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OPINION

# The criminal justice system is broken: Dalsh Veve, Justin Murrell and N.Y.'s lenient punishments

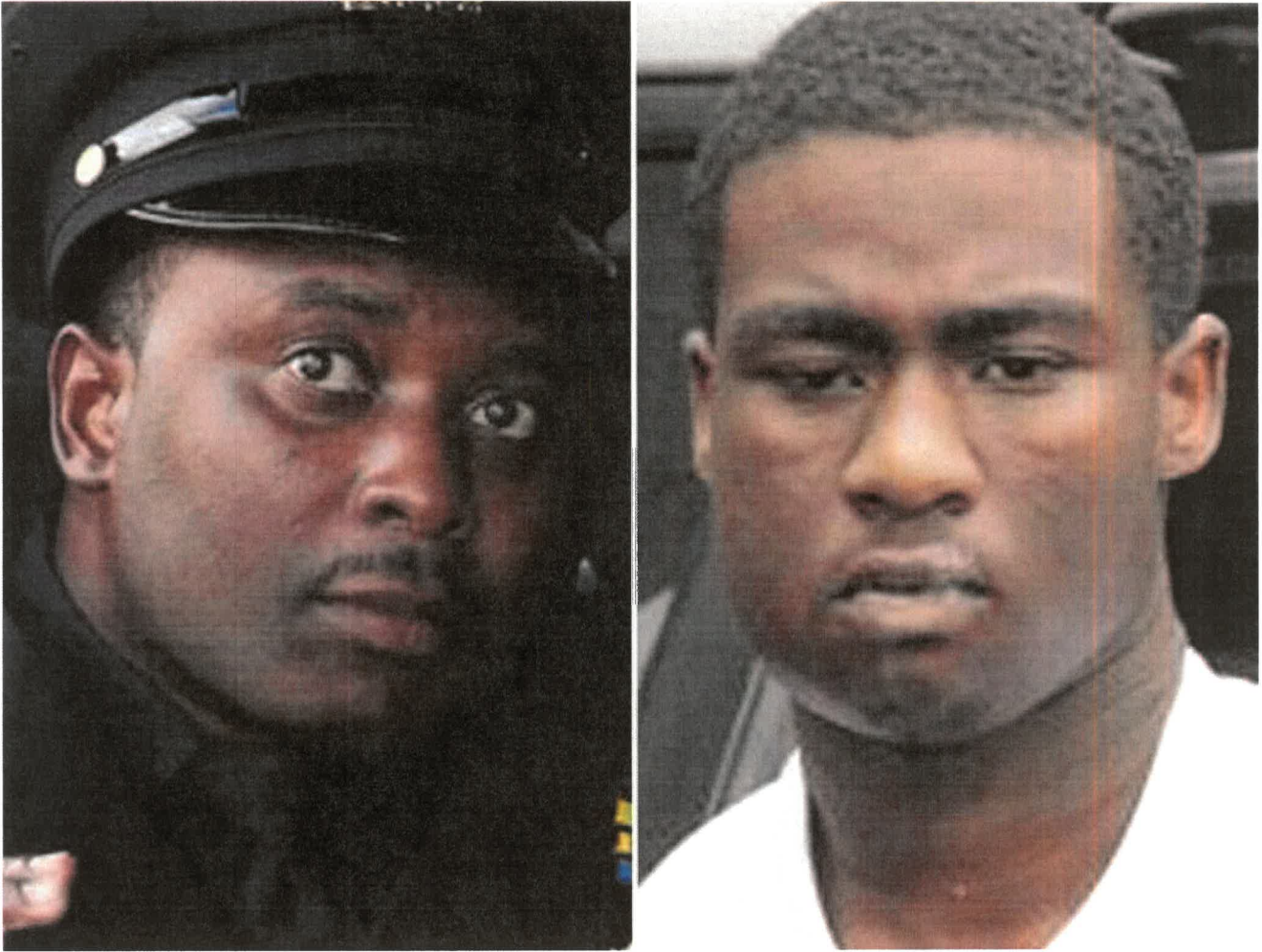
By **ESTHER VEVE**

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS | APR 02, 2022



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NYPD Detective Dalsh Veve (left) and Justin Murrell (New York Daily News)

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My husband Dalsh and I emigrated from Haiti in order to be part of the American dream. Dalsh proudly joined the New York Police Department to make a difference in a city that welcomed us with open arms. I became a nurse. Life was perfect.

Saturday, June 3, 2017, began just like any other day for myself and Dalsh, but it was that day that our lives would be altered forever. We ate dinner together, and then Dalsh went to work at the 67 Precinct in Brooklyn, where he had served for nearly nine years. I got our 2-year-old daughter, Darshee, ready for bed and we both fell asleep. It was just about midnight when I awoke to loud knocks at our home's front door. It was one of

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Dalsh's fellow officers who, with tears in his eyes, told me he needed to rush me to the hospital because Dalsh had been hurt.

The ride to the hospital, the sirens of the police car, and the walk into the emergency room are all a blur in my mind — but what I can still see perfectly is Dalsh lying paralyzed in a bed with a respirator helping him breathe. He [had stopped Justin Murrell](#), who [was driving a stolen vehicle](#), after there had been reports of gunfire in that area. Murrell had his mind made up that he didn't want to be arrested. Instead, he hit the gas pedal and sped away, even though Dalsh was hooked to the side of the stolen car. My husband was dragged for blocks.

Murrell served just 14 months in prison beyond time served for what he did to my husband — a sentence that was as pathetic as the current criminal justice system in New York that has prompted me to write this. At the time of his sentencing, [Murrell had 11 prior arrests under his belt](#). He was just 15. Clearly, there were no lessons learned because there were no real consequences to his lawless behavior.

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While Dalsh is confined to a wheelchair and faces enormous cognitive challenges, Murrell has been walking the streets still preying on New Yorkers — continuing his life of crime. In May 2021, while still on parole for dragging Dalsh, Murrell took NYPD officers in Brooklyn on a high-speed chase in another stolen car. It was a miracle no

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and was out again. While out on bail in February 2022, he led Port Authority officers on a chase in a stolen vehicle at Kennedy Airport. Last month, he was arrested again for being in possession of that stolen car after cops linked a vehicle they found to surveillance video.

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As the arrests continued, so did Murrell's releases. After pleading guilty to the May 2021 crimes, he was released to await sentencing. His reward for the February 2022 arrest was also to be released due to New York's bail reform laws, which forbids a judge from setting bail in stolen-car cases, no matter how often you are caught.

This begs the question: How does someone with such a wanton disregard for the safety of every person in our city continue to go free?

There are theories on both sides of the argument about bail reform and other proposed changes to our criminal justice system, but Justin Murrell is not a theory, he is a reality that Dalsh and I have to live it every time he is caught and then released. Another reality is that it would take only minor adjustments to our laws to keep criminals like Murrell in jail when they have proven to the courts they will commit more crimes every time they are released.

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Currently, there are a narrow range of offenses that would allow a judge to set bail or remand a defendant, tying the hands of jurists. Judges need to have more discretion to ensure individuals are held when they are a clear danger to society. The past actions of an individual are a good predictor of future actions. Every other state that has enacted reforms similar to New York has allowed safety concerns to be part of the criteria for bail. My husband Dalsh Veve, every waking day, will always be confined to a wheelchair. For most of that time, Justin Murrell was not confined anywhere. Clearly, the current system is broken.

*Veve is the wife of Dalsh Veve.*

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