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Quotes about Crime and Criminals

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Stripped of ethical rationalizations and philosophical pretensions, a crime is anything that a group in power chooses to prohibit.

- Adler, Freda

Organized crime in America takes in over forty billion dollars a year. This is quite a profitable sum, especially when one consider that the Mafia spends very little for office supplies.

- Allen, Woody

No punishment has ever possessed enough power of deterrence to prevent the commission of crimes. On the contrary, whatever the punishment, once a specific crime has appeared for the first time, its reappearance is more likely than its initial emergence could ever have been.

- Arendt, Hannah

Every rascal is not a thief, but every thief is a rascal.

- Aristotle

Crime is a fact of the human species, a fact of that species alone, but it is above all the secret aspect, impenetrable and hidden. Crime hides, and by far the most terrifying things

are those which elude us.

- Bataille, Georges

Abscond. To move in a mysterious way, commonly with the property of another.

- Bierce, Ambrose

Want of money and the distress of a thief can never be alleged as the cause of his thieving, for many honest people endure greater hardships with fortitude. We must therefore seek the cause elsewhere than in want of money, for that is the miser's passion, not the thief's.

- Blake, William

The infectiousness of crime is like that of the plague.

- Bonaparte, Napoleon

The world of crime is a last refuge of the authentic, uncorrupted, spontaneous event.

- Boorstin, Daniel J.

The thief. Once committed beyond a certain point he should not worry himself too much about not being a thief any more. Thieving is God's message to him. Let him try and be a good thief.

- Butler, Samuel

For centuries the death penalty, often accompanied by barbarous refinements, has been trying to hold crime in check; yet crime persists. Why? Because the instincts that are warring in man are not, as the law claims, constant forces in a state of equilibrium.

- Camus, Albert

The fear of burglars is not only the fear of being robbed, but also the fear of a sudden and unexpected clutch out of the darkness.

- Canetti, Elias

My rackets are run on strictly American lines and they're going to stay that way.

- Capone, Al

Crime is terribly revealing. Try and vary your methods as you will, your tastes, your habits, your attitude of mind, and your soul is revealed by your actions.

- Christie, Agatha

Slums may well be breeding-grounds of crime, but middle-class suburbs are incubators of apathy and delirium.

- Connolly, Cyril

One crime is everything, two is nothing.

- Deluzy, Madame Dorothe

The wrongdoer is more unfortunate than the man wronged.

- Democritus

Like art and politics, gangsterism is a very important avenue of assimilation into society.

- Doctorow, E. L.

Successful crimes alone are justified.

- Dryden, John

There is no society known where a more or less developed criminality is not found under different forms. No people exists whose morality is not daily infringed upon. We must therefore call crime necessary and declare that it cannot be non-existent, that the fundamental conditions of social organization, as they are understood, logically imply it.

- Durkheim, Emile

Crime seems to change character when it crosses a bridge or a tunnel. In the city, crime is taken as emblematic of class and race. In the suburbs, though, it's intimate and psychological -- resistant to generalization, a mystery of the individual soul.

- Ehrenreich, Barbara

We cannot be sure that we ought not to regard the most criminal country as that which in some aspects possesses the highest civilization.

- Ellis, Havelock

Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that, unsuspected, ripens with the flower of the pleasure that concealed it.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

Commit a crime, and the earth is made of glass.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

One usually dies because one is alone, or because one has got into something over one's head. One often dies because one does not have the right alliances, because one is not given support. In Sicily the Mafia kills the servants of the State that the State has not been able to protect.

- Falcone, Giovanni

Crime expands according to our willingness to put up with it.

- Farber, Barry J.

Crimes, like virtues, are their own rewards.

- Farquhar, George

The lyricism of marginality may find inspiration in the image of the outlaw, the great social nomad, who prowls on the confines of a docile, frightened order.

- Foucault, Michel

The man who is admired for the ingenuity of his larceny is almost always rediscovering some earlier form of fraud. The basic forms are all known, have all been practiced. The manners of capitalism improve. The morals may not.

- Galbraith, John Kenneth

Repudiating the virtues of your world, criminals hopelessly agree to organize a forbidden universe. They agree to live in it. The air there is nauseating: they can breathe it.

- Genet, Jean

Crimes of which a people is ashamed constitute its real history. The same is true of man.

- Genet, Jean

How vainly shall we endeavor to repress crime by our barbarous punishment of the poorer class of criminals so long as children are reared in the brutalizing influences of poverty, so long as the bite of want drives men to crime.

