Description: Who pays for the institutions of the criminal justice system – police, jails, courts, prisons – and how far does the law reach to make people “pay” for their crimes? We find that the neoliberal logics of personal responsibility and carceral expansion suffuse criminal laws in Illinois, establishing the basis for transferring greater costs of government onto criminal defendants, offering little relief for poverty, and supporting severe additional penalties for unpaid debt.

Mary Pattillo is the Harold Washington Professor of Sociology and African American Studies at Northwestern.