

## **Monica Shepard Law, PLLC**

### **Legal Representation and Outsiders Don't Mix**

As a criminal lawyer I have the pleasure of working with people from various backgrounds and economic statuses. One thing they all seem to have in common is anxiety about the resolution of their case. It's natural as no one in their right mind **WANTS** to go to jail. The criminal justice system can be complex and oftentimes cases wind through the court system very slowly. I try to be honest with my clients (regardless if it hurts their feelings). I try to explain what they can expect to the best of my abilities.

One aspect I make sure to explain is the concept of attorney-client privilege. Attorney–client privilege is a legal concept that protects certain communications between a client and his or her attorney and keeps those communications confidential. This confidentiality is sacred. But I also understand that it's human nature for people to seek a second opinion. Oftentimes, unfortunately, that second opinion is coming from friends, family or even casual acquaintances.

Those people, of course, have good intentions. Unfortunately, their input is rarely constructive. Sometimes it's even detrimental. They'll tell a client that they knew someone who had a case like theirs and it ended in a certain fashion. Or maybe they'll say that they went through something similar and it resolved in whatever way. They often misinterpret the law or cite laws that are **NON-EXISTENT!** Their Court TV law expertise fails to hit the mark. It only serves to confuse and unnecessarily upset the client.

What the outsiders fail to understand is that **EVERY** case is different. The resolution of criminal cases resolve around several things including, but not limited to:

- prior criminal record
- facts of the case
- the law and it's common application
- the prosecutor
- the judge
- the impaneled jury
- media attention
- locality

and the list goes on.

Attorneys with decades long experience can't guarantee how a case will end. But they can use their legal expertise to develop the best course for a case. Therefore, client-attorney interactions are best spent determining legal strategy...not wading through outsider input. Your mechanic/neighbor/Uncle Tommy/Cousin Ricky/Aunt Sally should be kept at arms length of your legal representation...**EVEN IF THEY'RE PAYING FOR IT.** A client hires an attorney because he or she seeks legal expertise. Why compromise it? You deserve efficient, effective and zealous representation. Allowing outsiders to complicate your legal defense can be just as destructive as having no legal defense at all.