

**ZACH SOMMERS**  
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## **ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

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**IIT CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW**, Chicago, IL  
Assistant Professor of Law 2024 –

## **EDUCATION**

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**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**, Evanston, IL 2013 – 2018  
Ph.D. (Sociology), December 2018

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY PRITZKER SCHOOL OF LAW**, Chicago, IL 2011 – 2013  
J.D., *magna cum laude*, January 2019

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**, Philadelphia, PA 2007 – 2011  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, (Criminology; Psychology), May 2011

## **PUBLICATIONS AND WORKS IN PROGRESS**

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[\*Missing White Woman Syndrome: An Empirical Analysis of Race and Gender Disparities in Online News Coverage of Missing Persons\*](#), 106 (2) J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 275 (2016).

[\*Missing White Woman Syndrome: It's Not a Media Myth\*](#), THE CRIME REPORT, Apr. 3, 2017.

[\*Solitary Confinement and the Nation of Islam\*](#), THE IMMANENT FRAME, May 30, 2018.

[\*Black Deaths Matter: Disparities in Gun Homicides, Policing, and News Coverage in Chicago\*](#), 57:5 CRIM. L. BULL. ART. 2 (2021).

[\*Missing White Woman Syndrome: How Do We Fix It?\*](#), BLOOMBERG LAW, Oct. 19, 2021.

*White-Collar Crime: An Empirical Examination of Race, Class, and the Challenges of Enforcement*, \_\_ MICH. ST. L. REV. \_\_ (forthcoming).

*More Than You Bargained For: Race and Plea Bargain Experiments*, (manuscript in progress).

*What's in a Name? An Experimental Analysis of the Role of Suspect Name and Victim Location in Perceptions of Acts of Terror* (manuscript in progress).

## **SELECT MEDIA COVERAGE**

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Marquise Francis, *Boyfriend of Alabama Woman Carlee Russell Suggests She Was Kidnapped Before Her Safe Return*, YAHOO! NEWS, July 17, 2023.

Melanie Eversley, *When Women of Color Disappear, Who Says Their Names?*, THE GUARDIAN, Oct. 4, 2021.

Li Cohen, *These Families Want Help Finding Keeshae Jacobs, Mary Johnson, Alicia Navarro and Hundreds of Other Missing People. Here's Why You Might Not Have Heard of Them*, CBS NEWS, Oct. 1, 2021.

Nora Mabie, *The Gabby Petito Case Has Left Indigenous People Asking How to 'Qualify' for Same Attention*, USA TODAY, Sep. 24, 2021.

Nicquel Terry Ellis, *These Families of Missing Black People are Frustrated with the Lack of Response to their Cases*, CNN, Sep. 23, 2021.

Maia Niguel Hoskin, *What About Jelani Day And Daniel Robinson?: Racial Bias And Anti-Blackness In the Media*, FORBES, Sep. 23, 2021.

Hanna Flint, *Why Does the Media Only React When Victims are Young, Pretty and White?*, GQ MAGAZINE, June 2021.

Maia Niguel Hoskin, *Breonna Taylor's Death Further Illustrates the Invisibility of Black Women and Resurrects a Discussion About 'Missing White Woman Syndrome,'* FORBES, June 28, 2020.

Anna North, *A Young Woman Disappeared in Iowa. Here's Why President Trump Got Involved*, VOX, Aug. 23, 2018.

Paul Farhi, *Colorado Murders Signal a Return of the News Media's 'Damsels in Distress' Trope*, THE WASHINGTON POST, Aug. 21, 2018.

Gene Demby, *What We Know (And Don't Know) About 'Missing White Women Syndrome,'* NPR, Apr. 13, 2017.

## **AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

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Pro Bono Award, Kirkland & Ellis LLP 2021

Robert F. Winch Memorial Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University 2017

Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher Award, Northwestern University	2017
Winner, Graduate Student Paper Competition, Midwest Sociological Society For Paper Titled <i>Missing White Woman Syndrome: An Empirical Analysis of Race and Gender Disparities in Online News Coverage of Missing Persons</i>	2016
Robert F. Winch Memorial Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University	2015
Graduate Fellowship in Legal Studies, Northwestern University	2013 – 2018
Northwestern University Fellowship, Northwestern University	2013 – 2018
Law Scholars Program, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law	2012 – 2017
Dean’s List, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law	2011 – 2013
Sellin-Wolfgang Research Prize for Best Senior Thesis Department of Criminology, University of Pennsylvania	2011

### **SELECT ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS**

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“Clear and Present Danger: The Role of Internet News Coverage and Guns in Chicago Homicide Clearance Rates.” Midwest Sociological Society, Chicago, IL (Apr. 2019).

