

**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 1, 2022 2:09 PM  
**To:** 'Steve Zeidman'  
**Subject:** **How is that possible? -- RE: Assistance for Rikers Island Inmate XX (#XX)**

**[TO: CUNY Law School Criminal Defense Clinic Director Steven Zeidman](#)**

I am at a complete loss to understand your below e-mail response to my e-mail, also below. How can you “lack the capacity (or the experience) to assist XX”, when [your CUNY Law School webpage](#) states:

“Steve Zeidman, Professor, Director of the Criminal Defense Clinic, has spent the last 25 years working in the area of criminal defense. A graduate of Duke University School of Law, he is a highly-respected trial lawyer and former supervisor at the Legal Aid Society. He began his teaching career with substantive and clinical courses and has taught at Fordham, Pace, and New York University. Professor Zeidman was awarded the NYU Alumni Association’s Great Teacher Award in 1997 and CUNY’s Outstanding Professor of the Year honor in 2011. Prior to joining the CUNY faculty in 2002, he was Executive Director of the Fund for Modern Courts, a nonpartisan, statewide court reform organization.

Professor Zeidman is a member of the Appellate Division’s Indigent Defense Organization Oversight Committee and serves on the Board of Directors of Prisoners’ Legal Services. He was recently appointed by District Court Judge Shira Scheindlin to an Advisory Council created to help implement her remedial order in the Floyd v. City of New York stop-and-frisk litigation. He has also served on several statewide commissions, including the Commission on the Future of Indigent Defense Services and the Jury Project. Professor Zeidman was a member of the Mayor’s Advisory Committee for the Judiciary in the Bloomberg and Giuliani administrations. He has made numerous presentations on a range of issues, including judicial selection, hearsay, and the ethical dimensions of the effective assistance of counsel. His published work has been cited in numerous law reviews and journals, as well as by the New York Court of Appeals.”

I assume that the CUNY “Criminal Defense Clinic” of which you are the director is the same as CUNY’s “[Defenders Clinic](#)”, of which you are [co-director with Associate Professor Nicole Smith Futrell](#). Is that correct? In any event, why have you not referred XX’s request for assistance to her? Does she also “lack the capacity (or the experience to assist XX”?

[CUNY Law School’s webpage for its clinical programs](#) states in bold, enlarged type:

**“As the #1 clinical program in the nation, and a pioneer in clinical education, CUNY Law leads legal education in experiential, immersive learning focused on building professional experience, hard skills, and serving real human needs.”**

It then continues:

“Every student participates in our clinical education, which is considered the capstone of your public interest lawyering education built on our unique experiential, hands-on learning for advocates. Our faculty are leading experts, advocates, organizers, and

trailblazers in the social justice lawyering field; our community partners and clients help us create transformative justice.” (underlining added).

As I identified in my yesterday’s phone message, XX was a CUNY/BMCC student (20XX-20XX), who graduated with a degree in political science and government. Are you saying there is not a single CUNY law student in the criminal defense/defenders clinic who could speak with him, including *via* a televisit?

Please advise – and identify by what process CUNY Law School’s criminal defense/defenders clinic gets the cases on which its students are getting their “unique experiential, hands-on learning”.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
[www.judgewatch.org](http://www.judgewatch.org)  
914-421-1200  
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**From:** Steve Zeidman <[zeidman@law.cuny.edu](mailto:zeidman@law.cuny.edu)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 1, 2022 12:44 PM  
**To:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>

**Subject: Re: Assistance for Rikers Island Inmate XX (#XX)**

Apologies but I lack the capacity (or the experience) to assist XX.

Professor Steven Zeidman  
CUNY School of Law  
2 Court Square  
LIC, NY 11101

SSRN author page: <http://ssrn.com/author=115773>

Second Look Project: Beyond Guilt: <https://bit.ly/3lQvXLv>

Twitter @SteveZeidman

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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 1, 2022 8:31:43 AM  
**To:** Steve Zeidman

**Subject: Assistance for Rikers Island Inmate XX (#XX)**

**[TO: CUNY Law School Criminal Defense Clinic Director Steven Zeidman](#)**

Following up the voice mail I left for you at about noon, yesterday (718-340-4357), concerning XX, an inmate at Rikers Island (#XX), who I stated would be calling you at 8 am today about his criminal case involving prosecutorial and judicial misconduct and ineffective assistance of court-appointed counsel, he just called me to say that he will try to reach you at 10 a.m.

If that time is not convenient for you – and you are not reachable – please advise when would be a convenient date and time for him to call you – and I will let him know when he calls me next week. Or could you – or one of your students or faculty members – arrange for a televisit with him?

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
[www.judgewatch.org](http://www.judgewatch.org)  
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[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)