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Is Seattle Safe? Students Share their Perspective on Crime

Gray Ankcorn, Volunteer Reporter

In a segment of the Five from Fox News, Seattle residents were interviewed regarding their concern for the city's public safety. Although Fox described residents as “embracing the decay [of the city] as crime, drugs, and homelessness run rampant,” many interviewees disagreed with this characterization, suggesting these pointed the narrative being pushed was overblown or misguided.

One interviewee noted that “crime is a social issue that can be solved by giving people their basic needs.”

Seattle University students similarly opened up about their thoughts on the degree of crime in Seattle. One such student was First-year Nursing Major Brittany Tellis, who expressed her thoughts on the Fox segment.



Adeline Ong

An emergency blue light phone on campus.

“It made me annoyed and it was interesting that they chose those clips of people to show. I feel like there may not have been people who responded saying there was crime, and [Fox news was trying to paint a picture] trying to paint a picture,” Tellis said.

Second-year Creative Writing Major Jasper Mathews highlighted the complexity of crime in a city center like Seattle.

“Crime is a symptom of issues in the system at hand. Those who commit crime are demonized rather than actually looking at ‘Why did this person commit this crime? What was their situation? What can we do to keep that from happening?’” Mathews said.

TK Anney, a law student, responded to claims that Seattle residents were “embracing the decay” of Seattle.

“I think that’s really telling that they have this preconceived idea that it’s chaos out there,” Anney said.

Similarly to Mathews, Anney felt that crime in Seattle is tied to a variety of social issues that demand attention.

“I would argue that already the world we live in is capricious and violent. People can get gunned down by police and then they’ll laugh about it... people can just lose their health care or can go broke at any time due to a health emergency or lose housing,” Anney said.

Anney continued to express their frustrations with the misconceptions surrounding crime.

“It’s already this decayed world that they are afraid of. That is already the reality for so many people but their [Fox News] perspective is just incredibly out of touch... this is a serious misdirection and is meant to stoke fear in people.”

Anney provided their own perspective to crime, bringing in housing scarcity and rent control to the conversation.

“Vast amounts of money moving into Seattle and buying up property, driving up rent costs, that’s a level of violence that happens at the hands of wealthy landowners and homeowners, creating scarcity of housing so that a small number of investors can get rich, that’s crime. But somebody stealing a sandwich so they can live and putting a spotlight on that? That’s messed up,” Anney said.

In looking at fears on campus, Tellis reported that she’s weary about parking in certain areas at specific times or being extra cautious, especially at night.

Students across the board pointed out that we should not downplay the situation.

“Just because it’s not happening to you or you’re not seeing it with your own eyes, doesn’t mean it’s not happening,” Tellis emphasized.

Many people mentioned the severity of the offense as a contending factor.

“Taking people’s things or assaulting people, that’s not okay. But when we talk about crime there needs to be a preface of what that actually means,” Anney spotlighted.

Mathews shared that the scariest experience they had in this city occurred on campus. Recalling last year’s situation with armed individuals prompting a school lockdown, they confessed they thought “that was blown out of proportion too.”

Due to their identity, they felt as though being surrounded by officers made them feel less safe.

“It was really jarring that there were cop cars all over, it felt a little drastic... there should be levels of response for the different situations and more intentionality with addressing crime, always with the safety of civilians being the number one priority,” Mathews said.

In terms of personal fear, Anney described that they had more pressing concerns than fear around crime.

“A personal concern for me is losing my housing or my healthcare. A personal concern is being the target of a hate crime or being cut off from potential employment because of my identity as a trans nonbinary person,” Anney said.

“[Fear tactics] are actually really harmful to a lot of people including the people that think that they are protected by it.”

Approaching the idea of crime has complexity in Seattle and on campus. Students encourage others to not be swayed by media accounts but to conceive their own thoughts based on individual and collective experiences.