



Who Goes to Prison?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an understanding between the attributes of people who are sent to prison versus the daily prison population.
2. Review the most current national data on the numbers and attributes of the people sent to prison each year.
3. Understand the difference between quantitative and qualitative/ethnographic forms of analysis as it pertains to prisoner attributes.
4. Understand how changes in the length of stay (LOS) in prison has a large impact on prison population.
5. Develop an understanding of the lifestyles of people sent to prison each year.

PUBLIC MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT WHO GOES TO PRISON

The public reacts to crime with fear and panic, because they have been led to believe by the media and public officials that thousands of vicious, intractable street criminals menace innocent citizens. Actually, they have two slightly different images of the new street criminal. The “softer” version is that of a person who persists in committing property crimes even after repeated opportunities to live an honest life and after being arrested many times and serving numerous jail and prison sentences. The “harder” version is that of a violent criminal, equally intractable, who goes about his or her predatory crimes with no regard for other humans. When he (usually a male) snatches purses from old ladies, he bashes them in the head, because he enjoys hurting people. When he robs a mom-and-pop grocery store, he executes

his victims with a street on his face. Most Americans still believe that millions of these two slightly different types of street criminals stalk our streets, raid our homes, rape, assault, and murder innocent citizens and generally menace and vilify our society.

But as shown below, it does not take much today to be sentenced to prison. While these cases may not be the "typical" prisoner, they do show that the threshold for being sentenced to prison for relatively minor criminal behavior has been lowered. In addition to these types of low-level convictions, hundreds of thousands of people are being sent to prison each year, not for being convicted of a felony crime but for not complying with the bureaucratic rules associated with probation and parole supervision, such as not reporting to one's parole or probation officer, not paying supervision fees, and not reporting for drug treatment.

The emergence of criminology as a science in the nineteenth century had served to debunk the "evil person" theory of crime and instead attributed the crime problem to social and economic conditions. But recently, many researchers, perhaps swayed by the general conservative shift or lured by government incentives in the form of grants, jobs, and recognition, have resurrected old theories of the "criminal type" (now most often labeled the "career criminal") and have searched for methods to identify such people.

This trend started in 1970, when Marvin E. Wolfgang, Robert M. Figlio, and Thorton Sellin examined the arrest records of all youths born in Philadelphia in 1945 and discovered that 6 percent of the youth in that "birth cohort" accounted for more than half of all the arrests or police contacts of the entire cohort. The idea that a few criminals commit most of the crime evolved from this study—along with the hope that there was some way to identify these persons before they embarked on their criminal careers.¹

"Offenders"	Prior Record Crime	Description	Sentence
Elias Kelly and George Robinson	None	Nine counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor	Original sentence of 8 years—later reduced to 27 months
Mother and Steppather	None	Deleting a DUI conviction from the county DUI database	42 months
Cecilia Ruiz	None	Forgery	
Single parent—two children ages 6 and 8	None	Throwing a missile at an occupied vehicle	24 months
Jessica Hall	None	Threw a cup of McDonald's coffee at another car that cut her off while driving	
Unemployed mother of three children with Marine husband serving in Iraq	None	Four counts of perjury	30 months—commuted by President Bush
Lewis "Scooter" Libby	None	Child molestation	75 years
Stephen May	None	Inappropriately touched two girls and a boy; there was no sexual activity or penetration	
Genarlow Wilson	None	Aggravated child molestation	10 years—resentenced to two years by Georgia Supreme Court
	None	17-year-old male had consensual oral sex with 15-year-old girl at a party that was videotaped.	

SOURCE: *Undoing America: Why and How to Reduce America's Prison Population*, November 2007 (Washington, DC: JFA Institute), p. 2

In the early 1980s, Peter Greenwood and his colleagues at the Rand Corporation set out to identify "high-rate" offenders in samples of incarcerated burglars and robbers in Texas, Michigan, and California. Greenwood and Alan Abrahams asked these prisoners how much crime they had committed in the months before incarceration. Ten percent of their sample stood out from the rest in the number of crimes they reported, and a set of characteristics distinguished this subgroup of high-rate offenders from the other robbers and burglars. Even though Greenwood and his associate at Rand Corporation, Susan Turner, discovered later that persons identified by these same characteristics actually did *not* continue to commit crimes of the type and at the rate expected of high-rate offenders (a finding that caused Greenwood to recant his earlier claims), the idea of the high-rate offender or career criminal had taken hold. Even today, the concept of the career criminal continues to drive America's imprisonment binge.² This has been exemplified by the passage of many laws, such as truth in sentencing, mandatory prison, life without the possibility of parole, and three strikes and you're out—all of which serve to send more people to prison for a longer period of time.

In a series of longitudinal studies, Alfred Blumstein, along with various coauthors, examined forty-one different "criminal careers," which they offer as a category independent of that of career criminal.³ (All persons who are arrested have a criminal career even if they commit one crime, which would constitute their entire criminal career.) Blumstein and his colleagues located subgroups of male offenders who, instead of maturing out of crime like the vast majority of offenders, continued to commit crime at the same rate throughout a relatively extended criminal career, that is, until they were past 35 years of age. Blumstein abstained from calling these people either high-rate offenders (actually, the frequency with which they committed crimes was relatively low) or career criminals. He recognized instead that the idea of a career criminal implies that certain individuals have significant differences from other offenders and these differences, whatever they are, propel them toward a career in crime. This is particularly essential in employing the concept of career criminal in criminal justice decisions, because there must be some way to distinguish career criminals early in their careers from the majority of offenders who do not persist in crime.

Blumstein's "persisters," it turned out, were not identified until they were far along on their criminal careers, and he and his associates could not locate "background" characteristics that separated them from many other male offenders who had less enduring criminal careers. In estimating the effect of Blumstein's articles, however, David Greenberg points out that there is a tendency for "laypersons to oversimplify, misunderstand, or lose sight of distinctions and qualifications criminologists make" and to see in these studies the positive identification of the career criminal. And this misperception definitely occurred, particularly among criminal justice policy makers. Characterizing the search as fruitless, Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi noted:

On March 26, 1982, 14 leading members of the criminology community in the United States met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the future of criminal justice research in this country. The priority area for future research listed first by this panel was "criminal careers." . . . Four years later the criminal career notion so dominates discussion of criminal justice policy and so controls

expenditure of federal research funds that it may now be said that criminal justice research in this country is indeed centrally planned.⁴

Fear of crime and these new images of the criminal have encouraged politicians and judges to change sentencing laws and practices, a practice that has multiplied prison populations. Popular images and the social sciences' ideas about contemporary criminals are not accurate. Most of these popular images of criminals are shaped by the media, and media depiction consists mostly of selective attention on sensational crimes, politicians' rhetoric, and studies of criminals funded by the federal government.

In these studies, social scientists have formed most of their ideas, "in another or now, more accurately, at computer desks), using evidence that is unreliable and skippy—police arrest records, prison files, and convicts' profiles in news to questionnaires—which they study to discover the elusive traits of the criminal. Very few of these criminologists have spent any significant time doing anything or talking to their subjects, the prisoners, something that is absolutely necessary to develop an accurate understanding of offenders' motives and criminal practices.

