



## News Roundup

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As always, the past week has seen a tremendous amount of interesting criminal law news. Nationally, the story that has drawn the most attention is the conclusion of the Stephen Hayes murder trial in Connecticut. Apparently, two men invaded the home of a doctor and his family; beat the doctor severely; sexually assaulted his wife and one daughter; then set the house on fire. The doctor alone survived. Hayes, the first defendant to be tried, was sentenced to death. The *New York Times* archive on the case is [here](#). Coincidentally, several polls were released this week about the public's opinion regarding the death penalty. Gallup, which has been conducting polls on this issue for over 70 years, asked about the issue [a variety of ways and got a variety of results](#). UPI reports [here](#) on a different poll, which found, inter alia, that a majority of Americans would support the death penalty as a punishment for rape. In other news:

1. Governor Perdue has appointed a new ~~district~~-superior court judge and a new district attorney, as described [here](#).
2. The Office of Indigent Defense Services, in conjunction with several School of Government faculty members who work with defense lawyers, is offering a webinar about recent developments in criminal law. The details are available [here](#).
3. The *News and Observer* reports [here](#) that the DMV wants to cut down on colorful and nonstandard license plates, such as the popular Blue Ridge Parkway plates. Apparently, such plates are hard for officers, red light cameras, and automatic toll cameras to read.
4. On the law and technology beat, [the federal government is investigating](#) Google's Street View program for possible invasions of privacy. At the same time, at least one crime has been solved as a result of Street View: a vehicle thief was caught in the act by Google's cameras, as described [here](#).
5. Farther afield, police in Finland are using a [new automated traffic camera](#) system that can detect multiple offenses and issue multiple citations to a single vehicle in the blink of an eye. At least one Russian prison is being [renovated](#) to provide tanning beds to inmates, and to give them access to Skype. Gulag no more! Compare that to what's happening in Brazil, where a [recent prison riot](#) at a crowded facility left 18 inmates dead, six of them decapitated.
6. Finally, some odd tidbits. When a high school classmate of Jeffrey Dahmer was summoned for jury duty, he was asked whether he knew anyone who had been convicted of a crime. He responded that a friend had killed 17 people. Surprise, surprise: [he was excused](#). Meanwhile, in New York, a person attempting to contact a drug dealer accidentally dialed Crime Stoppers. He indicated that he wanted to "score" some drugs, which [got the sheriff on his case](#). And in Georgia, a murder conviction was recently affirmed in a case where the prosecutor turned out the lights, lit candles on a cake, and sang "Happy Birthday" to the child murder victim during closing arguments. [Seriously](#).