

Espinoza v. Idaho

Legal Team- Questions to Consider:

1. **How much time did Espinoza's attorney meet with him before deciding to push for a plea deal, and what does this suggest about the level of preparation for his defense?**

Consider how the quantity and quality of attorney-client communication may have influenced the defense strategy.

2. **What important personal background information did the defense fail to investigate or present to the prosecutor, and how might this information have impacted the parameters of the plea deal?**

Think about aspects such as education, socio-economic status, job history, language ability, etc.

3. **Why do you think the defense chose to go straight for a plea deal rather than bring the case to a jury? What do you think the risks are by deciding the outcome of a case with legal officials and not a jury of your peers?**

Explore whether this decision reflected a strategic judgment or a lack of investigation.

4. **Based on the Strickland Test, did Espinoza receive effective assistance of counsel?**

Apply both prongs: (1) Was the attorney's performance deficient? and (2) Did that deficiency prejudice the outcome of the case? Use evidence from the case to support your reasoning.

The Strickland Test:

To prove ineffective assistance of counsel, a defendant must show:

1. **Deficient performance** – that the attorney made serious errors falling below professional standards.
2. **Prejudice** – that these errors affected the outcome of the case.