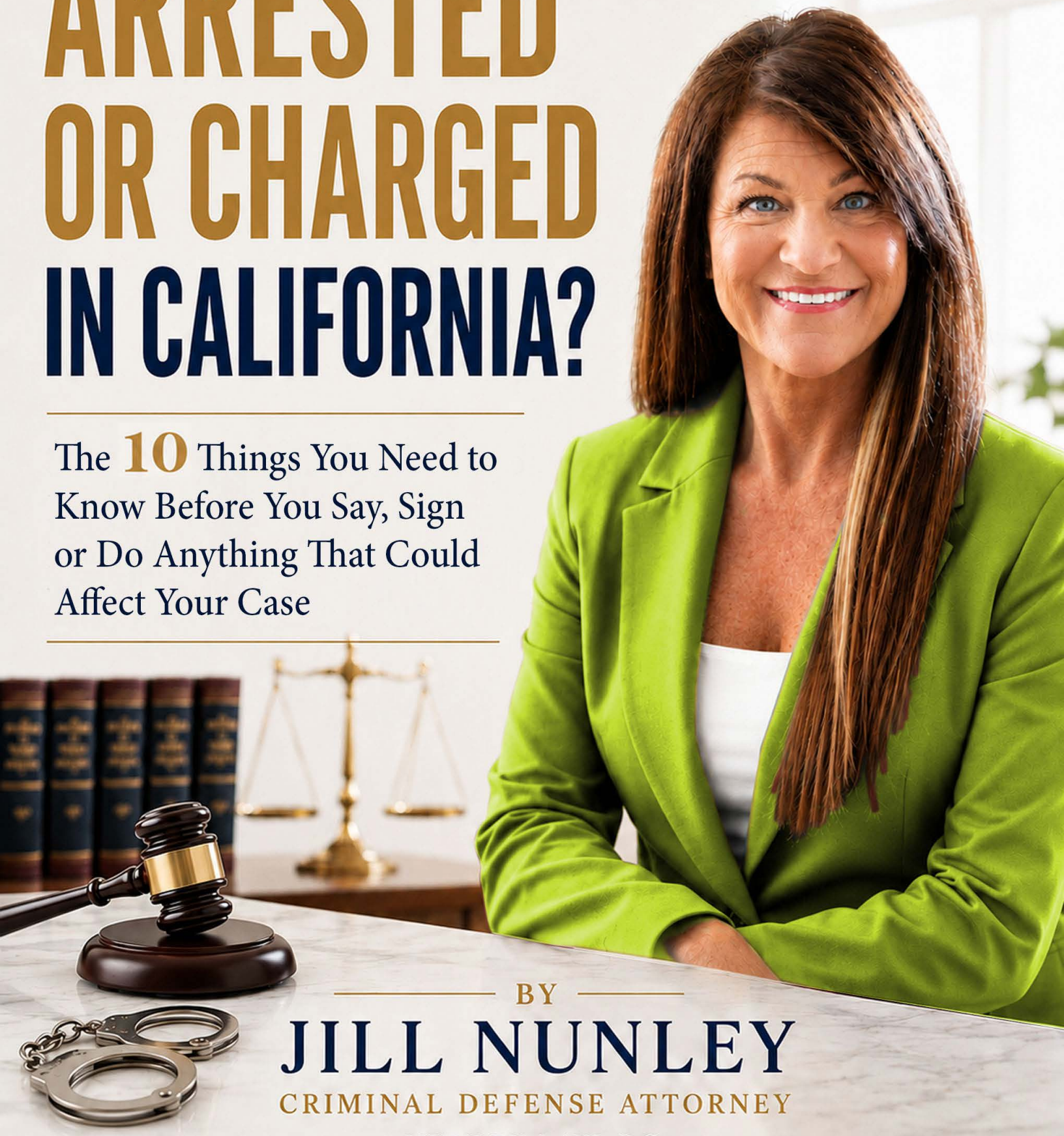
ARRESTED OR CHARGED IN CALIFORNIA?

The 10 Things You Need to Know Before You Say, Sign or Do Anything That Could Affect Your Case



BY

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COMPASSIONATE | DEDICATED | FIERCE | ADVOCACY

ABOUT YOUR ATTORNEY

The attorney behind the guide you just read.



