

# Criminal Law Legal Aid Workshop

## From Probable Cause to Mock Trial A Three Section Criminal Law Workshop

Over the course of this workshop, participants will work through a criminal case from the beginning of the investigation through trial.

Each section will build on the last. Participants will review facts, examine charges, analyze probable cause, prepare arguments, and eventually participate in a mock trial.

### **Workshop Focus:**

Understanding how criminal cases are built, challenged, and argued in court.

## Workshop Purpose

This workshop is designed to help participants understand how criminal law works in practice.

Rather than only discussing legal concepts, participants will work through a fictional criminal case step by step. Each part of the case will be reviewed the same way attorneys, judges, and legal aid representatives may encounter it during the criminal process.

By the end of the workshop, participants should understand how to identify legal issues, review evidence, challenge weak charges, and prepare for trial.

## What This Workshop Will Cover

- Criminal case basics
- Investigative reports
- Probable cause
- Arrest and search warrants
- Criminal charges and legal elements
- Discovery review
- Evidence issues
- Pretrial motions
- Case theory
- Witness preparation
- Direct and cross examination
- Opening and closing arguments
- Mock trial procedure

## Workshop Format This is a 3 section workshop.

Each section will focus on a different stage of a criminal case.

### **Section 1:**

Case file review, discovery, and evidence basics

### **Section 2:**

Legal issues, probable cause, motions, and case strategy

### **Section 3:**

Trial procedure, objections, evidence presentation, and witness questioning

## The Case We Will Be Working

Throughout the workshop, participants will work through one criminal case:

### **State of San Andreas v. Marcus Vale**

This case involves an alleged armed robbery, vehicle pursuit, firearm possession, government equipment possession, and disputed identity issues.

The case is designed to be fair for both sides.

The State will have evidence to argue guilt.

The Defense will have legal and factual issues to challenge.

## Why This Case Is Being Used

This case was created to reflect issues that commonly appear in criminal warrants and court proceedings.

It includes:

- A serious criminal allegation
- A vehicle pursuit
- A masked suspect
- A firearm
- Recovered cash
- Government issued equipment
- A second unidentified person
- A vehicle not registered to the defendant
- Evidence that can be argued by both sides

The goal is not to create an easy case.

The goal is to create a realistic case.

## How We Will Work the Case

Participants should not rush to decide whether Marcus Vale is guilty or not guilty.

The case will be reviewed step by step.

First, we will ask:

- **What happened?**
- **Who reported it?**
- **What did witnesses actually see?**
- **What did officers observe?**
- **What evidence was recovered?**
- **What charges were filed?**
- **What facts support each charge?**
- **What facts are missing?**

## Key Legal Question

The first major legal question is not:

“Is the defendant guilty?”

The first major legal question is:

## Is there probable cause?

Before a case reaches trial, the court must often determine whether there are enough facts to justify an arrest, search, seizure, or charge.

Probable cause is where our case analysis begins.

## What Is Probable Cause?

Probable cause is the legal standard used to determine whether there are enough facts to believe:

- A crime may have occurred, and
- A specific person may be connected to that crime.
- Probable cause is lower than proof beyond a reasonable doubt, but it still requires facts.
- It cannot be based only on suspicion, assumptions, or guesses.

## Probable Cause vs. Proof at Trial

Probable cause is used early in the case.

It asks whether there is enough factual basis to move forward.

Proof beyond a reasonable doubt is used at trial.

It asks whether the State has proven every element of a charge.

A case may have enough probable cause for a warrant but still have weaknesses that matter at trial.

## Evidence vs. Assumption

One of the most important skills in criminal law is separating evidence from assumption.

**Evidence** is something supported by a report, witness statement, video, physical item, or officer observation.

**Assumption** is something someone believes may be true but has not clearly proven.

In this case, participants will be asked to identify which facts are evidence and which facts are assumptions.

## Questions to Keep Asking

As we review the case, keep asking:

- What do we know?
- How do we know it?
- Who said it?
- Can that person prove it?
- Does the evidence support the charge?
- Does the evidence connect to Marcus Vale specifically?
- Are there other possible explanations?
- What would the State argue?
- What would the Defense argue?

## Think Like a Legal Reviewer

When reviewing a criminal case, do **not only** ask what happened.

Ask whether the facts legally support the charge.

A strong legal review looks at:

- The timeline
- The witnesses
- The evidence
- The defendant's connection to the evidence
- The elements of each charge
- The strength of the affidavit
- The possibility of alternative explanations

## The Role of the State

The State is responsible for proving the case.

The State must show that the defendant committed each charged offense.

The State may use:

- Witness testimony
- Officer testimony
- Physical evidence
- Video evidence
- Statements
- Circumstantial evidence

The State does not have to prove everything at the probable cause stage, but it must have enough facts to justify moving forward.

## The Role of the Defense

The Defense is responsible for protecting the defendant's rights and challenging the State's case.

The Defense may argue:

- The wrong person was charged
- The evidence is weak
- The search was improper
- The charge is unsupported
- The witness is unreliable
- The State is relying on assumptions
- The evidence does not prove every element

The Defense does **not** have to prove innocence.

The **burden** remains on the State.

## The Role of the Judge

The Judge must remain neutral.

The Judge does not investigate the case.

The Judge does not gather evidence.

The Judge reviews what is presented and decides whether the legal standard has been met.

At different stages, the Judge may decide:

- Whether a warrant should be granted
- Whether evidence should be suppressed
- Whether a charge should proceed
- Whether objections are proper
- Whether the State has met its burden

## Workshop Ground Rules

During this workshop:

- Argue the facts, not each other.
- Stay focused on the legal issues.
- Do not assume facts not in the packet.
- Separate personal opinion from legal analysis.
- Remember that both sides should have something meaningful to argue.
- Treat the mock trial seriously, but keep it educational.

The goal is to learn how criminal cases are built and tested.

## Starting Point

Before we review the facts of the case, remember:

- A criminal case is built one step at a time.
  - First, we identify what happened.
  - Then, we identify the charges.
  - Then, we ask whether the facts support those charges.
  - Then, we examine the evidence.
  - Then, we prepare arguments.
  - Then, we test the case in court.

This is where the workshop begins.

# Section 1: Case File Review, Discovery, and Probable Cause

Reviewing the evidence before the case reaches trial  
“What do we have?”

Section One focuses on the case file. Participants will review the docket, discovery, witness statements, evidence, and arrest warrant affidavit to determine what the case proves, what it does not prove, and whether probable cause exists.

The goal is not to decide guilt.

