Human rights leader Dixon Osburn has been named the new Executive Director of CJA. Osburn served as the Director of Law & Security at Human Rights First from 2010 until this spring, where, among other accomplishments, he led efforts to end counterterrorism policies that violate the rule of law, including unlawful detention at Guantánamo, the lethal targeting by drone of suspected terrorists outside the laws of armed conflict, and the use of torture. He currently serves as an Adjunct Fellow at the American Security Project. He will join the CJA team on December 1.

“It is a great honor to join one of the most talented teams of human rights advocates in the world,” said Osburn in a statement made earlier in October. “Since 1998, CJA has been doing ground-breaking work on behalf of victims of torture, but there is more work that can be – and must be – done. If we want to prevent human rights abuses from happening in the future, we must hold perpetrators accountable today. I look forward to leading that charge on behalf of CJA and its clients and partnering with the global human rights community.”

Osburn has more than 20 years of experience in the field of social justice. In 1993, Osburn co-founded Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a national security and human rights organization he led until 2007. During that time, the organization spearheaded the effort to repeal “Don’t ask, don’t tell” and end sexual orientation discrimination in the armed forces. Rep. Barney Frank called Osburn “extremely effective and principled” in comments published in The Congressional Record.

As Executive Director, Osburn will lead efforts to raise CJA’s profile and work with other human rights organizations and government officials to advance the organization’s work, which has an internationally recognized and sought after expertise in developing, investigating, and litigating human rights abuses.

“We are very excited to welcome Dixon, an experienced, visionary leader with a lifelong passion for, and commitment to human rights,” said Wilma Wallace, CJA Board Chair. “CJA is at the forefront of the human rights community, and Dixon’s entrepreneurial spirit and collaborative approach will help the organization build on the great momentum we’ve created over the years for human rights advocates globally.”

Client Profile

Jesús Cabrera Jaramillo: My Mother, the Tireless Fighter

Jesús Cabrera Jaramillo is the eldest son of Alma Rosa Jaramillo, an attorney who brought cases on behalf of communities displaced by the Bloque Central Bolívar (BCB), a violent paramilitary group under the command of Jiménez Naranjo (alias “Macaco”). Alma Rosa Jaramillo’s legal work drew her into confrontation with the BCB and in June 2001, she was killed by members of the BCB. Jesús Cabrera Jaramillo was 18 years old at the time of his mother’s death. In 2010, CJA and pro-bono counsel from Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati filed suit on behalf of Jesús Cabrera Jaramillo as the representative of his mother’s estate. As CJA’s client, Jesús Cabrera Jaramillo hopes to bring justice to his mother’s memory in our case against Macaco, who is accused of mass human rights abuses. In this interview, Jesús Cabrera Jaramillo talks about his childhood, his mother, and their struggle for justice.

What was your childhood like?

I was born a little over 30 years ago in the coastal and historic city of Cartagena de Indias, in Bolívar, Colombia – a city with much history, fairy tales, and secret love affairs just as described in the story of Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza, told in the book Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez. Since I was little, I was raised in a matriarchy by my grandmother and my mother. My mother was always working for rural communities in several municipalities in the Colombian Caribbean coast and although we shared very little time at home, I learned that sometimes sacrifices are necessary and that the common good should be above personal interests.

What was your mother like?

My mom was an extraterrestrial. She never saw the cup half empty even if there was only a sip left. (Continued on page 3)
Dear Friends of CJA,

We are pleased to bring you this fall newsletter — the first we have published since 2011. This newsletter comes at an exciting time for CJA as we prepare to embark upon an era of new leadership. As we announced on October 6, we look forward to welcoming Dixon Osburn as our new Executive Director, effective December 1. Dixon has more than 20 years of experience as a champion of social justice and human rights, entrepreneur, leader, manager, political strategist, and fundraiser. The CJA board conducted a meticulous six-month search for the next leader of CJA, and received applications from an extremely gifted and diverse group of candidates. The level of experience and talent displayed by our candidate pool was telling of CJA’s standing in the NGO and legal communities.

This moment is also bittersweet, as we say goodbye to Pamela Merchant, CJA’s long-standing Executive Director who announced her decision to step down in April. Under Pamela’s leadership, CJA experienced unprecedented growth and transformed into a truly global organization, gaining recognition as an effective advocate for justice and human rights around the world. We are now working in six different legal systems – Cambodia, Guatemala, Haiti, Peru, Spain and the United States – and conducting human rights abuse investigations in 20 different countries. We have more than tripled our operating budget and developed staff with deep subject-matter expertise who are recognized experts in the field. As a result, we are stronger than ever as an organization. The board is extremely grateful to Pamela for positioning CJA so favorably as we enter this new era and for the support she has provided throughout this transition process. The Board will miss working with Pamela and witnessing firsthand her tireless passion for seeking justice on behalf of our clients.

