



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY

A FLY'S EYE FILMS PRODUCTION

Directed by Matt Bockelman

matt@flyseyefilms.com

917-574-0175

TRT: 12:45

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY

SYNOPSIS

You Have the Right to an Attorney documents Matt and Scott, public defenders at the reputable defense firm The Bronx Defenders. Young and idealistic, Matt and Scott struggle on a daily basis to serve a never-ending tide of court-bound clients while hoping that their work might affect broader change in a system they consider broken.



In the South Bronx, a community known for high arrest and poverty rates, public defenders often have more than 100 open case files, each file representing a person in need. The attorneys must make difficult decisions about which clients to help first and which ones must wait, knowing that postponed cases could result in a lost job, eviction from home, or even deportation for a client.

The attorneys at The Bronx Defenders cut against the stereotype of the lazy, under-trained Public Defender. They hope to affect real change. They must negotiate everyday between clients' needs and the larger crusade against injustice, at times advising clients to plead guilty despite claims of innocence, to settle instead of fighting the charge.



The daily compromises and the endless flow of new clients weigh heavy on Matt and Scott. They feel guilt for not doing enough for their clients, and frustration at the futility of fighting a flawed system. *You Have the Right to an Attorney* watches their attempt to persevere, one case at a time.



FLY'S
EYE
FILMS

matt@flyseeyefilms.com 917.574.0173

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Everyone is familiar with phrases like “you have the right to an attorney” and “innocent until proven guilty.” They’re quoted in movies and books so often that they’ve become pop culture shorthand for a fair and balanced judicial system. These phrases describe fundamental human rights that few would argue against, but how often do we really consider what these ideas look like in practice? How they are being exercised? Who is exercising them? And who is being protected by them?

For me, these questions presented an interesting moral gray area. I thought about how difficult it must be to represent a person accused of a horrible crime when there is overwhelming evidence to support the charge. This, I thought, must be a terrible emotional burden to bare.

I set out to make *You Have The Right To An Attorney* as a window into the public defender’s internal moral wrestling match, but through the filmmaking process I uncovered a more noble and idealistic story. Set in the South Bronx offices of the highly successful public defense firm *The Bronx Defenders*, I discovered that the true story was not about what it is like to defend perpetrators of violent crimes, but about what it is like to defend a community of people who have been exploited their entire lives by a flawed system. The heroics of these attorneys is less about trying to help bad people, but really about helping ALL people.

The clients these attorneys represent are no different from myself, except for the unfortunate reality that they live in an environment where poor people of color are always assumed guilty whether or not a crime has been committed. In these neighborhoods, the quality of life is reduced by racial profiling and constant unnecessary arrests. Despite the long hours and low pay, these public defenders shoulder a heavy emotional burden that stems not from the outrageousness of their client’s crimes but the constraints imposed upon them by the system they are working under.



FLY'S
EYE
FILMS

matt@flyseeyefilms.com 917.574.0173

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY

THE FILMMAKERS

DIRECTOR/CINEMATOGRAPHER: MATT BOCKELMAN

Matt is a New York-based cinematographer and director. His most recent projects include *The Unofficial House Band*, about a music and arts program at Sing Sing Prison (commissioned by Rehabilitation Through The Arts), *Comunitas*, an experimental documentary about theater director Richard Schechner's famed performance workshop, and *Meet the Gardeners*, a series profiling the employees of Madison Square Garden. Matt founded Fly's Eye Films in 2010 with the goal of creating substantive documentaries, objectively rendered and with a strong visual aesthetic. He started production on *You Have The Right To An Attorney* after receiving a 2011 Cinereach Film Fellowship.

PRODUCER: LISA LEVEY

Lisa is a New York based Producer/Director with extensive experience in long and short-form documentaries. She worked on several documentary specials for ESPN, including the

Emmy Award-winning "*Cinderella Man: The James J. Braddock Story*," and the Emmy-nominated "*Unsettled Scores*." She was Series Producer of the Emmy-nominated documentary series "*Amazing Sports Stories*" for Fox Sports Net. In 2006 Lisa founded L-Train Films and has since developed and produced several shows for clients such as MTV and Bravo.

EDITOR: MAX CANTOR

Max is a graduate of Elon University with a degree in Cinema. At Elon, he helped produce, write, and host the *Elon Phoenix Weekly*, a weekly recap of Elon athletics that aired regionally on ESPN-2. He was honored with the *Elon Excellence in Cinema Award*, and his short films and fiction writing have earned him numerous accolades and awards. In addition to editing *You Have The Right To An Attorney*, Max is currently directing *Decomposing Charles Strouse*, a documentary about the legendary Broadway composer Charles Strouse, set for release in 2012. Max is a New Hampshire native, currently living in Manhattan.



FLY'S
EYE
FILMS

matt@flyseyefilms.com 917.574.0173

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY

CAST



MATTHEW CALDWELL

Before coming to The Bronx Defenders, Matt worked at the Public Defender's office in Miami-Dade County. Matt has also interned in the Brooklyn Treatment Court, The Federal Defenders EDNY, the Legal Aid Society of New York, and for Judge James Francis, Magistrate of the Southern District of New York. He received his J.D. from Brooklyn Law School and his B.S. in Cellular Bi-

ology from the University of Kansas where he was active in Student Government. Matt was a debate coach for Legal Outreach, an after-school scholarship program for underserved communities, and he has worked in the Media Relations department of the ACLU.



SCOTT SIMPSON

Scott graduated from the University of Michigan Law School where he was a Dean's Public Service Fellow, an Associate Editor of the Michigan Journal of Law Reform and a Student Attorney in the law school's general clinic. As a law student, Scott interned for the Federal Defender for the Western District of Washington and The Defender Association in Seattle. He has also worked as a Paralegal for

Peter Goldberger, a criminal defense attorney who specializes in federal post-conviction practice. Scott holds a B.A. in History from Haverford College where he graduated with honors.



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY

CREDITS

Director Matt Bockelman

Producers Lisa Levey
Matt Bockelman

Associate Producer Christine Coletta

Editors Max Cantor
Matt Bockelman

Director of Photography Matt Bockelman

Additional Camera Jon Cooper

Field Sound Michael Reilly
Brendan Murphy
Reed Adler
Theodore Robinson

Colorist Gary Scarpulla

Original Music Michael Reilly

Sound Design & Mix Robin Shore

Title Design Patrick Hosmer

Original Artwork Brian Feeney



FLY'S
EYE
FILMS

matt@flyseyefilms.com 917.574.0173

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY



FLY'S
EYE
FILMS

matt@flyseeyefilms.com 917.574.0173