



A1

SEMINAR 7 Crime and Punishment

Some Thoughts on Crime

- 1 “The major dangers of crime in modern societies are not the crimes, but that the fight against them may lead societies towards totalitarian developments.” – Nils Christie (b.1928), Norwegian criminologist.
- 2 The prison industry is said to employ more than 523,000 people, making it the largest employer in the U.S. after General Motors, according to one 1999 report.
- 3 Imprisonment is a process whereby a large number of unemployed are made invisible. American unemployment statistics appear to be low compared to those of other industrial democracies because 1.6 million mainly lowskilled workers are imprisoned, with a 2% difference in real unemployment levels.
- 4 “Obviously crime pays, or there would be no crime.” – Gordon Liddy (b.1930), American radio talk-show host.
- 5 “Few men desire liberty; most men wish only for a just master.” – Sallust (86-34 BC), Roman historian.
- 6 “Drugs – if they did not exist, our governors would have invented them in order to prohibit them and so make much of the population vulnerable to arrest, imprisonment, seizure of property, and so on.” – Gore Vidal (b.1925), American author of The War at Home.
- 7 “If we make enough laws, we can all be criminals.” – Anonymous.
- 8 “Our current* prison state has the dual effect of getting rid of extra people (unskilled workers – this is related to race), and demonizing them. The drug war is basically for this - it has nothing to do with drugs, but much to do with criminalizing an unwanted population and scaring everybody else.” – Noam Chomsky (b.1928), American linguist and cultural critic.

Task 1 – Vocabulary matching

Match the following words from the above texts with their equivalents; then choose a quote for discussion.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. scare | a) not working |
| 2. invisible | b) make something/someone into a crime/criminal |
| 3. unemployed | c) leader |
| 4. obviously | d) make something appear evil (bad) |
| 5. liberty | e) can't be seen |
| 6. just | f) frighten |
| 7. governor | g) evidently, clearly |
| 8. prohibit | h) open to attack |



- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 9. vulnerable | i) freedom |
| 10. seizure | j) double |
| 11. current | k) fair |
| 12. dual | l) remove |
| 13. get rid of | m) taking something |
| 14. demonize | n) relating to the present |
| 15. criminalize | o) ban, not allow |

Discussion questions

- 1 Do you think that crime has increased in your lifetime? How safe do you feel in your town?
- 2 Has the representation of crime on television or in the news increased?
- 4 What is a "police state"?
- 6 Is it sociologically important how people are punished for crimes and how prisoners are treated?
- 7 Do you think that crime can be profitable? How?
- 8 What problems can arise with private prisons or private police forces?

Task 2 – Reading and Summarizing – Work with a partner to write a simple summary of one of the paragraphs. Use your own words and be prepared to read it to the class.

Prisons as Big Business

1 "Crime Does Not Pay" is a slogan we have often repeated, but which today is in doubt¹⁴. Crime does indeed pay! Some corporations are taking advantage of what is being called by Norwegian criminologist Nils Christie the "corrections industrial complex", an industry which since the mid 1980s has become an economic giant. It includes the construction, maintenance, and operation of private prisons. There is a basic problem with an industry which is economically interested in the continuation of a negative aspect of society. Dr. Christie explains, "You get private lobbying¹⁵ for prisons and you get private capital interested in building more prisons, in expanding that system. The industry has no interest in its own abolition¹⁶."

2 With a prison population of over 1.8 million in the U.S., which has doubled within the last ten years, there will be a need for more room. Existing prisons are overfull and filled with the product of the "war on drugs". Non-violent drug offenders¹² are the largest and fastest growing section of the prison population. "Three Strikes and You're Out" laws serve neither society nor the offender¹². Such "band aid" approaches¹⁷ have not been useful, except for creating corporate profits. Crime-industry lobbyists¹⁵ want tougher and longer punishment, even though the crime rate has actually decreased and is below what it was 25 years ago.

3 Not only do those financing private prisons have an interest in "the bottom line"¹⁸, but often the guard does as well. Many private prisons offer employees stock ownership¹⁹ as opposed to guaranteed pensions, a money-saving plan that encourages guards to lengthen prisoner stays at every opportunity, while saving on such things as food, medical services, and rehabilitative activities.

4 Another issue in this industry is prisoner labor. If private prisons can use prisoner labor, then the investment comes full circle. Not only are they paid to house inmates for the state, but they have a labor



force which needs no benefits, has no lobbying¹⁵ power, and cannot strike²⁰ for higher wages or better working conditions. Critics are concerned with prison labor undercutting²¹ outside wages or removing jobs from the private sector. There is also the fear of poor health and safety standards. Is such prisoner labor a way to rehabilitate them and decrease the amount paid by taxpayers, or is it exploitation²² of a particular class of society?