To discover who is actually going to prison, the extent of their criminal involvement, the seriousness of their crimes, and the "danger" they pose to society, we pursued a broad research methodology. In addition to examining the data records, we have conducted lengthy interviews of persons sentenced to prison. This is not to say that we ignored the records and available statistics, but we went beyond the so-called hard data and sought a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of a complex social issue.

NATIONAL TRENDS ON PRISON ADMISSIONS

There are three basic ways that you can be sent to a state or federal prison. First, you can be convicted of a felony-level crime and be sent directly to prison.⁵ Second, you can be convicted of a felony-level crime, but sentenced to a term of probation in lieu of a prison term. Should you fail to complete a probation term for any of a variety of reasons (for example, you are convicted of another crime, fail to meet the terms of probation supervision, and so on), your probation status can be revoked by the judge, and you can be sent to prison. Third, if paroled from prison, you can be readmitted to prison if you are rearrested and convicted for a new felony.

In 2009, the last year that aggregate national-level data are available, we reported that there were an estimated 674,707 admissions to state prisons and another 56,153 sent to the federal prison system (see Table 2-1). As shown in the table, most of the state and federal admissions were new court commitments which means that they were not under parole supervision at the time they were convicted and sentenced to prison. About one-third are parole violators who bear in mind that embedded in the parole violation figure are people who have been convicted of a new felony while on parole supervision.

Table 2-1 State and Federal Prison Admissions, 2009

Correctional System	Number	%
Total State Prison Admissions	674,707	100%
New Court Commitments	422,910	67%
Parole Violators	247,449	33%
Total Federal Prison Releases	56,153	100%
Conditional/Parole Releases	51,524	92%
Unconditional Releases	4,628	8%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 2009* (December, 2010).

Table 2-2 The Number of People Going to State Prison, 1990, 2000, 2005, 2008, and 2009

Year	State Prison Population	State Prison Admissions	% New Commitments	% Parole Violators
1990	689,577	460,739	70%	30%
2000	1,100,850	581,487	63%	37%
2005	1,340,311	676,952	62%	38%
2008	1,408,479	690,954	62%	38%
2009	1,405,622	674,707	67%	33%
% Change	104%	49%	-10%	+17%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Special Report: Truth in Sentencing in State Prisons* (January 1999); U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 2008* (June 30, 2010).

Although the number of admissions has increased by 49 percent since 1990, the state prison population has more than doubled (Table 2-2). The larger increase in the prison population, as compared to prison admissions, has occurred for one major reason—the length of stay (or LOS) in prison. Specifically, the LOS in prison has increased from 21 months in 1988 to 29 months by 2006.⁶ While this increase in LOS may seem minimal, it has a dramatic impact on the size of the prison population.

All correctional populations are the result of two key factors: admissions and length of stay (or LOS). A correctional population is the function of the following formula:

$$(\text{Admissions} \times \text{Length of Stay}) = \text{Correctional Population}$$

As either, or both, of these two population-drivers change, so too will the resulting correctional population. Using the current number of 674,707 admissions each year, you can see that for each reduction or increase in the LOS by just one month will increase or lower the prison population by nearly 60,000 inmates (674,707/12 = 56,226).

Another major trend shown in Table 2-2, alluded to in Chapter 1, is that the number of new admissions began to decline in 2009. Why this is occurring is the

subject of great interest and speculation. An important reason is the dramatic reduction in the crime rate, which in turn is reducing the arrest rate. But another reason is that national state prison data are largely driven by California, which accounts for nearly 20 percent of all state prison admissions. (129,904 in 2009. In 2008, California reported 140,827 admissions. The major reason for the decline was a drop of about 10,000 parole violators for the state. If California is removed from the analysis, there is a decline but at a much smaller level.⁷ The bottom line is that the historic increases in prison admissions seem to have ended and may even be starting to decline albeit at a small pace.

It should be noted that the 29-month LOS figure does not include the estimated 5 to 6 months one waits in jail before being transferred to the state prison or the amount of time parole violators spend in jail and prison until they are released again. Nor do the data include the growing number of prisoners who have been sentenced to life. In 2006, approximately 1 percent of all prison sentences were life sentences.⁸ Because these inmates must die in prison, it will be many years before the effects of these sentences are factored into the national release data, which would then increase the average LOS statistics.

Another misperception of the public is that most persons convicted for serious crimes are infrequently imprisoned. Using national data, we can see that the perception is profoundly inaccurate (Table 2-3). Contrary to popular perception, the vast majority of all offenders who are convicted of a felony are incarcerated, with 69 percent sentenced to prison or jail. The most frequent disposition for all crimes is

Table 2-3 Percent of Court Dispositions for Felony Cases in 2006

Most Serious Conviction Offense	Total Incarceration	Prison	Jail	Probation	Other
All Offenses	69%	41%	28%	27%	4%
Violent Offenses	77	54	23	20	3
Murder/Manslaughter	95	93	2	3	2
Sexual Assault	81	64	18	16	3
Robbery	85	71	14	13	2
Aggravated Assault	72	43	30	25	3
Other Violent	70	39	30	26	4
Property Offenses	67	38	29	29	4
Burglary	73	49	24	24	3
Larceny	69	34	34	28	3
Motor Vehicle Theft	83	42	41	15	2
Fraud/Forgery	59	32	27	35	6
Drug Offenses	65	38	28	30	4
Possession	63	33	31	33	4
Trafficking	67	41	26	29	4
Weapon Offenses	73	45	28	25	2
Other Specified Offenses	70	36	34	27	3

SOURCE: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Felony Sentences in State Courts, 2006*, (December 30, 2009), Statistical tables: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&id=2152>.

Table 2-4 Type of Offense for 2006 Prison Admissions, New Court Commitments and Parole Revocations

	New Court Commitments	Parole Revocations
Violent Offenses	27.6%	23.2%
Homicide	2.8	1.5
Kidnapping	0.6	0.5
Rape	1.5	0.9
Other Sexual Assault	4.6	3
Robbery	6.9	7.1
Assault	9.5	8.8
Other Violent	1.6	1.5
Property Offenses	27.6	33.3
Burglary	9.8	12.3
Larceny	6.6	7.6
Motor Vehicle Theft	2.6	5.5
Arson	0.4	0.3
Fraud	5.3	4
Stolen Property	1.7	2.8
Other Property	1.2	0.9
Drug Offenses	30.6	32.6
Possession	8.8	9.7
Trafficking	13	14.6
Unspecified Drug	8.8	8.3
Public-Order Offenses	13.7	10.2
Weapons	3.8	4
DWI	4.4	2.1
Other Public-Order	5.5	4.1
Other Offenses	0.5	0.6

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *National Corrections Reporting Program (May 2010)*.

state prison. For those convicted of the most serious crimes, the rates are even higher, with three out of four convictions resulting in prison or jail.

These data also mean that most people sentenced to prison were admitted for either nonviolent crimes or no crimes at all (technical parole violators). As shown in Table 2-4, the vast majority (about 75%) has been sentenced for property, drug, or public order crimes. But these data provide very little information on such important items as the number of prior prison terms or prior felony convictions.