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> *People should never be defined by the worst moment of their lives—or by the worst thing someone has accused them of doing. My job is to see the person, understand the story, and fight for what comes next.*

Jill Nunley is a California criminal defense attorney and the founder of Nunley Law. She represents people during some of the most stressful and life-changing moments they will ever face. Her practice is built on careful preparation, clear communication, and a simple promise: every client is more than a case number.

Jill's path to the law was shaped by resilience. She knew at fourteen she wanted to be an attorney—despite being told by a guidance counselor that it would never happen. She went on to raise children, work full time, and continue her education. Later, she built a blended family of five children and, at 36, welcomed twin daughters. When her husband was tragically killed in a diving accident later determined to be a homicide, Jill navigated the justice system firsthand. That experience deepened her commitment to becoming the kind of lawyer people can trust when everything feels uncertain.

Jill earned her Bachelor of Science in Business from the University of Redlands and graduated with honors from Abraham Lincoln University School of Law. She passed the California State Bar Exam and has since built her career in criminal defense. Her experience includes work with the Los Angeles Public Defender's Office and in criminal-defense firms handling pretrial matters, post-conviction issues, and immigration-related cases. She also serves as an adjunct professor teaching Supreme Court precedent.

Today, Jill brings compassion, insight, and tenacity to every case she handles. She listens closely, researches thoroughly, prepares strategically, and advocates fiercely—always keeping her client's future, family, and freedom at the center of her work.

DEDICATED • COMPASSIONATE • RELENTLESS

More than a case number. Always a person.

BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE...

Being arrested, investigated or charged with a crime can turn your world upside down in an instant.

Suddenly, you may be facing questions you never expected to have to answer.

- Am I going to jail?
- What happens to my job?
- Who should I tell?
- Should I talk to the police?
- What happens at my first court appearance?
- How serious are these charges?
- Can this follow me for the rest of my life?

And perhaps the biggest question of all:
What should I do next?

The decisions you make in the hours and days following an arrest or criminal accusation can matter.

That's why I created this guide.

It isn't intended to frighten you. And it isn't designed to turn you into your own criminal-defense attorney.

It's designed to help you better understand what may happen next, recognize some common mistakes people make, and know what questions you should be asking.

Most importantly, remember this:
Being accused of a crime is not the same as being convicted of one.

An accusation begins a legal process.

What happens from here depends upon the facts, the evidence, the law and the circumstances surrounding your individual case.

Let's start with what you need to know.

1 A CRIMINAL CHARGE IS NOT A CONVICTION

When you're arrested or learn that criminal charges have been filed against you, it's easy to immediately imagine the worst possible outcome.

Don't confuse an accusation with an outcome.

In our criminal justice system, the prosecution bears the burden of proving its case.

That means the government's evidence matters.

- **How was that evidence obtained?**
- **What do witnesses actually know?**
- **Are their accounts reliable?**
- **Were proper procedures followed?**
- **Are there additional facts that tell a different story?**
- **Is there evidence that hasn't yet been considered?**

These questions can matter.

A criminal-defense attorney's job isn't simply to look at the name of the charge.

It's to look ***beneath*** it.

That means examining the facts, evidence, circumstances and procedures surrounding what happened.



THE IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:

Don't decide the outcome of your case before your case has even been examined.

2 BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT YOU SAY

When people are frightened, they often want to explain.

They believe that if they can simply tell their side of the story, everything will get cleared up.

Unfortunately, statements can sometimes create additional complications.

You should be thoughtful about conversations involving your case — particularly conversations with law enforcement or investigators.

You also have constitutional rights, including the right to remain silent and the right to an attorney.

Exercising a constitutional right is not an admission of guilt.

ALSO REMEMBER:

Your case isn't necessarily something you should be discussing casually with:

- Friends
- Coworkers
- Neighbors
- Acquaintances
- Witnesses
- Other people involved in the situation

Something said casually today could become important tomorrow.

THE IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:

When the stakes are high, saying more isn't necessarily better. Know your rights and get appropriate legal advice before deciding how to proceed.

3 STAY OFF SOCIAL MEDIA

This deserves its own section because social media has become such a normal part of everyday life.

If you're facing criminal allegations, however, think very carefully before posting.

That includes:

Facebook. Instagram. TikTok. X. LinkedIn. YouTube.

Don't assume something is harmless simply because it has nothing directly to do with your case.

