

## **Presenter Biographies- *Defense Tune Up***

**Shelley Ajax** practices in Benton-Franklin Counties Superior Court primarily in major felonies handling persistent offender and homicide cases. She focuses on result driven resolutions for her client's that include trial and motion practice and active in-depth negotiations. During her near 2 decades of experience in this area, she has brought about advancements and change in her locality fighting for her clients.

**Cindy Arends Elsberry** is the Resentencing Resource Attorney for the Washington Defender Association (WDA) in Seattle. Prior to serving in this position, Cindy was the Felony Resource Attorney for WDA for 13 years. Cindy is a career public defender with more than 20 years of experience in criminal law, criminal procedure, and ethics. Cindy has worked on all types of criminal cases, from low-level crimes to aggravated murder. She has experience with collaborative courts and mental competency hearings, and is death penalty certified. Before joining WDA, Cindy worked as a staff attorney providing representation to indigent defense clients at the Associated Counsel for the Accused (ACA) in Seattle for 15 years. In her role as a Resource Attorney at WDA, Cindy provides technical assistance to attorneys and defense team members, develops resources for public defenders across the state and organizes training events. She is a frequent speaker at CLE presentations and regularly trains lawyers on ethics in criminal law, sentencing advocacy, investigating and litigating mitigation, client relationships, issue spotting, negotiation, public defense sustainability and more. Cindy has a special interest in the issues that arise when representing youth in adult courts, representing clients living with mental disabilities, and in promoting defender well-being. She received her J.D. from the University of Washington School of Law. In her spare time, she enjoys getting outdoors, walking her dogs, and getting her hands dirty in her garden.

**Jesse Collins** is the Administrator of the newly formed Douglas County Office of Public Defense. Prior to taking the helm in Douglas County, he was a public defender for over 10 years. He worked for Mountain Law as a public defender in the cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington from 2012 to 2014, for the Skagit County Public Defender's Office from 2014 to 2019, and for Counsel for Defense of Chelan County from 2019 to 2022. Jesse obtained his Bachelor's degree from University of Idaho and a J.D. from Gonzaga. He worked as a Law Clerk for Judge Joseph Wilson in Snohomish County 2010-2011. When he can find time to step away, he likes to travel as much as he can for fun with his wife and daughter.

**Jeffrey Ellis** has represented individuals accused of crimes since 1987 at trial, on appeal, in state post-conviction, in federal habeas, and in clemency proceedings. For most of that time, his focus has been on capital representation. He has represented capital defendants in Oregon, Washington, Texas, and in federal court. Currently, he is the Co-Director of the Oregon Capital Resource Center providing assistance to Oregon capital defense teams. He has taught at the University of Texas, Seattle University, and Lewis and Clark law schools. In recent years, Mr. Ellis has expanded his focus to juvenile life sentencing cases. In 2022, Jeff joined the Seattle Clemency Project as a staff attorney with Redemption Project of

Washington, where he works to support second chance resentencing hearings of individuals sentenced to life and long sentences in Washington.

**Jordan Goddard** has been practicing law since 2009. He spent 12 years as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney before opening his own practice last year, focused on litigating social security disability cases in federal court. He studied negotiation at Harvard's Program on Negotiation, and he has taught classes on negotiation and dispute resolution at the Northwest University School of Business and for Northwest University's undergraduate program. Before going to law school, he worked as a buyer for a company in Washington that imports construction equipment and supplies from manufacturers throughout Asia.

**Sonja Hardenbrook** has been at Snohomish County Public Defender Association since 2003, starting as a law school intern, post graduations she worked in the district court unit for two years, then serving in the felony unit and doing a management rotation. From 2012-2022 she worked in the 71.09 unit representing clients civilly committed as sexually violent predators under RCW 71.09. She currently works as a full-time trial attorney in the felony division at SnoCo. In her nearly 20 years as a public defender Sonja has hired or examined experts on toxicology, firearm ballistics, fingerprints, pharmacology, accident reconstruction, autopsy examination (bullet wounds, stab wounds, ligature marks, drowning, blunt force trauma), psychiatry/psychology (competence to stand trial, diminished capacity, insanity, competence as a witness, identification as a sexually violent predator), plethysmography, sexual assault nurse examinations, DNA, forensic accounting, medical, statistics, actuarial, and child interviewing.

