

GIDEON'S TRUMPET

Clarence Gideon's Road to the Supreme Court

Many people don't realize that, in the past, those arrested for a crime did not really have "the right to an attorney" unless they had money. This became a right because Clarence Earl Gideon, a prison inmate who did not have the money for a lawyer, took pencil in hand and wrote his own petition to the United States Supreme Court. Clarence Gideon, without a lawyer, took his case to the highest court in the country and won important rights for all of us. Gideon's Trumpet is his story.

As you watch the film Gideon's Trumpet, take notes with an eye toward answering the following questions:

1. What are the facts of the case?
2. What is the issue involved in the Supreme Court case?
3. Why was the Gideon case a particularly good case for review by the Supreme Court?
4. What are the arguments for Gideon?
5. What are the arguments for the state of Florida?
6. Are there any special problems that might arise should Gideon win the case?
7. Our court systems handle criminal cases and civil cases. In *Gideon v. Wainwright* the Supreme Court ruled that "if you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you by the court," but that this right only applies if you are a defendant in a criminal case, NOT if you are a defendant in a civil case. Why? Explain. Should a defendant in a civil case be entitled to representation? Explain.

