

Common Terms Heard in the Judicial Process

- **Acquittal:** Finding the Defendant “Not Guilty.”
- **Arraignment:** A hearing where the suspect appears before a judge, is formally accused of the crime, and enters a plea. (Guilty or Not Guilty)
- **Bail:** Upon payment of a fee set by the judge and a promise to appear in court, the suspect may remain free until the trial.
- **Ballistics:** The science of analyzing firearms and ammunition.
- **Circumstantial Evidence:** Evidence which consists of a fact or set of facts that is not conclusive. However, if proven, will support the guilt or innocence of a defendant
- **Closing Arguments:** The final summary of the case by each side.
- **Continuance:** Officially postponing or delaying the trial.
- **Conviction:** Finding the defendant guilty of the crime.
- **Direct Evidence:** **Evidence** that supports the truth of an assertion of guilt or of innocence
- **Dismissal:** A decision by the court not to continue the trial.
- **Hearsay:** A statement based on information heard from another. This is not admissible in court.
- **Indictment:** The formal written accusation of the suspect presented by the Grand Jury after deciding the case has merit.
- **Mistrial:** Ending the trial if something happens to jeopardize a fair trial or makes the trial unable to continue.
- **Motion:** A request by either attorney that the judge make a decision on a point of law.
- **Noll Prosequi (nol pros):** A decision made by the Prosecutor not to continue with the prosecution of a case at this time.
- **Opening Statement:** At the beginning of the trial each side presents a summary of what they intend to prove at the trial.
- **Plea:** The defendant’s formal answer to the charges.
- **Perjury:** A witness intentionally lying under oath. Punishable.
- **Probable Cause:** Facts that lead one to reasonably believe that the accused actually committed the crime.
- **Subpoena:** A written order to appear in court.
- **Testimony:** Oral evidence presented during the trial.
- **Verdict:** The final decision of a judge or jury.