



Louisiana Justice Coalition  
P.O. Box 19403  
New Orleans, LA 70179  
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(504) 558-0378 (f)

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for contacting the Louisiana Justice Coalition. The Louisiana Justice Coalition is an organization working to achieve systemic change for Louisiana's broken criminal justice system, working primarily on the crisis in indigent defense. If you were represented by a public defender, and believe that your representation was less satisfactory than you deserved, we would like to hear more about your experience. We have no attorneys on staff and are not set up to offer legal counsel or assistance to any individuals for their cases.

National experts and local advocates universally agree that the public defense system in this state is among the worst in the nation. This means people who cannot afford to pay a private attorney are regularly denied equal access to justice. Our coalition is united and guided by the belief that the amount of money an individual has in their pocket should not determine the quality of their defense.

While there are plenty of statistics and research to illustrate the problems, it is the voices and stories of real people, such as yourself, that will ultimately convince the media to report the crisis and the politicians to act to correct it. While we cannot offer any legal representation, we may be able to offer you a forum to tell your story. This story may be used to publicize the problem in the system and/or encourage more people to join the fight for fairness. Your story could be very important in our efforts to prevent injustice from happening to the next person in your situation.

The attached form has questions that will help us build a story from your experience with a public defender. Please fill it out to the best of your ability and submit it to the Louisiana Justice Coalition. If you currently have an attorney working on your case, you should consult with your lawyer prior to filling out this form. We look forward to hearing from you and doing our best to fight for fairness in the criminal justice system.

Sincerely,

Heather H. Hall, Director

**The Louisiana Justice Coalition (LJC) is a diverse group of community leaders and organizations committed to the reform our indigent defense system. LJC has initiated a comprehensive public education campaign to highlight the crisis in Louisiana's indigent defense system and to raise community voices for change. The campaign focuses on ensuring fundamental fairness, sound fiscal policy and effective policies to ensure positive community welfare for all of our citizens.**

**LJC believes that the only way to achieve these objectives is to implement an indigent defense system that complies with the American Bar Association *Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System*.**

**I. General Information**

First Name:	Last Name:	MI:
DOC Number:		
Address:		
Date of Birth:	Social Security Number:	
Case Number:	Police Item Number:	
What race are you:		
Were you employed at the time of your arrest? If yes, what was your occupation?		
Do you currently have an attorney? Circle One:    Yes        No		
If yes, provide his/her name, phone number and address:		
Name:	Phone Number:	
Address:		
Parish in which you were convicted:		
What were you convicted of?		
a) If your conviction was for theft, robbery or burglary, what were the object(s) stolen and at what value?		
b) If your conviction was for drugs, what type and what quantity?		
Date of your conviction?	What was your sentence?	
Circle One:    I had a jury trial        I pled guilty        I had a judge trial		
Name of your trial attorney:		
Name of the prosecutor at your trial:		
Name of judge at your trial:		
Date your conviction was final:		

## II. Co-Defendant Information

Did you have co-defendants? Circle one:      Yes      No
If yes, what were their names and race?
What counts did your co-defendant(s) face?
Were you tried together or separately? Or, did they plead guilty?
What was their sentence?

## III. Victims and Witnesses

Were you identified by the victim or witnesses? Circle one:      Yes      No
If yes, describe how many witnesses/victims identified you and how you were identified (such as a line-up or photographs):
If there was a victim, what race were they?
Was there a confidential informant or a jailhouse snitch? If yes, briefly explain:
Did you have an alibi witness? If yes, who were they and did they testify on your behalf?

## IV. Statements and Confessions

Did the police interview you? Circle One:      Yes      No
If yes, how many times?
How long were the interviews?
Did you ask to speak with a lawyer during the interview? Please explain why or why not:
If you did speak with a lawyer, when was the first time you spoke with him/her?

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Did you sign anything after interview? If yes, what did you sign?
Did you give a statement or confession? If yes, who did you give the statement to and how was it given (please specify written, video-taped or tape-recorded):
If the statement was written, did you sign it? Circle one:    Yes                  No
Was your lawyer present during your statement or confession? Circle one:    Yes                  No
What were your reasons for providing a statement to the police?
The goal of this section is to hear about your experience during your initial dealings with the police. Briefly explain your thoughts on how you were treated by the police during the statement and confession phase.

**V. Representation**

How many days did you spend in jail/prison before you met with your lawyer?
How soon before your trial did you meet with your lawyer?
Where were you when you spoke with him/her?
How long did you meet with them?
Did you have privacy when you met with your lawyer or were there other people around? Please explain:
Were you able to contact your lawyer by telephone? Circle One:    Yes                  No

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Did you meet more than one lawyer? Circle one: Yes No  
If yes, who was he or she and when did you meet with them?

With as much detail as you can remember, please describe all the times you met with your lawyer, where you met, for how long you met and if you had privacy: (this includes visits to jail, court dates and phone calls).

Specifically, what did you discuss with your lawyer during your conversations?

Did you provide your lawyer with any information such as witnesses that would assist in your defense? If yes, please describe:

Did he/she follow up on this information? Circle One: Yes No  
If your attorney did not follow up with the information did your lawyer explain why? Please explain:

Briefly, evaluate your lawyer's overall performance: Is there anything that your lawyer may have done that you believe affected the outcome of your case?

### **VI. Physical Evidence**

Was any physical evidence entered at the trial on behalf of the prosecution? If yes, please explain:

Was any physical evidence entered at the on behalf of the defense? If yes, please explain:

In what facility was the evidence processed?

Were any expert witnesses called by the prosecution? Circle one:      Yes              No

Did your attorney question this witness? Circle one:      Yes              No

Did your attorney request any expert witnesses to address physical evidence? Circle one:      Yes              No

### **VII. Trial**

**Not Guilty Plea:** Did your lawyer make an opening statement? How long was that statement?

Did you lawyer make a closing statement? How long was that statement?

Did you have an alibi witnesses? Were they called to testify?

Briefly explain why you believe you had a fair or unfair trial:

<b>Guilty Plea:</b> Why did you plead guilty?
What is the most amount of time you would have spent in prison if you were found guilty on all counts against you?
How many counts against you were dropped and/or reduced?
How much time did you spend in jail/prison before you pled guilty?
Did anyone ever recommend that you plead guilty? If so, who and did they explain why?

**VIII. Appeals**

Are you eligible to file an appeal? Circle one:      Yes      No
Do you know who your attorney is? Circle one:      Yes      No
Is it the same attorney that handled your trial? Circle one:      Yes      No
If it is a different lawyer, what is the lawyer's name?
Have you been in contact with your attorney? Circle one:      Yes      No
If you have been in contact with your lawyer, with as much detail as you can remember please describe when you met with your lawyer, where you met, for how long you met and if you had privacy: (this includes phone calls, visits to jail, court dates).
If you have called your lawyer but received no response, with as much detail as possible please catalog each phone call and what happened:

Has communication with your attorney been affected by Hurricane Katrina? Please explain:

**IX. Post-Conviction**

Are you eligible to file for post conviction relief? Circle one: Yes No

If you have not, have you filed in the past? Circle one: Yes No

Was ineffective assistance of counsel one of your claims? Circle One: Yes No

**X. Personal Statement**



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Please describe in your own words what happened in your case and why you believe you were treated unfairly. Please limit your answer to 300 words.