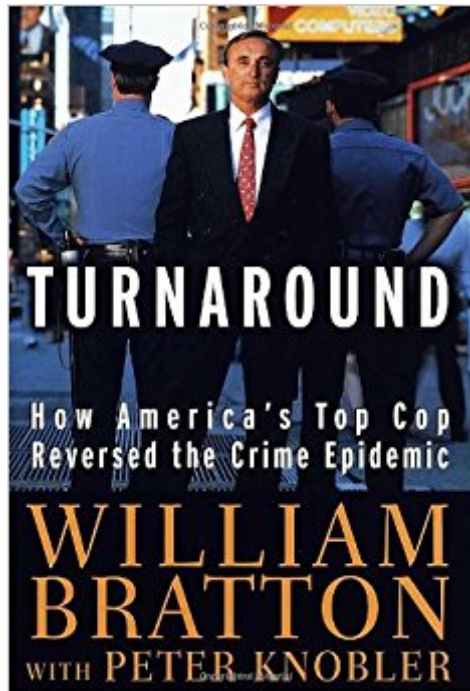




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The Turnaround: How America's Top Cop Reversed The Crime Epidemic



Synopsis

When Bill Bratton was sworn in as New York City's police commissioner in 1994, he made what many considered a bold promise: The NYPD would fight crime in every borough...and win. It seemed foolhardy; even everybody knows you can't win the war on crime. But Bratton delivered. In an extraordinary twenty-seven months, serious crime in New York City went down by 33 percent, the murder rate was cut in half--and Bill Bratton was heralded as the most charismatic and respected law enforcement official in America. In this outspoken account of his news-making career, Bratton reveals how his cutting-edge policing strategies brought about the historic reduction in crime. Bratton's success made national news and landed him on the cover of Time. It also landed him in political hot water. Bratton earned such positive press that before he'd completed his first week on the job, the administration of New York's media-hungry mayor Rudolph Giuliani, threatened to fire him. Bratton gives a vivid, behind-the-scenes look at the sizzle and substance, and he pulls no punches describing the personalities who really run the city. Bratton grew up in a working-class Boston neighborhood, always dreaming of being a cop. As a young officer under Robert di Grazia, Boston's progressive police commissioner, he got a ground-level view of real police reform and also saw what happens when an outspoken, dynamic, reform-minded police commissioner starts to outshine an ambitious mayor. He was soon in the forefront of the community policing movement and a rising star in the profession. Bratton had turned around four major police departments when he accepted the number one police job in America. When Bratton arrived at the NYPD, New York's Finest were almost hiding; they had given up on preventing crime and were trying only to respond to it. Narcotics, Vice, Auto Theft, and the Gun Squads all worked banker's hours while the competition--the bad guys--worked around the clock. Bratton changed that. He brought talent to the top and instilled pride in the force; he listened to the people in the neighborhoods and to the cops on the street. Bratton and his "dream team" created Compstat, a combination of computer statistics analysis and an unwavering demand for accountability. Cops were called on the carpet, and crime began to drop. With Bratton on the job, New York City was turned around. Today, New York's plummeting crime rate and improved quality of life remain a national success story. Bratton is directly responsible, and his strategies are being studied and implemented by police forces across the country and around the world. In Turnaround, Bratton shows how the war on crime can be won once and for all.

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Customer Reviews

When William Bratton was a year and a half old, his mother caught him directing traffic in the street out front of their Boston home. From that moment on, it seemed destined that he would become a cop. In this book, Bratton and his coauthor, Peter Knobler, chronicle Bratton's career, focussing particularly on his efforts to revitalize Boston's and New York City's police departments. Bratton rose quickly through the ranks of the Boston Police Department, where he pioneered community policing and cleaned up the city's subway system. As New York's transit-police chief, he cracked down on minor offenses like turnstile jumping on the theory that the people who commit more serious crimes underground also commit smaller ones. It worked. Finally, Bratton realized his dream of becoming America's top cop: the New York City Police Commissioner. The city's crime rate dropped over 10 percent a year during Bratton's brief tenure as top cop, until Mayor Giuliani's administration forced him out of the job in 1996. In *Turnaround*, Bratton describes the police initiatives that led to these successes. Bratton and his peers used computer mapping to pinpoint crime hot spots and then cleaned up the areas using all the tools of law enforcement. One of the favored tools was "quality of life enforcement"--curtailing minor crimes like panhandling, squeegeeing, and prostitution in order to make the streets seem less inviting to worse criminals. Bratton made police commanders from all districts of the city accountable, requiring them to report on progress and problems in their locales, during frequent departmental meetings. Bratton is now a consultant to police departments across the nation, so, like it or not, his style of law enforcement may soon be coming to a city near you. This is not a page-turner or a masterful work of literature, but Bratton's ideas about curbing crime

should be of interest to both those involved in law enforcement and regular people who are concerned about crime. --Jill Marquis