About 30 percent of all prison sentences are for drug crimes, with one-third being for simple possession. By contrast, in 1960, the proportion of prison admissions for drug crimes was only 5 percent; in 1981, the percentage was only 9 percent (Figure 2-1).⁹ It is also no coincidence that as the proportion of prison admissions for drug crimes has increased, so have the proportions of nonwhites being sent to prison. Since 1960, this proportion has increased from 32 percent to 50 percent.

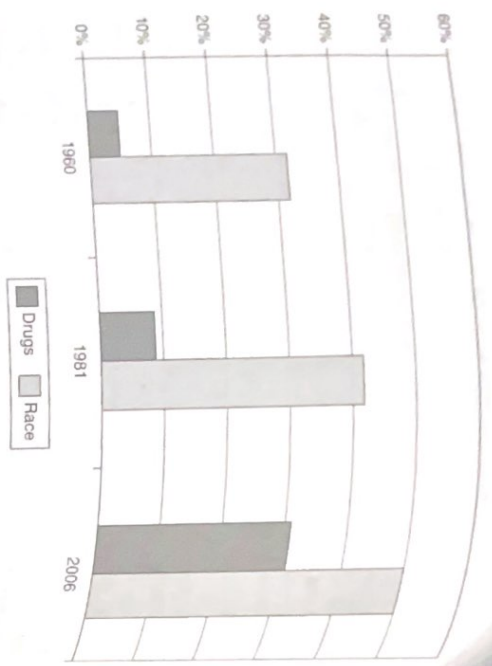


FIGURE 2-1 Percent of State Prison Admissions by Drugs and Race

Finally, we should note that the vast majority of prison admissions are people who were on probation and parole but failed to complete those forms of community supervision. We have already noted that about one-third of the prison admissions are people who fail parole after being released from prison. But there is another large group of people who fail to complete probation and are sent to prison for one of two reasons. One group is probationers who are convicted of another felony crime while on probation and are sentenced to prison for the new crime. The second group is probationers who fail to adhere to the rules of probation and are arrested but not convicted of a new felony crime.

There are no direct national statistics on how many probation violators are being sent to prison. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) does report on the number of probation terminations and the percentage of terminations that were revoked and were re-incarcerated. In 2009, there were 2.3 probation terminations, 65 percent of these successfully completed probation. At the same time, 16 percent were revoked and were incarcerated. That rate would mean that some 375,000 probationers were re-incarcerated, which would be over 50 percent of the 675,000 prison admissions. However, we cannot assume that all of these re-incarcerations would represent people being sent to prison. Some portion may reflect people who are detained at the local jail level for their revocation hearing and are then reinstated on probation supervision.

There are data from selected states that are more precise and give us a better idea of what portion of the prison admission stream are probation violators. In Kentucky, 53 percent of the prison admissions are probation or parole violators. In California, over 60 percent of the prison admissions are parole violators. Data



FIGURE 2-2 Estimated Percent of New Prison Admissions by Reason for Prison Admission

from other states like Texas, Nevada, and Michigan suggest that as much as one-half of the new court commitments are probation violators. Thus, the majority (estimated at 70%) of the prison admission stream consists of either probation or parole violators (Figure 2-2). As the probation and parole populations increase, there will be a growing number of these people sent to prison. In essence, the entire correctional system is feeding on its own high rates of failure.

All of these statistics suggest that a significant number of people are being sentenced to prison for relatively minor crimes. This is not to say that there are not offenders who are highly dangerous and need to be incarcerated for long periods of time. But what proportion of these half-million prisoners are truly dangerous and require long-term confinement? To answer this question requires a more detailed analysis of who goes to prison.

A CLOSER LOOK AT WHO GOES TO PRISON

Quantitative data are unable to paint a complete picture of the criminal lifestyles or the types of crimes committed by the present prison population. The only way to better understand who is going to prison is to examine their social and criminal backgrounds prior to being sent to prison. In the social sciences, such analysis is referred to as ethnographic studies. Such studies of prisoners in general and prison admissions in particular are extremely rare. Due to funding restrictions and the advent of high powered computers and statistical software packages, few criminologists ever spend any substantial time in correctional facilities. Rarely do they spend time talking to or observing prisoners. Virtually all of the major criminology journals consist of reports that are quantitative studies.

To counter this trend, the authors first conducted an ethnographic study of newly admitted prisoners in the early 1990s. The study consisted of interviewing and reviewing 154 males who were sentenced to prison in three states (Washington, Nevada, and Illinois).¹⁰ While the numbers may seem small, they were randomly selected from the entire list of all prison admissions at the time of the study. Although these cases were drawn from studies conducted in the early 1990s, they continue to be reflective of inmates who continue to be incarcerated and remain incarcerated, due to the recently enacted sentencing reforms discussed earlier. We emphasize inmate population because most studies of prison populations are designed to answer the question "Who is in prison at a particular time?" Surveys of the daily inmate population provide a distorted picture of who is going to prison because inmates with longer sentences, usually sentenced for more serious crimes, those prisoners with longer sentences, usually sentenced for more serious crimes, "stack up" in the prison population and are overrepresented in one-day surveys.

The states selected for the study varied in their sentencing structures, population sizes, rates of imprisonment, and lengths of imprisonment at the time of our research. Illinois uses a determinate sentencing structure in which release occurs after a prisoner serves a significant proportion of the original sentence. Although a parole board exists, it has no authority to grant a release. Although Illinois's determinate sentencing law eliminated discretionary release by the parole board, the vast majority of inmates must serve some period of parole supervision.

Washington adopted sentencing guidelines with the specific goal of increasing lengths of stay for inmates convicted of violent crimes. Because Washington eliminated parole as part of its sentencing guidelines reform act, very few inmates were released to parole, and thus very few violators returned to prison. Nevada uses an indeterminate sentencing scheme that allows inmates to be released by a parole board after serving approximately 20 percent of the original sentence. We interviewed these persons in lengthy open interviews; we covered their social histories, criminal activities in the period before the current arrest, and the full circumstances of their arrests. The information gathered from the interview was verified and augmented by the arrest records along with police and probation office reports.¹¹

HOW SERIOUS ARE THEIR CRIMES?

An essential part of the public conception of street crime is that growing numbers of people are engaged in very serious crime. To evaluate the severity of crimes committed by inmates in our samples, we used an objective measure of seriousness from the public's perspective based on data gathered in 1980 by the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law at the University of Pennsylvania. In the center's survey of crime seriousness, a national survey asked 52,000 Americans to assign a numerical score to a short description of 204 criminal acts. Americans to assign a numerical score to a short description of 204 criminal acts which reflected the respondents' perceptions of the crimes' seriousness. For example, two of the acts described were "A person, using force, steals property worth \$10 from outside a building" and "A person, using force, robs a victim of \$100

No physical harm occurs." The center reduced these raw scores into "ratio scores," which indicated the relative severity of each crime.

We observed that if the acts involved minor injury, the threat of injury, theft over \$1,000, the use of a weapon, use of heroin, or the selling of marijuana, theft received a score of more than 5 on the center's scale. We labeled these "moderate" crimes. If they involved theft of over \$10,000, serious injury, attempted murder, sales of heroin, or the smuggling of narcotics, they received a score of more than 10. We considered these "serious" crimes. If they involved rape, manslaughter, homicide, a child victim, or kidnapping, they received a score of more than 15. We labeled these "very serious" crimes. Crimes that lacked any of these characteristics received a score of less than 5. We called these "petty" crimes. Two such acts from the survey were: "A person breaks into a department store and steals merchandise worth \$10" and "A person smokes marijuana."

