Joseph Fracek

In Collier County, Florida, two men were arrested for the illegal harvest of 4,600 pounds of berries from a private property. According to NBC 2 News, which operates out of Southwest Florida, Daniel Navarrete, 23, and David Casillas, 19, face charges of fleeing and eluding, grand theft, and harvesting berries without a permit. To harvest berries in Florida, people must have a permit or permission from the property owner, the two men did not have either. Shortly after midnight, Collier County Sheriff's Office aviation crews spotted the two men picking berries, the men then ran from deputies in separate vehicles. When they were finally caught up to, deputies confiscated 20 large bags of harvested berries that weighed 4,600 pounds. The berries had a value of $5,400 (NBC 2).

Rational choice theory is what applies to this crime. Rational choice theory suggests that humans are reasonable and weigh the consequences or risks to their actions. The theory assumes people act in their own self-interest and make choices that benefit them the most. Additionally, the theory assumes that when someone is acting criminally, they know they are, but continue to do so anyways knowing the consequences they could face. Under rational choice theory, all humans are rational, they have free will, and make choices that will benefit them, knowing it may be a risk as well. For this particular property crime, rational choice theory helps us better understand why it occurred because the men were clearly acting in a way that benefited them, and only them. They decided to go on to someone else’s property and harvest berries, with the assumed goal of selling them. Additionally, the men knew they were breaking the law, and this is proved when they tried to run away from officers.

To limit future crimes, I would enforce strict penalties to deter offenders from committing this crime. For the charges of fleeing and eluding, and grand theft, and under Florida statutes, the two men face a maximum of 35 years in prison. Harvesting berries is only a misdemeanor, but with the intention of selling it, it should be a felony that carries a minimum of serving jail time, let us say 30 days. If you are going to enter someone else’s property and steal their berries for your own monetary gain, you will do so knowing that, if caught, you will be locked up for at least a month. And in the state of Florida, for entering someone’s property, jail time is if you are lucky.

<https://nbc-2.com/news/crime/2021/07/30/immokalee-men-arrested-for-illegal-harvest-of-4600-lbs-of-berries-from-private-property/>