- **A photograph.**
- **A location.**
- **A comment.**
- **A joke.**
- **A direct message.**
- **A video.**

Even something posted by another person could potentially become relevant depending upon the circumstances.

And don't assume deleting something automatically solves the problem.



A SIMPLE RULE:

If you're facing a criminal case, don't use social media to argue your case, explain your side, attack another person or defend your reputation.

Your attorney can help you think through the appropriate way to handle your particular circumstances.

4 DON'T DESTROY OR ALTER POTENTIAL EVIDENCE

When you're frightened, you may be tempted to clean things up.

Don't.

Potentially relevant information might include:

- **Text messages**
- **Emails**
- **Photographs**
- **Videos**
- **Voicemails**
- **Receipts**
- **Calendars**
- **Location information**
- **Documents**
- **Social-media communications**
- **Names of potential witnesses**
- **Other electronic records**

Something that seems insignificant to you today could potentially matter later.

The goal isn't to decide for yourself what's important.

The goal is to make sure potentially relevant information can be properly evaluated.



THE IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:

Preserve potentially relevant information and discuss it with your attorney.

5 UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE ACTUALLY CHARGED WITH

"I got arrested" doesn't necessarily tell you everything about the legal case that follows.

After law enforcement becomes involved, prosecutors generally review the available information and decide whether criminal charges should be filed and what those charges will be.

Those charges may not always be identical to what someone originally believed they were facing.

California criminal cases can involve misdemeanors, felonies or other allegations, and the possible consequences can vary substantially.

That's why one of the first questions you need answered is:

What *exactly* am I accused of — and what does that mean for me?

You need to understand the actual allegations, potential consequences and legal process involved in your particular situation.

6 YOUR FIRST COURT APPEARANCE MATTERS

One of the early stages of many California criminal cases is the **arraignment.**

At an arraignment, you'll generally learn the formal charges against you, be advised of important rights, and be asked to enter a plea.

Issues involving bail or conditions of release may also be addressed.

This is not something to treat casually.

- You may hear unfamiliar terminology.
- You may be asked questions.
- You may be asked to make decisions that have legal consequences.
- And you may simply want the entire experience to be over as quickly as possible.

That understandable desire can make it tempting to make decisions before you fully understand their implications.

THE IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:

Don't make major legal decisions simply because you're frightened, embarrassed or anxious to put the situation behind you.

Understand what you're agreeing to first.

7 THE EVIDENCE MAY NOT TELL THE WHOLE STORY

Police reports and allegations can sound definitive when you first read them.

But criminal-defense work frequently requires looking deeper.

Depending upon the case, questions may include:

- **Was the search lawful?**
- **Was the traffic stop legally justified?**
- **Were statements obtained appropriately?**
- **Are witness accounts consistent?**
- **Does video evidence support or contradict those accounts?**
- **Were testing procedures properly followed?**
- **Are there problems with identification?**
- **Does physical or electronic evidence support the allegations?**
- **Is important context missing?**

The exact questions depend entirely upon the case.

That's why criminal defense is rarely about simply reading the allegations and accepting them at face value.



THE IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:

Details matter. Evidence matters. Procedure matters.
And sometimes what isn't immediately obvious matters most.

8 A CRIMINAL CASE CAN AFFECT MORE THAN YOUR FREEDOM

When most people hear "criminal charges," they immediately think:

Jail.

And yes, loss of freedom can be a potential consequence depending upon the charges and circumstances.

But that's not the only concern.

Depending upon the case and the individual, criminal allegations or a conviction may potentially affect other areas of life, including:

- Employment
- Professional licensing
- Immigration status
- Driving privileges
- Finances
- Housing
- Personal relationships
- Reputation
- Educational opportunities
- Future opportunities

Not every consequence applies to every case.

That's exactly the point.

You need to understand what is actually at stake *for you*.



ASK YOURSELF:

"If this case goes badly, what parts of my life could potentially be affected?"

Then make sure those concerns are part of the conversation with your attorney.

9 TIME CAN MATTER

One of the biggest mistakes someone can make after an arrest is simply ignoring the situation and hoping it goes away.

Legal proceedings involve court dates, procedures and deadlines.

Certain types of cases may involve additional administrative proceedings or deadlines outside the criminal courtroom.

