

## Crime

Crime is a violation of the norms of good social behavior. Typically the criminal is aware of proper social behavior, but ignores those norms, in favor of a greater advantage to himself. (If I want to own that new KIA, I am going to have to take it, using Henry's keys which he carelessly left on top of the sink. In the end my action will be impulsive, will not be carried out with a steady deliberateness. It will not really be a crime, will it?)

There are of course many degrees of criminality in crime, many ways in which we could describe the criminality of the criminal. What if the criminal is thinking, as he snatches the scones from an unguarded tray, 'I will give several of those to my crippled cousin George, who always gets left out when it's time for snacks?' Would that reflection, if made in good faith, and with the intent to carry through exonerate the criminal for the small theft? Would that be a very small crime?

The strict answer is not his inner justifications will not exonerate him. If a crime is committed it is committed. Each of us has multiple responsibilities as a citizen. One of those responsibilities is to the whole community he belongs to. That community includes the trader in scones. (It also includes all the other partners with whom we share transactions on the market.) I cheat that trader in scones when I cheat the integrity of the market, and if I do that I cut the worth of the moral whole under which I have condescended to make an exception for my cousin.

Harsh as this reading of law may be, it is probably, in the end, more liberal than a more merciful legal interpretation which gives much more leniency to individual motives. Allowing individual motives would allow too much room for generosity, and not enough for the law itself, which is not about generosity.  
Injustice