

Jacqueline Vizcarrondo

From: Jonathan Laba
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 2:37 PM
To: Venus D. Johnson
Subject: RE: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

Terrific! I'm really looking forward to it. Let's touch base well ahead of time to discuss your talk – but basically, I think everything you covered last time is great, and we should add your thoughts about the Racial Justice Act (which they will read for the class).

Jonathan Laba
Assistant Public Defender
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office

From: Venus D. Johnson [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 10:44 PM
To: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

I've got the date and time locked in!

From: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 1:01 AM
To: Venus D. Johnson [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

Greetings! It's looking like Tuesday, February 16 at 6:25pm. Does that work for you?

Best,

Jonathan Laba
Assistant Public Defender
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office

From: Venus D. Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2020 1:41 PM
To: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED] >
Subject: Re: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

Time is so elusive these days!

Count me in - just let me know as soon as you have a better idea of the date.

Venus D. Johnson
Chief Assistant District Attorney
Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office

On Dec 18, 2020, at 9:18 AM, Jonathan Laba [REDACTED] wrote:

Venus –

In some ways, hard to believe a year has passed since you last spoke at my class in February; in other ways, the past year has been an eternity between COVID, election, and everything else. On balance, I lean toward “eternity.”

Anyway, I am teaching the Criminal Law Ethics Seminar this spring again, although the class (like all Cal classes) is by Zoom. But I’m hoping you can reprise your fabulous talk! I don’t have the class dates yet, but it will likely be a Tuesday evening at 6:25pm in late January or early to mid-February. You in?

Jonathan Laba
Assistant Public Defender
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office

[REDACTED]

From: Jonathan Laba
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 12:24 PM
To: Venus D. Johnson [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

There is a café called “Café Zeb” attached to the law school, adjacent to Bancroft. Meet there at 5:45?

Jonathan Laba
Assistant Public Defender
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office

[REDACTED]

From: Venus D. Johnson
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 12:17 PM
To: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

Yes, I can meet around 5:45 PM. Where should we meet?

Venus D. Johnson
Chief Assistant District Attorney
Contra Costa County Office of the District Attorney
900 Ward Street
Martinez, California 94553

[REDACTED]

From: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 12:13 PM
To: Venus D. Johnson [REDACTED] >
Subject: Re: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

Terrific, thanks. Do you think you'll have time to meet for coffee at the law school at 5:30 or 5:45? Would be nice to spend a few minutes together. Otherwise, I'll just ask you to come to the classroom at 6:25.

Look forward to it —

Jonathan Laba
Assistant Public Defender
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office

[REDACTED]

On Feb 10, 2020, at 12:09 PM, Venus D. Johnson [REDACTED] >
wrote:

Short bio below —

Venus Johnson is the new Chief Assistant District Attorney. She was appointed by DA Diana Becton on October 21, 2019.

She previously served as the Assistant District Attorney when she joined the Office in February 2018. In that role she oversaw the Family Violence Division, Homicide Unit, Community Violence Reduction Unit, Cold Case Unit, Conviction Integrity Unit, Juvenile Unit, and Human Trafficking Unit.

Prior to her service in this Office, Venus was the Director of Public Safety for Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff. Venus also previously served as the Associate Attorney General and a Deputy Attorney General for former California Attorney General Kamala Harris. She began her career as a Deputy District Attorney with the Alameda County District Attorney's Office. Venus served for eight years in the Alameda DA's Office, including stints in the Child Sexual Assault Unit, Strike Team, and DNA Cold Case Unit.

Venus earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science from Loyola Marymount University, and her law degree from the University of Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

Venus D. Johnson
Chief Assistant District Attorney
Contra Costa County Office of the District Attorney

900 Ward Street
Martinez, California 94553

[REDACTED]

From: Venus D. Johnson
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2020 4:30 PM
To: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

Thanks! I'll get you a bio asap.

