

SEEMA T. SAIFEE

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School 2020–present
Research Fellow, Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law 2012–2020
Adjunct Professor of Law
Course: Innocence Project Clinic. Supervised students in year-long clinic and taught classes, including post-conviction constitutional remedies, habeas litigation and executive detentions in Guantánamo, and legal writing.

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Primary Interests: Criminal Law & Procedure, Critical Race Theory, Professional Responsibility, Federal Courts
Additional Interests: Post-Conviction Remedies; Law, Lawyering & Social Movements; Civil Procedure

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

Aggregation in Criminal Punishment (work in progress)

[*Decarceration's Inside Partners*](#), 91 FORDHAM L. REV. 53 (2022)

[*Sustaining Lawyers*](#), 56 WAKE FOREST L. REV. 907 (2021)

Note, *Penumbras, Privacy, and the Death of Morals-Based Legislation: Comparing U.S. Constitutional Law with the Inherent Right of Privacy in Islamic Jurisprudence*, 27 FORDHAM INT'L L.J. 370 (2003) (awarded the Washington Foreign Law Society's 2005 Ibrahim Shihata Prize for outstanding student writing on Islamic law and related legal developments in the Muslim world)

EDUCATION

Fordham University School of Law, J.D., 2004

Honors: *Fordham Urban Law Journal*
Stein Scholar in Public Interest Law and Ethics
Crowley Scholar in International Human Rights

Activities: Muslim Law Students Association, Founder/Co-Chair

Cornell University, A.B. in English, A.B. in Psychology, concentration in French Studies, 2001

Honors: *cum laude* in English with distinction in all subjects
Thesis: *Empowering the Stage: Demonizing the Islamic World in Elizabethan Drama*

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP

Hon. Dan Aaron Polster, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio 2004–2006

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

- Innocence Project**, New York, NY 2012–2020
Staff Attorney, 2012–2017 / *Senior Staff Attorney and Clinical Director*, 2017–2020
 Lead counsel on exonerations of eight innocent people who spent a total of over 175 years in prison. Represented indigent clients in post-conviction proceedings in state and federal courts nationwide.
- American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania**, Philadelphia, PA 2011–2012
Legal Fellow
 Litigated cases at the intersection of civil liberties and national security, policing and immigration, and speech and privacy.
- Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP**, New York, NY 2006–2010
Litigation Associate

SELECTED CASES

Innocence Project (lead counsel):

Commonwealth v. Garr Keith Hardin & Jeffrey Clark, 528 S.W.3d 342 (Ky. 2017). Obtained reversal of 1995 murder convictions based on newly discovered evidence, affirmed by Kentucky Supreme Court (argued June 2017), and obtained dismissal with prejudice of new indictments for vindictive prosecution. Detective from Louisville Metro Police Department was subsequently criminally indicted.

State v. Darryl Howard (N.C. 2016). Obtained reversal of 1995 double murder and arson convictions resulting from fabrication of evidence by Durham police and misconduct by Assistant District Attorney Mike Nifong.

People v. Gregory Counts & Perry VanDyke (N.Y. 2018). Collaborated with Manhattan District Attorney's Office in joint re-investigation, leading to vacatur of 1992 sexual assault convictions based on actual innocence for a crime that never happened.

State v. William Barnhouse (Ind. 2017). Obtained state's consent to vacate 1992 rape conviction based on DNA evidence for individual with severe mental illness who was committed to psychiatric hospitals since age thirteen.

Kramer Levin:

In re Guantánamo Bay Detainee Litigation, 581 F. Supp. 2d 33 (D.D.C. 2008) (ordering the federal government to release into the U.S. seventeen Uighur men held in Guantánamo), *rev'd and remanded sub nom. Kiyemba v. Obama*, 555 F.3d 1022 (D.C. Cir. 2009), *vacated*, 559 U.S. 131 (2010), and *judgment reinstated as amended*, 605 F.3d 1046 (D.C. Cir. 2010). Represented four Uighur men held in indefinite detention in Guantánamo; litigated habeas cases in district, appellate, and U.S. Supreme Court; and co-led resettlement efforts before foreign ministries, overseas courts, asylum sponsor programs, and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Aggregation in Criminal Punishment (previously titled *Access to (In)Justice*), presented at:
 Markelloquium, Criminal Law Theory Colloquium, Brooklyn Law School (invited) (Sept. 2022)
 Quattrone Center Affiliated Faculty, University of Pennsylvania Law School (Sept. 2022)
 CrimFest, Cardozo Law School (July 2022)

