

# HATE CRIME BIAS

In January, the *New York Times* ran a story about two 20-year-olds and an 18-year-old who were arrested for stealing statues of baby Jesus from nativity scenes over the past two years. They hit the New York suburban communities of Suffern and Haverstraw several times in 2005 and 2006. The police said they would not charge them with committing hate crimes; each was being charged with 14 counts of petty larceny.

On the same day, WNBC.com reported that a 20-year-old was arrested for kicking a menorah in the Long Island community of St. James. A few days later, a Long Island teen was also charged with destroying a menorah. Both were charged with a felony for committing a hate crime and could face seven years in prison.

This is so interesting. The reason the menorah is allowed in New York City public schools is because the authorities have branded it a secular symbol, and the reason the crèche is barred is because the same authorities have branded it a religious symbol. Yet when menorahs are vandalized, the guilty are charged with a hate crime and may spend seven years behind bars for their felony, while those who vandalize several crèches—over a two year period—are given a slap on the wrist.

We have long maintained that hate-crime laws evince a bias of their own. These recent events prove it.