We have many exciting things on the horizon for CJA. On the litigation side, a damages hearing is scheduled for February 2015 in our case against one of the murderers of Chilean folksinger and activist Víctor Jara. In Cambodia, after a favorable judgment for survivors in Case 002/1 (see page 4), Case 002/2 began earlier in October 2014 and covers the remaining charges against the two former Khmer Rouge leaders.

Finally, this spring will mark the return of CJA’s Annual Dinner, on May 7, 2015. I am delighted to announce that Navi Pillay, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, will be accepting CJA’s Champion of Justice award for her career-spanning commitment to the rule of law and advocating for victims. In her time with the U.N., she bravely called out states where atrocities were taking place, organizing independent international investigations. She also used her position to draw attention to gender-based violence and the rights of women. She is truly an inspiration to all of us working in the field of human rights, and we are honored that she has agreed to spend this special evening with the CJA community.

From all of us at CJA, thank you for your continued support and for all you do to help make the world a just place. Please join me in wishing Pamela all the best and congratulating Dixon in his new role leading CJA forward.

Wilma Wallace
Chair, Board of Directors
Client Profile: Jesús Cabrera Jaramillo (cont.)

My mother was a person who fearlessly told the truth in their face to anyone: mayor, judge, police chief, priest, civic leader, shopkeeper or chalupero (canoe rider). She was a tireless fighter for just causes who put aside a successful career in the judicial system to listen and solve the problems of disadvantaged communities. She was a warrior who sacrificed many of her kids’ birthdays, Christmas, and Mother’s Day celebrations to stay with the farm workers of southern Bolívar and work with them under the guiding wing of the Program for Peace and Development in the Middle Magdalena.

What are some memories that you have of your mother?
I have many memories of my mother. On work-related memories, there is the story of a priest from the Program for Peace and Development, who was kidnapped (along with my mom) by ELN guerrillas in Morales, to send a message to the authorities. Although my mom got released, she decided to stay, like a mother with her cubs, to ensure the safety and integrity of the priest.

I could spend an entire afternoon sharing stories, like the day she gave me my first guitar, my birthday party with the baseball theme, or the proud look in her eyes every time I achieved success ... so many things that stayed in my memory, but I long for the things that we were yet to experience.

Why did you decide to bring this case against Macaco?
On May 13, 2008, the Colombian government decided to extradite to the United States the Colombian paramilitary leaders (including Macaco) for the crime of drug trafficking. At that time the victims had reported 123,787 crimes committed by paramilitary members, but only 5,831 had been recognized officially and only 41% (2,391) of those were confessed by the 15 extradited leaders. The government has partially repaired victims, but has denied them their right to know the truth.

We are going after Macaco not just for Alma Rosa (my mom), but for the thousands of Alma Rosas lying in graves in Colombia or those whose limbs were food for fish in a Colombian river. We are going after Macaco because he has to pay for the thousands of crimes he committed. We are going after Macaco to show the government of that time that it doesn’t matter if they sent the commanders of their parallel army out of the country to protect them because we’ve learned that justice has no borders.

“We are going after Macaco not just for Alma Rosa, but for the thousands of Alma Rosas lying in graves in Colombia...”

How has the experience with CJA been so far?
It is very gratifying to see a whole group of renowned men and women lifting stones to find evidence, signs, or clues that can help in this case. Although we have overcome the barriers of communication and documentation, I could not answer this question as a client of CJA because I do not feel like one. CJA has been more than a legal support for me.

Through this case I discovered that I have a couple of aunties outside of Colombia like Kathy Roberts and Almudena Bernabeu with whom — beyond the legal matters of the case — I’ve shared things about my life and fun moments. I know that they will always, always be there for me.

I can feel CJA’s desire to fight till the end regardless of the consequences to honor the life of a colleague they didn’t get to know. That’s why CJA has my infinite appreciation, and I will be grateful for the rest of my life.

What are you hoping will happen in the case?
A few close friends and family in Colombia see my case as a legal event that could bring interesting economic dividends because of the reparations side of it, but for me this case goes far beyond that. It is a pioneer case for many victims who seek justice and truth to hold accountable the 15 individuals convicted in the United States for drug trafficking who are thinking they can get away with all the massacres they committed in Colombia.

