1. White Vans are quite useful. Security guards are unreliable. Sympathy stories are the best way to get people to give you information.
2. I think what he did was questionable, however his time as a fugitive is harder to justify. I think that while his punishment was excessive for just the hacks, overall there are only slightly excessive. The solitary confinement thing was ridiculous though.
3. You could convince someone to give you their ID card, which could be quickly cloned and then you could use their meal plan. Free food!