



Gideon v. Wainwright / Newspaper Analysis

Appointed Attorneys . . .

Fight By Florida Man Brings Change In Law

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (UPI)prison two years and two days ago, convicted of breaking into a poolroom but convinced his poverty had cost him a fair trial.

Today, because he kept fight ing in a prison cell for his beiief that he had the right to a lawyer even though he couldn't pay for one, Gideon is free. And thousands of inmates of prisons in Florida and other states have the hope of new trials, with lawyers to defend them.

When he walked out of circuit court here Monday, the thin, in his legal path a landmark de cision of the U.S. Supreme Court, a new public defender law for Florida, and his own acquittal at Monday. a new trial.

A jury deliberated about 65 minutes after the one-day trial bc- He was able to find only a few fore freeing Gideon of breaking into a poolroom here on June 3, but among the inmates he found 1961.

"This is the happiest moment volved court cases, and some who

of my life," said the bespectacled Clarence Earl Gideon went off to Gideon, who began his legal fight alone but had the backing of attorneys general in 22 states when his case reached the federal high

Asked For Attorney

Gideon, whose wife has divorced him and whose children are in foster homes, was convicted on Aug. 4, 1961, and sentenced to five years in prison. He had asked the court then for an attorney, but state law provided court-appointed attorneys only in capital crimes and some special cases.

"Before the trial, I hadn't graying Gideon, 52, left behind thought much about it. I just took it for granted I would get a lawyer. I thought it was required under the Constitution," Gideon said

In Florida's state prison at Raiford, Gideon began his legal fight. law books in the prison library men who had been through in-

ection

knew a little of the procedures

"A little bit from one fellow, man, and it started falling to- ties Union and bar associations. gether," Gideon said.

trial, which he based on the consentenced without benefit of an attorney.

Gideon next penned, laboriously Supreme Court asking that an appeal be heard.

"No, I didn't try to use any cuits.

legal language. I just tried to write it simple and say what I believed and make my points," said Gideon.

When the high court accepted his case, Washington attorney Abe Fortas-"one of the best in the country," Gideon calls him-was appointed to represent Gideon. As the case drew interest, attorneys general from 22 states which had public defender laws entered the case as "friends of the court." Gideon also drew heip and something else from another from the American Civil Liber-

The Supreme Court's decision The Florida Supreme Court in the case was a legal landturned down his plea for a new mark, overturning the Florida Supreme Court and ordering a new tention that he was convicted and trial for Gideon on the grounds of lack of a defense attoney. The court ruled he was entitled to one.

With the Gideon case as a manin longhand, a petition to the U.S. date, the 1963 legislature passed a law providing public defenders for all of the state's judicial cir-

Source: The Chronicle. (Pascagoula, Miss.), 07 Aug. 1963. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87065526/1963-08-07/ed-1/seq-11/.

Observe

- 1. What text do you notice first?
- 2. What do you learn just from the titles and subtitles?

3. Where and when was this article published? What
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Reflect

- 4. What can you tell about what was important at the time and place of publication?
- 5. What can you tell about the point of view of the people who wrote and published this article?
- 6. What do you learn about the importance of the decision in Gideon v. Wainwright (1963) from this article?

Question

7. What do you still wonder about this source?