

# Gideon v. Wainwright / How the Case Moved Through the Court System

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## Supreme Court of the United States

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear Gideon's case and appointed a lawyer to represent him. In a unanimous decision, the Court ruled that in state felony criminal cases, a person who cannot afford an attorney must be provided one. Thus, *Betts v. Brady* was overturned.

*Gideon v. Wainwright*\* (1963)

*Note: Just before the Supreme Court made its decision, Wainwright replaced Cochran as director of the Division of Corrections.*



## Supreme Court of the State of Florida

After claiming the Circuit Court's refusal to appoint counsel for him constituted a denial of his rights, Gideon applied to the state Supreme Court for a writ of habeas corpus (an order asking that he be freed because he was illegally imprisoned). The court denied his request.

*Gideon v. Cochran* (1961)



## Circuit Court of the 14<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of Florida

Gideon, a poor man living in Florida, was arrested and charged with breaking and entering. He could not afford a lawyer and the judge refused to appoint one, ruling that the court will only supply lawyers in capital cases. Gideon is convicted and sentenced to jail.

*State v. Gideon* (1961)