

# ||| 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: WE USED MARIJUANA TO EASE THE PAIN OF DYING**



Before my husband died, when the pain and cramping were so bad that he couldn't shampoo his own hair or grip a pencil, I baked. I have asthma, so we couldn't smoke -- the marijuana went in the butter, then in the brownies. He probably did it ten or eleven times, four times I joined him. Solidarity, I suppose. I guess I justified it: it was an herb, it helped, his mother knew about it.

After he died, there was some of it left over. But look at me. I'm white, a scholar, a woman. No one's going to search my house. I'm aware of that privilege.

I would do it again: it was such an obvious and correct decision. My husband, a Marine who couldn't untwist his hand to hold mine, for a short while felt a little better. In that context, it was okay; it wasn't drug use, it was something else.

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## **PUBLIC RECORD: POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE**

When the pain seized and contorted her son's body, he would smoke. She never touched it, but was thankful that something -- anything -- would help her baby. Two years after cancer took his life, police executed a search warrant, citing an anonymous tip that she'd been warehousing drugs. They found two zip-locked baggies of marijuana in the freezer -- untouched since her son passed. In fact, she hadn't been able to move anything: his toothbrush by the bathroom mirror, his boots by the back door, his illegal pain medication in the freezer.

She was arrested, charged, and plead to felony drug possession. The drug offense resulted in lost housing; her court fines, fees and mandated treatment sapped whatever she could have put toward the inflated deposits required by private landlords. She thought about moving back to the Reservation to stay with her sister, but there really isn't room right now.

At 72 years old, she's left with a felony record, no home, and no son.

## **WAAC THANKS:**

Thanks to Saint Louis University for hosting We Are All Criminals in October. We applaud the University for addressing the deep and unconscionable disparities in society and in St. Louis. Our hearts are with you.

Thanks to the new [Collateral Consequences Resource Center](#) for sharing a [WAAC post](#). The website is an excellent resource for information on rights restoration, collateral consequences of convictions, and second chances.

## **ON THE DOCKET:**

||| St. Catherine's |||  
St. Paul, MN  
11.26

||| Stillwater Prison |||  
Stillwater, MN  
12.2

||| MN Dept of Human Rights  
Symposium |||  
St. Paul, MN  
12.10

## **IN THE NEWS:**

### **THE DRUG WAR AND MEDICAL MARIJUANA**

Many states -- including, recently, Minnesota -- have approved marijuana consumption with a prescription for medicinal purposes. However, [CBS reports](#) on a MN mother who purchased marijuana oil ahead of the law change. She has been charged with child endangerment for administering to her son to alleviate the migraines, spasms and depression stemming from a traumatic brain injury. Eighteen prior medications hadn't worked. The marijuana oil did. She faces 2 years in prison and a \$6,000 fine.

And while legalizing medical marijuana is a step in the right direction, it's a small one. The War on Drugs has wreaked havoc in America, resulting in more than 45 million arrests and incarcerating more people now for nonviolent drug offenses than were incarcerated for any and all crimes in 1970. To learn more about the drug war, see [Ethan Nadelmann's TED talk](#), read [Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow](#), and watch [Eugene Jarecki's The House I Live In](#).

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READ THE FULL STORY AND GET INVOLVED AT: [www.weareallcriminals.org](http://www.weareallcriminals.org)

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