



Our Top 15 Writ Tips and Hacks

Baldwin Chin
Catherine Greene
Burnett

1

Disclaimers ... and Admonitions

Our personal observations after combined years of practice in various settings Nothing “official” Not representing anyone here but ourselves – no Court, no prosecutor’s office, no law school, no non-profit voluntary lawyers associations

- Writs are incredibly specific
- Some rules are picky, and strictly construed
- At local district court level, writ practice varies across Texas
- Paper = basic primer
- When in doubt, reach out and ASK

2

TIP 1: Understanding that the landscape for this case may be unique

Basic rule for felonies: Final conviction, one vehicle, one form, one year, one chance

- Two of these are malleable, the others not at all
- Intersection with AEDPA and the federal system

Picking right vehicle: 11.07 = sole writ to challenge final non-death felony conviction

[capital, pretrial, probation, misdemeanors all have their own statutes]

Where does probation fit into the equation?

11.07

- Probation / Deferred REVOKED and Defendant **Confined**

11.072

- Defendant seeks to challenge constitutionality of probation condition
- Defendant successfully completed probation / deferred
- Defendant was revoked but not confined

Tip 2: Thinking broadly about “restraint”

- Confinement means
 - Confinement OR
 - Any collateral consequence resulting from conviction being challenged
- Locating collateral consequences
 - Texas: State Law Library, “*Statutory Restrictions on Convicted Felons in Texas*”
 - National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction [ABA Criminal Justice Section collaboration]
- It should be tied to this particular case and explicitly pled

5

TIP 3: Memorializing Defense Counsel’s scope of work

What You’ll Do

- “Opinion letter” detailing possible grounds following investigation
- Writ application with supporting memorandum of law
- State Writ or Federal Writ or both
- Federal writ appeal
- Petition for certiorari

What You’ll Charge

- Stair step options
- Litigation costs – part of your fee or separate expenses
 - Investigator
 - Transcript
 - Expert witness evaluation
 - Expert witness affidavit or testimony
 - Travel

6

Find the full text of this and thousands of other resources from leading experts in dozens of legal practice areas in the [UT Law CLE eLibrary \(utcle.org/elibrary\)](https://utcle.org/elibrary)

Title search: Our Top 15 Writ Tips and Hacks

Also available as part of the eCourse

[2020 Robert O. Dawson eConference on Criminal Appeals](#)

First appeared as part of the conference materials for the
2020 Robert O. Dawson Conference on Criminal Appeals session
"Practical Tips from Writ Litigators"