More than the story of Bratton's two years as New York City police chief and his disagreements with Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, this work details Bratton's early life and tenure at previous policing jobs while providing a crash review of contemporary American policing. For every citizen who has wondered, "What do these cops think they're doing?" this book is the answer. Bratton's book resembles Los Angeles Police Chief William Williams's *Taking Back Our Streets* (LJ 4/1/96), but it covers more. The management reengineering that Bratton undertook in all of his command positions earned him the sobriquet CEO Cop and allowed him to step right into private industry when he resigned. Bratton may or may not be responsible for New York's plummeting crime rate, but he put impetus behind a new era of community and quality-of-life policing as espoused by George Kelling and Catherine M. Coles in *Fixing Broken Windows* (LJ 12/96). This book is certain to be widely read and may be Bratton's lasting contribution. [Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 10/1/97.]?Janice Dunham, John Jay Coll. of Criminal Justice Lib., New Yor.-?Janice Dunham, John Jay Coll. of Criminal Justice Lib., New YorkCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Commissioner Bratton is the definition of a leader. This book is a must read for anyone interested in policing. He made me think about some ideas and strategies that I never thought of before. He exposes the inefficiencies and culture that paralyzed police leaders in the past. He created an environment that praised creativity. Plus its fun to hear the stories of the political nature of police leadership. Stories of Mayor Giuliani are interesting too. Read the book its great.Reduce robberies in Manhattan by cracking down on fare evasion in the subways in Brooklyn? Where are the crimes being committed? Who is committing the crimes? At what time? How old are the offenders? Where do they live in comparison to where they commit crimes? How do they get to where they are committing crimes? in cars? on bicycles? on foot? by train? What are you going to do to prevent crime? What is it about your strategy that will make it work? How are you motivating your officers to actively participate in your plan? How are you going to address your specific problem?

Bratton does a great job illustrating his personal and professional life. My only complaint would be that Bratton was opposed to merging the Metropolitan District Commission Police, when he was chief of that department, with the Massachusetts State Police, which ultimately happened. Bratton then became chief of NYC Transit Police, then Boston Police Commissioner and NYPD

Commissioner. During his first term as NYPD Commissioner, NYC Transit Police and NYC Housing Police were merged with the NYPD. He mentions the merger only in passing, and gives no opinion on whether or not he supported it. It would have been nice to know, given his previous opposition to mergers and his previous term as chief of NYC Transit Police. It is nice to know that he opposes residency requirements for police. Hopefully he writes another book after his current term as NYPD Commissioner ends.

We all enjoy watching a great athlete "step onto the field" and perform brilliantly time and time again. Bill Bratton, in Boston, NYC and now LA, has led very complex sets of activities--policing a multimillion person city--and reduced crime dramatically. I lived in NYC from 1980-1983 and saw a rough place...and rarely saw policemen. During my first night in the city, I sat on the floor of my apartment because gunfire, for a long period, was a block away. When I moved back in 1997, I was shocked to see a patrolman on the beat in lower Manhattan. The city--I was about to find out--had changed dramatically. This book goes into great detail to describe the man behind many leadership and management actions that made a DRAMATIC difference in crime rates and quality of life. What most struck me was his decision to disconnect the linkage between the economic and social nature of the community AND the associated crime rate. That is, he led while telling his officers and citizens that criminal behavior was caused by "bad guys"...and not merely by the economy, the job rate and general social conditions. Once he delinked those factors, he was able to apply organizational & human performance management--along with a solid budget--to go after crimes large and, more importantly, small. Mr. Bratton was able to apply information, intelligence and feedback (COMSTAT), get better resources, add incentives for the police and citizens, provide better/more realistic training and select the right people to serve in the police department. I use Mr. Bratton's approach--and the NYPD--as part of a course/workshop on organizational leadership & performance. The attendees, senior law enforcement officials from outside the USA, are amazed that someone has so successfully "broken the code." Read this book; I did twice in the first week. This guy really gets the process of orchestrating complex performance in tough environments. Who else can you say that about?

Interesting read. I had to reconsider my opinion of Giuliani after reading this book.

Bratton is a controversial figure in law enforcement and after reading this book one understands why. This book is a memoir of his life up to and through his time as Commissioner of NYPD.

Whether you like him or not, his leadership and management style has brought change to the way progressive police leaders fight crime. Bratton shows how the implementation of a few but important principals applied to agencies in ways that fit that organization will improve the effectiveness of those organizations no matter the mission, the table of organization, or location. Bratton's career takes him through several leadership positions in various law enforcement agencies, each very different from the others, yet in every case he improves the crime fighting ability of each agency and the opinion of both the rank and file officers and the public they serve about the agency by insisting on quality investigations, treating citizens with respect and taking care of the little things that often are more important to the citizen than the big crimes that happen two blocks away. The two takeaways from this book are that the police can make a difference in criminal activity if they have the right people in leadership position (leaders not managers), and that politics play a larger roles in law enforcement most of us realize.

Book for class--

I found this book extremely interesting, because it presents a firsthand account of a plan to reduce criminal violence, which was successfully implemented. I think many of Mr. Bratton's ideas and practices could be adapted to other cities in the US and even in other countries. Apart from that, the book tells a good story and allows the reader a peek into the Machiavellian practices of many (or should I say most?) politicians. The description of the interactions between the NYPD top management and City Hall shows how tough the power game is.

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