The goal is to determine whether the facts presented are strong enough to move the case forward.

# State of San Andreas v. Marcus Vale

**Case No.:** 8821

**Defendant:** Marcus Vale

**Citizen ID:** MV92LQ18

**Alleged Incident Date:** May 9, 2026

**Location:** LTD Gasoline, Strawberry Avenue

**Secondary Location:** Vespucci Canals

**Arresting Agency:** LSPD

**Lead Officer:** Officer Daniel Reeves

**Assisting Officer:** Trooper Elena Marsh

**Assigned Prosecutor:** State of San Andreas

**Defense Counsel:** Legal Aid Participant Team

## CRIMINAL CHARGES

### **P.C. 2002 | Second Degree Robbery**

The State alleges the defendant robbed the LTD Gasoline clerk by force or threat while armed.

### **P.C. 5020 | Reckless Evading**

The State alleges the defendant fled from law enforcement in a vehicle while driving in a manner that created danger to the public.

### **P.C. 5006 | Resisting Arrest**

The State alleges the defendant fled on foot and refused lawful commands after the vehicle pursuit ended.

### **P.C. 8009 | Criminal Possession of a Class 1 Weapon**

The State alleges the defendant possessed a pistol recovered from the vehicle.

### **P.C. 8016 | Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm**

The State alleges a shot was fired during the robbery or immediately after leaving the scene.

On May 9, 2026, at approximately 8:42 PM, a masked individual entered the LTD Gasoline on Strawberry Avenue. The individual was wearing a black hoodie, dark pants, gloves, and a face covering. The clerk later reported that the person pointed a pistol at him and demanded money from the register.

The clerk, fearing for his safety, turned over approximately **\$3,700** in cash. The suspect then exited the store. Seconds later, the clerk heard what sounded like a single gunshot outside the business. No one was struck, and no property damage was immediately confirmed from the alleged shot.

The clerk could not identify the suspect's face because the individual was masked. He stated the suspect appeared to be male based on voice and build, but he could not make a positive identification.

A civilian witness standing across the street reported seeing a person in dark clothing run from the direction of the LTD and enter, or move toward, a dark blue Sultan Classic. The witness then heard a loud pop and saw the vehicle leave the area at a high rate of speed. The witness could not clearly identify the driver or confirm how many people were inside the vehicle.

Approximately six minutes later, Officer Daniel Reeves observed a dark blue Sultan Classic traveling near Innocence Boulevard. The vehicle appeared to match the description given by the civilian witness. Officer Reeves activated emergency lights and sirens in an attempt to stop the vehicle. The vehicle failed to stop and a pursuit began.

During the pursuit, the Sultan Classic allegedly ran multiple red lights, crossed into opposing lanes of traffic, and nearly struck a civilian vehicle near Vespucci Boulevard. The pursuit ended near Vespucci Canals after the vehicle struck a barrier.

Officers reported that two individuals appeared to exit the vehicle after the crash. One person fled east and was not located. The second person, later identified as **Marcus Vale**, fled west on foot along the canal path. Officers gave several commands for him to stop. Marcus continued running for a short distance before being detained near a fence line.

Marcus Vale was not found with a weapon, cash, mask, taser, or handcuffs on his person at the time of arrest. During detention, he stated:

"I didn't rob anybody. I was just in the car."  
He also stated:  
"That car isn't even mine."

The dark blue Sultan Classic was later confirmed to be registered to **Keon Bell**, not Marcus Vale.

# Evidence File

## Evidence / Exhibits Attached

- **Exhibit A:** Initial Incident Report
- **Exhibit B:** Victim Statement of Jonah Price
- **Exhibit C:** Civilian Witness Statement of Alina Brooks
- **Exhibit D:** Responding Officer Narrative
- **Exhibit E:** Vehicle Search Report
- **Exhibit F:** Evidence Inventory
- **Exhibit G:** Arrest Warrant Affidavit

## Physical Evidence Listed

- Pistol recovered from passenger glove box
- Loose cash totaling \$3,420 recovered from glove box
- Government issued taser recovered from glove box
- Government issued handcuffs recovered from glove box
- Spent casing recovered from front passenger area

# Evidence File

## Evidence That Supports the State

- The pistol, cash, and casing are consistent with an armed robbery.
- The vehicle was located shortly after the reported robbery.
- Marcus Vale fled from the vehicle after the pursuit ended.
- The taser and handcuffs may support the government equipment charge if the State can prove knowledge and control.

## Evidence That Supports the Defense

- The items were not found on Marcus Vale's person.
- The vehicle was registered to Keon Bell, not Marcus Vale.
- Another person fled from the vehicle and was not located.
- No witness identified Marcus Vale as the masked robber.
- No one saw Marcus fire a weapon.
- The taser and handcuffs were in the glove box, not in plain view.

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Key Question : Does the evidence connect Marcus Vale to the crimes, or does it only connect him to the vehicle?

# Exhibit B:

## Victim Statement of Jonah Price

### Victim Statement of Jonah Price

**Witness:** Jonah Price

**Role:** LTD Gasoline Clerk

**Location:** LTD Gasoline, Strawberry Avenue

**Statement Date:** May 9, 2026

Jonah Price stated that he was working the register when a masked individual entered the store wearing a black hoodie, dark pants, gloves, and a face covering.

The individual displayed a pistol and demanded money from the register. Jonah stated that he feared for his safety and turned over approximately **\$3,700** in cash.

After the individual exited the store, Jonah heard what sounded like a single gunshot outside.

Jonah did not see who fired the shot.

Jonah could not see the suspect's face and cannot identify Marcus Vale as the person who entered the store.

### Key Question:

Does this statement prove Marcus Vale committed the robbery, or only that a robbery occurred?

## What This Statement Proves

### Supports the State:

- A robbery was reported by the victim.
- The suspect used fear or threat by displaying a pistol.
- Money was taken from the register.
- The victim heard what sounded like a gunshot shortly after the suspect exited.
- This statement supports the existence of a robbery and possible firearm involvement.

### Supports the Defense:

- Jonah cannot identify Marcus Vale.
- The suspect's face was covered.
- Jonah did not see what vehicle the suspect entered.
- Jonah did not see who fired the shot.
- The statement proves a robbery occurred, but does not prove Marcus Vale was the robber.

### Workshop Question:

What charges does this exhibit support, and what charges does it fail to connect to Marcus Vale?

### This exhibit supports:

**P.C. 2002 | Second Degree Robbery** - Strong support that a robbery occurred.

**P.C. 8009 | Criminal Possession of a Class 1 Weapon** - Some support that a firearm was involved, but not that Marcus possessed it.

