as both an articling student and an associate, to have worked closely with many brilliant and talented lawyers, all of whom have helped shape me into the advocate I am today and the one I aspire to be in the future. I hope to continuously be inspired and realize my learning will never end within this practice...whether it be when to use a particular negotiation style, an example in civility, a turn of phrase to temper a contentious request on one's feet - the lessons can be subtle but so impactful.

10- What's your favourite song?

I don't have favourites, I have top fives. And it changes every day. In no particular order:

1. Harvest Moon – Neil Young
2. Lips of Wine – Dennis Brown
3. Aaye Ho Meri Zindagi – Udit Narayan
4. Take It Easy – The Eagles
5. Deeper Than the Holler – Randy Travis



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

I have gotten really good at compartmentalizing in a healthy way. Doing so does not mean that I'm avoiding an issue, rather, I can keep work separate from my personal life such that I'm still able to enjoy both. At the end of particularly stressful days, I read a lot of fiction as a way of escaping into another world, or I turn on auto-pilot while in the kitchen to make a dessert or two. Mango-pineapple cheesecake anyone?

12- What is your biggest legal inspiration?

I've worked with many great lawyers and I take inspiration from the standard of work that they put into their matters. They treat their practices not only as job but as an opportunity for change at an individual level for their clients, and to the law as it is applied generally.

13- What do you do outside of the law?



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I enjoy painting, reading, and attempting new recipes. I'm currently documenting family dishes in a handwritten journal which is proving to be a little difficult given that my mom uses her own metric system for measuring ingredients: her heart.