DUI cases are a good example because driver's-license issues can involve a separate administrative process in addition to the criminal case.

Other cases may present entirely different time-sensitive issues.

That's why waiting until the night before court to begin asking questions isn't an ideal strategy.



THE IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:

The sooner you understand what you're facing, the sooner you can make informed decisions about what to do next.

10 THE ATTORNEY YOU CHOOSE MATTERS

Not every attorney approaches criminal defense the same way.

When speaking with a criminal-defense attorney, don't be afraid to ask questions.



QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING:

- How much of your practice involves criminal defense?
- Have you handled cases involving allegations like mine?
- Who will actually be working on my case?
- How will we communicate?
- How will you evaluate the evidence against me?
- What information do you need from me?
- What happens next?
- What should I be doing right now?

And perhaps most importantly:

Do I feel like this attorney is actually listening to me?

Your criminal case isn't simply a file number.

It's your life.

You should understand who is representing you, how your case will be approached and what you can expect moving forward.

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF RIGHT NOW

Before you put this guide down, take a few minutes and answer these questions:

1.	Do I know exactly what I'm accused of?	Y / N
2.	Do I know when my next court date or deadline is?	Y / N
3.	Have I made statements that my attorney needs to know about?	Y / N
4.	Is there evidence, video, documentation or electronic information that should be preserved?	Y / N
5.	Are there witnesses who may have relevant information?	Y / N
6.	Could my driver's license, career, professional license or immigration status potentially be affected?	Y / N
7.	Have I discussed my case on social media or with other people?	Y / N
8.	Do I understand what happens at my next court appearance?	Y / N
9.	Do I understand the potential consequences I'm facing?	Y / N
10.	Have I spoken privately with a criminal-defense attorney about my specific circumstances?	Y / N

If several of those answers are ***"No,"*** you may have important questions that still need to be answered.

YOUR CASE IS UNIQUE. YOUR DEFENSE SHOULD BE TOO.

If there's one thing I hope you take away from this guide, it's this:

Don't let fear make your decisions for you.

Being arrested or accused of a crime can be frightening, embarrassing and overwhelming.

But your situation deserves to be evaluated based upon **your facts, your evidence and your circumstances.**

- I've represented people who were scared.
- People who were angry.
- People who were embarrassed.
- People worried about their careers.
- Parents worried about their children.
- People who simply didn't know where to turn next.

And one of the first things I want my clients to understand is that **they are more than the accusation against them.**

- ✓ My job is to listen.
- ✓ To ask questions.
- ✓ To examine the evidence.
- ✓ To identify issues that deserve closer attention.
- ✓ To help you understand the process.
- ✓ And to stand up for your rights.

You don't need to have every answer before speaking with an attorney.
That's what the conversation is for.

You just need to take the next step.

TALK WITH JILL NUNLEY



Criminal Defense Attorney
Nunley Law, P.C.

If you or someone you care about has been arrested, charged with a crime or is under investigation, **you don't have to try to figure everything out alone.**

A CONSULTATION GIVES US AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK ABOUT:

- **What happened.**
- **What you're accused of.**
- **What concerns you most.**
- **What may happen next.**
- **And what options may be available based upon your individual circumstances.**

SCHEDULE A CONFIDENTIAL CONSULTATION

Nunley Law, P.C.

Criminal Defense • DUI • Sex Crimes • Juvenile Crimes • Drug Crimes
Violent Crimes • Theft & Property Crimes • White-Collar Crimes • Weapons Charges

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YOUR NEXT STEP

JILL NUNLEY

ATTORNEY AT LAW

JN | NUNLEY LAW
CRIMINAL DEFENSE

Dedicated. Relentless. On Your Side.

You don't have to face this alone.

When your future, your freedom, and your family are on the line, you deserve an attorney who listens, explains your options, and fights for the best possible outcome.

PERSONAL ATTENTION
You are more than a case number.

THOROUGH INVESTIGATION
We examine every detail and challenge the evidence.

STRATEGIC DEFENSE
Every case is unique. Every defense is built for you.

COMPASSIONATE ADVOCACY
We treat you with respect, dignity, and the support you deserve.

SCHEDULE A COMPLIMENTARY CONSULTATION
Let's talk about your situation and your options.

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YOUR RIGHTS. YOUR FUTURE. OUR FIGHT.

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