

DISCLAIMER: This guide discusses ideas and concepts aimed at the player taking the role of “Lead Prosecution” and deals in subjective terms based off of a “meta” interpretation of casing, along with simple guidelines. Your character is yours to play however you wish, and may differ from the examples listed.



Newbie's Guide to Lead Prosecution

By Truce, a caser with too much time on her hands.



Prosecution...Just like everyone has a different way of taking their coffee, everyone plays this role a different way. There's certainly a wrong way to go about it, but a right way? Well, that's subjective, and the court doesn't deal in conjecture. That being said? Name's **Godot**. I'll be rambling a bit about what kinds of prosecutors I see and what their game plan is so you can get a few ideas about how to form your own.



First up on the roster you've got the **Clever** type, the one most folks think of when they think "Prosecutor." This guy's an expert at looking like he's **always one step ahead of the defense**. When the defense finds a contradiction, he'll either **have an explanation ready** or **use the argument against them**, applying the defense's logic to another part of the case to make the Defendant even more guilty. Being this guy generally takes a lot of planning or improvisational skill, but the gallery will appreciate every minute of it.



Next up you've got your **Aggressive** brand of prosecutor. These folks are **in your face** and will make the defense **fight for every inch**. No play is too dirty for them. For those new to the profession, it's pretty easy to try emulating this, but it's a **deceptively difficult balance**. You've got to be **intimidating** rather than **annoying**, since you're arguing more often than the other types on this list. Done well, you're a wall the defense has to get over and everyone wants to see overcome. Done poorly, you're either a **petulant child** or a **half-assed bully**.



Now we're at the opposite end of the spectrum with the **Passive** form of prosecutor. A real low-key kind of appeal here, you're not going to see him pop up as much in the court stenographer's record. They **don't sweat the small stuff** and generally give the defense **plenty of leeway during questioning**, but don't mistake this for an act of kindness; **they're giving the defense more rope to hang themselves with**. You see, there's a bit of a gambit in letting the defense run their mouth, as they'll either **find the info they're looking for**, or **dig too deep** and put their foot in their mouth. This type is all about watching a trainwreck and then showing why it's a trainwreck, usually by pointing out how they completely forgot to add **evidence** or a **motive**.



And now we're hitting some of the **“problem prosecutors.”** This guy here is **all bark and no bite**. One of the biggest sins a prosecutor can commit is being **forgettable**. Ideally, you're the foil and the one who sets the pace and tone for the case. Just because you're in that position **doesn't mean you're infallible**. Getting **completely bowled over** by the defense or arguing with semantics all day until the defense **gives up out of frustration** are not conducive to a fun time for those involved. Put some more thought and effort into it.



Last but not least, we have **The Newbie**. Generally, everyone starts here in one form or another. They've seen a few examples of prosecuting and think that it looks simple enough, and they hop on in. Good on them. Unfortunately, they're liable to make **more than a few mistakes** and get some flak for it, which nowadays most folks seem to take way too hard. **There's nothing wrong with being new, as long as you're willing to learn**. Now, that being said? Most newbies haven't established an identity or style for themselves yet, **and that's fine**. No sense picking a preferred cup of coffee when you haven't tried every blend. Take your time and figure it out.



Right, that should have set the stage well enough. It's time we get down to brass tacks, and the **major guidelines to follow** when figuring out your style of prosecution. There's four major facets to keeping the defense in check and the case moving forward. **Four P's**, if you will.

Let's go ahead and list 'em off.

Set the **P**ace
Apply **P**ressure
Ask for **P**roof
Work towards **P**rogress



You need all four in order to have a foundation for your style. Just one of them missing could make the whole thing collapse in on itself. These probably won't make sense without some examples, though, so let's go ahead and tackle them one by one, in the same order we listed them.



First off, setting the **P**ace. The prosecution's **mood, opening statement, and initial banter** go a long way towards setting the stage for your confrontation. It's not just the beginning that's important, however: you also need to ensure **cross-examination doesn't take ages** by chiming in every so often to **remind the defense that other people are waiting on them**. Likewise, it's worth telling the defense to **get to the point** of their arguments so that they're not wasting everyone's time dancing around the issue and hiding behind ellipses. Here's a few examples of how our various prosecutors would go about doing that.

Clever	Aggressive	Passive	Problem	Newbie
				
Keeping it clear that he's watching the defense and actively observing and commenting on their behavior. Semi-vocal.	Ready to strike out and grab the defense's attention at any moment they either ask a dumb question or take too long.	Chimes in every once in a while to joke about why the defense is taking so long. Lets them have their dumb questions.	Stands there like a lump and lets the defense bog down the court for hours on end. Some variants instead spam "RLVNS???"	Likely to let dumb questions go by because they also want the answer. Doesn't want to be rude and gives the defense time.



