

||| WE ARE ALL ||| ||| CRIMINALS |||

One in four people in the U.S. has a criminal record.
This is the other 75%.

Participants in We Are All Criminals tell stories of crimes they got away with. The stories range from humorous to humbling, but all have one thing in common: they are privately held memories without public stigma. Each shows that often times the only thing separating *clean* from *criminal* is who gets caught.

PRIVATE MEMORY:
I'M A LICENSED ALCOHOL AND DRUG
COUNSELOR.
I POSSESSED AND SOLD DRUGS.



It started out casual and then became something more. It was just kind of my life for a few years.

I was working overnights while in college. I was tired of worrying about everything and just wanted to have fun for awhile. In the beginning, getting high was something I'd do every now and then. But it eventually seeped into the workday. I don't know what I was trying to escape; I don't know what I was trying to get away from. I just knew that I didn't want to live in that moment.

I was pulled over three times while stoned and carrying. One time the cop even got into my car, trying to help me after I told him I didn't know how to turn on my lights. If I didn't look like I look...

After many failed attempts to clean up, I met someone. He encouraged me to stop running from my problems, but to face them. I slowly realized I wanted to be in the moment with him. I wanted time to stop, the world to stay still.

Now, I'm an LADC. I can relate to my clients, but they can also relate to me. I know I wouldn't be here if I'd been caught; I shudder to think where I would be.

IN THE NEWS: DRUG TREATMENT V. INCARCERATION

[Speaking recently](#) on behalf of Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP), a former prosecutor tells law students that **the War on Drugs "has failed in every respect and exacerbated every problem it was called on to fix."** He continues, "[e]very time I opened a file, I ruined a life. You can get over an addiction, but not a conviction."

This realization is shared by drug addiction researchers, and sweeping changes in Portugal's approach to drug-related crimes bears this out. Acting on research by Professor Bruce Alexander that showed that environment has a huge impact on lab rats' development of addictions, Portugal stopped incarcerating addicts and instead offered housing, schooling and counseling services. It worked. Since the policy change, drug abuse in Portugal has dropped by half. In spite of this inspiring example, the U.S. continues to fight drug addiction with incarceration, with no appreciable effects on addiction rates and at a cost of \$70 billion annually; twice the education budget.

Further reading on the research and Portuguese story [here](#); Stuart McMillen illustrates Professor Alexander's experiments [here](#); and WAAC joins LEAP in encouraging you to take action [here](#) and [here](#).

ON THE DOCKET:

||| Reception for Art Exhibit at Unity Unitarian |||
St. Paul, MN, 4.3

||| U of MI School of Law |||
Ann Arbor, MI, 4.6 – 4.8

||| School to Prison Pipeline Town Hall at Loyola University |||
New Orleans, LA, 4.14

||| Art Exhibit Presentation at Unity Unitarian |||
St. Paul, MN, 4.19

||| MN Housing Working Together Conference |||
St. Paul, MN 4.23

||| Dept of Corr Senior Staff Training |||
Sioux Falls, SD, 4.28

PUBLIC RECORD: BURGLARY; DRUG POSSESSION; ASSAULT

He was born into addiction, and while he wouldn't have traded his mom for any other, he did wish that her steady parade of boyfriends would find a different block. He started acting out in school, picking fights with other kids; he was suspended time and again and eventually dropped out. He picked up odd jobs and after a roofing accident was prescribed oxycodone. He found that he preferred the quiet numbness the pills offered. Three years after the accident, he was picked up by police while breaking into the local pharmacy.

He's been sober for eight years now, earned his GED, and completed coursework for counseling. He wants to work with young adults dealing with the same problems he did -- but **with burglary, controlled substance offenses, and several assaults on his record, he'll never be able to work with youth in his state.**

WAAC THANKS:

Thanks to Boston College; we were humbled to be a part of your Spring Teach In. WAAC also thanks the ABA for the Collateral Consequences Summit and School-to-Prison Pipeline discussions in D.C.

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READ THE FULL STORY AND GET INVOLVED AT: www.weareallcriminals.org