**Brent Hart** has been a criminal defense attorney since the year 2000. He is currently a partner with the law firm of Hart, Jarvis, Murray, Chang in Seattle. Prior to going into private practice, Brent worked for the Federal Public Defender of Eastern Washington and Idaho, the Spokane County Public Defender, and The Defender Association in Seattle. Brent left public defense in 2007 and has been in private practice since that time. Although Brent is in private practice, he continues to accept public-defense, court-appointed cases through the King County Public Defense conflict panel and the Criminal Justice Act panel for Federal Court in the Western District of Washington. Brent has tried cases in Washington State and Alaska and has handled almost every kind of criminal case, including RICO allegations, homicide, major drug conspiracies, sex offenses, third-strike offenses, and complex fraud. Brent also continues to represent clients accused of misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor offenses such as assault, driving under the influence, theft, and harassment. Brent believes that there is no substitute for working closely with clients so that they are fully informed about their case, defenses, and strategies. Brent is an experienced and successful litigator who has obtained favorable results for many clients in Superior, Federal, and Municipal Courts.

**Sarah Hudson** is an Immigration Resource Attorney at WDA. Sarah graduated from law school in San Diego and continued to explore her interest in immigration law by working

with a non-profit focusing on defensive asylum cases. As a military spouse, she has lived in many places and explored different areas of law. Most recently, Sarah was a public defender and uses that experience to assist other defense attorneys with issues related to the immigration consequences of criminal convictions.

**Shaul Goldberg** is a public defender in the Skagit County Public Defender's Office where he currently represents clients with felony cases. He previously worked in Whatcom County, Pierce County and Alaska as a defender. Shaul has represented clients in criminal matters, in dependency/family defense cases and in mental health involuntary treatment act hearings. He has represented incarcerated parents and litigated zealously on behalf of Native American women in dependency matters. In his spare time, Shaul aims for a goal of running 20 kilometers a week.

**Percy Levy** served 20 years behind bars before being granted executive clemency by Governor Inslee in 2019. Since that time, he has been an advocate for changing the criminal legal system from the inside out—with an emphasis on sentencing reform and bringing home the victims of the so-called “war on crime.” He has an Associate of Arts degree from Walla Walla Community College and spent most of his time in prison working in the law library helping others with post-trial litigation efforts. Last, but not least, he is the author of several articles and three urban novels.

**Anton Robinson** is a senior staff attorney in the Innocence Project's Strategic Litigation Department, focusing on mistaken identification cases. Anton uses varied litigation strategies to increase awareness amongst system actors like judges, attorneys, and policymakers of the inaccuracy of unvalidated forensic science disciplines and the potentially unreliable nature of eyewitness identification evidence. To achieve court-enforced evidentiary reforms, Anton files amicus briefs, consults with defense attorneys across the country, represents individual clients, trains public defenders, and collaborates with the Innocence Project's Science and Research Department to promote the use of reliable and valid forensic methods.

Before joining the Innocence Project, Anton was a Senior Planner at the Vera Institute of Justice, where he launched and managed the New York City Bail Assessment Project to mitigate the harms of money bail and drive progressive bail reform in New York. Prior to working at the Vera Institute, Anton was an assistant public defender at the New York County Defender Services, representing persons facing criminal charges in Manhattan Criminal and Supreme courts. He began his legal career as an assistant public defender in the Ninth Judicial Circuit in Orlando, Florida.

Anton teaches “Wrongful Convictions” at the American University Washington College of Law. He graduated from the Levin College of Law at the University of Florida and Florida State University.

**Lara Zarowsky** is the Executive & Policy Director of the Washington Innocence Project. Following her work as non-partisan counsel in the Washington State Legislature, Lara joined Washington Innocence Project in 2010 to lead its policy efforts.

In 2011, Lara joined the faculty of the University of Washington School of Law to establish the Washington Innocence Project track of the Legislative Advocacy Clinic, which she directed from 2014 to 2019. Her clinic students championed a 2013 law to compensate Washington's wrongly convicted, a 2015 law to preserve biological evidence collected from crime scenes, and a 2019 law to establish and implement best practices for gathering eyewitness and incentivized witness evidence. In 2021 Lara led the successful legislative effort to mandate the recording of all custodial interrogations in Washington State.

Lara serves on the national Innocence Network Executive Board where she sits on several committees. She received her undergraduate degree from the Evergreen State College, is a graduate of the University of Washington School of Law and alumna of the Washington Innocence Project Clinic, and holds a Certificate in Nonprofit Management through the University of Washington.