**P.C. 8016 | Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm** - Weak support that a shot may have been fired, but Jonah did not see who fired it.

### This exhibit does NOT strongly support:

**P.C. 5020 | Reckless Evading** - No vehicle pursuit information.

**P.C. 5006 | Resisting Arrest** - No arrest or flight information.

**P.C. 5002 | Possession of Government Equipment** - No taser or handcuff information.

# Exhibit C:

## Civilian Witness Statement of Alina Brooks

### Victim Statement of Alina Brooks

**Witness:** Alina Brooks

**Role:** Civilian Witness

**Location:** Across from LTD Gasoline, Strawberry Avenue

**Statement Date:** May 9, 2026

Alina Brooks stated that she was standing across the street near the sidewalk when she saw a person in dark clothing run from the direction of LTD Gasoline. She stated that she heard a loud pop that sounded like a gunshot.

Shortly after, she saw a dark blue vehicle leave the area at a high rate of speed.

Alina stated that she believed the vehicle may have been a Sultan Classic, but she was not completely sure.

She could not clearly see the driver.

She could not identify Marcus Vale as the person who ran from the LTD or as the person driving the vehicle.

She also could not confirm how many people were inside the vehicle.

### Key Question:

Does this statement connect Marcus Vale to the crime, or does it only create a possible link between the scene and a vehicle?

## What This Statement Proves

### Supports the State:

- A person in dark clothing was seen running from the direction of the LTD.
- A loud pop was heard near the time of the incident.
- A dark blue vehicle left the area at high speed shortly after.
- The vehicle description may connect the robbery scene to the later police pursuit.
- This statement helps establish a possible getaway vehicle.

### Supports the Defense:

- Alina cannot identify Marcus Vale.
- Alina cannot clearly identify the driver.
- Alina is not completely sure the vehicle was a Sultan Classic.
- Alina cannot confirm how many people were inside the vehicle.
- The statement connects a dark blue vehicle to the scene, but does not directly connect Marcus Vale to the robbery.

### Workshop Question:

What charges does this exhibit support, and what charges does it fail to connect to Marcus Vale?

### Charges Connected to Exhibit C

**P.C. 2002 | Second Degree Robbery** - Supports the timeline after the robbery, but does not identify Marcus as the robber.

**P.C. 8016 | Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm** - Weak support because Alina heard a loud pop, but did not see who fired a weapon.

**P.C. 5020 | Reckless Evading** - Indirect support because the dark blue vehicle may later connect to the pursuit.

### This exhibit does NOT strongly support:

**P.C. 5006 | Resisting Arrest** - No arrest or foot pursuit information

**P.C. 8009 | Criminal Possession of a Class 1 Weapon** - No direct observation of Marcus with a firearm.

**P.C. 5002 | Possession of Government Equipment** - No government equipment information.

# Exhibit D:

## Responding Officer Narrative

**Officer:** Daniel Reeves

**Agency:** LSPD

**Primary Location:** LTD Gasoline, Strawberry Avenue

**Secondary Location:** Vespucci Canals

**Report Date:** May 9, 2026

Officer Daniel Reeves stated that he responded to a reported armed robbery at LTD Gasoline on Strawberry Avenue. Upon review of the initial information, Officer Reeves learned that the suspect was described as wearing dark clothing and that a dark blue vehicle had reportedly left the area shortly after the incident. Approximately six minutes after the reported robbery, Officer Reeves observed a dark blue Sultan Classic traveling near Innocence Boulevard. Reeves stated that the vehicle appeared to match the description provided by the civilian witness. He activated emergency lights and sirens in an attempt to conduct a traffic stop. The vehicle failed to stop. A pursuit began.

Officer Reeves stated that during the pursuit, the vehicle ran multiple red lights, crossed into opposing lanes of traffic, and nearly struck a civilian vehicle near Vespucci Boulevard. The pursuit ended near Vespucci Canals after the vehicle struck a barrier.

After the crash, Officer Reeves observed two individuals exit the vehicle. One individual fled east and was not located. The second individual, later identified as Marcus Vale, fled west on foot along the canal path. Officer Reeves gave several commands for Marcus Vale to stop. Marcus continued running for a short distance before being detained near a fence line.

At the time of arrest, Marcus Vale was not found with a weapon, cash, mask, taser, or handcuffs on his person. During detention, Marcus stated:  
"I didn't rob anybody. I was just in the car."  
He also stated:  
"That car isn't even mine."

### Key Question:

Does this narrative connect Marcus Vale to the robbery, or does it only connect him to the vehicle after the robbery?

## What This Statement Proves

### Supports the State:

- Officer Reeves located a vehicle matching the civilian witness description shortly after the robbery.
- The vehicle failed to stop for law enforcement.
- The vehicle was allegedly driven recklessly during the pursuit.
- Marcus Vale fled from the vehicle after the crash.
- Marcus ignored commands to stop and was detained after a foot chase.
- Marcus admitted he was in the vehicle.

### Workshop Question:

What charges does this exhibit support, and what charges does it fail to connect to Marcus Vale?

### Charges Connected to Exhibit D

**P.C. 5020 | Reckless Evading** - Strong support that the vehicle fled from police, but the State must still prove Marcus was the driver or legally responsible for the evading.

**P.C. 5006 | Resisting Arrest** - Strong support because Marcus allegedly fled on foot after commands to stop.

**P.C. 2002 | Second Degree Robbery** - Moderate support through timing, vehicle description, and Marcus fleeing from the vehicle, but no direct identification.

**P.C. 8009 | Criminal Possession of a Class 1 Weapon** - Weak direct support at this stage because no weapon was found on Marcus.

**P.C. 8016 | Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm** - Weak direct support because Officer Reeves did not see Marcus fire a weapon.

**P.C. 5002 | Possession of Government Equipment** - No direct support from this narrative unless later evidence connects Marcus to items in the vehicle.

### Supports the Defense:

- Officer Reeves did not see Marcus Vale commit the robbery.
- Officer Reeves did not see Marcus Vale inside the LTD.
- Officer Reeves did not state that Marcus was seen holding a firearm.
- Marcus was not found with the weapon, cash, mask, taser, or handcuffs on his person.
- Another person fled from the vehicle and was not located.
- Marcus stated that he was only in the car and that the vehicle was not his.
- The narrative connects Marcus to the vehicle and foot chase, but not directly to the robbery itself.