Alma Rosa is not dead. She lives not only in our family but also in the women and men of CJA who — with great tenacity and determination — sacrifice their time, effort, and money for this difficult and complicated case. I do not expect to just win a case, but I hope it serves to tell an entire country not to fall asleep, that a victory is possible, that we can demand truth, justice and reparation.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?
Thank you! Thanks to all of those who in some way or another have contributed a bit for things to go on the right track. Special thanks to Almudena, Kathy, Yukyam Lam, Pedro Mahecha, the people at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati and many others I haven’t met because I know they’re thinking of us, they’re thinking of Alma Rosa, her children and her family. Many, many thanks!

Interview translated by Susana Solis.

Jesus Cabrera Jaramillo in Colombia in 2014. Photo by Jesús Cabrera Jaramillo.
Former Khmer Rouge Officials Found Guilty by Tribunal, Face Second Trial

On August 7, 2014, two senior officials from the Khmer Rouge regime — Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea — were found guilty of crimes against humanity. In its first judgment issued against senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) sentenced both defendants to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity committed in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. A second trial, which began on October 17, covers the remaining charges against the two leaders, including crimes related to genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and forced marriage.

CJA represents 45 survivors from the U.S.-Cambodian diaspora before the ECCC. CJA client Sophany Bay was the first Cambodian American to testify before the ECCC in June 2013 about the loss of her young children at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

Upon hearing the verdict for the first trial, known as Case 002/1, Bay said, “The Court cannot give me my children back, but it can give me justice. I participated in the trial for the memory of my children and for all victims. Today, the world will know who is responsible for our suffering.”

The decision read from the bench on August 7 specifically highlighted the harm suffered by Bay, and the written decision also cites evidence presented by CJA clients Marie Chea, Sowatha Chea, Nicholas Vesna Keo, Kelvin Leng So, and Sokhan Yang. All of these clients applied to the Court as civil parties with the assistance of U.S.-based victim’s association, the Applied Social Research Institute of Cambodia.

“I have waited a long time to hear the Tribunal announce this powerful verdict condemning Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea to life imprisonment for the destruction they brought to their own people, under their rule,” said CJA client Kelvin Leng So. “The judgment tells the Khmer Rouge, and the world, that no matter how much time has passed, the victims will still demand justice. With this conviction, I am hopeful that the defendants will now formally apologize to the Khmer people and the world for their role in the devastation they committed.”

Death Cheats Justice: Notorious Haiti Dictator “Baby Doc” Duvalier Dead at 63

Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, Haiti’s former dictator and “President for Life,” died at the age of 63 on October 4, 2014. His death cuts short a long overdue trial for crimes against humanity that held a glimmer of hope for his victims.

“We often say that one has cheated death, but now Baby Doc’s death has cheated justice,” said CJA Staff Attorney, Scott Gilmore, who partnered with Haitian human rights lawyer Mario Joseph and the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI) in a case against Duvalier in Haiti.

In 2011, Duvalier returned to Haiti after 25 years in exile. Within days, the Haitian government reopened a criminal investigation into financial crimes, while victims of persecution filed complaints for crimes against humanity. After an investigating judge ruled that the charges of torture and murder were barred by the statute of limitations, Haitian and international human rights lawyers rallied around the victims to appeal the ruling.

For several weeks in the spring of 2013, the Court of Appeals of Port-au-Prince heard a landmark hearing. And for the first time ever, Duvalier was summoned to court and forced to face his victims. CJA submitted an amicus brief to the court, laying out the international law basis for prosecuting Duvalier. On February 20, 2014, the Court issued a historic ruling that Duvalier should face charges of crimes against humanity. The court held that international law puts no statute of limitations on such horrific crimes.

And Duvalier’s crimes were truly horrific. From 1971 to 1986, under Duvalier’s command, an estimated 300 to 4,000 political prisoners were held incommunicado in a network of prisons called the “Triangle of Death.” Many died from horrific conditions of confinement, torture, starvation, denial of medical care, and summary execution. Others simply disappeared without their families ever learning their fate.

“With Duvalier’s death, his prosecution in Haiti will no doubt be closed, but Haiti’s reckoning with its troubled past must not end.”

-CJA Attorney Scott Gilmore

Currently, CJA and its partners in Haiti are reviewing the evidence to identify surviving members of the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti and abroad. As Gilmore explains, “As long as Duvalier’s accomplices and henchmen survive, they should be brought to justice.”
Staci Dresher is Partner and Associate General Counsel at the professional investigative services firm The Mintz Group, which has helped CJA discover the whereabouts of human rights abusers, identify key witnesses, and uncover important leads. Dresher describes her work with CJA and how she became a private investigator.

