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Export date: Sat Oct 31 11:59:44 2026 / +0000 GMT

Armed robbery ? it?s no big deal

by BRIAN LOCKHART

It's no wonder police services in the country are frustrated with the court system and its apparent revolving door method of dealing with criminals by granting bail to people who have been convicted of multiple crimes. They're still released ? only to commit another crime while out on the streets.

Police arrest a person on a serious charge, only to see some of them doing the same thing a week later while out on bail.

It is even more frustrating for someone who is an innocent victim of a violent crime committed by a person who has already proven they are dangerous.

The purpose of prison is two-fold, maybe three-fold, depending on who you ask.

For starters, it's a punishment for committing a crime ? your freedom to walk the streets is taken away. Secondly, it serves as a place for rehabilitation ? supposedly. I'm not sure being in a prison situation really provides much in the way of changing some people's way of thinking. Although every time I read a story about an execution in the U.S., the condemned always seem to have had a religious conversion prior to being administered a cocktail of drugs or being fried in the chair when the switch is thrown.

And the purpose of prison is to separate dangerous people from society. In rare cases, criminals have been unable to just live their lives without causing pain and anguish for others in the community.

I'm not a throw-away-the-key kind of person. I think everyone deserves a second chance.

Not everyone in jail or prison is an inherently bad person. Sometimes people make mistakes then go on to lead the rest of their lives with no trouble at all.

There was a bank robbery in Alliston a couple of weeks ago. A man walked into a local bank, brandished or appeared to have a firearm, and ordered the teller to give him the money in the till. He took the money, then strolled out of the bank.

I've never been on the wrong end of a gun, but I'm sure the bank teller, who was threatened with a weapon, was traumatized in some way, and so were their co-workers. Some people who have been through this experience never return to work out of fear of it happening again ? with dire consequences.

A photo of the bank robber leaving the bank was released. When viewing the photo, my thought was, ?Yup, they're going to identify this guy in about 10 minutes.?

It was a clear photo and easily recognizable to anyone who knew the man.

Sure enough, it didn't take police long to identify the subject, and a Canada Wide Warrant was issued for his arrest.

This was no Billy the Kid or Jesse James - this was a 54-year-old man, and a career criminal.

The OPP released information on the man and asked the public to keep a lookout and notify them if anyone saw him.

They also released information on his rap sheet and background in crime.

I had to read this twice, as at first I thought it must be a mistake.

From the OPP website posting on this man: He is serving a 41-year, 4-month and 18-day sentence for Possession of a Weapon, Robbery x 16, Armed Robbery x 16, Robbery using a Firearm x 8, Possession of a Firearm While Prohibited, Possession of Prohibited Firearm with Ammunition, Prohibited Weapon in Vehicle, Pointing Firearm, Forcible Confinement, Discharge Firearm Cause Bodily Harm, Possession of Explosive Substance, Possess Weapon for Dangerous Purpose, Disguise With Intent, Escape Lawful Custody, Assault, Break and Enter x 2, Theft x 2, Possession of Property Obtained by Crime x 4, Possession of Scheduled Substance of Trafficking x 2.

And the first thing he does when out on some kind of statutory release ? is to rob a bank.

Who are the people that decided a guy like this should be allowed to walk the streets? I would have liked to able to listen in on that discussion.

?Well, It's only 16 counts of armed robbery, and the forcible confinement thing - is that really all that bad??

It's no wonder the police are frustrated by the courts.

If someone had been killed or injured during this robbery, who would be held accountable for making the decision to give a dangerous criminal the ability to go out and commit more crimes?