# Exhibit E:

## Vehicle Search Report

**Vehicle:** Dark Blue Sultan Classic

**Registered Owner:** Keon Bell

**Search Location:** Vespucci Canals / Secured Police Hold

**Related Case:** State of San Andreas v. Marcus Vale

**Date of Search:** May 9, 2026

After the pursuit ended near Vespucci Canals, officers secured the dark blue Sultan Classic believed to be connected to the reported armed robbery.

The vehicle was confirmed to be registered to **Keon Bell**, not Marcus Vale.

A search of the vehicle resulted in the recovery of the following items:

Pistol recovered from the glove box

Loose cash totaling **\$3,420** recovered from the glove box

Government issued taser recovered from the glove box

Government issued handcuffs recovered from the glove box

One spent casing recovered from the front passenger area

Marcus Vale was **not** found with the pistol, cash, taser, handcuffs, or casing on his person at the time of arrest.

### Key Question:

Does this search report prove Marcus Vale possessed the items, or does it only prove the items were inside the vehicle?

## What This Statement Proves

### Supports the Defense:

- The vehicle was registered to Keon Bell, not Marcus Vale.
- The items were not found on Marcus Vale's person.
- Another individual fled from the vehicle and was not located.
- The taser and handcuffs were inside the glove box, not in plain view.
- The pistol was on the passenger floorboard, not in Marcus's hands.
- The cash was not confirmed as marked or directly traced to the LTD register.
- The report does not prove who placed the items in the vehicle.

### Supports the State:

- The recovered items are consistent with the reported robbery.
- The pistol supports the allegation that a firearm was involved.
- The cash may support the allegation that money was taken from LTD.
- The spent casing may support the allegation that a firearm was discharged.
- The taser and handcuffs may support the government equipment charge.
- All items were found in the same vehicle Marcus Vale fled from after the pursuit.

### Workshop Question:

What charges does this exhibit support, and what charges does it fail to connect to Marcus Vale?

### Charges Connected to Exhibit E

**P.C. 2002 | Second Degree Robbery** - Moderate to strong support because the mask, pistol, and cash are consistent with the reported robbery.

**P.C. 8009 | Criminal Possession of a Class 1 Weapon** - Moderate support, but possession is disputed because the pistol was not found on Marcus.

**P.C. 8016 | Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm** - Weak to moderate support because a spent casing was recovered, but the report does not prove Marcus fired the weapon.

**P.C. 5002 | Possession of Government Equipment** - Moderate support that government equipment was present, but weak on whether Marcus knew about or controlled the taser and handcuffs.

**P.C. 5020 | Reckless Evading** - Limited support. The search report does not prove who drove the vehicle.

**P.C. 5006 | Resisting Arrest** - Limited support. The search report does not address the foot pursuit directly.

# Exhibit F: Evidence Inventory

**Case:** State of San Andreas v. Marcus Vale

**Case Number :** 8821

**Logged By :** Evidence Technician / LSPD

**Evidence Source :** Dark Blue Sultan Classic

**Date Logged:** May 9, 2026

The following items were collected and logged into evidence:

**Item 1:** Pistol

**Location Found:** Glove box

**Condition :** Functional firearm, later confirmed operational

**Initial Relevance :** May connect to reported firearm used during robbery.

**Item 2:** Loose cash totaling \$3,420

**Location Found:** Glove box

**Condition:** Mixed bills, not marked

**Initial Relevance:** May connect to reported firearm used during robbery.

**Item 3:** Government issued taser

**Location Found:** Glove box

**Condition:** Government issued equipment

**Initial Relevance:** Possible possession of government equipment

**Item 4:** Government issued handcuffs

**Location Found:** Glove box

**Condition :** Government issued equipment

**Initial Relevance :** Possible possession of government equipment

**Item 5:** Spent casing

**Location Found:** Front passenger area

**Condition :** Single spent casing

**Initial Relevance :** May connect to reported gunshot

## Key Question:

Does the inventory prove ownership or possession, or does it only prove that the items existed inside the vehicle?

## What This Statement Proves

### Supports the State:

- The evidence inventory confirms that a pistol, cash, government issued equipment, and a spent casing were recovered from the vehicle.
- The pistol supports the allegation that a firearm was involved.
- The cash may support the allegation that money was taken during the robbery.
- The spent casing may support the claim that a firearm was discharged.
- The taser and handcuffs support the allegation that government equipment was present in the vehicle.
- The pistol, cash, taser, and handcuffs being found together in the glove box may help the State argue common access or shared control over the vehicle's contents.

### Supports the Defense:

- The inventory shows where the items were found, but not who owned them.
- The pistol was not found on Marcus Vale.
- The cash was not found on Marcus Vale.
- The taser and handcuffs were not found on Marcus Vale.
- Most items were located inside the glove box, which creates a major knowledge and control issue.
- The cash was not marked or directly traced to the LTD register.
- The vehicle was not registered to Marcus Vale.
- The inventory does not show fingerprints, DNA, or direct proof that Marcus handled any item.

### Charges Connected to Exhibit F

**P.C. 2002 | Second Degree Robbery** -The pistol and cash support the State's theory, but the absence of a mask or identifying clothing weakens the direct connection to the masked robber.

**P.C. 8009 | Criminal Possession of a Class 1 Weapon** - The pistol supports the weapon charge, but the possession element remains disputed because it was found in the glove box and not on Marcus.

**P.C. 8016 | Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm** - The spent casing supports the possibility that a firearm was fired, but does not prove Marcus fired it.

**P.C. 5002 | Possession of Government Equipment** - The taser and handcuffs support the existence of government equipment, but knowledge and control remain disputed.

**P.C. 5020 | Reckless Evading** - The inventory does not directly prove reckless evading.

**P.C. 5006 | Resisting Arrest** - The inventory does not directly prove resisting arrest.

# Exhibit G:

## Arrest Warrant Affidavit

**Case:** State of San Andreas v. Marcus Vale

**Case Number:** 8821

**Affiant:** Officer Daniel Reeves

**Agency:** Los Santos Police Department

**Defendant:** Marcus Vale

**Citizen ID:** MV92LQ18

**Date Submitted:** May 10, 2026

I, Officer Daniel Reeves, being a duly sworn law enforcement officer for the State of San Andreas, do hereby state under oath that I have probable cause to believe Marcus Vale committed violations of the San Andreas Criminal Law.

On May 9, 2026, officers were notified of a reported armed robbery at LTD Gasoline on Strawberry Avenue. The reporting party, Jonah Price, stated that a masked individual entered the store, displayed a pistol, demanded money from the register, and left the location with cash.

