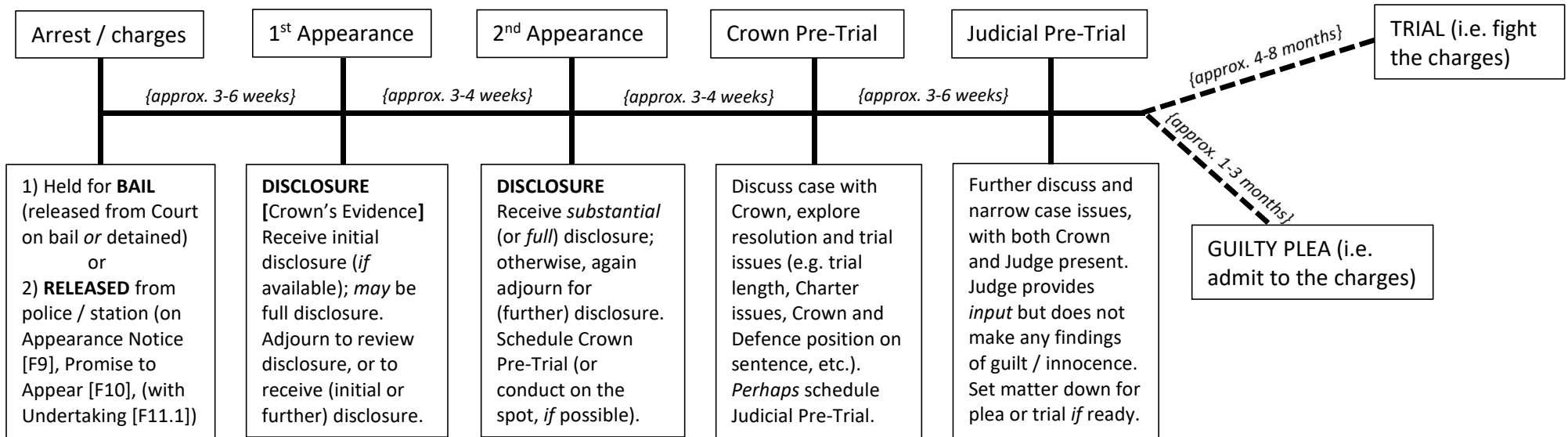




## THE CRIMINAL COURT PROCESS – Ontario Court of Justice



**Note:** Charges can be withdrawn (“dropped”) at any stage in the above process (though *very seldom* on the 1<sup>st</sup> Appearance) and sometimes with ‘conditions’ (e.g. Diversion, Peace Bond). However, such is only possible *if* the Crown consents. There is no way to *force* the Crown to withdraw charges, and if the Crown refuses to do so, generally the **ONLY** options are Guilty Plea or Trial. No lawyer can readily *guarantee* they will get charges withdrawn as it up to the Crown; making such guarantees violates LSO bylaws.

**Note:** In OCJ, the entire criminal process (i.e. from Arrest / Charges to Trial) generally takes roughly 12 months, though anything under 18 months may still be considered “reasonable”. The actual criminal process and timeframes may differ from that above, depending on several factors (e.g. jurisdiction, Charter hearings / motions, etc.).

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