We sorted the crimes of our sample into the categories "petty," "moderate," "serious," and "very serious" according to these characteristics. Figure 2-3 summarizes the results of this distribution. In this figure, we have adjusted our stratified samples so that they reflect the offense distribution for the nation.¹² About half of the crimes for which persons are sent to prison (53%) fall into the petty category. This finding is wholly consistent with the BJS prison admissions and inmate classification studies that have repeatedly found that most prisoners are committed to prison for nonviolent property or drug crimes, with the result that the majority (50 to 70%) are classified as minimum-custody inmates.

The distribution on crime seriousness was somewhat different in the three states. Washington, which has the lowest rate of incarceration of the three states, also had the lowest proportion of petty felons (31%) and the highest proportion

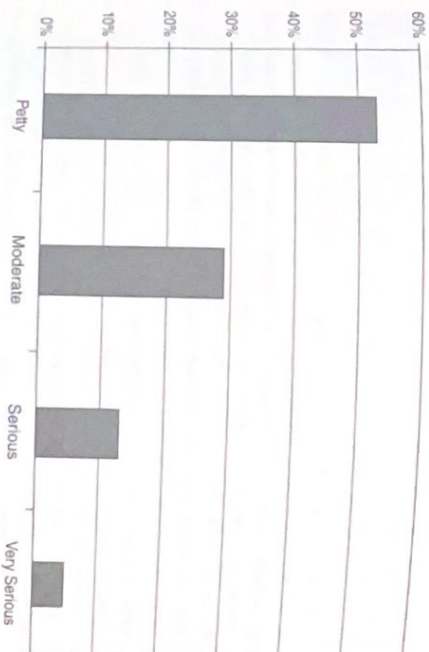


FIGURE 2-3 Severity of Crime Committed by New Prison Admission in Illinois, Nevada, and Washington State

(30%) of serious crimes. This is to be expected, as Washington had enacted sentencing guidelines that purposely restrict the use of prison for nonviolent and property crimes. Illinois, which had a medium rate, did not differ very much from the total sample. Nevada, which had the highest rate of the three states and the highest rate in the nation, predictably had the lowest proportion of serious (5%) and very serious crimes (4%). These different patterns between the three states also verified the validity of the sampling methods.

These findings show that over half of the people being sent to prison in these three very diverse states are being sent for petty crimes, which are crimes with no aggravating features—that is, no significant amount of money, no injury, or any other feature that would cause ordinary citizens to view the crime as particularly serious. The following are narrative descriptions of three typical petty crimes from our sample.

George, a 17-year-old black youth, was arrested for possession of a stolen vehicle. He had been kicked out of school in the ninth grade. Since then, he had worked at a couple of jobs—a small soul food restaurant and a small garage fixing cars. He had not been working for a while. He had been arrested a few times before, once for curfew, another for shoplifting. A couple of months before this arrest, he was arrested for “busting a car window.” “A man tried to hit me with his car, and I swung at him and broke his window. I got three months’ supervision.” On the current arrest he was caught inside a car trying to steal the radio. “They said I busted the window, but it weren’t locked. He [the policeman] took the screwdriver I was using and put it in the lock and said I was stealing the car.” He was sentenced to three years in prison.

Jimmy, a 26-year-old black man, dropped out of high school in the tenth grade. He worked at several unskilled jobs as a teenager but started getting into trouble when he was 17. After several arrests, he was sent to prison for aggravated assault against a relative. He served three years and then another year and a half for violation of parole. He had been out for two months when he was arrested this time. He was living with his grandmother, “trying to stay out of trouble.” He was not able to find a job and was living on general assistance. He was caught in an abandoned school where he and some other young men were looking for junk metal that they intended to sell for “some loose change.” The school had been abandoned for six years, and local people had been stealing from it repeatedly. He received seven years for burglary.

Edmond was a 50-year-old white carpenter who worked in Florida in the winter and Seattle in the summer. He had been arrested once 22 years before for receiving stolen property. He was passing through Las Vegas on his way to Seattle and said he found a billfold with \$100 on a bar where he was drinking and gambling. The owner, who suspected him of taking it, turned him in. He was charged with grand larceny and received three years.

Twenty-nine percent of our sample fell into the “moderate” severity category, but many of these were aggravated because the charges involved possession or sales of heroin or cocaine. Most of our sample’s heroin or cocaine crimes involved only very small amounts of the drugs, and the persons, if they were dealers, were small-time, as the following cases indicate.

Luis, a 29-year-old Puerto Rican raised in Chicago, had never been arrested before. He had been a member of Latin gangs but in recent years had less and less contact with them. He used cocaine occasionally and hung around with a lot of guys who dealt cocaine. He was riding with a friend on a motorcycle, and the police pulled them over because they were not wearing helmets. The police found a packet of cocaine on his friend and several on the ground around them. He and his friend were charged with possession of cocaine. Luis was sentenced to three years.

Felix had been in trouble on the West Side of Chicago since he was 10 years old. He had dropped out of school in the eighth grade and was arrested several times before he was 18. He had served three prison terms since then. At 26, he was living at home with his mother, “taking little side jobs,” and hustling a little. He said he wanted “an average job and to go home after it and enjoy life.” On the present arrest, he was riding with his girlfriend, and the police stopped them. The police said they had a report that a man and a woman were selling drugs out of a car in that neighborhood. They found one bag of cocaine (0.5 grams) on his girlfriend’s side of the car and arrested him. He was sentenced to two years.

Robberies were considered at least moderate crimes because the public, officers, and criminologists invariably view robbery as a serious crime and a violent crime (government agencies that compile statistics on crimes always place robbery in their “violent” category). In actuality, however, many robberies differ from the public’s perception of them. The following accounts, for example, do not seem to fit the image, and many citizens, perhaps a majority, would not consider them serious or violent crimes.

Darryl was a 21-year-old black man raised on the South Side of Chicago in housing projects. He had dropped out of school in the tenth grade and had been working on and off at minimum-wage jobs. He had been arrested three times for minor crimes (battery, disorderly conduct, and marijuana) and had borrowed some money on his girlfriend’s watch because his “brother was coming to town and I wanted to have some money to do things with him.” The dealer offered him \$60 but only gave him \$20, telling him that he would give him \$40 later. Darryl did not see the dealer for two weeks, and said he did not have any and offered Darryl drugs. When he was showing him the drugs, Darryl saw the watch and grabbed for it. They fought and the drug dealer was “whipping” him. Darryl’s brother jumped in and helped

him. Then the dealer gave Darryl the watch. Three days later, the police came to his apartment and arrested him for robbery and assault. He was bailed out and later went to a jury trial. The jury found him not guilty on aggravated assault and was hung on the robbery. However, Darryl had run from the court while they were deliberating. He later turned himself in, bail was set at \$150,000, and the public defender talked him into pleading guilty to robbery. He was sentenced to prison for three years.

