

Britain's Criminal-Justice Frivolity

by Theodore Dalrymple



The British criminal-justice system once again exposed its elaborate and ceremonious frivolity. This frivolity is serious in its effects, not only for its immediate consequences on Britain's crime rate but also because it undermines the legitimacy of the state, whose first and inescapable duty is to maintain enough order to secure the safety of citizens as they go about their lawful business.

A young man, [police surveillance](#) immediately after his release.

Therefore, when he attacked passersby on a South London street with a knife, injuring two—one gravely—a few days after his release, police were on hand to shoot him dead before he could

do more damage.

With infallible aim, the media asked the wrong question. “The attacker was known,” said the [*City Journal*](#).