

Title: For those of you who have figured out over the last few months that the game is rigged and corrupt, coincidentally one of my classes mentions the charade they play. Buy and hodl.

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In early capitalism, children worked alongside adults. At that time, just as today, most street criminals came from the marginal working class, as did these boys who worked in a glass works company in Indiana in 1908.

The criminal justice system, then, does not focus on the executives of corporations and the harm they do through manufacturing unsafe products, creating pollution, and manipulating prices. Yet the violations of the capitalist class cannot be ignored totally; if they become too extreme, they might outrage the working class, encouraging them to rise up and revolt. To prevent this, a flagrant violation by a member of the capitalist class is occasionally prosecuted. The publicity given to the case provides evidence of the "fairness" of the criminal justice system, which helps to stabilize the social system—and keeps the powerful in their positions of privilege.

The powerful are usually able to bypass the courts altogether, appearing instead before an agency that has no power to imprison (such as the Federal Trade Commission). These agencies are directed by people from wealthy backgrounds who sympathize with the intricacies of the corporate world. It is they who oversee most cases of price manipulation, insider stock trading, violations of fiduciary duty, and so on. Is it surprising, then, that the typical sanction for corporate crime is a token fine?

In Sum

Conflict theorists stress that the power elite developed the legal system to stabilize the social order. They use it to control the poor, who pose a threat to the powerful. The poor hold the potential of rebelling as a group, which could dislodge the power elite from their place of privilege. To prevent this, the criminal justice system makes certain that heavy penalties come down on the poor.