Richard graduated from high school in Seattle and went into the armed services. After being discharged, he went to cosmetology school and worked for 13 years as a cosmetologist. Three years ago he began learning a new trade and worked part-time in a print shop. He had started using marijuana and heroin in high school. When he was working as a cosmetologist, he and his wife "got into coke, heavy." He had several arrests for driving while under the influence and one for child molesting. "That was a mistake. I was drunk and high and I just got carried away with this young girl." After the last arrest, he and his wife decided to change their lives and quit all drugs. "I became responsible and became manager of Super Cuts. But after a while I got bored and started hanging around with my old friends. They were freebasing and pretty soon I was back into drugs heavy. I left my wife and moved in with a friend. I couldn't believe that I had let my life get so fucked up again, so I went into a drug program, but I didn't get along with the director. After three weeks I tried coke again. And I was right back into the same lifestyle. I needed money, so I decided to rob some stores. I robbed the same store three times, a convenience store like 7-Eleven. I got about \$50 each time. I tucked a BB gun in my belt and went in, showed the clerk the gun in my belt, and asked for the money. In court the clerk said I was polite." He was sentenced to five years.

About 18 percent of the sample fell into the "serious" and some "very serious" crime ratings in our samples. Two were very serious armed robbers (they involved larger amounts of money and people were threatened during the robbery). There were seven first-degree homicides (2% of our adjusted sample), and three were gang-related. The following is one:

Parnell, a 20-year-old member of the Disciples, had dropped out of school and hung around with his neighborhood branch of the gang since he was 15. He had never held a job and was arrested fourteen or fifteen times for activities related to "gang banging," mostly possession of weapons.¹³ He was arrested once for robbery when he was 17. "The guy I was walking with was strong-armed some guy. But I wasn't into robbing, just gang banging." The night of the murder, he and some of his gang were at a skating rink, which was the location of many altercations between rival gangs. His group saw a guy from another gang who they thought had robbed one of their buddies. They chased him, and one of them beat him with a baseball bat. He did a week later. Parnell was the only one convicted because "I was the only one witness identified." He received twenty-five years.

Two of the homicides occurred during drug robberies. This is one of them:

Anthony, a 24-year-old black man, was sent to prison when he was 17 for aggravated battery. "Some guy broke out the windows of a neighbor of mine. I went to court, and after the court a fight broke out and they arrested all of us." After serving eighteen months, he completed two years in community college and had been working for five years as a roofer. He says he was living a clean life in the suburbs of Chicago—working, playing basketball, and taking care of his common-law wife and her son. "They said I went to this house, kicked in the door, and demanded drugs and money, and then shot the man. The woman in the house identified me. The police had received an anonymous phone call and they arrested me. They said I searched the house, but they didn't find any fingerprints. The description she gave the police didn't fit me."

In two of the homicide cases, people were convicted of killing their girlfriends. In one, a 33-year-old Cuban man who had never been in trouble before and who had worked steadily was convicted of killing his girlfriend:

It was an accident. I was fighting with my girlfriend. She bothered me a lot. I had a son with her, and she was wanting me to leave my wife. We had been drinking and we got into a fight. I hit her with my fist and killed her.

Most of the serious crimes (53%) were sex crimes. These ranged from child molesting to rape, and most were acts committed against family members or close associates. These are serious crimes, but it should be noted again that most of them depart from the popular images of crime and criminals in which a menacing stranger is the perpetrator. The other serious crimes were robberies (17%), attempted murders (8%), manslaughter (12%), and drug charges (10%). Several of the robberies and drug crimes do approach the popular image: that is, they involved larger amounts of money, threats or injuries to victims, or larger amounts of cocaine or heroin.

PATTERNS OF CRIME

The concept of a career criminal is now entrenched in criminal justice—a dramatic rethinking of policy and practice. In the United States, legislators, judges, and prosecutors have passed laws to extend sentences, have recommended or have granted longer sentences, because they hold this belief in the prevalence of high-rate offenders. The habitual offender and three strikes laws are examples of this (See Chapter 9 for a full discussion of these laws and their impact on populations). To test the validity of the "career criminal" viewpoint, we focused on patterns of offending among our surveyed convicts. We discovered five distinct patterns—"into crime," "crime episode," "one-shot crime," "being around crime," and "deterioration"—that are defined and summarized here. Figure 2-4 indicates the proportion of our sample that corresponds to each crime pattern.

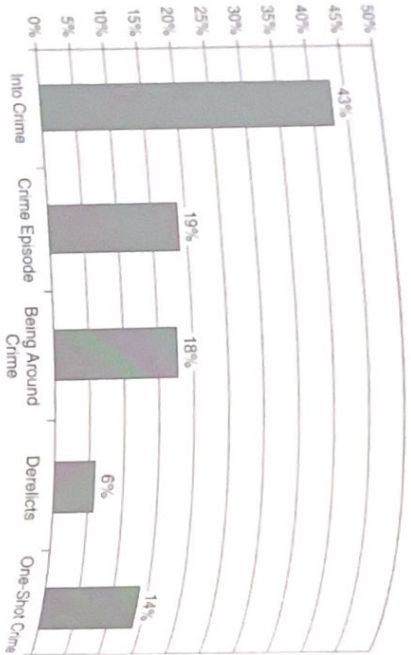


FIGURE 2.4 Criminal Pattern of Prison Admissions in Illinois, Nevada, and Washington State

Into Crime (43%)

Persons into crime call themselves "thieves," "hustlers," "dope fiends," or "gang bangers," which they understand as identities within particular criminal systems. They also follow the patterns of crime consistent with these identities and criminal systems—that is, they attempt to steal large amounts of money through burglaries and robberies; they "hustle" on the streets, making money any way they can; they maintain drug habits by selling drugs and stealing; or they hang out with their fellow "homeboys," wear their gang's colors, steal, and fight with other gangs. Parnell, described earlier, was a gang banger into crime. Bettman, a thief, and Donald, a dope fiend, were all into crime:

Bettman says he "started a life of crime" when he was in high school. When he was 17, every weekday he and older friends walked from their neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago to Hyde Park, a middle-class racially mixed neighborhood, and burglarized some houses. They took TVs, jewelry, and any other thing they could sell. "It was like a job." They were caught in one house and arrested. Bettman was sentenced to three years in prison. When he got out of prison, his brother and sisters were living alone and his younger brother was selling cocaine. Bettman stopped him, but he had to supply them with money. So he started burglarizing houses and trucks on the West Side at night. Then he and his "rappers" pulled sixteen armed robbers of gas stations and convenience stores.

In one week, he says, they made \$7,000 apiece. After the last robbery, they were pulled over by the police, who found guns in their car. He received a ten-year sentence.

Donald started using heroin and cocaine when he was 19. He was convicted of burglary when he was 25 and served six months in the county jail. He was

convicted of possession of drugs when he was 29 and received a year in the state prison. As soon as he got out, he was arrested again for burglary and served four years. He says he did not want to go back to drugs, but he met a friend right after getting out and got high with him. He was quickly addicted and stealing again. He says he was pulling one or two burglaries a day. He could not sell drugs because the police knew him too well. In his last arrest, he was caught trying to pry open a door of a construction business and was convicted of two attempted burglaries. At 33, he says he wants to stop using drugs, but he does not know how. He says he is getting tired.

