

ALEXA A. VAN BRUNT

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EXPERIENCE

Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL
Director of MacArthur Justice Center Clinic, Clinical Associate Professor of Law 2019 – present

- Experienced litigator, clinical law professor, and lead attorney on groundbreaking civil rights litigation to achieve criminal system reform.
- Director of the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center Clinic at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law; manage and oversee 10-person Center within the Bluhm Legal Clinic;
- Serve as lead supervisor and instructor for clinical students, interns, and fellows acting as junior counsel on MacArthur’s cases;
- Achieve multi-million dollar settlements on behalf of victims of police and prosecutorial misconduct;
- Lead attorney in first-of-its-kind suit against the Chicago Police Department on behalf of community groups alleging excessive force and racial discrimination; won enforcement power on behalf of clients in court-ordered citywide consent decree;
- Litigate highly-publicized suits challenging constitutional violations in the criminal legal system, including challenges to Cook County’s cash bond scheme and Illinois parole revocation proceedings;
- Won appointment of state-funded attorneys for youth and adults facing parole revocation;
- Sought as expert on legal issues of pre-trial detention, parole reform, policing, and de-incarceration;
- Member of Northwestern Pritzker School of Law Faculty Advisory Committee (2019-2020) and Curriculum Committee (2017-2018; 2019-2020).

Clinical Assistant Professor of Law, Bluhm Legal Clinic 2010 – 2018

- Civil rights attorney and clinical instructor supporting MacArthur’s complex civil litigation docket.
- Achieved multi-million dollar settlements on behalf of clients targeted by Burge police torture scandal;
- Co-authored petition for an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice stemming from systematic misconduct in the Chicago Police Department;
- Won appointment of a special prosecutor in case involving nephew of former-Mayor Richard M. Daley when there was a conflict of interest within the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office;
- Co-authored Illinois Supreme Court amicus brief on behalf of public interest organizations supporting challenge to Department of Corrections’ incarceration of people on parole;
- Supervised and instructed law students participating in Center’s civil rights litigation clinic;
- Instructor of Public Interest Practicum at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law.

Hon. Myron Thompson, U.S. District Court – Middle District of Alabama, Montgomery, AL 2009 - 2010
Federal District Court Clerk

Open Society Justice Initiative, New York, NY 2008
Legal Intern, Equality and Citizenship Program

UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (UN-ICTR), Arusha, Tanzania 2007
Legal Intern, Chambers

Bronx Community Solutions, Center for Court Innovation, Bronx, NY 2005-2006
Project Planner

Education Statistics Services Institute, American Institutes of Research, Washington, D.C. 2004-2005
Research Assistant

EDUCATION

Stanford Law School, Stanford, CA 2006 - 2009
JD with Distinction

- Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) Research Assistant; International Law Society, Co-President; Journal of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Lead Article Editor; Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLS-EPA), Immigration Fellow and Board member

Brown University, Providence, RI 2000 - 2004
BA (Honors) Sociology, magna cum laude

- Honors Thesis: *Children's Living Arrangements in Lesotho As a Result of the AIDS Epidemic*
- Studied abroad at the University of Ghana at Legon in Accra, Ghana (2003)

HONORS, AWARDS, and FELLOWSHIPS

- United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and Federal Bar Association, Award for Excellence in Pro Bono Service (2017)
- Public Voices Thought Leadership Fellow, OpEd Project, Northwestern University (2014-2015)
- Independent Voters of Illinois Independent Precinct Organization "Legal Eagle" Award for Litigation in the David Koschman case (2014)
- Deborah L. Rhode Public Interest Award for outstanding public service by a graduating student (2009)
- Fulbright & Jaworski LLP Scholar, California Bar Foundation Public Interest Scholarship (2008)
- Equal Justice America Fellowship (2007)
- New York University Wagner Fellowship for Emerging Leaders in Public Service (2005)

ADMISSIONS TO PRACTICE

State of Illinois Jan. 2010
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois Oct. 2010
United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois Oct. 2010

MEMBERSHIP

Board of Directors, Injustice Watch (2020-present)
Junior Board of Directors, Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (2017-2020)
National Police Accountability Project
American Constitution Society
American Association of Law Schools, Clinical Legal Education section

REPRESENTATIVE CASES

Class Action Suits

Mays v. Dart, filed 2020 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Kennelly

Lead counsel in class action injunctive suit against Cook County Sheriff's Office stemming from widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the Cook County Jail. Led to preliminary injunction against Sheriff, mandating social distancing, proper sanitation, testing and provision of protective equipment.

