

as a traffic infraction. Felonies are crimes that are deemed felony because of the amount of time a person must serve in the penitentiary. Most people, when they think of the word "felony", envision some horrible, vicious or violent crime, but it is not the nature of the act that determines whether it's a felony, it's the amount of time that a person must serve and, generally, that amount of time is one year in the penitentiary. So if there is conduct which is forbidden by law and the punishment attached to it is a year or more in the penitentiary, it's a felony. Now it is possible for a Legislature to call anything a felony that it chooses to, but I'm telling you in general what the term means so that it's clear what it is that I'm talking about here today. When the Constitution was put in its present condition, it was felt by the framers, who were very acquainted with felons and felonies, some of them acquainted very intimately, they felt, and perhaps it was a self-interest type of motivation, but they felt that defendants, in cases of felony, should have a right to appeal to the Supreme Court. There are problems in this society whenever somebody is accused of a crime. For most people, unfortunately, an accusation is the same as guilt. When a person has once been accused, he or she stands guilty as far as the public is concerned. There might be lurid headlines, there might be statements by high ranking politicians that will attach a badge of shame to the individual accused when the individual may have had no involvement whatsoever. A very recent and regrettable example of that occurred in Boston not very long ago. It happened that an upstanding white gentleman of the Christian persuasion decided, for various reasons, that his wife should no longer be allowed to live. So he...she was pregnant with his child, he shot her dead, shot himself, then called the police on his car radio and said that a black man had forced his way into that car, shot him and his wife. The wife died. The child was birthed into the world, lived 17 days and died. The Mayor of Boston immediately went to the scene and stated that he was calling on every detective to help solve this heinous murder. The police began to stop black men wholesale on the streets, search them, subject them to humiliation and some were arrested. They went through communities where people of my complexion live and went door to door searching for this vicious murderer. And do you know why this vicious murderer was being sought? Because a white man said that he and his wife had been shot by a black man and gave no description other than that. Our complexions range from the palest of you in here to the darkest person that you might find on the continent of Africa, which is where people