



Crime and Punishment

In 1974, at the age of 19, Doris Drugdealer was arrested for selling \$200 worth of heroin to an undercover police officer in Michigan. She received a 10-20 year prison sentence for this crime. After serving about 8 months of her sentence, she decided that she could not tolerate prison and with the help of her grandfather, plotted an escape. She used a work pass to walk away from prison. In May, 2008, after 34 years, Doris was captured again by detectives who matched fingerprints from her driver's license to her prison records.

Doris said that in 1974 she was a "stupid little ...hippie-ish girl...a pothead." During the 34 years that Doris evaded prison, she worried every day that she would be caught. While looking at a sunset, she would marvel at her freedom and wonder if the past would catch up with her. She was very careful to lead the life of a model citizen and even volunteered for Common Cause, an organization that promotes government ethics and accountability. She married an executive and had three children and lived a comfortable life in an upper middle class neighborhood in California. She never told her family about her past. Her husband of 23 years stated that he loved his wife as much as the day they were married and that she was a "person of the highest integrity and compassion" and had dedicated her life to raising her children. She taught her children to be responsible citizens and to avoid drugs. Her husband said that the arrest "was the next worst thing to having a death in the family." Doris worried about the effect of her arrest on her son who had just graduated from high school and her older daughters. A neighbor commented that it would not be useful to society to send Doris back to prison.

Undercover drug officers believed that Doris had connections to "higher ups" in the drug world and was a teenage leader in a 1970's drug ring. They found \$600 in her apartment, paraphernalia for cutting heroin and pictures of her with other drug dealers. Doris described herself as a recent high school graduate who was strapped for cash, working at a minimum wage job and driving a \$400 car. She said that every day of her life she regretted getting herself into this situation. She was extradited back to Michigan to serve her original prison term. Her family and friends submitted a plea for clemency to the governor of Michigan. Should the governor grant her clemency?

Use your critical thinking to analyze this situation. Use the Critical Thinking Worksheet on the back for your analysis.

This exercise is based on excerpts from "Former Fugitive Drawing Sympathy" and "Captured Fugitive Now Waiting for Extradition, and to Learn Fate" from the San Diego Union Tribune, May 1 and 2, 2008.

Use the summary of the news article on crime and punishment to answer the questions below. Discuss the issues with a group of students in your class and then write your reasonable point of view.

1. State the problem as simply and clearly as you can.

2. Describe the values and point of view of Doris Drugdealer.

3. Describe the values and point of view of her husband.

4. Describe the values and point of view of her children.

5. Describe the values and point of view of her neighbors.

6. Describe the legal and societal issues.

After discussing the issues and looking at different points of view, what is your reasonable point of view? Why? Include a brief description of your values.
