

Article Heading:

The Basics of a Plea Bargain

Keyword-Rich Content:

In Florida, a plea bargain is not as cut-and-dried as it may seem represented on popular television shows and blockbuster movies. In these farfetched imitations, a cop offers a presumably guilty defendant a plea bargain in exchange for some juicy information for cooperation in another case, or just to be rid of the case when all the evidence is in the bag.

The prosecutors and the defendant's counsel will negotiate back and forth, guffawing at one another's offer, until some sort of compromise is reached and someone makes a snarky comment about justice being served.

In reality, a Florida plea bargain rarely unfolds in such a manner. They are sometimes the result of a strain on correctional resources or an effort to keep legal costs under control when the evidence against a defendant is obvious.

Common Misunderstandings about a Florida Plea Bargain

One of the most common and basic misconceptions is that you will be offered a plea bargain only if the prosecution believes you are guilty – this isn't the case. The State offers plea bargains to both the guilty and the innocent for a variety of reasons.

The State may offer a plea bargain to a defendant that the prosecutors consider guilty when, for sheer volume of cases, they are unable to try the case. A plea bargain may also be offered to the defendant if it's somewhat of a minor crime and they have nothing else on their record.

Innocent defendants are also routinely offered plea bargains, and it's worth it to take some time to consider the options, particularly because one can never be certain of the outcome of a trial. Trials by jury have resulted in the conviction of innocent people, and some of those wrongly convicted prisoners had to wait years or even decades before they were granted a re-trial or an appeal so that their case could be heard a second time.

Many plea bargains include substituting jail time with a probationary period – this recourse puts less of a burden on the corrections system and frees up jail space. If you are placed on probation, you will have to report to a probation officer on a regular monthly basis and you will be responsible for a nominal probation fee.

How Fort Lauderdale Defense Lawyers Can Help

If you've been charged with a crime in Florida, you may not realize that you are eligible for a plea bargain, or you may not be aware of how a proposed plea bargain will impact you in the long run. These decisions should always be made with the assistance and counsel of an attorney from a team of Fort Lauderdale defense lawyers who have experience successfully handling cases like yours.

Don't trust the prosecution or the police to give you a good deal out of the kindness of their hearts, and don't expect them to accurately represent the fine print of that deal to you – consult with an attorney who focuses on criminal defense in Florida so that your plea bargain is better protected.