5 There is a tendency to deprive²³ individuals of their liberty for purely economic reasons as the "prison industrial complex" (like any other) desires to expand. The only possible way for the industry to do this is for it to maintain high rates of imprisonment, while providing the least number of services (that cut into profits). This could lead to the privatizing of the justice system by the influence of the industry's lobbying power for longer, tougher, and stricter punishment.

6 The focus must be shifted away from profits made by a few individuals and financial interests, and redirected towards building a system that takes from the best of both public and private sectors. The goal is a system which is cost-effective, serves society, and produces what prison systems are designed for: a rehabilitated²⁴ prisoner. It is not an unachievable goal; America has done as much with greater problems. It is already proven that prisoner labor and prison privatization creates huge amounts of money. This money should benefit the taxpayers, and it should, in part, be for the funding of the justice system, including defender²⁵ expenses, prison construction, operation and maintenance, and crime prevention and prisoner rehabilitation²⁴. Truly looking for answers to stopping crime is the only way that the industry will benefit society in a responsible way.

Adapted from Prisons as Big Business by Lawson Strickland, Biddle Publishing, 1998; found at http://www.lairdcarlson.com/celldoor/Bio_Address/StricPrisonBigBusiness.htm viewed on 22.11.2002.

Task 3 – Vocabulary

Match each person in the list with the description given

Blackmailer	Forger	Hooligan	Murderer	Shoplifter	Vandal
Burglar	Hijacker	Kidnapper	Pickpocket	Smuggler	Witness

1. This person takes control of a means of transport by force.
2. This person sees what happens during a crime or accident.
3. This person brings goods into the country illegally.
4. This person might steal food from a supermarket.
5. This person kills someone on purpose.
6. This person takes people and demands money for their return.
7. This person makes illegal copies of paintings, documents etc.
8. This person damages other people's property.
9. This person might steal your wallet in a crowd.
10. This person steals from houses.
11. This person gets money from others by threatening to tell secrets.



12. This person causes trouble at football matches.

Task 4 – Reading Comprehension

Bolivia Brings End to Bizarre Tourist Attraction

It used to be one of South America's most talked about tourist attractions. Famous for being unique in the world, San Pedro in La Paz, Bolivia, was a prison like no other. Foreign tourists would pay bribes to enter, look, shop, dine and even take drugs. Many thought it better value than the Inca citadel Machu Picchu.

Not anymore. A Bolivian government crackdown has stopped tourists from entering the prison, replaced corrupt guards and challenged the bizarre practices which had made the prison infamous. Most likely, San Pedro's unique days are over.

"This was a very original prison, very different from the others," said Juan Gonzalez, 39, a convicted thief, sitting on a bed in his cell. "It was like a little village. It wasn't so bad. Now all that's at risk.

Out in the main courtyard other inmates stood together in small groups, nervous and resentful. They used to run mini-restaurants and craft stalls but now, with the tourist ban, business has collapsed. Outside the prison disappointed tourists regretted that they had come too late. Guards in green uniforms tried to send them away but still they lingered.

"What a bummer. This was one of Bolivia's main attractions," said a British couple, Matt and Linda. "Well, at least let's take a picture at the gate."

San Pedro's fame is set to reach a wider audience with a new film produced by Brad Pitt and starring Don Cheadle. Based on the book *Marching Powder*, about the four years a British drug mule, Thomas McFadden, spent in the prison, it describes how tourists paid for tours, overnight stays and cocaine-fuelled parties.

After years of ignoring what was happening the authorities were forced to act after tourists uploaded a video of a visit on YouTube in February. Local TV picked up on the story and interviewed foreigners leaving the jail.

Embarrassed, the government vowed to change San Pedro. "The most alarming thing was the tourists," said Jorge Lopez, head of the prison service. "We are now constantly rotating the guards so they do not develop a close relationship with inmates so we can stop corruption."

In addition to keeping tourists away the authorities have banned other things that were going on in San Pedro such as inmates renting, buying and selling their own cells. Office workers can no longer pop in for a cheap lunch in restaurants which could undercut outside rivals as they didn't have to pay taxes or utility bills.

What most upsets inmates is a threat to expel their families. Hundreds of wives and children voluntarily live in the prison – with freedom to come and go during the day – due to a lack of accommodation and jobs in the impoverished city.

