

LIFE WITHOUT RIGHTS FOR THE ACCUSED

Directions: Read the story and underline the sections where Johnny's rights are violated.

Johnny Q. Public dozed off to sleep while watching a crime show on TV. Suddenly there was a noise on his porch and then, "BAM!" Five men in police uniforms stood in his living room with guns pointed at him.

The captain shouted to the other officers, "You, go search the basement. You, search the garage. You, search the kitchen!"

"Wh- wh- where's your search warrant?" asked Johnny nervously.

"We don't need a warrant!" replied the police captain.

After searching his house, the captain announced, "Johnny Q. Public, you are under arrest."

Johnny was booked and led to a prison cell. He wondered what he had been arrested for. "Guard, why I have been arrested?" Johnny asked each day. But the guards said they didn't know.

Months went by. Finally Johnny was told that if he could post one million dollars bail, he could get out of jail until his trial. "I don't have that kind of money. Can I talk to an attorney?" He'd beg, but the answer was always, "No."

A year passed, and finally Johnny was transported from Virginia to Pennsylvania for trial. He found out that he was charged with shoplifting a t-shirt. As he entered the courtroom, he saw an empty jury box. He asked, "Where's my jury?" He was told he couldn't have a jury because judges were better at knowing when someone was guilty.

Then the district attorney said, "The prosecution calls Johnny Q. Public to the stand." Johnny didn't want to testify. But he was told he would be sent back to jail if he did not. Johnny put on the best defense he could. By some miracle, he was found not guilty.

A month later, Johnny was arrested again on the same charge. He had to prepare for another trial. The prosecution had new evidence this time. Johnny wanted to question the prosecution's witnesses, but the judge would not let him.

When it was time for Johnny to present his case, Johnny said, "I'd like to call my neighbor to the stand. He knows that I was at home alone that night." But the judge said, "Your neighbor didn't want to get involved, and so he would not agree to testify. There's nothing we can do."

Johnny was found guilty. The judge asked Johnny to stand while he read the sentence: "Johnny Q. Public, since this is your first offense, you have been sentenced to five years in a maximum security prison." Johnny felt dizzy and sat down. He thought, "I wish there were something that could protect me from these abuses!"