Venus D. Johnson
Chief Assistant District Attorney
Contra Costa County Office of the District Attorney
900 Ward Street
Martinez, California 94553

[REDACTED]

From: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2020 2:01 PM
To: Venus D. Johnson [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

Venus – I inadvertently sent you the previous edition of the book chapter. A pdf of the current edition's chapter is attached.

Looking forward to next week --

Jonathan Laba
Assistant Public Defender
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office

[REDACTED]

From: Jonathan Laba
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2020 7:24 PM
To: Venus D. Johnson [REDACTED] >
Subject: Speaking at Jonathan's Criminal Law Ethics class

Venus,

Terrific! Looking forward to having you in class on Tuesday, February 11. **We will be in Room 244 and start at 6:25pm.** Usually I introduce the speaker after some housekeeping matters, and then the speaker talks for about an hour (it can be less), followed by Q&A. The class goes to 9:15pm so don't worry about taking too much time, although I'll have plenty to discuss with them (readings, other exercises) after you leave.

If you have the time, I'd be delighted to meet you at the school at 5:30pm to have coffee and chat before class. Let me know if that will work.

Could you send me a current bio?

Attached is my syllabus and the chapter on prosecutor's ethics that they are reading for this class. I also attached a law review article they will read. If you want to look at anything, I'd focus on the book chapter.

This is our fourth of nine classes. Judge Bowen will speak at my third class.

Here is a link to the ABA Model Rules:

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/

I have 18 students this year. 15 of the 18 are interested in defense careers, and three are interested in prosecution. (Sorry; I prefer a more balanced class also, but at Berkeley, that can be hard to achieve!)

I leave it to you to decide what you'd like to speak about, but in past years, prosecutor speakers have discussed various items from the following: Your background, why you chose your career as a D.A., how law school experiences influenced that decision; overview of your career, including pre- and post-management. They will be interested in all of your past work – as a DA, as an AG, and for Oakland. They will be very interested in your work in Contra Costa and your efforts to integrate progressive prosecution policies into a more traditionally conservative organization.

Ethical and related issues: Implicit bias from the D.A. perspective and as a woman of color; prosecutorial filing discretion, discovery, "higher obligations" vs. client-focused practice, training of new D.A.'s, case negotiation, new ethical rules and statutes clarifying prosecution ethical obligations, and things that bother you about defense attys (and your own colleagues!). Again, you don't need to cover all these topics by any means.

Looking forward to a great discussion!

Jonathan Laba
Assistant Public Defender
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office

[REDACTED]

From: Venus D. Johnson
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2020 11:52 AM
To: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Jonathan's cell phone; and an ask

Good morning Jonathan –

Thank you for the thoughtful invitation. I would love to speak to your class. Please share with me any materials you think would be helpful for me to review. Looking forward to this!

Venus

Venus D. Johnson
Chief Assistant District Attorney
Contra Costa County Office of the District Attorney
900 Ward Street
Martinez, California 94553

[REDACTED]

From: Jonathan Laba [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2020 8:19 PM
To: Venus D. Johnson <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Jonathan's cell phone; and an ask

Venus,

Nice speaking with you today. I neglected to share my cell, which is usually the best way to reach me: [REDACTED]

The ask: I have taught a criminal law ethics seminar at Berkeley Law for many years. Every year I invite a prosecutor to speak to the class for about 60 minutes during one of our two class sessions on prosecution ethics. (I also invite a judge on a different day; Judge Bowen is joining this year). Would you have interest in being my guest speaker this year, on Tuesday, February 11, beginning at 6:25pm? If so, we can chat further, and I'll send you a number of topics I've found students to be particularly interested in, and can even send you the readings to glance at if you wish. It is an informal setting and does not require any kind of formal preparation. I know the students would find your career path, policy background and views on progressive prosecution fascinating and enlightening.

Best regards,

Jonathan Laba
Assistant Public Defender
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office

[REDACTED]