A civilian witness, Alina Brooks, stated that shortly after the incident, she saw a person in dark clothing run from the direction of LTD Gasoline. She also reported hearing a loud pop and observing a dark blue vehicle leave the area at a high rate of speed.

Approximately six minutes later, I observed a dark blue Sultan Classic near Innocence Boulevard. The vehicle appeared to match the description provided by the civilian witness. I activated emergency lights and sirens in an attempt to conduct a traffic stop, but the vehicle failed to stop.

During the pursuit, the vehicle ran multiple red lights, crossed into opposing lanes of traffic, and nearly struck a civilian vehicle. The pursuit ended near Vespucci Canals after the vehicle struck a barrier.

After the crash, two individuals appeared to exit the vehicle. One individual fled east and was not located. The second individual, later identified as Marcus Vale, fled west on foot and ignored commands to stop. Marcus Vale was detained near a fence line.

A search of the vehicle resulted in the recovery of a pistol, loose cash totaling \$3,420, a government issued taser, government issued handcuffs, and one spent casing. The pistol, cash, taser, and handcuffs were recovered from the glove box. The spent casing was recovered from the front passenger area.

The vehicle was confirmed to be registered to Keon Bell, not Marcus Vale.

Marcus Vale was not found with the pistol, cash, taser, handcuffs, or casing on his person.

Based on the totality of the circumstances, including the reported armed robbery, the matching vehicle description, the vehicle pursuit, Marcus Vale's flight from the vehicle, and the recovery of evidence from the vehicle, I believe probable cause exists for the listed offenses.

### Key Question:

Does the affidavit provide probable cause for each charge, or does it rely on one chain of assumptions?

### The Affidavit Should Establish:

- A crime occurred.
- Marcus Vale is connected to the crime.
- The requested charges are supported by specific facts.
- The evidence is connected to the charges.
- The warrant is based on facts, not assumptions.
- An arrest warrant does establish probable cause. Not guilt without a doubt.

# What the Affidavit Must Prove

## Supports the State:

- The affidavit creates a timeline from the robbery to the vehicle pursuit.
- The vehicle was located shortly after the incident.
- Marcus fled from the vehicle after the crash
- Marcus admitted he was in the vehicle.
- Evidence connected to the alleged crimes was recovered from the same vehicle.
- The State can argue the totality of the circumstances supports probable cause.

### Workshop Question:

#### Review the affidavit as if you are the Judge.

Would you grant the arrest warrant in full?

Would you grant it only for some charges?

Would you deny it without prejudice and request more facts?

Which charges are supported by facts?

Which charges rely too heavily on assumptions?

## Supports the Defense:

- The victim cannot identify Marcus Vale.
- The civilian witness cannot identify Marcus Vale.
- The civilian witness was not certain about the vehicle model.
- The vehicle was not registered to Marcus Vale.
- Another individual fled and was not located.
- Most of the evidence was found in the glove box.
- No evidence was found on Marcus Vale's person.
- The affidavit does not prove Marcus was the driver.
- The affidavit does not prove Marcus fired a weapon.
- The affidavit does not prove Marcus knew what was inside the glove box.

## Charges Connected to Exhibit G

**P.C. 5020 | Reckless Evading** - The affidavit supports the vehicle pursuit, but it does not clearly establish that Marcus was the driver.

**P.C. 5006 | Resisting Arrest** - The affidavit strongly supports this charge because Marcus allegedly fled on foot after commands to stop.

**P.C. 2002 | Second Degree Robbery** - The affidavit supports probable cause through the reported robbery, vehicle timing, flight, and recovered pistol and cash. The Defense can argue identity remains weak.

**P.C. 8009 | Criminal Possession of a Class 1 Weapon** - The affidavit supports that a pistol was found, but possession is disputed because it was in the glove box and not on Marcus.

**P.C. 8016 | Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm** - The affidavit supports that a loud pop was heard and a casing was found, but it does not show Marcus fired the weapon.

**P.C. 5002 | Possession of Government Equipment** - The affidavit supports that government equipment was found, but knowledge and control are disputed because the items were inside the glove box of a vehicle not registered to Marcus.

**You completed Section One!**

**You should now be able to answer.**

**What facts do we know?**

**What facts are unclear?**

**What evidence helps the State?**

**What evidence helps the Defense?**

## Section 2: Motions, Investigation, and Trial Preparation

Turning discovery into courtroom strategy  
“Is it enough, and what do we do with it?”

Section Two focuses on what each side does after reviewing the discovery. Participants will identify legal issues, prepare motions, develop case theory, review objections, and prepare trial arguments.

The goal is not to decide guilt.

The goal is to determine whether the facts presented are strong enough to move the case forward.

# From Discovery to Legal Issues

## What Discovery Gave Us

Discovery is the starting point for legal strategy.

In Section One, the case file showed:

- A robbery was reported.
- A masked person entered the LTD.
- The Clerk could not identify Marcus Vale.
- A civilian saw a dark blue vehicle leave the area.
- Police later pursued a dark blue Sultan Classic.
- Marcus Vale fled from the vehicle after the crash.
- Another person fled and was not located.
- A pistol, cash, taser, handcuffs, and casings were found in the vehicle.
- Most items were found in glove box.
- The vehicle was registered to Keon Bell.

## What Legal Issues Appear?

The discovery creates several legal issues:

### Identity

Was Marcus Vale the person who robbed the LTD?

### Possession

Did Marcus knowingly possess the pistol, cash, taser, or handcuffs?

### Vehicle Control

Was Marcus Vale the driver, passenger, or something else?

### Knowledge

Did Marcus know what was inside the glove box?

### Causation

Can Marcus be connected to the alleged gunshot?

### Reliability

Are the witnesses certain enough to support the charges?

### Key Question:

What legal issues should each side focus on before trial?

# What Needs More Investigation?

## State Investigation Goals

The State should look for facts that strengthen the connection between Marcus Vale and the alleged crimes.

The State may want to determine:

- Who was driving the Sultan Classic?
- Where was Marcus seated in the vehicle?
- Was Marcus seen entering or exiting the LTD?
- Can the cash be connected to the LTD register?
- Can the pistol be connected to the spent casing?
- Can any witness identify Marcus by clothing, voice, build, or behavior?
- Can Keon Bell explain why his vehicle was involved?
- Can the second fleeing person be identified?

## Defense Investigation Goals

The Defense should look for facts that weaken identity, possession, and knowledge.

