

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 766 California's Love Letter to Shoplifters

Today, as a public service, we offer solid career advancement advice for all of our island's shoplifters. What if we could help you get ahead by helping you get away with it much more often? It's coming next, on The Extra Point.

If you have selected shoplifting as your career, there's no kind way to say this...you are in the wrong place. You need to get on a plane and move to California immediately. This is because California's liberal politicians care about their constituents, even shoplifters.

With the passage of Proposition 47, California increased the maximum amount someone can steal from retail businesses, to \$950, and it's still only a misdemeanor — and that's not all.

A lot of retail businesses have told their employees not to try to stop people from ripping off the store. Just let them go. CVS drug store employees told a San Francisco video producer how shoplifters come into the store everyday, grab a bag and fill it up with up to \$950 of merchandise, and then they walk out without paying.

So, why do the employees do nothing? They've been told if they do, they'll be fired. Because the criminal, if stopped by the employee, may claim that their civil rights were violated.

If the employee was forced to physically stop the criminal, then they could claim they were injured. I suppose emotional distress over being interrupted from stealing will come in there as well.

To avoid legal costs which would far exceed the \$950, businesses tell their people to back off. Is this starting to shape up as the opportunity of a lifetime? It gets even better.

If police are called and if they show up to perform an arrest, the fun doesn't stop there.

The shoplifter is released immediately. Retail workers report they've seen the same people back in the store the next day. As they say, a big part of success is showing up.

You want more? In the interest of the shoplifter's job security, the San Francisco District Attorney's office doesn't prosecute the cases. The dollar amount is too small and their offices are already overwhelmed with other work. Perfect. Are you excited or what?

Guam is so far behind in taking care of your needs. The felony starts at a paltry \$500. Store employees stop you, cops arrest you, stores press charges, and the attorney general will prosecute. Yeah sure, the judges will let you go, but what a hassle they make you go through before you walk.

So, how did such a fun law like this come about? It was introduced as the "Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act." Who would vote against that? Answer: not enough. It passed. Proponents called it a means of keeping non-violent criminals out of the more violent general prison population. Okay, so you took care of the soft criminals, and the state's retail industry became a shoplifter's paradise. I'm not sure how that works for neighborhoods and schools, but, hey, whatever.

Further, this is not just the big city. Retail theft is way up statewide, sometimes double and triple the previous rates before the law took effect. Vice-President Kamala Harris has proudly stated that she feels California should be the model for the rest of the nation. Yes ma'am.

Shoplifters, have you made those airline reservations yet? What are you waiting for?

As we finish this episode off, I want to ask you a question. What impact do you think this has on the employees of the stores where this takes place, day after day? (Con't.)

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Do you think they might be demoralized?  
What must it be like for them to just have to watch somebody walk into their store, shove stuff into a bag, and walk out with no fear of being arrested? On average, no better than one in three workers is engaged in what they do, and give a hoot. Do you think this kind of thing helps?

I understand the pressure on CVS and other retailers, and the economics of fighting this problem. However, you're going to lose your team and top talent isn't going to stay with you, if you don't stand up for what's right — if you don't defend basic values.

Here's the answer, in chunks. Put a guard at the door to stop people from walking out with your stuff. That costs less than what you're now losing. Use media and social media to put pressure on the district attorney to prosecute.

Finally, try to amend the law, lowering the misdemeanor limits. Will any of this happen? Who knows?

Enjoy your time in California, Guam shoplifters. If you decide to move there permanently, we'll understand.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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