# Controversy erupts over Just Stop Oil activist’s Dartford Bridge protest and its impact on justice



The recent episode of *You Be The Judge: Crime & Punishment*, aired on Channel 5, has ignited discussions regarding crime, punishment, and the implications of activism, particularly in the context of environmental protests. The programme featured Morgan Trowland, a prominent activist associated with the group Just Stop Oil, who gained notoriety for his dramatic protest method that involved scaling the cables of the Dartford Bridge, subsequently resulting in its closure for a duration of 36 hours.

Trowland, during the programme, expressed his motives for disrupting traffic, stating his belief in the urgent need to challenge governmental policies surrounding oil and gas extraction. His actions, however, had significant downstream effects; traffic was reported to be backed up for miles, leading to countless individuals missing important appointments, such as hospital visits and funerals. Presenter Anne Robinson highlighted the paradox in Trowland's methods, noting that in his quest to combat climate change, he inadvertently contributed to increased pollution during the traffic standstill.

The episode further explored Trowland's backstory, revealing that his fervour for environmental activism was sparked during a trip to India, where he witnessed the harsh realities faced by communities affected by climate change. However, a critical implication was raised; Trowland's journey to India was likely via air travel, which contradicts his mission to save the environment. This hypocrisy was pointed out by Robinson, who suggested that Trowland’s actions demonstrated an inconsistency in his commitment to environmentalism.

Trowland was serving a sentence of 14 months for causing a public nuisance — a punishment some viewers found inadequate given the broader societal impact of his protest. Calls for accountability were made, advocating that he should consider compensating those affected financially. Suggestions included the sale of his property and a ten-year ban from receiving state benefits, raising questions about the costs associated with activism and its consequences on the public.

In addition to Trowland’s case, the episode presented three other sobering court cases, including one involving the murder of a young woman by her ex-boyfriend and an unprovoked fatal attack by a drunken assailant. These cases were examined by panels comprising retired law enforcement professionals and legal experts, alongside public voices affected by crime. The public response highlighted a common sentiment: the sentences imposed on the offenders appeared disproportionately lenient, emphasising a perceived disconnect between crime severity and judicial outcomes. For example, a man convicted of manslaughter spent merely nine months in prison, provoking further discussion around fairness in the judicial system.

The programme aimed to stimulate public dialogue on issues of justice and punishment, particularly in cases involving severe crimes contrasted with those of civil disobedience, such as Trowland's protests. Overall, the episode encapsulated the ongoing tensions surrounding activism, accountability, and the moral complexities intertwined within the justice system.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-essex-65263650> - This report provides information on the Dartford Crossing protest, including the sentencing of the activists and the impact of their actions on traffic and local businesses.
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