The Defense may want to determine:

- Was Marcus only a passenger?
- Did Marcus know what was inside the glove box?
- Who owned or controlled the vehicle?
- Was Keon Bell involved?
- Who was the second person who fled?
- Did anyone actually see Marcus with a weapon?
- Did anyone actually see Marcus fire a weapon?
- Were the cash or equipment tied directly to Marcus?
- Was the stop, pursuit, search, or arrest properly supported?

### Key Question:

What facts are still missing before either side should feel ready for trial?

# Charge by Charge Review

## Charges Filed

- **P.C. 2002 | Second Degree Robbery**  
The State must connect Marcus Vale to the robbery itself.
- **P.C. 5020 | Reckless Evading**  
The State must show Marcus Vale was responsible for the vehicle fleeing.
- **P.C. 5006 | Resisting Arrest**  
The State must show Marcus fled or refused lawful commands.
- **P.C. 8009 | Criminal Possession of a Class 1 Weapon**  
The State must show Marcus knowingly possessed or controlled the pistol.
- **P.C. 8016 | Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm**  
The State must connect Marcus to the alleged shot fired.
- **P.C. 5002 | Possession of Government Equipment**  
The State must show Marcus knowingly possessed or controlled the taser and handcuffs.

## Review Questions

For each charge, ask:

- What facts support this charge?
- What facts weaken this charge?
- What element is easiest to prove?
- What element is hardest to prove?
- Is Marcus personally connected to the charge?
- Is the evidence direct or circumstantial?
- Is the charge strong enough to survive a motion?
- Is the charge strong enough for trial?

### Key Question:

Which charges are supported by facts, and which charges rely on assumptions?

# Probable Cause and Warrant Review

## What the Warrant Must Do

An arrest warrant affidavit must give the Court enough facts to believe:

- A crime may have occurred.
- Marcus Vale may be connected to that crime
- The requested charges are supported by specific facts
- The warrant is based on evidence, not guesses.
- The affidavit gives enough factual basis for the case to move forward.
- The Court is not deciding guilt at this stage.
- The Court is deciding whether the legal standard has been met.

## Applying It to Marcus Vale

Facts that support probable cause:

- The robbery was reported.
- The suspect used a firearm.
- A dark blue vehicle left the area shortly after
- Police located a similar vehicle shortly after
- The vehicle fled.
- Marcus fled from the vehicle.
- Evidence was recovered from the vehicle.

Facts that Weaken probable cause:

- No one identified Marcus as the robber.
- No one proved Marcus was the driver.
- Another person fled.
- The vehicle was not registered to Marcus.
- The items were not found on Marcus.
- Most items were inside the glove box.

### Key Question:

Would you grant the arrest warrant for every charge, only some charges, or none?

# Motion Practice

## What Is a Motion?

A motion is a formal request asking the Court to make a legal ruling.

Motions can be used to:

- Challenge weak charges.
- Challenge evidence.
- Request dismissal.
- Request suppression.
- Clarify legal issues.
- Limit what can be used at trial.
- Protect the defendant's rights.
- Prepare the case before trial begins.

Motions are not just paperwork.

They are legal arguments.

## What a Motion Should Include

A strong motion should explain:

- What the party is asking for.
- What facts support the request.
- What legal issue is being raised.
- What evidence matters.
- What ruling the Court should make.
- Why that ruling is fair.

A weak motion only says the party disagrees.

A strong motion explains why the law supports the request.

**Key Question:**

What should each side ask the Court to decide before trial?

# Possible Motions in This Case

## Defense Motions

The Defense may consider:

### Motion to Dismiss Weak Charges

- Argue that certain charges are not supported by enough facts.

### Motion to Suppress Vehicle Evidence

- Challenge whether the search was lawful or whether the evidence should be excluded.

### Motion to Suppress Statements

- Challenge whether Marcus's statements should be used.

### Motion to Sever or Limit Charges

- Argue that certain charges may unfairly prejudice the trial.

### Motion for Discovery Clarification

- Request missing information about the vehicle, evidence, second suspect, or chain of custody.

## State Responses

The State may argue:

The warrant was supported by the totality of the circumstances.

The vehicle was connected to the robbery by timing, description, and flight.

Marcus fled from the vehicle after the crash.

Marcus admitted he was in the car.

The recovered evidence supports the robbery theory.

The issues raised by the Defense are trial issues, not dismissal issues.

The State does not need proof beyond a reasonable doubt at the warrant stage.

**Key Question:**

Which motion has the strongest chance of success?

# Case Theory

## State Case Theory

The State's theory may be:

- Marcus Vale participated in an armed robbery at LTD Gasoline.
- After the robbery, Marcus fled the area in a dark blue Sultan Classic.
- When police attempted to stop the vehicle, the vehicle recklessly fled.
- After the crash, Marcus ran from officers.
- The pistol, cash, government equipment, and spent casing found in the vehicle support the State's argument that Marcus was connected to the robbery and related offenses.

## Defense Case Theory

The Defense's theory may be:

- Marcus Vale was not identified as the robber.
- No witness saw Marcus inside the LTD.
- No witness saw Marcus with a firearm.
- No witness saw Marcus fire a weapon.
- The vehicle was not registered to Marcus.
- Another person fled and was never located.
- The items were found in the glove box, not on Marcus.
- Marcus may have been present in the vehicle, but presence is not the same as guilt.

### Key Question:

What story will each side tell the Court using the same evidence?

# Preparing Witnesses

## State Witness Preparation

The State should prepare witnesses to explain:

- What they personally saw.
- What they personally heard.
- What they reported.
- What they did next.
- What evidence they collected.
- How Marcus became connected to the case.
- Why the timeline matters.

State witnesses should avoid guessing.

They should testify only to what they know.

## Defense Cross Preparation

The Defense should prepare questions that test:

- **Identification**  
Could the witness actually identify Marcus?
- **Certainty**  
Was the witness sure about what they saw?
- **Timeline**  
How much time passed between events?
- **Possession**  
Did anyone see Marcus touch the items?
- **Vehicle control**  
Did anyone see Marcus driving?
- **Missing person**  
Who was the second person?
- **Assumptions**  
What did the witness assume instead of know?

**Key Question:** What questions expose the weakest part of the witness testimony?

# Preparing Arguments

## State Argument Goals

The State should argue:

- The case should move forward.
- The timeline creates a reasonable connection.
- Marcus fled from the vehicle.
- The vehicle contained evidence connected to the robbery.
- The totality of the circumstances supports probable cause.
- Any weaknesses can be tested at trial.

The State does not need every fact to be perfect.

The State needs enough facts to support the charges.