Campbell et al. v. City of Chicago et al., filed 2017 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Lee
Lead counsel in first of its kind class action on behalf of community groups, including Black Lives Matter Chicago, NAACP and the Urban League, challenging police excessive force and discrimination. Won right to monitor and enforce court-ordered consent decree entered in companion case brought by Illinois Attorney General and the City of Chicago.

Robinson v. Martin et al., filed 2017 (Cir. Ct. Ck. Cty.), Judge Gamrath
Lead counsel in Cook County class action challenging wealth-based discrimination in pre-trial release.

Morales v. Monreal et al., filed 2013 (N.D. Ill.), Judge St. Eve
Lead counsel in class action on behalf of parolees denied due process in parole revocation proceedings. Settlement agreement approved in 2017, establishing state-funded attorneys for eligible parolees.

M.H. v. Monreal et al., filed 2012 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Wood
Lead counsel in class action on behalf of juvenile parolees denied due process protections in parole revocation proceedings. Consent decree approved in 2015, providing state-funded counsel for all youth in revocation proceedings.

King v. Walker, filed 2012 (N.D. Ill.) Judge Gettleman
Lead counsel in class action on behalf of Cook County parolees denied due process in preliminary parole revocation proceedings. Revised consent decree approved in 2015, providing procedural protections for all Cook County parolees.

Hudson v. Preckwinkle et al., filed 2013 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Kendall
Litigation counsel in class action preliminary injunction suit challenging systematic violence in maximum-security divisions of the Cook County Jail. Case settled as individual damages suit.

Trial Level Cases

Johnson v. City of Chicago et al., filed 2018 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Lee
Lead counsel in civil rights case on behalf of a young man who spent two decades in prison based on a false confession coerced by Chicago Police detectives with long records of misconduct. Suit remains pending.

Finch v. City of Wichita et al., filed 2018 (D. Kan.), Judge Broomes
Lead counsel in civil rights case on behalf of Estate of Andrew Finch, who was unlawfully shot and killed by a Wichita Police officer during the police department's response to a prank "swatting" call. Suit includes challenge to Department's policies and practices of accountability. Suit is set for trial in October 2020.

Taylor v. City of Chicago et al., filed 2014 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Lee
Lead counsel in civil rights case on behalf of a young man who spent twenty years wrongfully convicted of a double homicide, based on evidence that was fabricated by police. Case involves the investigation of the Chicago Police Department's infamous "street files" policy. Suit is set for trial November 2020.

Swift v. City of Chicago et al., filed 2012 (Circuit Court of Cook County), Judge O'Hara
Lead counsel in civil rights case against Chicago police officers and prosecutors for malicious prosecution and wrongful conviction of teenager (member of the "Englewood Four"), who spent almost 15 years in prison after being coerced into confessing to a crime he did not commit. Resulted in settlement of over \$12 million in June 2017.

Yates v. St. Clair County et al., filed 2014 (S.D. Ill.), Judge Reagan
Lead counsel in civil rights case brought against sheriff's deputies in St. Clair County, Illinois, on behalf of young man with cognitive disabilities coerced into confessing to a crime he did not commit. Resulted in almost \$1 million settlement in September 2015.

Fontano v. Godinez et al., filed 2011 (C.D. Ill.), Judge Myerscough
Lead counsel in civil rights case brought on behalf of young man who was sexually assaulted by his prison cellmate and subjected to unlawful retaliation by prison officials for reporting the rape. Suit challenged use of solitary confinement and prison's failure to comply with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Resulted in \$500,000 settlement in June 2016.

Taylor v. Kachiroubas et al., filed 2012 (N.D. Ill), Judge Gottschall
Litigation counsel in civil rights case against Illinois State Police and Village of Dixmoor police for malicious prosecution and wrongful conviction of a teenager (member of the "Dixmoor Five"), who spent almost 20 years in prison after being coerced into falsely confessing. Resulted in \$40 million settlement (among five plaintiffs) in June 2014 – largest such settlement at time in state history.