- George, Henry

There is no crime of which I do not deem myself capable.

- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang Von

Crime is naught but misdirected energy.

- Goldman, Emma

Crime generally punishes itself.

- Goldsmith, Oliver

There is a heroism in crime as well as in virtue. Vice and infamy have their altars and their religion.

- Hazlitt, William

We are often deterred from crime by the disgrace of others.

- Horace

Many a man is saved from being a thief by finding everything locked up.

- Howe, Edgar Watson

After all, crime is only a left-handed form of human endeavor.

- Huston, John

He threatens many that hath injured one.

- Jonson, Ben

Many commit the same crime with a different destiny; one bears a cross as the price of his villainy, another wears a crown.

- Juvenal, (Decimus Junius Juvenalis)

Every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves. What is also true is that every community gets the kind of law enforcement it insists on.

- Kennedy, John F.

Squeeze human nature into the straitjacket of criminal justice and crime will appear.

- Kraus, Karl

If poverty is the mother of crime, lack of good sense is the father.

- La Bruyere, Jean De

There are crimes which become innocent and even glorious through their splendor, number and excess.

- La Rochefoucauld, Francois De

There is a new billboard outside Time Square. It keeps an up-to minute count of gun-related crimes in New York. Some goofball is going to shoot someone just to see the numbers move.

- Letterman, David

He reminds me of the man who murdered both his parents, and then when the sentence was about to be pronounced, pleaded for mercy on the grounds that he was orphan.

- Lincoln, Abraham

Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

- Lowell, James Russell

The common argument that crime is caused by poverty is a kind of slander on the poor.

- Mencken, H. L.

We may live without friends; we may live without books. But civilized men cannot live without cooks.

- Meredith, Owen

The study of crime begins with the knowledge of oneself. All that you despise, all that you loathe, all that you reject, all that you condemn and seek to convert by punishment springs from you.

- Miller, Henry

It is because they took the easy way out that rivers, and people, go crooked.

- Peterson, Jill

He who commits injustice is ever made more wretched than he who suffers it.

- Plato

A burglar who respects his art always takes his time before taking anything else.

- Porter, O. Henry

All criminals turn preachers under the gallows.

- Proverb

Great thieves punish little ones.

- Proverb

In times of trouble leniency becomes crime.

- Proverb

Set a thief to catch a thief.

- Proverb, French

Save a thief from the gallows and he will cut your throat.

- Proverb, French

Locks keep out only the honest.

- Proverb, Jewish

He 63 ways of getting money, the most common, most honorable ones being staling, thieving, and robbing.

- Rabelais, Francois

Small crimes always precedes great ones.

- Racine, Jean

All, all is theft, all is unceasing and rigorous competition in nature; the desire to make off with the substance of others is the foremost -- the most legitimate -- passion nature has bred into us and, without doubt, the most agreeable one.

- Sade, Marquis De

It is certain that stealing nourishes courage, strength, skill, tact, in a word, all the virtues useful to a republican system and consequently to our own. Lay partiality aside, and answer me: is theft, whose effect is to distribute wealth more evenly, to be branded as a wrong in our day, under our government which aims at equality? Plainly, the answer is no.

- Sade, Marquis De

A person with predatory instincts who has not sufficient capital to form a corporation.

- Scott, Howard

Crime when it succeeds is called virtue.

- Seneca

He has committed the crime who profits by it.

- Seneca

One crime has to be concealed by another.

- Seneca

He that is robbed, not wanting what is stolen, him not know t, and he's not robbed at all.

- Shakespeare, William

The faults of the burglar are the qualities of the financier.

- Shaw, George Bernard

A crime persevered in a thousand centuries ceases to be a crime, and becomes a virtue.

This is the law of custom, and custom supersedes all other forms of law.

- Twain, Mark

From a single crime know the nation.

- Virgil

Almost all crime is due to the repressed desire for aesthetic expression.

- Waugh, Evelyn

Crime and bad lives are the measure of a State's failure, all crime in the end is the crime of the community.

- Wells, H.G.

Today more Americans are imprisoned for drug offenses than for property crimes

- Will, George F.

The greatest crime in the world is not developing your potential. When you do what you do best, you are helping not only yourself, but the world.

- Williams, Roger

The truth of the matter is that muggers are very interesting people.

- Winner, Michael



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