

BREAKDOWN IN SOCIAL ORDER PREDICTABLE

[Bill Donohue](#)

Unlike many sociologists, Travis Hirschi understands human nature. His specialty is crime. Instead of asking why do some people commit crime, he aptly notes that the right question is why doesn't everyone.

One way to understand his point is to apply his logic to children. What do responsible parents spend so much of their time doing: they are constantly invoking the word "No." That's because what comes natural to us is to satisfy our wants and desires, and that can often be harmful to others, even dangerous.

Adults are the same way. When we see something in a store that we like, what stops us from stealing it? If we have been properly socialized, we know that stealing is morally wrong. But what if we have not been properly socialized? Then our instincts tell us to take what we want. Now it may be that we will refrain from stealing because we are afraid of being caught, and because stealing is a crime, we may be punished, even imprisoned.

What happens if we steal, get caught, and get a slap on the wrist? If this is the new normal, then it is only a matter of time before the word gets out that breaking the law to get what we want matters little. Only a fool would think this wouldn't lead to a spike in crime.

We are a nation run by a lot of fools. This is especially true of officials in big cities. The breakdown in the social order that is now commonplace was entirely predictable. [Take New York City.](#)

Before the pandemic, one in five New Yorker bus riders did not pay their fare. Now it's one in two. Almost one million take the bus daily, and in 2022, the bus fare evasion cost the city about \$315 million in lost revenue. It's not hard to figure out why.

In 2008, a bus driver was stabbed to death in Brooklyn; he was killed after telling a passenger he needed to pay. The transit union jumped on this tragic incident and told bus drivers not to question those who refuse to pay. The word got out and soon there was an increase in fare beaters.

Why did fare beating jump from 18 percent in 2018 to 48 percent now? Because the word got out that even those who commit violent crimes suffer little or no punishment. It is not a big leap to think that if thugs are caught and released, what are they going to do to fare beaters?

Only a fool would be surprised.

The fools are Alvin Bragg, the George Soros-funded Manhattan D.A. who is responsible for the no-bail, catch and release, soft on crime policies. Another fool is the only person who can fire him, New York State Gov. Kathy Hochul (she adopted the policies of her predecessor, Andrew Cuomo, another fool). Indirectly, they sent the message to those who take the bus that fare beating is of no consequence.

It all filters down. What is happening is a variation of the "broken window" thesis. For example, when those who live in an apartment complex notice that broken windows are rarely repaired, it has a way of cascading: it invites a callous attitude toward misconduct, the result of which is an escalation of offenses of a more serious sort.

Responsible parents don't wait until their child does something that is seriously wrong before disciplining him. Yes, some parents can be overbearing, and that is not a virtue. We are talking about reasonable ones.

They understand that if their child is not held accountable for relatively minor infractions, they are not likely to stop at that point. Just as it is foolish not to call the fire department until a neighborhood fire is literally next door, it is foolish not to act when Johnny keeps pushing the envelope.

Some urban problems are hard to resolve, but some are quite easy. All it takes is common sense and the will to do act on it. Just keep the fools at bay.