Since they were committing crimes regularly, it is accurate to view the 43 percent of our sample who were into crime as high-rate offenders. Of these high-rate offenders, more than half (57%) had served a prior prison sentence, and 32 percent a juvenile sentence. However, most of the active offenders (59%) were convicted of petty crimes. All of our data strongly suggest that, rather than being vicious predators, most were disorganized, unskilled, undisciplined petty criminals who very seldom engaged in violence or made any significant amount of money from their criminal acts.

Crime Episode (19%)

These inmates had engaged in a crime episode or spree. Many had committed crimes in some earlier period, some had even been into crime. Unlike the "into crime" group, these offenders had less severe histories of prior incarcerations, either as adults (33% had a prior prison term) or as juveniles (26% had a prior record). But for an extended period, perhaps after a jail or prison sentence, they had lived a relatively conventional life.

Joe joined a Latin gang when he was 13. By his 18th year he had been arrested three times in activities with his "homeboys" (the Latin Kings). For the last, a residential burglary, he served a county jail sentence and was placed on probation for two years. After that, he pulled back from gang banging but was still hanging around with some of his old friends. "We hung around the corner drinking, but we didn't think of ourselves as a gang. We thought of ourselves as an organization. We tried to protect all the old people, to stop the blacks from robbing them." He was working steadily at the Golden Grain packinghouse making \$7 an hour. "I was going to work there the rest of my life." He had a car and a girlfriend, and they were buying furniture—a bedroom set. The crime he was convicted of occurred early on a Sunday morning. He had been partying at a house with his friend—"smoking, drinking and snorting." Someone borrowed his car and did not bring it back to the house. He was angry about this. A friend gave him a ride home, and on the way, he said, "Someone said, 'Let's go rob someone.' I guess I said, 'Let's go, I'll do it.' I don't remember much about it. A white guy was snatched in the stomach and neck. For all I know, the other guy in the car did it. It was stupid. I blacked out from the time I got home until the police came." He received six years for attempted murder.

Richard was one of the few black students in his high school in Montana and the star football player. He was also selling drugs. "I scored five touchdowns on Friday and was busted on Monday. I was hanging around white kids trying to prove myself. They wouldn't let me play football after that." His father put him out of the house, so he left for Oklahoma with some friends. He returned to Montana but could not find a job. He began hanging around some of the black guys who were "going to discos and being cool." He was arrested for a house burglary and received two years' probation. He went to California with a friend who was in the air force. He joined the army, got married, and had two kids. He had broken up with his wife by the time he was discharged from the army. He stayed in Fort Lewis, Washington, and worked part-time in construction, living across the street from a corner where drugs were being sold. "One night I walked over there, and a guy asked me if I wanted to make some money. So I started selling drugs. I sold to the police. They wanted me to set up my supplier, so I went back to the corner, but the word had got out, so the other dealers told me to get out of town." He went back to California and went back to his wife. They both used cocaine heavily. He turned himself into a drug program, but she continued to use cocaine. He went back to the house and found her in bed with another man. He kicked the man out and took his son. He was charged with kidnapping his child and served two years in a California prison. He was transferred to Washington upon release and charged with unlawful delivery of drugs for the earlier arrest. He received fifteen months.

Being Around Crime (18%)

About one-fifth (18%) of our sample were "corner boys," men who were raised and lived in lower-class neighborhoods in which street crime is a prominent feature. Many in these neighborhoods, particularly young males, regularly commit crimes. Most other young males avoid regular participation in crime but accept it as a normal feature of life around them. Many of the males, particularly younger ones, though they avoid regular involvement in crime and do not think of themselves as criminals, are at risk of being arrested because they are on the streets for many hours and police regularly patrol these neighborhoods looking for street criminals. When confronted by police, these corner boys also frequently exhibit macho behavior that provokes hostile reactions from the police. Finally, corner boys are often present at crimes being committed by friends or relatives, and, under special circumstances—such as when they are in the company of more criminally oriented acquaintances, saving face in front of peers, intoxicated, or trying to take advantage of an opportunity for financial gain—they are drawn into the commission of a crime.

Once arrested, their corner boy or lower-class identity makes it very likely that police, district attorneys, and judges will treat these young men as if they were more criminally involved than they actually were. Sixty-eight percent of our corner boys were convicted of petty crimes. Only a small minority had

adult prior terms (8%) and/or juvenile terms (15%). The cases of Darryl and Robert described in the section on crime seriousness are examples of this pattern. The following are two more examples:

Maurice is an 18-year-old black youth raised on the South Side of Chicago. He was in the Disciples from ages 12 to 16, but he dropped out. "My grandmother told me to get out of the gang. They hate it when you pull out, so they were right at my door waiting for me." He dropped out of high school in the tenth grade. He had gotten into a little trouble before—some fights and the theft of a moped, for which he received two years' probation. "A guy let me ride it. I didn't know he had stole it." At the time of this arrest, he was staying off the streets. "I had a girlfriend with two kids. She lived with her father. I would go over to her house and stay all day. We'd sit around and watch TV, clean the house, help with the kids." On the day of this arrest, he was going to his grandmother's to get something and a policeman who worked in that area stopped to question him. "There's a guy around there that looks like me. He would get into a few things. The police asked what was I doing over there. I wrestled with him and his gun fell out of his holster. I kicked it and ran. They got me later. They found out I didn't do nothing so they charged me with taking his gun." He received five years for damning a police officer.

Eddie is a 32-year-old black man who was raised in Little Rock, Arkansas. His mother supported the family of six kids. She worked as a cook in a motel, and they lived in a housing project. He quit school in the ninth grade and went to work as a busboy in the motel. He worked there for seven years, ending up as a cook. He got married in Little Rock to a woman with a daughter. They moved to Seattle, where he worked at several jobs, the last one as a supervisor of a janitorial crew in a federal building. Years before, the police had arrested him in an apartment he managed. The charge was dismissed. This was his only prior arrest. In Seattle he spent a lot of time playing basketball. He was on a team sponsored by the Mormons. He was the top player and scored 36 points in one game. He started hanging around one of the other players who was using a lot of cocaine. Eddie says he "sort of took this guy under his wing." He started using cocaine with him. His wife objected to this, so Eddie stopped. He says he was trying to get his friend to stop also. One night he took his friend to his friend's apartment to collect some money from his roommate. Eddie stayed in the car. The friend and the roommate got into a fight over the money, and the friend ended up stabbing the roommate. The roommate accused both of them of robbing him, and Eddie was arrested for robbery. He was released on his own recognizance, but after a week the supervisor said she did not want to supervise him. He was held in the county jail for five months, and finally he pled guilty. The public defender told him since he had admitted being there he would not be able to win a trial. "I decided I was going ahead and get it over with and get on with my life." He received five years for robbery.

