

# Criminal justice assignment

Law



Are laws targeting the right people? So far in the class, Vive learned that criminal justice is not black and white. It has the goal of being that way, but mostly it's a lot of grey area. The topic of habitual offenders is just another grey area. Some of the laws in place for habitual offenders are perfectly affective. I also believe that there are some who commit crimes so small and insignificant that the law should not be enforced. I do believe in mistakes and poor choices. Do those people deserve to be in prison for 25 years? Perfect example was a man named Wallace.

Wallace was such an incompetent thief that he was still sitting in the passenger seat of the car by the time police arrived. He went to court and got 25 years to life. In prison, Wallace immediately became a target (Tibia, 2013). Should Wallace have been imprisoned for what he did? No. Should he have been given help? Absolutely. He obviously had some mental issues and in prison some physical ones as well. I thought our systems were supposed to follow a process of arrest, punish affectively, and rehabilitate to release. Wallace, and many others out there, are wrongfully punished every day for impel mistakes.

I do not think these laws, overall, target the right people, but that doesn't mean that I don't think those who deserve it shouldn't be punished.

Misdemeanors, in law, a minor crime, in contrast to a felony... Len the United States a misdemeanors usually is an offense that may be punished summarily by fine and by imprisonment for less than a year (Encyclopedia, 2013). By definition alone, misdemeanors should not be punishable by a life sentence. They usually consist of traffic offenses and other small things. There was a man named Curtis in California.

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He eventually ended up in some trouble as a young man. He served 6 years and when he was released, he found a job and moved away from his old life. He was rehabilitated. Then one afternoon while waiting on his girlfriend he walked around the mall shopping. Suddenly, a pair of socks caught his eye. He grabbed them and slipped them into a shopping bag... They were ordinary white socks. They didn't even have any stripes... Wilkinson never made it out of the store. At the exit, he was, shall we say, opportunistically apprehended by two security officers.

They took him to the store security office, where the guards started to argue with each other over whether or not to call the police. One guard wanted to let him pay for the socks and go, but the other guard was more of a harasser and called the cops, having no idea he was about to write himself a part in one of the most absurd scripts to ever hit Southern California. Because Wilkinson had two prior convictions, both dating back to 1981, the shoplifting charge counted as a third strike against him. He was sentenced to 25 years to life, meaning that his first chance for a parole hearing would be in 25 years (Tibia, 2013).

Wallace may have had a record, but I do not believe that his status of having two priors should've landed him in prison for the rest of his life. Status only matters at a certain level. At some point it gets more serious, but I think there needs to be greater standards to our laws to avoid putting any more Wallach's or Curtis' behind bars for the rest of their days. I think that misdemeanors need to have levels. I know they do in traffic courts. Maybe there could be levels within levels; a level that incorporates smaller crimes

Criminal Justice By statecraft lightly more serious crimes (and so on and so forth).

I think each of these levels should then have a number of strikes attached to it. If you continue to commit small misdemeanors you shouldn't just keep paying fines and getting away, eventually things will escalate. I do believe that Three Strikes and other laws that we have in place are too harsh and end up wrongfully accusing the good, instead of actually catching the "bad guys".

References  
Columbia University. (2013). Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia (6th Edition). Columbia University.  
Tibia, Matt. (2013). Rolling stone (Issue 1180).