Twelve million people are arrested in the United States each year and millions of those cases will proceed through the criminal justice system. Most will be represented by public defenders; lawyers who represent low income people accused of crimes. Often these lawyers receive little or no training, resources or support. What does that mean for our system of justice?

Lawyer turned filmmaker Dawn Porter spent three and a half years following three public defenders working in the deep south. The result was “Gideon’s Army,” a feature documentary about their work.

Dawn Porter is the founder of Trilogy Films. She is Director/Producer of Spies of Mississippi, which will aired on Independent Lens in 2014, as well as, Gideon’s Army, which premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, and won the Best Editing Award in the US Documentary competition. Gideon’s Army aired on HBO in the summer of 2013 and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award and an Emmy. The film received numerous criminal justice awards including the Ridenhour Prize from the Nation Institute.

As an alumnus of the Tribeca All Access program, Porter won the 2011 juried Creative Promise Award for Gideon’s Army. Realscreen named Porter one of their 2012 Doc Hot Shots 15 emerging directors to watch. Other Trilogy projects include “Spies of Mississippi” for ARTE Germany and PBS.
Biography

Porter also works in narrative features as executive producer on *Serious Moonlight*, written by Adrienne Shelley and starring Meg Ryan and Timothy Hutton. *Serious Moonlight* debuted at the Tribeca Film Festival and was released theatrically by Magnolia Pictures and domestically on Lifetime Movie Network. She is also an executive producer on *The Green*, an independent feature premiering on Showtime Networks and starring Cheyenne Jackson (*30 Rock*) and Emmy-winning actress Julia Ormond.

Before becoming a filmmaker she was the Director of News Standards and Practices at ABC News, and Vice President of Standards and Practices at A&E Networks. Porter is a graduate of Swarthmore College and the Georgetown University Law Center. She was a practicing attorney at Baker & Hostetler and ABC Television Networks before beginning her film career.