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STAGES IN A FELONY CASE

Stage 1: Pre-Filing Investigation

- Before Case Begins in Court
 - Gather witness statements and mitigation evidence
 - Negotiate case with arresting agency and/or prosecutor

Stage 2: Arraignment

- Your First Court Appearance
 - Enter a not guilty plea
 - Argue bail/ release conditions
 - Set future court dates
- Bail Review Hearing
 - Typically three days after arraignment
 - Only necessary if defendant is in custody

Stage 3: Case Preparation

- Investigation
 - Analyze discovery
 - Interview witnesses
 - Engage expert witnesses
 - Prepare defense

Stage 4: Readiness Conference #1

- 1st Settlement Conference
 - Discuss settlement in chambers with the judge and prosecutor
 - Present mitigation

Stage 5: Preliminary Hearing

- Prosecutor Puts on Evidence
 - DA puts on witnesses to establish probable cause
 - Opportunity to poke holes in case/show witness is wrong or lying
 - Defense attacks charges
 - Argue motions
 - Case can be dismissed or reduced to a misdemeanor

Stage 6: Arraignment in Trial Court

- Procedural Hearing
 - File any motions
 - Set future court dates

Stage 7: Readiness Conference #2

- Settlement Opportunity
 - Discuss settlement with the judge and prosecutor
 - Discuss trial issues
 - Discuss evidence presented at the Preliminary Hearing
 - Present mitigation materials

Stage 8: Motions

- Hearing on the Motions Filed
 - Argue motions previously filed
 - Review trial strategy
 - Subpoena witnesses for trial
 - PC § 995 motion (motion to dismiss)
 - PC § 1538.5 motion (suppress evidence)
 - Discovery motions

Stage 9: Trial

- Jury Trial
 - Motions in Limine
 - Pick a jury (“voir dire”)
 - Opening statements
 - Prosecution puts on its case
 - Mid trial motions
 - Defense puts on its case
 - End of trial motions
 - Closing arguments
 - Verdict (Not Guilty!)