Beaman v. Souk et al., federal suit filed 2010 (C.D. Ill.), Judge McDade
Litigation counsel in civil rights case against Town of Normal police officers and McLean County prosecutors for malicious prosecution and wrongful conviction of a college student, who spent over a thirteen years in prison for a crime he did not commit. Suit is pending in companion state court case.

Kitchen v. Burge et al., filed 2010 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Bucklo
Litigation counsel in civil rights case on behalf of Jon Burge torture victim sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit after confessing under torture. Resulted in \$6.15 million settlement in 2013.

Tillman v. Burge et al., filed 2010 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Pallmeyer
Litigation counsel in civil rights case on behalf Jon Burge torture victim who spent over 20 years in prison for a crime he did not commit after confessing under torture. Resulted in \$5.375 million settlement in 2013.

Cannon v. Burge et al., filed 2005 (N.D. Ill.), Judge St. Eve
Litigation counsel in civil rights case against Chicago police officers and prosecutors on behalf of Jon Burge torture victim. Case dismissed on procedural summary judgment issue.

Wilson v. O'Brien, et al., filed 2007 (N.D. Ill.), Judge Kocoras
Litigation counsel in civil rights case against Chicago police officers on behalf of a man who spent over nine years in prison for a crime he did not commit after being coerced to falsely confess. Resulted in settlement of \$3.6 million in 2012.

Other

Cordrey v. Illinois Prisoner Review Board et al., filed 2014 (Illinois Supreme Court)
Authored amicus brief on behalf of criminal justice advocates, e.g., ACLU of Illinois and Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, in mandamus suit challenging arbitrary and wealth-based detention of parolees incarcerated for failure to afford an adequate residence.

In re Petition for Appointment of Special Prosecutor, filed 2011 (Circuit Court of Cook County), Judge Toomin
Litigation counsel in case winning appointment of special prosecutor to investigate whether charges should be brought against nephew of former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley for homicide of David Koschman, and whether employees of the Chicago Police Department and Cook County State's Attorney's Office intentionally impeded the initial homicide investigation.

PUBLICATIONS

Alexa Van Brunt and Locke E. Bowman, *Toward a Just Model of Pretrial Release: A History of Bail Reform and a Prescription for What's Next*, 108 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 701 (2018).

Dart's Misguided Approach to Jail Reform, CHICAGO TRIBUNE (March 12, 2018), <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-perspec-dart-misguided-jail-reform-toni-preckwinkle-0313-story.html>

How Abusive Police Practices Target Women of Color – and What Women Are Doing About It, TRUTH-OUT (December 28, 2015), <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/34194-how-abusive-police-practices-target-women-of-color-and-what-women-are-doing-about-it> (with Sheila Bedi)

Why New Jobs Are Not Worth the Price of Prisoners' Lives, TRUTH-OUT (July 23, 2015), <http://www.truth-out.org/op-ed/item/32024-why-new-jobs-are-not-worth-the-price-of-prisoners-lives>

Poor People Rely on Public Defenders Who Are Too Overworked to Defend Them, THE GUARDIAN (June 17, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/17/poor-rely-public-defenders-too-overworked>

Same-sex Marriage and the Case of Race, THE HILL (April 29, 2015), <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/judicial/240417-same-sex-marriage-and-the-case-of-race> (with Jennifer Richeson)

It's Time for Lawyers in the U.S. to Do Something About White Privilege (April 3, 2015), <https://qz.com/374527/its-time-for-lawyers-in-the-us-to-do-something-about-white-privilege/>

After Boris Nemtsov's Murder, the U.S. Congress Needs to Act, TALKING POINTS MEMO (March 18, 2015), <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/cafe/after-boris-nemtsov-s-murder-the-u-s-congress-needs-to-act> (with Juliet Sorenson)

Adult Interrogation Tactics in Schools Turn Principals into Police Officers, THE GUARDIAN (March 18, 2015), <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/mar/19/interrogation-schools-turns-principals-police-officers>.

Prosecutors Shouldn't Have Immunity From Their Unethical – or Unlawful – Acts, THE GUARDIAN (February 5, 2015), <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/05/prosecutors-immunity-unethical-unlawful-acts>.

Newest Wave of GOP Governors Should Support Prison Reform, HUFFINGTON POST (February 5, 2015), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alexa-van-brunt/newest-wave-of-gop-govern_b_6617656.html.

A New York Lesson for Chicago (and Elsewhere), THE MARSHALL PROJECT (January 27, 2015), <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/01/27/a-new-york-lesson-for-chicago-and-elsewhere>.

