



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

MEMBER PROFILE QUESTIONS

INTRO :

Member Name : Remy Sansanwal

Year of Call : 2021

Region/City : Toronto

Board Position : Recent Call Director

Linkedin profile link : <https://www.linkedin.com/in/remysansanwal/>

QUESTIONS :

1- How did you get into criminal law?

Someone close to me was charged with a baseless offence when I was young. The charge was ultimately withdrawn. It was an unexpected and formative experience that sparked my interest in criminal law. I never looked back. It's personal whenever someone asks, "how can you represent those people?" I know what it feels like when someone you love is charged with an offence and how quickly they can be reduced to an allegation. That experience shaped my approach to criminal defence work. I use it as a



reminder to treat my clients with empathy and to advocate for fairness throughout the process.

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

Anything and everything. I currently have a diverse practice, which I enjoy. Early in my still-young career, I particularly enjoyed impaired driving cases and the issue spotting required.

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

Criminal law has made me a more patient and forgiving person. It has reinforced the idea that people are more than the mistake they've made or have been accused of making.

I recently watched *The Drama*, starring Zendaya and Robert Pattinson, with a friend. Without spoiling the movie, the characters reveal the worst thing they've ever done in life prior to getting married. I remember walking out of the theatre, turning to my friend, and saying "that was it?" regarding one of their reveals. My friend joked that maybe criminal law has desensitized me, but I like to think the practice has made me more empathetic. I try to search for the redeemable qualities in people.



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

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

Nurture your friendships and connections in the bar. Don't say no to the dinners, drinks, or conferences. Make an effort to show up and talk to others. I remember listening to The Law Garage episodes with Marco Sciarra and one of the takeaways for me was how much we can learn by talking to others. It's important to have others your own vintage that you can share ideas with and get feedback. Those are the same people you will quickly turn to and text when an issue comes up in court. They are also the same ones who will keep you in mind for referrals and opportunities. My practice is almost entirely referral based and I wouldn't be here without the friendships I've made in this bar.

5- How do you deal with bad work days?

I video call my family, including my adorable three nieces and one nephew. It's hard to be upset when your two-year-old nephew is telling you what shape the moon is that night or your first-born niece is recapping her day at kindergarten. Otherwise, I find going to the movie theatre to be therapeutic. It's one of the few places in this world where I can completely disconnect for a few hours.



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

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

I've knocked over my fair share of water pitchers and glasses at counsel table already. Fortunately, nothing too embarrassing yet.

Narrator: He embarrasses himself daily.

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

Marco Sciarra. It's difficult to be universally liked in criminal law with an adversarial system and high stakes litigation. Marco is the closest person I've seen to achieving that on both sides of the aisle. I was fortunate to article with Marco. I always hear him in the back of my head whenever I'm talking to Crowns, either during a simple CPT or during a tense moment in court. A part of the reason I ran for Recent Call Director on the CLA Board is because of the stories I heard from Marco about the work he did to unite and engage young lawyers in his early career.

8- What's your favourite song?

My favourite artist is Drake. My most controversial opinion is that Drake had the best diss song in the Kendrick Lamar beef. You can't tell me Not Like Us is lyrically better than Family Matters. It's hard to pick my favourite Drake song though. I'm going to say Lose Yourself by Eminem since my high school nickname was Reminem, which probably says more about me in high school than I'm prepared to admit.



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

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

I enjoy travelling and having a trip to look forward to in my calendar. I find that it helps me to stay focused and motivated, knowing that I can hopefully disconnect and enjoy time off when the trip rolls around. I also find the planning process itself to be a break from work. I always have a few internet tabs open with hotel, restaurant, and excursion reviews that I browse in between emails or drafting throughout the day. I travelled to Italy last year and I have a trip to Peru planned for September.

10- What do you do outside of the law?

I spend a lot of time with my family. My nieces and nephew keep me busy with living room dance parties. I enjoy travelling. I recently started taking Spanish lessons as a hobby and in advance of my trip to Peru in September. I also play in a summer softball beer league.