
9/65 B Indigent client charged with crime

It is improper for an attorney to accept funds from the county to represent an indigent defendant charged with a crime, and subsequently bill the client or his family for fees in the same case. In view of sec. 956.27, which requires the court to make a finding that the defendant is in fact indigent, it would appear that the proposed conduct by the lawyer is unethical and possibly a fraud on the court. As a corollary, if a lawyer represents an indigent defendant upon court appointment and later discovers that the client is not in fact indigent, the attorney must insist on reporting such facts to the court before he continues with the matter. (9/28/65)