"We are very happy here. We have work, we have a home. Outside there is nothing," said Laura Gonzalez, wife of the convicted thief Juan. She cooks in a restaurant and her husband, who is in prison for three years, works as an amateur dentist. They share their cell, cluttered with clothes and DVDs, with two children and a cat, Felix.

Latin American prisons tend to be overcrowded, grim and violent. Riots and beheadings are common. San Pedro, which is divided into eight sections, is dangerous at night but relatively safe in the day. "Having



women and children here helps keep the men calm,” said one guard. Cocaine, crack and marijuana are still openly consumed but the cocaine-processing laboratories have reportedly closed.

It is uncertain what will happen to San Pedro’s businesses – hairdressers, grocery shops, pool halls. The prison governor, Jose Cabrera, recently said, “The prisoners have to understand that this is a penitentiary.”

Adapted from www.onestopenenglish.com viewed on 7.6.2010

Are the sentences true (T) or false (F) according to the article?

1. The prison is in the capital city of Bolivia.
2. It is a ‘secret’ but often talked about tourist attraction.
3. Brad Pitt is going to star in a film about the prison.
4. The Bolivian authorities have tried to stop tourists going to the prison by putting a video up on YouTube.
5. Prisoners’ families and pets are allowed to live with them in the prison.
6. Office workers have opened a restaurant in the prison.
7. La Paz is the richest city in South America.
8. Latin American prisons are often violent places.
9. The presence of women and children make the prison a less violent place.
10. The prison is now free from drugs.

Write in the missing prepositions

1. South America’s most talked tourist attractions
2. very different the others
3. stopped tourists entering the prison
4. all that’s risk
5. take a picture the gate
6. a new film produced Brad Pitt
7. head the prison service
8. wives and children voluntarily live the prison
9. a lack accommodation and jobs
10. wife the convicted thief Juan
11. her husband works a dentist
12. they share their cell two children and a cat

Task 5 – Work in pairs

Discuss what, if any punishment you think would be appropriate for the following people

1. Three children aged ten, eleven and twelve who deliberately damaged a railway line. As a result, a train came off the line and several people were injured.
2. A single unemployed parent with four children who stole 500 CZK worth of food from a supermarket.



3. A successful businessman who was found to have deliberately not paid 600,000 CZK a year in taxes over the last five years.
4. An animal rights activist who put a bomb in a university laboratory which experiments on animals. The laboratory was destroyed, but no animals or people were hurt.
5. A doctor who had been working for thirty hours without a break and gave the wrong drugs to a patient. As a result the patient died.

Adapted from First Certificate Gold, Sally Burgess with Richard Acklam, Longman, 2001

Task 6 – Listening

You are going to hear a conversation between a husband and wife. Listen and decide if the following statements are true or false.

1. Guardian Angels began in America and have since come to Britain.
2. Only a few of them are paid or carry guns.
3. In Britain they will work patrolling the streets.
4. There is a 3-month period in which they are taught different skills.
5. They sometimes ask the police for help.
6. The official police view about the Guardian Angels is quite negative.
7. The view of the police on the streets is quite positive.

The man and woman having the conversation basically have the same view about the Guardian Angels.

Discuss the following statements.

- a. The Guardian Angels are a useful and necessary idea. Citizens should take more responsibility for preventing crime.
- b. There shouldn't be a need for groups like the Guardian Angels.
- c. The Guardian Angels are a dangerous idea. Keeping law and order must be left to the police.

Adapted from First Certificate Gold, Sally Burgess with Richard Acklam, Longman, 2001

Task 7 – Grammar Exercise – Probability and Possibility

Look at the following activity and choose either if or when, according to the context (sometimes you can use both). Try to decide what the difference in meaning of each statement is.

1. If / when I get home tonight, I'll cook dinner.
2. If / when I was a child, I once stole some candy.
3. If / when I win the lottery, I'll buy you a coffee.
4. If / when I reach the age of 60, I'll retire and move to Costa Rica.
5. If / when I don't see you, have a nice journey.
6. If / when I get out of prison, I'm going to go to college.
7. If/when you put ice in a glass of hot water, it melts.
8. If/When it rains this afternoon, I'll stay at home.
9. If/When I get old, I'll probably have grey hair.



Task 8 - Grammar Exercise – Relative pronouns

Look at the following sentence.

A high proportion of people who Victim Support contacted were helped with at least one problem.

Victim Support is the subject of the sentence.

A high proportion of people is the object.

What does the relative pronoun refer to – to the subject or the object?

Note that a relative pronoun is not necessary if it refers to the object of the sentence.