When Staci Dresher explains the work of a private investigator, you can tell that this is a line of work that she truly enjoys. “What we do is we find the facts and connect the dots,” Dresher said. She continues to describe how The Mintz Group was able to track down Colonel Abdi Aden Magan, the former investigations chief of a secret police force in Somalia that used torture and arbitrary detention to suppress dissidents.

“So there is this rumor that Magan is in the U.S. and we were asked to pinpoint exactly where he was and his finances,” she explained. “You couldn’t just look for his whereabouts with the regular databases we use to locate people.” Eventually, Dresher and her team found Magan living in Ohio, and CJA filed a case against him in 2010. In 2012, Magan was found liable for the torture and arbitrary detention of CJA’s client, former constitutional law professor Abukar Hassan Ahmed.

Dresher has been the point-person for several cases that The Mintz Group takes on as part of their pro-bono partnership with CJA, from Ahmed v. Magan to CJA’s landmark Supreme Court case Yousuf v. Samantar. She is also involved in several of our current investigations and has led a training at CJA on best practices for investigations. “Staci is one of my favorite people in the world to work with,” said Kathy Roberts, CJA’s Legal Director. “She is a brilliant investigator, generous with her expertise, and deeply committed to human rights.”

Dresher continued to do pro-bono work at her new job. “When I joined The Mintz Group, I made it clear that I wanted to continue my commitment to pro-bono because I think it’s really important that we give back,” she explained.

Because of her previous experience in the Constant case, it was natural for Dresher to work on the CJA cases that The Mintz Group took on. And she finds her work with CJA to be undeniably rewarding.

“It’s most rewarding to use the skills you have for a purpose that you strongly believe in. With my background, it’s heartening to know that I can make a difference and be a part of the justice system.”

-Staci Dresher

Dresher has worked at The Mintz Group for eight years, but she did not always think that she would become a private investigator. Dresher studied international politics in college, worked in conflict resolution for a few years, lived in Latin America, and then decided to pursue law. After receiving her J.D. from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, Dresher worked at two prestigious law firms, focusing on intellectual property, complex commercial matters, and insurance coverage.

She stumbled into the world of private investigation when her firm, Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP (now a part of Dentons), provided pro-bono counsel for CJA’s case against Haitian paramilitary leader Emmanuel “Toto” Constant, who was later found liable for torture, crimes against humanity and the systematic use of violence against women, including rape. “I was one of the key associates in the case against Constant and the firm had hired The Mintz Group to do some investigative work,” Dresher explained. Dresher was fascinated by the work and after several years as a civil litigator she decided to “try something completely new” and join The Mintz Group.

CJA, in turn, is so grateful of the work that Dresher and her team provide. Their investigative work is often key to building CJA’s cases. As Dresher describes, “You don’t file a case until a year or two because half of it is getting the facts. The law is cut and dry, but you always need the facts.”
CJA Welcomes Legal Fellows from Yale Law School and UC Berkeley Law School

Amy Belsher joins CJA as a Berkeley Law Public Interest Fellow. She is a recent graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law (Boalt Hall). During her last two years in law school, Belsher worked for the Human Rights Center, investigating accountability for sexual and gender-based violence in Uganda.

Belsher spent a summer working for judges at the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in The Hague. She has also worked for judges at the Immigration Court in San Francisco and for a number of immigration non-profit organizations, including the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project. Belsher speaks proficient French and conversational Spanish. She holds a bachelor of arts in Legal Studies and Global Poverty and Practice from the University of California, Berkeley.

Mytili Bala joins CJA for a second year as a Robert L. Bernstein International Human Rights Fellow. Prior to starting her fellowship at CJA in September 2013, Bala spent four years in private practice at Irell & Manella LLP and Kirkland & Ellis LLP, where she represented clients in civil litigation in federal and state court.

Bala graduated from Yale Law School in 2009. During law school, Bala participated in the Community Lawyering Clinic, where she worked with a community organization in New Haven to address local housing and employment concerns. She also participated in the Temporary Restraining Order Project and served as Senior Editor of the *Yale Human Rights and Development Law Journal*. Bala interned with an NGO in southern India as part of the EU-funded National Project on Preventing Torture in India.

Bala received a bachelor of arts in Economics with Honors from the University of Chicago in 2005. She is admitted to practice in California and Illinois and is fluent in Tamil and proficient in Spanish.

What CJA Does

The Center for Justice and Accountability is an international human rights organization dedicated to deterring torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world and advancing the rights of survivors to seek truth, justice, and redress. CJA uses litigation to hold perpetrators individually accountable for human rights abuses, develop human rights law, and advance the rule of law in countries transitioning from periods of abuse.