## Defense Argument Goals

The Defense should argue:

- The State is stacking assumptions.
- No one identified Marcus as the robber.
- No one proved Marcus was the driver.
- No one proved Marcus knew what was in the glove box.
- No one saw Marcus fire a weapon.
- The second person may be the stronger suspect.
- Some charges should be dismissed or narrowed.

The Defense does not have to prove Marcus is innocent.

The Defense only has to show the State has not met its burden.

**Key Question:** Which side has the stronger argument on each charge?

# You completed Section Two!

## You should now be able to answer.

What legal issues come from the discovery?

What facts still need investigation?

Which charges are strongest?

Which charges are weakest?

What motions should be filed?

What arguments can each side make?

What witnesses need to be prepared?

What evidence may be challenged?

## Before Moving to Section Three

### Prepare your position:

State:

Which charges are you defending and why?

Defense:

Which charges are you challenging and why?

Judge:

What ruling would you make on the motions?

Everyone:

What facts matter most when this case reaches trial?

**Next Section:**

Objections, testimony, courtroom arguments, and mock trial preparation.

# Section 3: Mock Trial and Practical Application

Preparing to present the case in court  
“How do we present it in court?”

Section Three focuses on how a criminal case is presented in court. Participants will review trial structure, opening statements, witness questioning, objections, exhibit use, and closing arguments.

The goal is not to memorize a script.

The goal is to understand how to present facts clearly, challenge weak evidence, and argue within courtroom procedure.

# What Trial Preparation Means

Trial preparation is the process of deciding how the case will be presented in court.

## Before trial, each side should know:

- What theory they are arguing.
- What charges they are focusing on.
- What witnesses they need.
- What each witness proves.
- What exhibits they want to use.
- What evidence they may challenge.
- What objections they may raise.
- What weaknesses they need to explain.

Trial preparation is not just knowing the facts.

It is knowing how to use the facts.

## Applying It to Marcus Vale

### In this case, trial preparation should focus on:

- Whether Marcus Vale can be identified as the robber.
- Whether Marcus Vale was the driver of the vehicle.
- Whether Marcus Vale knowingly possessed the items in the glove box.
- Whether the pistol, casing, cash, taser, and handcuffs can be connected to Marcus.
- Whether witness statements are strong enough to prove the charges.
- Whether the State is relying on facts or assumptions.

**Key Question:** What does each side need to prove, challenge, or explain at trial?

# Order of a Criminal Trial

## Basic Trial Structure

A criminal trial usually follows a clear order:

- Opening statements
- State presents evidence
- State calls witnesses
- Defense cross-examines State witnesses
- Defense may present evidence
- Defense calls witnesses if needed
- State may cross-examine Defense witnesses
- Closing arguments
- Judge or jury reviews the evidence
- Verdict

- Each stage has a different purpose.
- The trial should not become random argument.
- It should move in an organized way.

## What Each Stage Does

- **Opening Statement**  
Tells the Court what the evidence will show.
- **Witness Testimony**  
Allows witnesses to explain what they saw, heard, did, or collected.
- **Exhibits**  
Allows reports, statements, evidence logs, or physical evidence to support testimony.
- **Cross Examination**  
Tests the witness's memory, certainty, bias, assumptions, or credibility.
- **Closing Argument**  
Explains why the evidence does or does not prove the charges.

**Key Question:** Where does each part of your argument belong?

# Opening Statements

## What Is an Opening Statement?

An opening statement is the first chance to explain the case to the Court.

### It should tell the Court:

- What the case is about.
- What evidence will be presented.
- What witnesses will say.
- What facts matter most.
- What the party believes the evidence will prove.

An opening statement is not testimony.

It is not the time to argue every detail.

It is a roadmap.

## Opening Statement Goals

### State Opening Goals

The State should explain:

- A robbery occurred.
- A vehicle matching the witness description was located.
- The vehicle fled from police.
- Marcus Vale fled after the crash.
- Evidence connected to the robbery was found inside the vehicle.
- The total evidence proves the charged offenses.

### Defense Opening Goals

The Defense should explain:

- No one identified Marcus Vale as the robber.
- No one saw Marcus inside the LTD.
- No one saw Marcus with a firearm.
- No one proved Marcus drove the vehicle.
- The vehicle belonged to someone else.
- The evidence was in the glove box, not on Marcus.

**Key Question:** What story should the Court understand before evidence begins?

# Trial Evidence Presentation

## What Counts as Trial Evidence?

Trial evidence may include:

- Witness testimony
  - Officer testimony
  - Civilian statements
  - Reports
  - Physical evidence
  - Evidence inventory
  - Vehicle search report
  - Statements made by the defendant
  - Circumstantial evidence
- Evidence must be connected to the case.  
➤ The Court should be able to understand why the evidence matters.  
➤ Evidence should not be thrown in just because it exists.

## Evidence in This Case

Important evidence includes:

- Jonah Price's victim statement
- Alina Brooks' civilian witness statement
- Officer Reeves' narrative
- Vehicle search report
- Evidence inventory
- Arrest warrant affidavit
- The recovered pistol
- The recovered cash
- The government issued taser and handcuffs
- The spent casing
- Marcus Vale's statements during detention

**Key Question:** What does each piece of evidence prove, and what does it fail to prove?

# Introducing Exhibits

## How Exhibits Are Used

An exhibit is a piece of evidence presented for the Court to consider.

### Before relying on an exhibit, a party should be able to explain:

- What the exhibit is.
- Who created it or collected it.
- Where it came from.
- Why it matters.
- What charge it supports.
- Whether the exhibit is reliable.
- Whether the other side may object.

Exhibits should be connected through testimony whenever possible. .

## Exhibit Questions

### Before using an exhibit, ask:

- Does this exhibit prove an element of a charge?
- Does this exhibit identify Marcus Vale?
- Does this exhibit prove possession?
- Does this exhibit prove knowledge?
- Does this exhibit prove vehicle control?
- Does this exhibit only show that something existed?
- Does this exhibit create more questions than answers?

**Key Question:** Which exhibits are strongest, and which exhibits need explanation?

# Direct Examination

## What Is Direct Examination?

Direct examination is when a party questions their own witness.

The goal is to let the witness explain what they know.

Direct examination should be clear, organized, and focused.

### Good direct questions usually begin with:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why
- How
- Please explain
- Describe

Direct examination should help the witness tell the story.

## Direct Examination Examples

### For Jonah Price:

- Where were you working on May 9, 2026?
- What happened while you were at the register?
- What did the person demand from you?
- What did you observe about the person's clothing?
- What happened after the person left the store?
- Were you able to identify the person's face?