Dereliction (6%)

These men had completely lost the capacity to live in organized society. Some had retreated on the edge of physical survival. All had been incarcerated a long early life, and most used drugs and alcohol, usually from their early teens. Though they tried to avoid committing serious crimes (to avoid returning to prison), they occasionally robbed, burgled, or committed some other felony (for example, arson, assault, sexual deviations) and were arrested. Though these crimes were invariably petty, their repulsive disreputability and former records resulted in imprisonment. This small group had the highest prior prison record (91%), with 71 percent incarcerated as juveniles.¹⁴ The following are two examples of their crimes and lifestyles:

Leonard is a 32-year-old black who grew up on the South Side of Chicago. His father died when he was small, and his mother raised seven children on welfare. He dropped out of school in the ninth grade and never had a steady job. He was a Disciple until his early 20s. He started to drink heavily when he was a teenager. He was first arrested when he was 15 and again when he was 17. Both times he was sent to youth institutions. He was arrested for robbery and auto theft as an adult and served two prison terms. He lived with his mother and says all he did was drink. Three years ago it was discovered that he had cirrhosis of the liver. Two years before this imprisonment, he and a friend robbed another black man on the street. This man lived in the neighborhood and knew them. His friend had a stick, and they were charged with robbery. Leonard received probation, but he quit reporting, and they arrested him and sentenced him to five years.

Charles and his three sisters were raised by his nurse mother on the South Side of Chicago. He "got to drinking and smoking reefer at about 10." He was hanging around with the "bad kids" and not going to school. He started getting into trouble with the police, and then "they started harassing me." He was in a small local gang, and they got into a lot of fights. Later he joined the Gangster Disciples, a splinter group of the Disciples. He has never held a steady job. He was arrested when he was 16 for not going to school and was sent to a boys' school. He ran away and was sent to another youth institution. When he was 17, he was arrested for robbery and was sent to Searsville (Illinois State Prison) for six months. When he was 22, he was convicted of another robbery and sent back to prison for five years. For the last five years he has been a derelect. He stays high or drunk most of the time. "I been stealing petty things, anything you can take from a store. I quit robbing. Made a believer out of me. I been 'carrying a stick' ... had no residence and slept anywhere he could. Some days before this arrest, he went to the house of a girlfriend and a man came to the door. "I asked him for my girlfriend and he said, 'Fuck you, punk.' I went to his car and hit it with a water-caster cover I picked up off the street. He came after me with a hatchet and hit me in the head. I went to the hospital, and when I got out, I went over and

stabbed his car. Then a week later, I started a fire in a old building next to his house. My old girlfriend told them who did it. I was drunk at the time." He received four years for attempted arson.

One-Shot Crime (14%)

A significant number of our sample (14%) had never been involved in serious crime before the current arrest. Something about the crime—its seriousness or an associated mandatory sentence—resulted in their receiving a prison sentence. The following are two of these crimes.

Jose was born in Puerto Rico, and his father sent for him to come to Massachusetts when Jose was 10. He quit high school when he was a junior three years later. He worked as a baker for the next ten years for Nabisco. He quit this job to help a friend run a grocery store. Then he worked for five years with Sanco, until the firm moved to Philadelphia in 1983, four years before. He had not found a steady job since. He had been married for twenty years and had four daughters. At 46 he had no steady job and was drinking a lot. He had a friend who dealt in cocaine. A narcotics undercover officer who had been trying to set up his friend repeatedly asked Jose to buy some cocaine for him. He finally did and was arrested. He was out on bail for two and a half years before sentencing, but the sentence was mandatory.

Donald was raised on a farm in Iowa. Two years after graduating from high school, he went into business for himself, leasing livestock. At 30, he changed businesses and had been selling mobile home running gear ever since. He was married for ten years but separated five years before. He had been arrested for failure to pay child support, but nothing else. He was drinking heavily in the last year of his marriage but had about quit drinking. All he was doing was "work[ing] my ass off in my business. I have been working seven days a week. Most of the time I am on the road with two helpers, delivering mobile home running gear." Three years ago, he and two employees were making a delivery with a large truck and trailer. After dinner, they picked up a six-illinois to urinate. He and one of the employees got back into a rural area of truck. He says he thought the other employee, a 16-year-old (who had told by the truck when Donald pulled out onto the highway. "He might have been trying to get on the trailer and fell under the wheels." They accused him of being drunk, although he says he only had a couple of beers. "They never ran a test on me, and the officer who arrested me testified that I didn't have alcohol on my breath." Donald was convicted of reckless homicide and sent to prison for a year.

MORE RECENT PORTRAITS

One might argue that these descriptions of people being sent to prison are outdated and no longer accurate. While we were not able to conduct another in-depth study, we were able to develop case studies of people who were referred to prison for violating parole by committing new crimes in the state of Michigan. These are people who are part of the one-third of prison admissions who are parole violators. The methodology used was to randomly select cases of prisoners returning to prison as parole violators after completing a reentry program. While most people who entered the program succeeded, these are the ones who failed. One would have hoped they had "learned" their lessons and no longer were attracted to criminal conduct, but what emerges are people who are very unsophisticated in their criminal careers and continue to engage in petty criminal conduct.

Caught In The Act Kevin and his young cousin decided to go shopping. They started their spree in broad daylight by driving into a Target parking lot. They got out of their truck and proceeded to check car doors to find those that were unlocked. They didn't know they were being watched by the bank teller across the street, who had immediately called the police. The patrol officer arrived just in time to see the duo leaving Target's parking lot; they followed the victim's truck into their next location, the Home Depot parking lot. They were apprehended there as police found a stolen purse in their vehicle.

All of the victim's possessions were returned to her that day. Kevin blamed his younger cousin for the plan. The young boy had to write a letter to apologize to the victim, submit to a drug test, a curfew, counseling, and twenty hours of probation. Kevin was sentenced on a second-degree home invasion charge carrying two to fifteen years; the assault, resisting arrest, and obstructing a police officer carried a one- to two-year sentence.

Groundhog's Day Michael loved stealing cars; unfortunately, he loved to steal them from the Shelbyville Garage on Tenth St. Michael's M.O. was the same as it was back in 2007: steal a car or a bike, get to the Shelbyville Garage, kick in the door panel, steal all the quarters from the register for gas money, take all the car keys from the wall rack, and pick a car to take for a ride. Based on a full confession to State Trooper Clure of the Michigan State Police, 2007 was just the beginning. In 2008, Michael returned to the garage by stealing a Chrysler to get him there, kicked in the door panel, stealing the quarters for gas, and taking an 1999 Olds Alero. On March 5, 2009, Michael returned to the Shelbyville Garage on a bike he stole from his neighbor's backyard. Same scenario: kick in panel, take quarters, take keys, take car. This time he took a Ford Mustang for a ride, but he returned it because it was a little too fast for him to handle. He exchanged the Mustang for a Chevy Impala and returned later to take a Pontiac Bonneville for a drive, until the head gasket blew.

Ironically, Michael was stopped by the police as he was walking down the street. He had six sets of car keys, three were to the cars reported stolen. He

also carried his collection of trophies: the visor from the Impala, the CD player from the Mustang, and a victim's checkbook. Michael's voluntary comment to the police was "You know who I am, just arrest me, the keys are in my front pocket."

