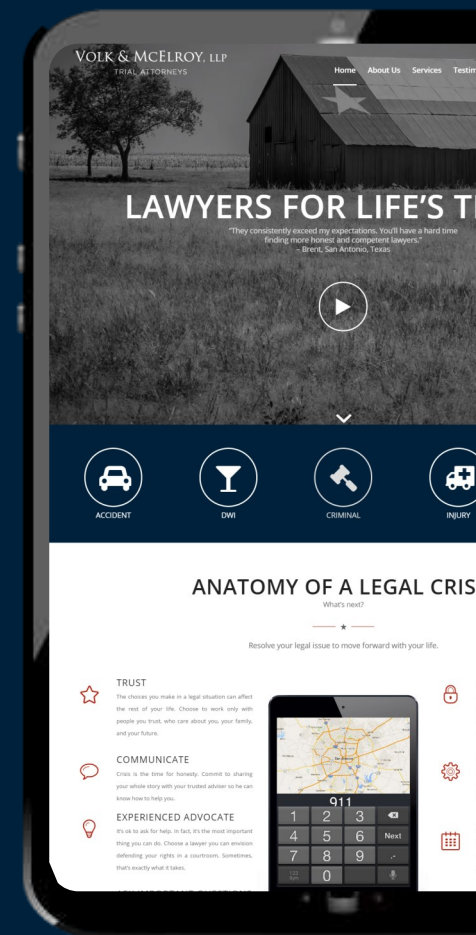


Avoid the 5 Biggest Criminal Defense Pitfalls

Presented by: The Volk & McElroy Law Firm



PITFALL #1:

Talking to Police without a Lawyer present

Most defendants think cooperating with police is a good thing. They think they're helping themselves by making friends and explaining how this is all one big mistake. What you don't understand is that when the police arrest you, they consider you a suspect.

They discount any explanations you make about the situation, and this can actually be used against you. When you make statements to law enforcement officers without an attorney present with you, your statements can be inaccurate and incomplete. They often hurt your defense. Police officers will often encourage you to make admissions and talk to them about the situation, assuring you that things will be easier for you if you speak with them.

Remember that the police are allowed to mislead you during an interrogation. They might not be telling you the truth and because you are a suspect in the case, their number one priority is seeking an admission to the crime. It is much more helpful to keep quiet until you have the advice of an experienced criminal defense attorney. Remember also not to discuss your case over the phone, with your cellmates, or with anyone other than your attorney.



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PITFALL #2:

Using Social Media Inappropriately

Social Media is a normal part of our everyday lives. We understand that this is a common form of connection that most of us use on a daily basis. Most of the time it isn't necessary to completely delete your social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.)

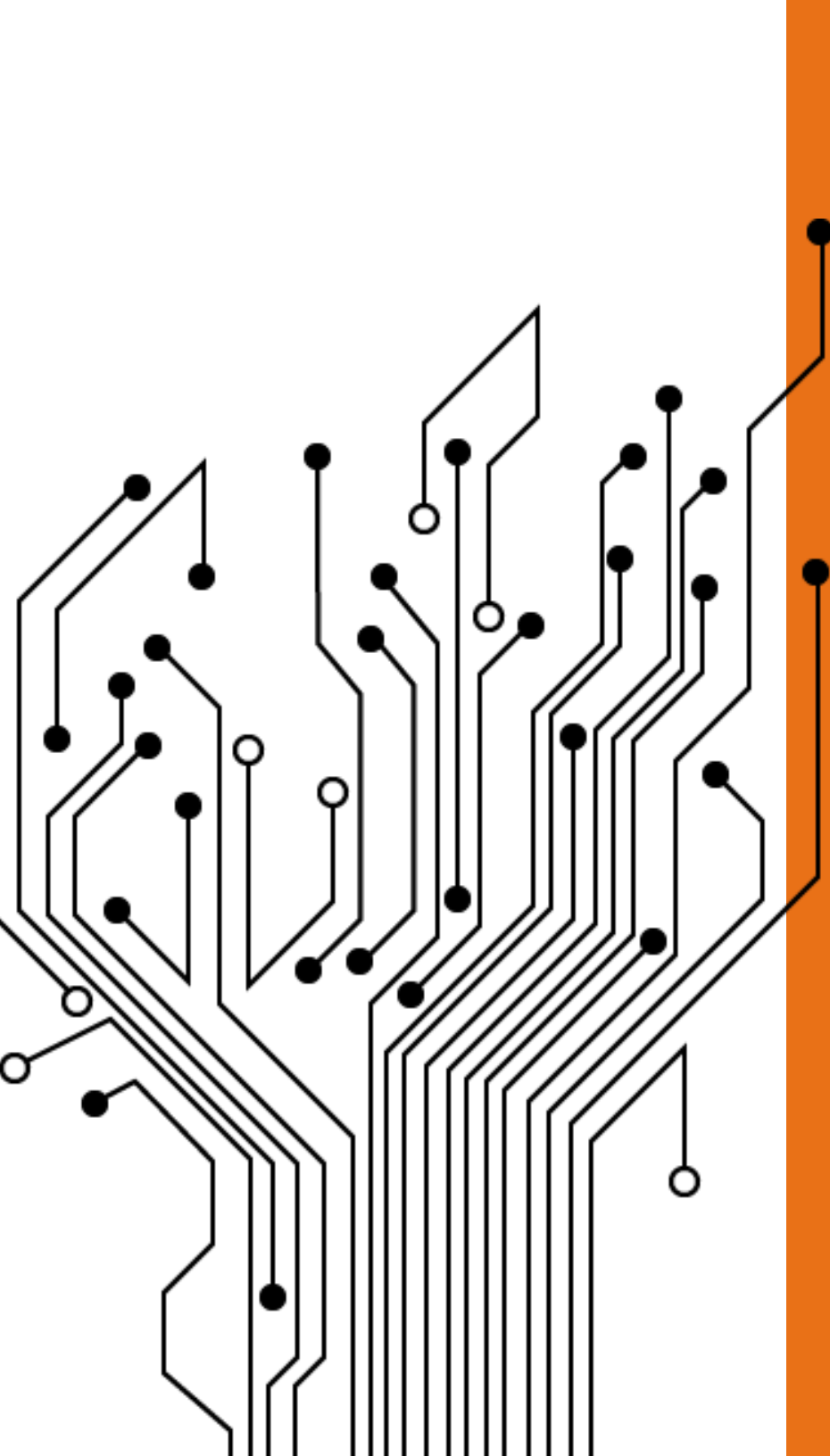
The most important thing you can remember is that messages and public postings you make using social media can often be used against you in court. Prosecutors and law enforcement are becoming much more internet savvy and they're likely to use this communication against you in court. This can hurt your defense and it can have serious consequences for your future.

