

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER



Our goals are to empower survivors, promote healing, and provide closure. We understand a significant amount of time has passed and this may be difficult to revisit. This may also trigger strong or conflicting emotions. It is okay to feel this way.

Remember to reach out for support or take care of yourself by:

- Connecting with family, friends, or a counselor
- Engaging in physical, relaxing, spiritual, or creative activities
- Staying connected to your body through grounding or breathing exercises
- Reaching out to your Victim/Witness Advocate with any questions, concerns, or for help with connecting to community or counseling resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office

Main Office: (504) 822-2414

SAKI Unit: (504) 827-6023

New Orleans Police Department

Non-Emergency Line: (504) 821-2222

Sex Crimes Unit: (504) 658-5523

RESOURCES:

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline*

(800) 656-HOPE

Louisiana Sexual Assault Hotline*

1-888-411-1333

* A hotline advocate can assist you with connecting to local counseling services

Victim Notification Network

www.vinelink.com

Joyful Heart Foundation

www.joyfulheartfoundation.org

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NEW ORLEANS, LA

SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT INITIATIVE

WHAT'S NEXT?

A Survivor's Guide
to the
Resolution
of Cold
Cases



POLICE DEPARTMENT



ORLEANS PARISH
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

WHAT IS SAKI?

The Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) is a nationwide effort to submit and test previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits (SAKs). Through this effort, the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) and Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office (OPDA) are re-investigating and prosecuting cold case sexual assaults.

NOTIFICATION

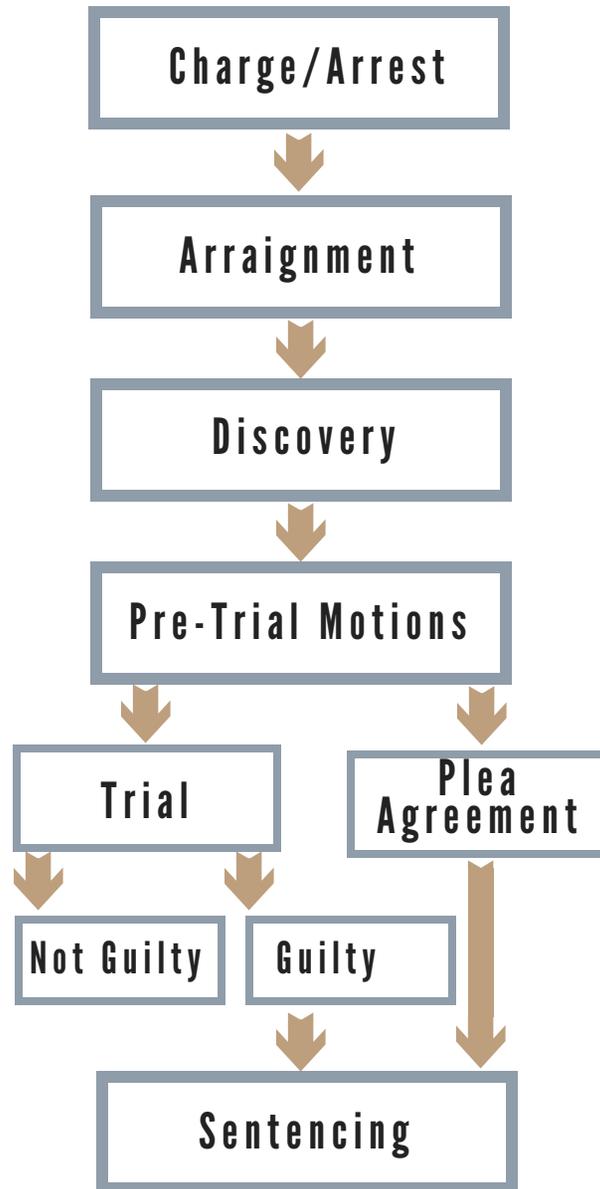
You will be notified by NOPD and OPDA when there is a DNA match to your SAK or your case is linked to an offender whose DNA has matched with another SAK. There currently are not statutes of limitations for most rape cases in Louisiana. However, there may be limitations in other crimes related to the case, such as robbery or kidnapping.

WHAT IS MY ROLE?

- You may be asked to meet or speak with an investigator, a detective, a social worker, and the SAKI prosecution team at various points to go over your case.
- You may take your time when discussing the case. Considering the impact of trauma and time, we understand you may not remember everything right away. That is okay.
- You may need to be present during some of the court proceedings.
- You may be asked to testify in court if the case goes to trial. On rare occasions, you may also be asked to testify during pre-trial hearings.
- You may decide to make a Victim/Impact Statement at sentencing to express, in your words, how these crimes have impacted you, your life, and those of your loved ones.

COURT PROCESS

Criminal court proceedings may last anywhere from a few months to a few years.



You have the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect at each step of the process.

- **Charge/Arrest:** the prosecution or police will make a formal accusation asserting that the perpetrator has committed a crime. If the defendant is not already incarcerated, the police will issue an arrest warrant or arrest a perpetrator based on reasonable belief of guilt.
- **Arraignment:** the defendant is read the charges made against them and given the first opportunity to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty before a judge.
- **Discovery:** a hearing where the state and defense share evidence they intend to use throughout the trial.
- **Pre-Trial Motions:** the defense and state set boundaries for the trial and make arguments for what evidence and witnesses can be used or kept out of trial.
- **Trial:** the defendant may decide to take his case to trial by judge or jury. This is a formal examination of evidence to determine guilt in a criminal case.
- **Plea Agreement:** an agreement between the state and defendant where the defendant agrees to plea guilty. This may be as charged or in exchange for a lesser charge. You will be involved in all discussions of potential plea agreements.
- **Sentencing:** if the defendant pleads or is found guilty, the judge will deliver a sentence, or the legal consequences of the conviction. Prior to sentencing, you and/or your family have the right to enter a victim impact statement.