Five Ways the U.S. Criminal Justice Violates Human Rights – And How We Can Do Better, HUFFINGTON POST (January 21, 2015), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alexa-van-brunt/5-ways-the-us-criminal-ju_b_6492646.html.

The 'Torture' Memos Prove America's Lawyers Don't Know How to be Ethical, THE WASHINGTON POST (December 12, 2014), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/12/12/the-torture-memos-prove-americas-lawyers-dont-know-how-to-be-ethical/>.

When Will Illinois Stop Unlawfully Holding People in Prison?, TRUTH-OUT (December 10, 2014), <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/27938-when-will-illinois-stop-unlawfully-holding-people-in-prison>.

Mike Brown's Law is a Start but Police Body-Cams Are No Panacea for Violence, THE GUARDIAN (November 27, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/27/mike-brown-law-police-body-cams-change>.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Race, Gender, and Disability Issues in Policing Reform in Illinois, 40th Anniversary of the Illinois Human Rights Act, Panel Speaker, Illinois Human Rights Commission, Chicago, IL (November 2020)

Police Reform in Nigeria and Chicago, Panel Speaker, Center on International Human Rights Symposium, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL (September 2019)

Civil Rights and Police Reform in Chicago, Panel Speaker, Access to Justice Symposium, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL (September 2018)

Out on Bail: A Dialogue on the Dynamic Criminal Justice Reform Movement, Panel Speaker, Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology Symposium, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL (February 2018)

Parole Reform Litigation: Using the Due Process Clause to Redress Mass Incarceration in Illinois, Workshop Organizer and Speaker, National Lawyers' Guild Annual Conference, Washington D.C. (July 2017)

Cash Bail: A Powerful Hold Over the Poor, Panel Speaker, *Lawyering & Race in the 21st Century*, Children and Family Justice Center, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL (January 2017)

De-incarceration through Civil Rights Litigation, Conference Organizer, Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center, Chicago, IL (April 2016)

Police in America: Ensuring Accountability and Mitigating Racial Bias, Conference Organizer and Panel Speaker, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, *Journal of Law & Social Policy* Symposium, Chicago, IL (November 2015)

Addressing Mass Incarceration through Parole Reform, Presentation, ACS Constitutional Law Scholars Forum, Barry University School of Law, Orlando, FL (March 2015)

REPRESENTATIVE MEDIA COVERAGE

Radio and TV

Tyler Kendall, CBS News, “‘We’re at War with No Weapons’; Coronavirus Cases Surge Inside Chicago’s Cook County Jail”

April 2020

Megan Hickey, CBS Chicago, Fight to Release Cook County Jail Inmates During COVID-19 Pandemic Goes to Federal Court *April 2020*

Chris Coffey, NBC Chicago, NBC 5 Investigates Previous Complaint Against Chicago Cop Caught on Video Body Slamming A Man” *February 2020*

Chris Tye, CBS Chicago, “‘My Partner Took Him Down’: New Video Of CPD Thanksgiving Day Body Slam” *January 2020*

ABC7, “‘Unacceptable’: Community groups decry 6 Chicago police-related deaths in 2019” *June 2019*

WBBM Radio “Attorneys Threaten to Have City Held in Contempt Over 6 Deaths by Police” *June 2019*

Planet Lex Podcast Interview, “Reforming the Chicago Police Department” *August 2018*

WVON Interview, “The Talk of Chicago,” Charles Johnson Wrongful Conviction *February 2018*

NPR, Department of Justice investigation of Chicago Police Department *December 2015*

WBEZ, Roll-out of Pilot Program of Police Body Cameras in Chicago *January 2015*

WBEZ, Settlement of Juvenile Parole Revocation Suit *July 2014*

WVON Interview, “The Talk of Chicago,” Parole Revocation Class Action Suits *May 2014*

WGN “Politics Tonight,” Class Action Lawsuit for Burge Victims *October 2013*

WBEZ Interview, “Lawsuit: Hearings for Youth are ‘Kangaroo Courts’” *October 2012*

Newspapers

Timothy Eggert, “Judge: More Social Distancing Needed at County Jail,” CHICAGO LAW BULLETIN, Apr. 28, 2020.