We suggest taking a social media hiatus and remembering not to post, text, or say anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable playing at your hearing in front of a judge or jury.



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PITFALL #3:

Missing or Arriving Late to Court Hearings

We know having a Criminal Case against you can be stressful and inconvenient. We also know many people avoid situations that cause stress. Remember that this is your future at stake!

When you hire our law firm, we make every effort to protect you and your future. We care about your case as if you were family. Make sure to take things seriously. This includes showing up on time and never missing court appearances or appointments. The Courtroom is a serious, formal place of respect. Judges, attorneys, and staff take things seriously and things will not be pleasant for you if you do not respect courtroom procedure.

Follow your attorney's instructions and do your best to be as respectful as possible. Missing your court date can result in the forfeiture of your bond and an arrest warrant. Even if you haven't hired an attorney yet, you must show up to your court appearances.

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PITFALL #4:

Waiting to Hire an Attorney

If you have been arrested or you suspect that you may have committed a crime, we recommend that you contact an attorney immediately. Waiting to hire an attorney until after you are indicted or formally charged can result in undue stress and poor, knee jerk decision making.

Hiring an attorney as soon as you are released from jail gives you the best opportunity to reach a favorable outcome. Oftentimes, your attorney can investigate the matter beforehand and communicate with prosecutors before formal proceedings even begin.

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PITFALL #5:

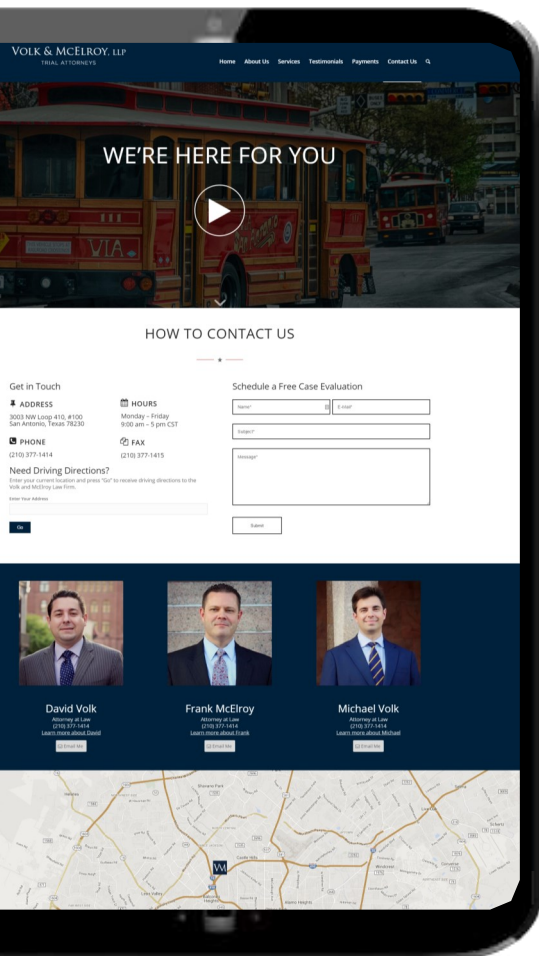
Signing Statements or Agreeing to Cooperate without the assistance of Counsel

Law Enforcement may offer you the option of cooperating with them in exchange for leniency in your case. Do not agree to this without the assistance of a lawyer. Involving counsel on your side should not affect the availability of such an agreement, and you want to be as protected as possible.

Hiring someone with your best interest in mind is the only way to make important decisions like this while knowing your rights are protected. Experienced criminal law attorneys can give you invaluable advice and realistic expectations about the criminal justice system. Never rely on the word or advice of anyone who has not been retained as your attorney and trusted adviser.



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