Next up is the part everyone loves and loves to joke about: applying **P**ressure. Bullying the defense, as some would call it. The goal here is to make sure **the defense is the underdog** in the scenario. No matter what style you're going for, you're trying to make things difficult so that it's all the more satisfying when they **finally overcome it**. Well, assuming they do, anyway. This is **one of the easiest parts to mess up**, as there's a difference between **applying pressure** and **being annoying**. Let's see how the others handle it.

Clever	Aggressive	Passive	Problem	Newbie
				
Quick to point out any meaningless or trivial lines of questioning, has a quip ready to add insult to injury.	Actively hunting for reasons to bully the defense. Will often swap between smug and scary at the drop of a hat.	Plays it cool, humoring and making jokes about the defense as they continue making mistake after mistake.	Screeches about everything, pushes for verdict at every turn, engages in mudslinging and name-calling rather than real banter.	Leans heavily on the judge to get their points across, liable to back off if defense shows backbone or complains.



((case?))



Right. This part. Asking for **Proof** is a bit of a loaded topic. You see, **evidence is a two-way street**. If you're going to ask the defense for evidence of their claim, **you need proof to back your ideas as well**. Moreover, if the claim validity is self-evident, IE **you know what they're driving at** and know what evidence they're going to use to accentuate their point, **don't make them jump through the hoop anyway**. Acknowledge what they're trying to say, point out that evidence, then see about using other evidence, or even the same evidence in your rebuttal. But above all else, **let the defense finish their crackpot claim before you butt in**. It does nothing but annoy people when everyone interrupts each other. Let's look at our example prosecutors now.

Clever	Aggressive	Passive	Problem	Newbie
Can ((SEE)) the contradiction from the beginning and wants to make sure the defense knows exactly what it is when they object.	Suffers a bit here, as their bullying takes a hit if the defense is right. Can still smugpost and potentially bluff away a contra.	Shines at this part, wherein they make the defense either pony up the right evidence or take a big hit for all the time wasted.	Doesn't ((SEE)) it, and doesn't get what the defense is trying to say. Probably doesn't know what "taking turns" means.	Doesn't ((SEE)) it, and might trip over the contradiction in the process of making a rebuttal. Prone to hintcoining and "EBDNS?"



This last one's a great deal more important than most people think. Making **P**rogress is referring to, in a meta sense, ensuring the case gets to **reach a satisfying conclusion**. Walling someone at the detective phase is amusing at first, but typically people **don't want a beatdown**; they want a **close match** that ends in either a narrow victory or a decisive, crushing defeat. This is going to get a bit weird, but you need to **look at your witness and gauge their reactions** to determine what you do next, which also means **letting them speak and react**. If they're **shocked** and you don't have an evidence-backed explanation, **ask them to explain themselves** or call in another person. If they **don't seem fazed** by the accusation, **step in** and fire back with evidence. If they're **somewhere in the middle**, thinking or unsure, ask the defense if they've got **anything else** to add or if there's **something they're forgetting**, since they're probably on the right track but not quite there. Let's have a gander at a few ways people go about "making progress" and see what we can conclude.

Clever	Aggressive	Passive	Problem	Newbie
				
Will often work with weaving a narrative with the witnesses and use one contra to lead to another testimony. Can make "deals."	The most likely to accidentally wall the intended, but can usually use ego or some other reason to move to the next witness.	Is interested in having fun more than the verdict, and therefore can easily make a reason to keep the case going.	Screeches about verdict after every failed objection, walls the intended, "CASE PROGRESS BE DAMNED," etc. Expect salt.	If they accidentally wall the intended, if they realize they did so will probably ask for a recess, since it's unlikely they have a solution.



Right, that should just about do it. Like I said, the job's subject both to context and how you intend to go about it, so there's not that much to teach. The real teacher is **experience**. Give the role a few tries, see if you can get the hang of it, try to find your niche. A case is a **collaborative effort** to tell a story and flex your creative muscle, so feel free to chat with others about it and **get someone else on your bench** to help fill in the gaps.



Now get out there, bully the defense, take some lumps, and show folks why this job is one of the most memorable parts of any given case, for better or for worse. After all, most of the time a problematic or crashed case is attributed to either a **blind and/or stupid defense** or a **prosecutor that made more blocks than a defensive lineman**. That being said, **no pressure**. Everyone has off days and days where they're on a hot streak. Practice just helps you achieve more highs and fewer lows. In short? Do more casing. I'm outta here.

