

||| WE ARE ALL CRIMINALS |||

One in four people in the United States 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 AN ELECTED OFFICIAL;
I'VE POSSESSED FELONY AMOUNTS OF
MARIJUANA



I was 17, maybe 18. I was with a friend, Michael. He had a joint in his hand and I had one in mine. Mine was lit. **We passed it back and forth, inhaling summer with the smoke.**

All of the sudden, a cop was at my friend's side. Michael must have swallowed his joint.

I smelled marijuana as I was driving by, and again now.

Marijuana in those days was a felony.

I wanted to head off the cop so I said, *Michael are you wearing that patchouli oil? Officer, my mother is always complaining it smells like marijuana.*

Michael told him he was wearing the oil and bent toward the cop, offering his forehead as proof. The cop inhaled. *Okay, he said. I'll buy it.*

PUBLIC RECORD: MARIJUANA POSSESSION

Police singled her out three years ago; she was the only African American in a group of rowdy teenagers. Scared, she consented to a search of her purse. They took her two joints, her name and her address. She missed her court summons; domestic abuse forced her to move suddenly.

Recently she was driving to work on a Friday night and was stopped for a broken taillight. Arrested on the marijuana possession warrant, she spent the weekend in jail waiting for her court date. Those missed shifts cost her job. She still can't afford to get her car out of impound. **The case settled with a dismissal of the criminal charge, but she still gets asked about arrests and charges on job applications.** She hasn't had an interview since the arrest. She's contemplating applying for cash assistance and food stamps for the first time.

ON THE DOCKET:

Yale University:
20 - 24 Feb

Bridgewater State:
25 and 26 Feb

MN Capitol Rotunda:
3 March

IN THE NEWS:

MARIJUANA POSSESSION

Regarding marijuana criminalization, President Obama recently [said](#): **"We should not be locking up kids or individual users for long stretches of jail time when some of the folks who are writing those laws have probably done the same thing."**

Meanwhile, the ACLU [found](#) that **Black Minnesotans are nearly 8 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites, despite using at similar rates.** Racial disparities in such arrests have grown by 231% in the past decade. While a majority of voters favor legalization, the state spent \$69 million on enforcement of marijuana laws in 2010.

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