

News Roundup

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Date : April 16, 2010

As always, there's a lot going on in the world of criminal law.

1. The headline news is, of course, Justice Stevens's announcement that he will retire this summer. He's 90 and has been on the Supreme Court since 1975. Wow! Speculation about who will replace him is rampant; those who want to read the tea leaves can start [here](#), but most pundits doubt that his retirement will change the ideological balance of the court very much.
2. Several high profile local cases are marching along in various ways. Timothy Hennis was [sentenced to death](#). Samuel Cooper's jury is [considering his fate today](#). Ruffin Poole's trial is [scheduled to start in early May](#). And the state supreme court issued [opinions](#) yesterday, none of which were the *Bowden* case concerning inmates serving life sentences imposed in the 1970s. Maybe next month.
3. Anyone who has watched the HBO drama *The Wire* knows how compelling it is. (Very broadly, the series draws its name from, and centers around, wiretapping operations by narcotics officers in Baltimore.) But it's not just entertainment anymore: at Duke, it is the [subject of a new class](#). The instructor reports that she "devoted part of a semester-long leave last year to watching all 60 episodes." Sounds tough!
4. Recent items of interest on the law-and-technology front include [this story](#) about crime-predicting software to be used on juvenile delinquents in Florida, and [this blog post](#) about whether viewing child pornography without downloading or caching it constitutes possessing the pornography. (The latter issue is the subject of a split of authority, and I think the approach taken in the case that prompted the post is promising.)
5. Speaking of blogs, the New York Times recently ran an [article](#) about anonymous comments and why a number of web sites are limiting -- or eliminating -- them. It's a particularly timely piece in light of the [controversy in Cleveland](#), where a local judge posted several anonymous comments on a newspaper's website, apparently including some about cases over which she was presiding. The newspaper "outed" her, and she sued the paper in response. I must say, though, that the comments on this blog illustrate how valuable comments can be, and I think that the option to remain anonymous helps make more people comfortable commenting. I am grateful to those of you who contribute. Another example of comments -- albeit not anonymous ones -- being used to exchange well-considered views is [here](#), where several leading experts debate the value of the Death Penalty Information Center's exonerated list on a blog sponsored by the *Dallas Morning News*.