CJA uses two civil laws to hold perpetrators of international human rights abuses accountable in the United States: the Alien Tort Statute (ATS) and the Torture Victim Protection Act (TVPA). We also pursue criminal human rights cases before the Spanish National Court, which has initiated investigations into abuses around the world. CJA leverages resources by partnering with pro-bono law firms and expert witnesses to help litigate our cases. For more information, visit www.cja.org.
Patrick Ball Speaks at Young Professionals’ Event Held at Eventbrite’s Headquarters in San Francisco

On September 16, over 100 guests gathered at the headquarters of Eventbrite to attend the latest event in CJA’s Young Professionals’ Committee for Human Rights’ “Drink + Think” series.

Speaker Patrick Ball, Executive Director of the Human Rights Data Analysis Group, gave a fascinating presentation, titled “Data Mining for Good: Prosecuting War Criminals Using Data and Statistics.” He discussed how data analysis can be used as a tool to speak truth to power and bring justice to communities that have suffered human rights abuses.

Ball drew from his experiences as an expert witness in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia trial against Slobodan Milošević, the former President of Serbia, and in Guatemala’s Supreme Court in the trial of General José Efraín Ríos Montt, the de-facto president of Guatemala from 1982 to 1983.

CJA’s Young Professionals’ Committee for Human Rights (YPCHR) was established in 2013 and produces quarterly events featuring expert speakers working in the field of human rights and social justice. At YPCHR’s first event in July 2013, Eric Stover, Faculty Director of the Human Rights Center and Adjunct Professor of Law and Public Health at UC Berkeley, spoke at SOMArts.

Human rights activist Ahmed Salah discussed Egypt’s 2011 revolution at YPCHR’s second event in November 2013. Salah was one of the leaders behind the demonstrations in Cairo that sparked the revolution and was the recipient of CJA’s 2013 Champion of Justice award.

In April 2014, YPCHR organized an event at Google that attracted more than 100 attendees. Cindy Cohn, Legal Director and General Counsel at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, led an engaging discussion about NSA surveillance and internet freedom.

For more information about YPCHR, call Rachel Hill at 415-544-0444 or email her at rhill@cja.org.

CJA Celebrates Pamela Merchant’s Tenure

On September 19, CJA friends and supporters gathered at the San Francisco offices of Dentons US LLP to celebrate Pamela Merchant’s accomplishments since joining CJA in October 2005.

During Pamela’s tenure, CJA has grown its client base from 56 clients from eight countries to over 220 clients from 20 countries, including 188 torture survivors and 32 relatives of people who were tortured or disappeared.

The past nine years have seen many firsts for CJA, from the filing of CJA’s first criminal human rights case in Spain for the Jesuits Massacre Case, to crossing the one million dollar mark for recovery for our clients in Jean v. Dorelien, to attaining a unanimous victory in CJA’s first case to reach the U.S. Supreme Court in Yousuf v. Samantar.

CJA also testified before Congress, organized the first client conference on the effects of participating in human rights litigation, and launched a Transitional Justice Program, which is now operating in six countries.

“Because of Pamela’s work, and the work we’ve done together at CJA, survivors from all over the world can offer their children, and ours, the chance for a more just future,” said CJA Legal Director Kathy Roberts.
CJA’s Annual Dinner, Celebrating our Victories in the Movement for Global Justice, will return on May 7, 2015 to San Francisco. The dinner brings together leading international human rights advocates, judges, survivors, and supporters to celebrate important victories secured by CJA in our efforts to hold high-ranking human rights abusers accountable.

CJA will be presenting Navi Pillay, the former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the Champion of Justice award. Pillay was the first woman to start a law practice in her home province in South Africa where she defended scores of anti-Apartheid activists including Nelson Mandela, and was the first nonwhite woman to be appointed as a judge in the South African High Court. She has also served as a judge with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and the International Criminal Court in The Hague. As High Commissioner for Human Rights, Pillay was a critical first responder in ongoing human rights crises around the world.

CJA’s Annual Dinner will be held on May 7, 2015 at the Julia Morgan Ballroom in San Francisco. Sponsorships are now available; for more information about sponsorship or to receive a sponsorship packet, please contact Rachel Hill, Individual Giving Manager, at rhill@cja.org or 415-544-0444.

Save the Date for CJA’s Annual Dinner with Navi Pillay

We are moving! CJA’s new address is:
One Hallidie Plaza
Suite 406
San Francisco, CA 94102