Complete each of the spaces below with an appropriate relative pronoun. Choose from that/which/who/whose/none needed. Some will have more than one possibility.

- 1 The treatment victims receive from the police varies from area to area.
- 2 Some people are burgled find it no more than an irritating inconvenience.
- 3 Unfortunately, people have been burgled once are statistically more likely to be burgled again.
- 4 Face to face contact was the method most people found helpful.
- 5 Burglars usually sell the things they stole quite quickly.
- 6 If you make an insurance claim, you will need the crime reference number the police give you.
- 7 All volunteers work with victims have been specially selected and trained.
- 8 Convicted burglars are sometimes asked to apologize personally to the people possessions they stole.
- 9 Volunteers are people work free of charge because they think the work is important.

Task 9 - Grammar Exercise - Relative pronouns

Rewrite this passage adding the relative clauses to make it clearer. The first one has been done for you.

who has already been convicted of burglary which are reported
who commit burglary which people commit who are burgled

Burglary is one of the most common crimes which people commit. Some figures show that up to one in six crimes is a burglary. Therefore, many people will be burgled at some point in their life. Some of those will find it devastating, even if none of their possessions are actually taken. People should realize the effect they may have on someone else's life. In my opinion, if someone offends again, they should receive a stiffer sentence.

Tasks 7 and 8 adapted from: Roberts, Rachael, Joanne Gakonga, and Andrew Preshous. IELTS Foundation Student's Book. Oxford: Macmillan, 2004.



Vocabulary

1. per capita	na jednu osobu
2. *estimate; to estimate	odhad; odhadovat
3. *to fail to pay fines	neplatit pokuty
4. an arrest, to arrest	zatčení, zatknout
5. *offence	přestupek
6. disorderly conduct	výtržnické chování
7. curfew	zákaz vycházení
8. loitering	potulování se
9. runaway	uprchlík, utečenec
10. vagrancy	tuláctví (bezdomovci)
11. probation; parole	podmíněné prominutí trestu; zkušební lhůta
12. offender	pachatel přestupků
13. *to be in doubt	být na pochybách
14. *lobbying; lobbyist	vykonávání nátlaku, intervenovat; lobb(y)ista
15. *abolition	zrušení
16. "band-aid" approach	povrchní přístup k řešení problému
17. "the bottom line"	základní, rozhodující (finance)
18. stock ownership	vlastnictví akcií
19. *to strike	stávkovat
20. to undercut	podbízet, pracovat za nižší plat
21. *exploitation	vykořisťování
22. *to deprive someone of their liberty	zbavit někoho svobody
23. to rehabilitate; rehabilitation	ospravedlnit; ospravedlnění
24. defender	obžalovaný
25. *to sacrifice; sacrifice	obětovat; oběť

Word bank

1. to commit a crime	spáchat trestný čin
2. offence	přestupek
3. to witness a crime	být svědkem trestného činu
4. eye witness	očitý svědek
5. to be charged with a crime	obvinít z trestného činu
6. to take to court	vzít k soudu
7. to sue sb	žalovat někoho
8. to be tried	být souzen
9. trial	soudní proces
10. to be taken into custody	být vzat do vazby
11. to plead not guilty	prohlašovat se nevinným
12. to defend sb	obhajovat někoho
13. state prosecutor	státní zástupce



14. to pass verdict	vynést rozsudek
15. judge	soudce
16. jury	porota
17. to appeal	odvolat se
18. Court of Appeal	odvolací soud
19. to be acquitted	být zproštěn obžaloby
20. to sentence	odsoudit
21. to pay a fine	platit pokutu
22. bail	kauce
23. to serve 2 years in prison	odpykat si 2 roky ve vězení
24. to be released from prison	být propuštěn z vězení
25. blackmail	vydírání
26. bribery	úplatkářství
27. to bribe	uplácet
28. drug trafficking	pašování drog
29. to smuggle	pašovat
30. human trafficking	ilegální převod lidí přes hranice
31. mugging	loupežné přepadení
32. kidnapping	únos osoby
33. ransom	výkupné
34. to hijack	unést dopravní prostředek
35. arsonist	žhář
36. copyright infringement	porušení autorského práva
37. breach of law	porušení zákona
38. to pass a bill	schválit zákon
39. community service	veřejně prospěšné práce
40. death penalty	trest smrti
41. to abolish	zrušit
42. life imprisonment	doživotní trest
43. jail	cela
44. to amend a/the law	upravit zákon

Other quotations from <http://www.newspeakdictionary.com/of-quotes.html#QProhibition>, viewed on 22.11.2002.