Andy Grimm, Chicago Sun-Times, “Advocates Call for Inspection of Cook County Jail Amid Coronavirus Outbreak,” CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, Apr. 14, 2020

Samantha Michaels, “Chicago’s Jail is the Biggest Single Site of COVID-19 Infections. A Judge Denied Inmates’ Pleas for Release,” MOTHER JONES, Apr. 10, 2020

Maya Dukmasova, “Man Who Exclaimed ‘What?’ in Court Jailed—Without Bail—During Jason Van Dyke Hearing, Activists Say,” CHICAGO READER, March 13, 2018

Kiran Misra, “Shifting Fronts in Bail Reform,” SOUTH SIDE WEEKLY, March 6, 2018

Kiran Misra, “The Battle Against Money Bonds,” SOUTH SIDE WEEKLY, Feb. 20, 2018

Agence France-Press, Lawsuits Claim Chicago Police Misconduct in Murder Case,” DAILY MAIL, Feb. 12, 2018

Nereida Moreno, “Attorneys: Exonerated Immigrants Blocked from Returning Home to Mexico,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Feb. 9, 2018

Andy Grimm, “Man Cleared in Murder Case Goes Free 19 years in Prison, Month in ICE Detention,” CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, Feb. 2, 2018

Dan Hinkel, “City Proposed \$31 Million Settlement for Englewood Four’s Wrongful Conviction,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Dec. 8, 2017

Andrea Salcedo, “Federal Judge Approves Settlement in Parole Lawsuit,” CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, Jan. 25, 2017

Sarah Lazare, “Hundreds of Thousands are Languishing in Jails Because They Can’t Afford Bail Bonds: A National Movement is Building to End This.” ALTERNET, Dec. 22, 2016

Jennifer Smith Richards et al., “92 Deaths, 2,623 Bullets: Tracking Every Chicago Police Shooting Over 6 Years,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Aug. 26, 2016

“New Jersey Police Shooting Leads to Renewed Interest in Body Cameras,” THE GUARDIAN, Jan. 24, 2015

Steve Mills, “State Keeps 1,250 Parolees Behind Bars Due to Housing Shortage,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Jan. 25, 2015

“Rules Agreed to for Juvenile Detention Hearings,” CBS CHICAGO, May 20, 2014

Steven Schmadeke, “State agrees to Settlement in Lawsuit Alleging ‘Kangaroo Court,’” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, May 19, 2014

Dave Gong, “Inmate Challenges DOC’s ‘Turnaround’ Policy,” CHICAGO DAILY LAW BULLETIN, April 9, 2014

David Ormsby, “Lawsuit Targets Illinois Prison Policy Incarcerating Thousands Despite Parole Eligibility,” THE ILLINOIS OBSERVER, March 11, 2014

Jason Meisner and Steve Mills, “Daley Didn’t Aid His Nephew,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Feb. 5, 2014

Scott Brown, “Northwestern Law Professors Challenge Parole Revocation Process,” THE DAILY NORTHWESTERN, Nov. 18, 2013

Tim Novak, Chris Fusco, and Carol Marin, “Dailey Nephew Charged with Involuntary Manslaughter in Koschman Death,” CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, Dec. 3, 2012

Jamey Dunn, “A Constitutional Question,” ILLINOIS ISSUES, May 2013

Liane Membis, “Illinois is Wrongfully Locking Up Parolees, Lawsuit Claims,” CLUTCH MAGAZINE, Nov. 12, 2013

Jack Bouboushian, “60 Years in Prison After Police Coercion, 4 Say,” COURTHOUSE NEWS SERVICE, Nov. 19, 2012

Jennifer Delgado, “Lawsuits Allege 4 Men Were Framed for Murder,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Nov. 16, 2012

Maggie Lee, "Illinois Advocate Sues to Speed Juvenile Parole Reform," THE CHICAGO BUREAU, Oct. 25, 2012

Michael Tarm, AP, "Suit: Parole Revocation Hearings 'A Sham'," NORTHWEST HAROLD, Oct. 24, 2013

"Lawsuit: Illinois Parole Revocation Hearings Unfair," THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER, Oct. 23, 2013

"'Englewood Four' Sue City, Say Officials Ignored Evidence," NBC CHICAGO, Nov. 15, 2012

Matt Arado, "Mother of Dead Mt. Prospect Man Seeks Special Prosecutor," DAILY HERALD, Dec. 15, 2011