The reason why I am limiting the race of my sample to only black and white defendants is because they account for 1.1 out of 1.2 million observations. Additionally, I chose to use age as my dependent variable because it is the best way to represent the distribution of the punitiveness of crime over a life course; the age-crime curve is also supported by the literature in criminology. The total prison time that the defendant is sentenced to is a good representation of the outcome because it incorporates different forms of judicial discretion that results in the outcome of the case.

The reason why I chose to incorporate the different types of crimes in the time series plot is because it shows us the degree which drug cases is driving prosecution rates. It is also interesting that until recently when it was surpassed by immigration cases, it has been quite steady. This will be used to justify my study and emphasis on drug related crimes.