

Presenting the Case

As in all criminal trials, the State will present its case first by calling witnesses to testify against you. After each prosecution witness has finished his testimony, you will have the right to cross-examine the witness. Your examination must be in the form of questions and you must not argue with the witness. Do not attempt to tell your side of the story at this time. You will have an opportunity to do so later in the trial. After the prosecution has presented its case, you may present your case. You have the right to call any witness who has knowledge of the incident.

If you so desire, you may testify in your own behalf, but as a defendant, you may not be compelled to testify. It is your choice, and your silence cannot be used against you. If you do testify, the State has the right to cross-examine you.

After all testimony is concluded, both sides can make a closing argument. This is your opportunity to tell the court why you think that you are not guilty of the offense charged. The State has the right to present the first and last arguments. The closing argument may be based only on the testimony presented during the trial. As stated previously, if you so desire, you may testify in your own behalf, but cannot be compelled to do so. It is your own choice and your silence will not and cannot be used against you.