

## News Roundup

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It's Friday before a holiday weekend. What better time for a news roundup?

1. Two brothers prevented a 19-year-old jogger from being abducted in Chapel Hill recently. Their inspiring story is [here](#).
2. A much more somber story about crime in Chapel Hill is [here](#): Demario Atwater pleaded guilty to murdering student body president Eve Carson, and received a life sentence. He had previously pleaded guilty in federal court. Charges remain pending against codefendant Laurence Lovette.
3. Although the above items might make it seem as though Chapel Hill is in the midst of a crime wave, nationally, crime rates have continued to decline according to a [recent FBI report](#). Both violent and property crime rates are down, confounding those who believed that the economic downturn would result in more crime.
4. The *New York Times* has a [fascinating article](#) on California's three strikes law and efforts to soften it. The law is dramatically more punitive than our habitual felon statute, requiring a life sentence even when the predicates are relatively minor offenses. (Hat tip: SL&P.)
5. The *Mississippi Clarion Ledger* has an [equally compelling piece](#) up, by a writer who witnessed an execution for a murder committed 24 years ago. I've read several excellent first-person accounts of executions by those opposed to the death penalty, and this is a thoughtful counterweight. (Hat tip: C&C.)
6. Fans of *The Wire* know that disposable prepaid cell phones -- "burners" -- are a staple means of communication for drug traffickers. Since the Times Square bomber used one in connection with his plot, Congress is [considering a new bill](#) that would "help police thwart 'terrorists, drug lords and gang members,' along with the occasional hedge fund manager." (Click on the link to learn a bit more about the hedge fund manager reference.)
7. Finally, the *New York Times* [reports](#) that Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan was disappointed to receive a B and a B- in her first semester at Harvard Law School. Hmm, I guess she's bounced back OK, hasn't she?