Michael was charged with breaking and entering a building and unlawfully driving away motor vehicles and a Habitual 4th offense (meaning his 4th felony conviction). Michael committed his first and second felonies while on parole. The garage owner stated that he is out over \$2500 for replacing door panels and keys and getting the cars cleaned after Michael's joy rides. He said that the first time he felt sorry for Michael, but after the second and then a third time, his empathy was gone. Based on a defendant's statement, Michael remains proud of his acute car stealing and driving abilities. The interviewer stated that he does not appear to have any remorse.

Game Pays? In October 2008, Shane entered a Kroger store to pick up a purse. He decided to grab the purse of an 82-year-old woman as she turned away from her cart to pick up a donut. Shane realized he was seen by an employee and ran out the store. Another Kroger employee chased him on foot, but he lost the suspect.

The victim said she was going to purchase some donuts and did not want to get her purse sticky. Though visibly shaken, she said she had credit cards and \$5 worth of coins in a change purse. She also stated that the "night" have had \$300 in cash from her Obama stimulus check.

Shane, highly intoxicated, was apprehended with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.116 percent on a bike. Shane told the police they had the wrong guy and then attempted to flee. The officer had a hold on his sweatshirt, so Shane did not get far. The officer stated that Shane continued to try to run away, with no luck. Shane was taken to the ground and handcuffed, yet still refused to give his name.

Shane was interviewed by the sheriff department's detective and confessed everything. He planned to go into Kroger's and steal some drinks and a purse; he had a "get away" bike waiting outside. He then went to the liquor store, bought a bottle of vodka, and got about \$7 out of the purse and ditched it. Shane cooperated and showed the detective where he had dumped the purse. The purse was recovered with its contents, except for the \$300 stimulus money.

Shane was on parole at the time of the crime and was charged with three counts of retail fraud with mandatory consecutive sentencing, and he pleaded "no contest." In the meanwhile, the victim stated that she got her purse and its contents back.

When the Bartender Doesn't Like You Police responded to a call from a bartender at a local pub indicating that one of his patrons was in possession of cocaine. The defendant, Mr. McNeil, was sitting in his green Buick, still in the parking lot, when police arrived. Mr. McNeil was unaware that standing outside the bar was a large group of bar patrons pointing him out to the police. The officers pulled behind him, blocked him with their patrol car, and approached to investigate. The officers told him to get out of the car, McNeil complied

with a search and was asked a few questions, the last being "What's this in your pocket?" McNeil responded, "Some drugs, it means nothing."

McNeil continued to respond honestly to the officers. What kind of drug crack. Why did he have the drugs? I'm a piece of shit. Was he selling the drugs? No, but he could. He had people who would buy it and then confessed that he had sold a gram or two at the bar, just tonight. McNeil also stated to the officers that he occasionally smokes crack, but had not in about two weeks.

In a further search of his parked car, the officers found an open beer and a digital scale with white residue. The officers interviewed the bar's doorman who stated he saw McNeil holding a bag of what looked like cocaine, then observed him trying to sell to two women at the bar, who he says declined the offer. The doorman did his job and bounced him, as the bartender called the police.

McNeil had time to leave the scene, but instead he got in his car, sat there for awhile, then drove it to the parking lot exit. He then decided to park his car again and sit for awhile. A field test of the substance found on McNeil was cocaine, and he was charged with possession with intent to deliver crack cocaine and possession of open intoxicants in a motor vehicle.

McNeil later stated that he did not remember selling any drugs or saying any of the statements that got him arrested. All he remembered of the night was being put in the cop car and that nothing he said made sense.

Stop, it's the Bike Police! Anthony was on parole. He was walking down Benjamin Street in front of the elementary school, when he saw a car with a window down and a purse in it. Anthony also saw an opportunity to supply his drug habit. Twenty minutes later, just a block or so away, the police responded to a call from a resident of Benjamin Street that a man was in their backyard rummaging through a purse.

A bicycle patrol officer saw Anthony who fit the description of the backyard purse rummager. The officer yelled, "Stop! Police!" and peddled toward Anthony. Anthony ran through a park and jumped over a fence. The officer left his bike at the fence and pursued Anthony on foot. They physically collided during the chase and both fell to the ground. After a brief struggle, Anthony was searched and was found with the contents of the purse, a cell phone, and a driver's license.

Anthony was taken into custody and charged with unarmed robbery and home invasion in the second degree. All of the victim's possessions were returned. At the time of this case, Anthony had three children on the way, from three different women. He also had no motivation to seek employment or stop his drug use. Anthony stated that he was hoping to be sentenced to jail time, so that he can think and prepare himself for his kids. He pled guilty to larceny from a motor vehicle.

The High Cost of Gas A home owner called the police to report that his garage was on fire. The owner also stated that two white males had taken off southbound on bikes and he thinks they have something to do with it. Two officers were dispatched to canvas the area, but with no luck in locating the suspects.

The firemen dispatched to the scene found flames shooting out of a gas tank of a lawn mower in the garage. Only the fumes were ignited, all the gas had been siphoned. After further investigation and interviews, two names came up as suspects. A witness stated that he saw both Mr. Sophia and Mr. Craven exiting the garage, then the flames shooting out of the garage. After being caught, not far from the scene, they both gave statements implicating each other for the gas culprit.

Both defendants were charged with attempted larceny in a building and arson of personal property under \$200. One was on parole and has received consecutive sentences. The only damage to the victim was a melted and deformed gas tank, but he wasn't out any money as the lawn mower still worked.

The Happy Pizza Robbery A delivery driver for Happy's Pizza called the police because he had been robbed. The driver arrived at the Gunn residence to deliver a large pizza and was approached by Mr. Gunn and another man. Mr. Gunn handed the driver cash and the other man was handed the pizza. The driver, quickly realizing that the \$50 bill he was handed was counterfeit, demanded to be paid with real money. With each man having a hold on the pizza box, a tug of war ensued between the driver and Mr. Gunn. During the struggle, the driver pulled out his cell phone and tried to take pictures of the two robbers; they both fled, leaving the pizza box behind.

The pizza box was taken into evidence and tested by the lab. Mr. Gunn's fingerprints were found all over the pizza box. After being shown Mr. Gunn's last mug shot, the driver positively identified him as his assailant. There was no monetary loss to the victim or Happy's Pizza.

Mr. Gunn was arrested, and, with this offense being Mr. Gunn's fourth felony conviction, the sentence agreement was for one to five years with mandatory consecutive sentences. Still a juvenile and on parole, his parole officer said that Mr. Gunn, at only nineteen years of age, has one of the most extensive criminal records he had ever seen at such a young age. He also stated that Mr. Gunn has a poor attitude and mumbles when he talks so that you have to keep asking him to repeat himself. With an extensive juvenile record and over ten felony convictions, it seems as though Mr. Gunn does keep repeating himself.

Watching You, Watching Me Early in the evening, a police officer observed three males walking down the street. The officer's partner noticed that one of the men, Mr. Jones, looked right in their direction and grabbed his right hip. Before the patrol officers could even slow down, Mr. Jones turned and then took off running. The officers did what officers do, they pursued him. They watched as he threw a handgun under the front porch of a house on the corner. One officer retrieved the discarded .45 caliber handgun loaded with live rounds. Mr. Jones was caught and arrested shortly thereafter. In a full confession, Mr. Jones admitted to having an unregistered, loaded gun while on parole, but that he needed it for his personal protection.