### For Officer Reeves:

- What report did you respond to?
- What vehicle did you observe after the report?
- What happened when you attempted to stop the vehicle?
- What happened after the vehicle crashed?
- What did you observe Marcus Vale do?
- What items were recovered from the vehicle?

**Key Question:** What does this witness need to explain clearly?

# Cross Examination

## What Is Cross Examination?

Cross examination is when a party questions the other side's witness. The goal is to test the witness's testimony.

### Cross examination can challenge:

- Identification
- Memory
- Certainty
- Timeline
- Bias
- Assumptions
- Missing details
- Contradictions
- Personal knowledge

Cross examination should be controlled.

This is usually not the time for open-ended questions.

## Cross Examination Rule

On cross examination, ask questions that keep control.

### Use questions that suggest the answer:

- You did not see Marcus Vale inside the LTD, correct?
- You did not see Marcus Vale holding a pistol, correct?
- You did not see Marcus Vale fire a weapon, correct?
- You cannot say Marcus Vale was the driver, correct?
- The vehicle was registered to Keon Bell, correct?
- The items were found in the glove box, correct?
- The items were not found on Marcus Vale's person, correct?

**Key Question:** Do not ask a cross examination question unless you know the answer or can handle the answer.

# Open-Ended Questions vs. Leading Questions

## Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions allow the witness to explain. They are best used on direct examination.

### Examples:

- What did you see?
- What happened next?
- How did you respond?
- Where was the vehicle located?
- What items were recovered?
- How did Marcus Vale become connected to the case?

Open-ended questions are helpful when the witness supports your case. They can be risky when the witness does not.

## Leading Questions

Leading questions suggest the answer. They are best used on cross examination.

### Examples:

- You could not identify Marcus Vale, correct?
- You did not see the driver, correct?
- You did not see who fired the shot, correct?
- The glove box was closed before the search, correct?
- The vehicle was not registered to Marcus Vale, correct?

Leading questions help control the witness. They keep the answer narrow.

**Key Question:** Do you want the witness to explain, or do you want the witness to confirm?

# Objections

## What Is an Objection?

An objection is a formal challenge to a question, answer, or evidence.

Objections help keep the trial fair.

## A party may object when:

- A question is improper.
- A witness is guessing.
- A witness is repeating unsupported information.
- Evidence is unreliable.
- A question is confusing.
- A question is argumentative.
- A party is trying to introduce facts not in evidence.

Objections should be short and clear.

## How to Make an Objection

A proper objection should state the reason.

## Examples:

- Objection, relevance.
- Objection, speculation.
- Objection, hearsay.
- Objection, leading.
- Objection, argumentative.
- Objection, asked and answered.
- Objection, assumes facts not in evidence.
- Objection, lack of foundation.
- Objection, narrative.

After an objection, stop speaking and allow the Judge to rule.

**Key Question:** What is legally wrong with the question, answer, or evidence?

# Common Objections Explained

## Evidence and Testimony Objections

- **Relevance**  
The evidence or question does not help prove or disprove the case.
- **Speculation**  
The witness is guessing instead of testifying from personal knowledge.
- **Hearsay**  
The witness is repeating what someone else said to prove it is true.
- **Lack of Foundation**  
The party has not shown how the witness knows the information.
- **Assumes Facts Not in Evidence**  
The question treats an unproven fact as if it has already been established.

## Questioning Objections

- **Leading**  
The question suggests the answer. Usually improper on direct examination.
- **Argumentative**  
The attorney is arguing with the witness instead of asking a proper question.
- **Asked and Answered**  
The same question has already been asked and answered.
- **Compound Question**  
The question asks multiple things at once.
- **Narrative**  
The witness is giving a long, unfocused answer instead of answering the question.

**Key Question:** Is the objection about the evidence, the witness, or the way the question was asked?

# Responding to Objections

## If You Are Objected To

### When the other side objects:

- Stop speaking.
- Let the Judge hear the objection.
- Do not argue over the witness.
- Explain why the question or evidence is proper.
- Rephrase the question if needed.
- Accept the ruling and move forward.

Do not take objections personally.

Objections are part of trial practice.

### Simple Responses

- **Relevance Response**  
Your Honor, this goes to identification, possession, or the timeline.
- **Foundation Response**  
Your Honor, I am establishing how the witness knows this information.
- **Hearsay Response**  
Your Honor, this is not being offered for the truth of the statement, but to explain what the officer did next.
- **Leading Response**  
Your Honor, I can rephrase.
- **Speculation Response**  
Your Honor, I will ask what the witness personally observed.

**Key Question:** Can the issue be fixed by rephrasing the question?

# Closing Arguments

## What Is a Closing Argument?

Closing argument happens after the evidence has been presented.

This is when each side explains what the evidence proved.

### A closing argument should:

- Connect facts to charges.
- Explain why witnesses should or should not be trusted.
- Address weaknesses.
- Explain the legal burden.
- Show how the evidence supports the verdict requested.

Closing is argument.

This is where the parties explain what the Court should do.

## Closing Themes

### State Closing Theme

The evidence creates one connected timeline: robbery, vehicle flight, foot chase, and recovered evidence. The totality of the facts proves Marcus Vale's connection to the charged offenses.

### Defense Closing Theme

The State has suspicion, but suspicion is not proof. No witness identified Marcus as the robber, no one proved he drove the vehicle, and the items were found in someone else's car.

**Key Question:** What should the Court remember when deciding the case?

# Trial Readiness Checklist

## Before Trial Begins

### Each side should be ready to answer:

- What is my theory of the case?
- Which charges am I focusing on?
- Which witnesses do I need?
- What does each witness prove?
- What does each witness hurt?
- What exhibits do I need?
- What objections should I expect?
- What weaknesses do I need to address?

**Key Question:** Are you ready to present the case, not just understand it?

## For This Case

### Before the mock trial, prepare:

- An opening statement.
- Questions for Jonah Price.
- Questions for Alina Brooks.
- Questions for Officer Reeves.
- Questions about the vehicle search.
- Questions about the evidence inventory.
- Arguments about identity.
- Arguments about possession.
- Arguments about the warrant and charges.
- A closing argument.

Closing is argument.

This is where the parties explain what the Court should do.

**You are now ready for the  
Workshop!**

**You completed Section Three!**

**You should now be able to answer.**

How does a criminal trial proceed?

What belongs in an opening statement?

How should exhibits be used?

How do you question your own witness?

How do you cross examine the other side's witness?

When should you object?

How do you respond to objections?

What belongs in a closing argument?