“If it Bleeds, it Leads: Media Coverage and Police Homicide Investigation Clearance Rates.” Law and Society Association, Toronto, Canada (June 2018).

“The Prison Gang Threat: Examining the Disparate Use of Punishment Techniques in Correctional Institutions.” Co-Presented with Brittany Friedman. American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, PA (Nov. 2017).

“Defining Terrorism: What Qualifies as an Act of Terrorism and Who Gets Labeled a Terrorist?” JD-PhD Colloquium, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL, (Sep. 2017).

“Defining Terrorism: What Qualifies as an Act of Terrorism and Who Gets Labeled a Terrorist?” Law and Society Association, Mexico City, Mexico (June 2017).

“Missing White Woman Syndrome.” Legal Studies Research Methods (Guest Lecture), Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (May 2017).

“Food for Thought: Capital Punishment.” International Student Organization Subcommittee on Global Engagement, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (Nov. 2016).

“Why Do People Obey the Law? Deterrence.” Law and Society (Guest Lecture), Northwestern University, Evanston IL (Nov. 2016).

“Approaches to Grading and Student Feedback in the Social Sciences.” Northwestern University New Teaching Assistant Conference, Evanston, IL (Sep. 2016).

“Missing White Woman Syndrome: An Empirical Analysis of Race and Gender Disparities in Online News Coverage of Missing Persons.” Joint Annual Meeting, Midwest Sociological Society and North Central Sociological Association, Chicago, IL (March 2016).

“Missing White Woman Syndrome and Its Consequences: An Empirical Investigation.” Applied Quantitative Methods Workshop, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (May 2015).

“Missing White Woman Syndrome.” JD-PhD Colloquium, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL, (Apr. 2015).

## **PROFESSIONAL LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

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<b>KIRKLAND &amp; ELLIS LLP</b> , Chicago, IL Summer Associate; Litigation Associate, White-Collar Crime Group	2019 – 2024
<b>U.S. DISTRICT COURT, NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS</b> , Chicago, IL Judicial Law Clerk for the Hon. John J. Tharp, Jr.	2019 – 2020
<b>CHILDREN AND FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER, BLUHM LEGAL CLINIC</b> , Chicago, IL Research Assistant	2016 – 2018
<b>INDEPENDENT POLICE REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> , Chicago, IL Research Intern	2016
<b>U.S. DISTRICT COURT, NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS</b> , Chicago, IL Judicial Extern for the Hon. Susan E. Cox, Magistrate	2012
<b>PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON SENTENCING</b> , Philadelphia, PA Research Associate	2010 – 2011
<b>PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE</b> , Philadelphia, PA Summer Intern	2009

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**, Evanston, IL  
Teaching Assistant (2014 – 2016)  
Graduate Student Instructor (2016 – 2017)

Courses Taught: Crime and Criminology

**THE PRINCETON REVIEW**, Chicago IL  
GRE Instructor (2014 – 2016)

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

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Invited Reviewer, Law & Soc. Inquiry, Nw. U. L. Rev., PLOS ONE, Social Forces, SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Mentor, Illinois Science & Technology Institute Mentor Matching Engine, (2018 – Present)

Mentor, University of Pennsylvania Ben Connect Mentoring Program, (2020 – 2023)

Mentor, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law Mentorship Program (2020 – 2023)

Student Coordinator, JD-PhD Seminar, Northwestern University (2017 – 2018)

Invited Participant, Teaching Consultant Program, Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching, Northwestern University (2016 – 2019)

Cofounder and Student Coordinator, Crime, Law, and Society Workshop, Northwestern University (2016 – 2018)

Selected Participant, Searle Teaching Certificate Program, Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching, Northwestern University (2016 – 2017)

Member, Northwestern University Mentorship Program for First Generation or Low Socioeconomic Status Students (2014 – 2018)

Criminology Editor, *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* (2013 – 2014)

**BAR ADMISSION**

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Illinois (2019)