Moderator, *The Intersection Between Secondary Trauma and Race*, Wake Forest University School of Law (virtual) (Feb. 2021)

Speaker, *Justice in the Time of Pandemic: Are the Incarcerated Being Protected from COVID-19?* (with Adnan Sultan), Muslim Public Affairs Council (virtual) (Apr. 2020)

Panelist, *Trump's Muslim Ban* (with Mary Catherine Roper & Afia Yunus), Islamic Society of Greater Valley Forge, Pennsylvania (Feb. 2017)

Panelist, *Wrongful Convictions Across Borders*, American Judges Association, Toronto, Canada (Sept. 2016)

Speaker, NYU Stern Business & Society Program's Eleventh Annual Haitkin Lecture (with exoneree Andre Hatchett) (Apr. 2016) (invited back to NYU for next five semesters to speak with exoneree Darryl Howard)

Panelist, *Uighurs in Guantánamo*, humanitarian resettlement conference hosted by Center for Constitutional Rights, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights, and Reprieve, Berlin, Germany (Nov. 2008)

Panelist, *Uighur Refugee Seeks Asylum*, Amnesty International, Berne, Switzerland (Nov. 2008)

Speaker, *The Future of Uighur Prisoners in Guantánamo*, Annual Conference of Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization and World Uyghur Congress, Berlin, Germany (Apr. 2008)

SELECTED OP-EDS & POPULAR WRITING

[*Exchanging One Prison for Another*](#), DER SPIEGEL (Jan. 19, 2012)

[*Obama's Veto Backdown*](#), LAWFARE (Dec. 20, 2011)

[*Lower Manhattan Islamic Center Faces Irrational Resistance*](#), N.Y. DAILY NEWS (Oct. 28, 2010)

SELECTED PRESS & MEDIA APPEARANCES

Newspapers & Online Media:

- [*A Rape Kit that Sat Untested for Decades Just Exonerated a Wrongfully Convicted Man*](#), WASH. POST (Jan. 29, 2020) (interviewed & quoted)
- [*26 Years Later, Justice for Men Imprisoned for a Bogus Rape*](#), N.Y. TIMES (May 7, 2018) (interviewed & quoted)
- [*After 26 Years, Murder Case Wrongly Linked to Satanism is Finally Dropped*](#), COURIER-JOURNAL (Feb. 26, 2018) (quoted)
- [*Brooklyn Man is Exonerated After 25 Years in Prison for Murder*](#), N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 10, 2016) (interviewed & quoted)
- [*Gitmo's Fallen Czar*](#), FOREIGN POLICY (May 23, 2013) (quoted)
- [*Guantánamo Cannot Be Closed Without Europe's Help*](#), DER SPIEGEL (Oct. 6, 2009) (interviewed & quoted)

Radio & Podcasts:

- Wrongful Conviction Podcast with Jason Flom (May 14, 2018) (interview) (with Andre and Jerry Hatchett)

- *Paradise Prison for Gitmo Uighurs*, Dispatches, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Feb. 2, 2012) (interview)
- *Understanding Uighurs*, Radio Times with Marty Moss-Coane, WHYY-NPR (July 14, 2009) (interview)

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Member of Advisory Council to develop the Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering (invitation from Juan Méndez, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and Mark Thomson, former Secretary General of the Association for the Prevention of Torture) (2019-2021)

BAR ADMISSIONS

New York, 2005; Southern and Eastern Districts of New York; Third Circuit Court of Appeals; Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals; D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals; U.S. Supreme Court

LANGUAGES

French (intermediate); Urdu (intermediate conversation); Arabic (intermediate conversation)