

WE ARE ALL CRIMINALS

One in four people in the U.S. has a criminal record.
Four in four have a criminal history.

Participants in the We Are All Criminals project 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 oftentimes the only thing separating *clean* from *criminal* is who gets caught.

We Are All Criminals Around the Country

Miigwech (thank you) to Lac Courte Oreilles in Northern Wisconsin for hosting WAAC. To the many people that made it a wonderful event, including Daryl, Debra, John, and Lisa—thanks! And props to the LCO Community College for creating education opportunities for people in nearby jails and people with criminal records.



Thanks to the North Carolina Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Raleigh: it's an honor to share WAAC with committed criminal justice stakeholders, like Kami Chavis, a former prosecutor turned law professor, and James Williams, the public defender for Orange and Chatham Counties.

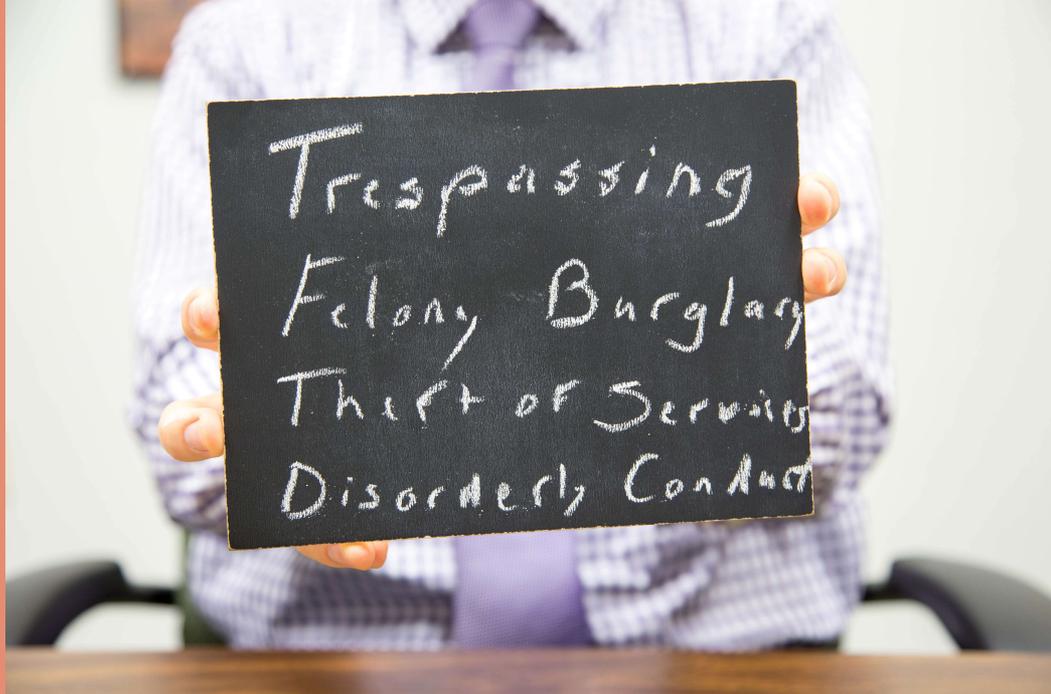


New Board Members

We Are All Criminals is thrilled to welcome four talented and passionate individuals to our Board of Directors. We look forward to the ideas and insights these new directors will bring to the WAAC organization in the coming years. Many thanks to Jerome Graham, Nadine Graves, Richard McLemore II, and Perry Moriearty.



PRIVATE MEMORY TRIGGERED BY PUBLIC RECORD
Attorney: Stadium Crashing



First the setup: I never thought of this as a crime.

Recently, a client came into my office. He had been charged with a laundry list of offenses—for crashing a wedding.

This guy ate and he drank and he was arrested. Trespassing, Felony Burglary, Disorderly Conduct, and Theft of Services—aggravated by false pretenses.

Here's the thing: nothing got out of hand. Nothing was stolen, nothing was broken, no voices were even raised. He just appropriated an overpriced plate of mediocre food and now has a felony.

Holy crap.

When I was in college, I went to a baseball game with my delinquent brother. A few innings and a few shots of tequila in, and he was bored. I was a beer beyond my capacity and actually went along with his plan to get better seats.

We walked into the sports writers' box, but got kicked out before we could finish our bucket of stolen popcorn.

So we went to the luxury suite instead. It was packed with execs; the waitress took our order—more food, more booze. A couple more innings, and I locked myself in the private bathroom—where I spent the remainder of the game vomiting.

I'm sure the one reason no one asked us why we were there was because we were white. We were wearing t-shirts and, by our clothes alone, clearly didn't belong. But we were folded right into the crowd; people didn't care.

If I had to wager a guess, if I were any other color I would not have been allowed in; if I would have sneaked in, I would have been kicked out—or arrested, like my client.

I remember thinking: *Ha! What's the worst that could happen?*

Now I'm just waiting for the next client to remind me of more crimes I forgot.

Support WAAC

We Are All Criminals has done some amazing work, but [we need your help to keep moving](#)

[forward](#). We're at a crisis point in America. With millions of people locked up and millions more locked out, we've become the incarceration nation. The result is a system too costly to sustain—both in fiscal and human terms.

We're also at a turning point. Across the US there's a sea change in criminal justice – a resounding call to end the era of mass criminalization. But without a radical reimagining of our criminal and juvenile justice systems, piecemeal solutions are bound to fall short.

With your support, We Are All Criminals encourages that radical reimagining—one of empathy, equity, and exigency—across the country and around the world. WAAC has traveled to 17 states and Washington DC, spoken to thousands of students and scholars, lawyers and employers, social service providers and probation officers, police and policymakers—and has reached thousands more through radio programs and the website.

We are developing the next phase of We Are All Criminals, which we call More Than My Mugshot. This project provides a space for people with criminal records to reclaim their own narratives and show the world that their past mistakes are a very small part of their whole selves.

We will continue making presentations and exhibiting the WAAC project across the country. The demand for our work is building and our growth over the past year was significant. In order for WAAC to have a broad and deep impact, we plan to add a staff person to assist with communications and logistics.

[Help us continue our work by donating online.](#)

WAAC is grateful to The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota for its generous support of our work.

We Are All Criminals on the Web

Comedian and podcaster Shane Mauss interviewed Emily for [his Here We Are weekly podcast](#). Watch for Emily's interview to be posted in a few weeks.

[Check out our Facebook page](#) for photos from Emily's visit to Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, to see artists' installations that humanize the lives of those behind bars.
