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APA 7th ed.

Gallimore, M. L. (1998). Turnaround: how america's top cop reversed the crime epidemic. *Boston University Public Interest Law Journal*, 7(2), 365-368.

Chicago 17th ed.

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TURNAROUND: HOW AMERICA'S TOP COP REVERSED THE CRIME EPIDEMIC

BY WILLIAM BRATTON WITH PETER KNOBLER

RANDOM HOUSE 1998

Turnaround: How America's Top Cop Reversed the Crime Epidemic, written by William Bratton with Peter Knobler, chronicles the extensive police career of Bratton and provides a detailed behind-the-scenes account of the operations of a major metropolitan police force. Bratton, a Boston native, is the former police commissioner of both Boston and New York City ("NYC"). He achieved nationwide recognition not only for his success in "turning around" the New York Police Department ("NYPD") during his tenure as Commissioner in 1994-1996, but also for his difficulties with Mayor Rudolph Giuliani that led to Bratton's resignation in 1996.

The book is autobiographical; it is Bratton's life story with most of the book's emphasis on his career. He details the important personal influences on his decision to become a police officer and the important personal value he placed on ultimately becoming a Boston police officer. As a police officer in the 1970s, Bratton quickly realized that his vision and expectations of what policing should be was different from the reality. The reality was that veteran police officers were often involved in corrupt practices, were more concerned with the political implications of policing activities, and were not open to change or new ideas.

Bratton also provides a glimpse into the historical events taking place in Boston in the late 1970s. He gives a detailed account of the racial tension surrounding school busing and the Father's Day riot in 1977 in South Boston. During this period, the new ideas of Police Commissioner Robert di Grazia influenced Bratton. Bratton presents himself as concerned with improving the police force and making the organization more efficient; however, he was also concerned with his own career and was quite determined to move up in the organization. The arrival of the emergency number 911 in the sixties and seventies changed the way policing was done. The friendly neighborhood cop was replaced by the "three R's:" rapid response, random patrols, and reactive investigation. Bratton asserts that the emphasis on response time and clearance rates led to a situation where the police were not preventing crime, but were simply chasing the crooks after the crime occurred.

One of the more interesting sections of the book highlights Bratton's success in implementing some of his new ideas in the Fenway district of Boston. He developed a Neighborhood Responsive Police Plan, a plan focusing on involvement from both police officers and members of the community. Bratton mapped where crime was occurring, changed the system of responding to emergency calls to reflect the priority of the situation, and organized police participation in neighborhood meetings with the citizens. This resulted in the police possessing a greater awareness of the community's concern with quality of life issues to

which the police had not been effectively responding in the past. These quality of life issues included prostitution, graffiti, and noisy parties. Bratton notes that the success of this program was based on inclusion; individual police officers gained a sense of involvement and commitment to the policies of the department.

Bratton quickly became a rising star in the Boston police department. In 1980, at the age of thirty-two, he became the executive superintendent, making him the top uniformed person in the Boston police department. The *Boston Globe* profiled Bratton in 1982 and some of Bratton's comments outlining his desire to become police commissioner were not lauded by his colleagues. Bratton's ambition scared some people in the department and, before long, he was on the political "outs." Although Bratton tells the story from the point of view that the Boston police should have wanted such a young, ambitious person in charge, the reader is left with the impression that perhaps Bratton became too power-hungry.

Bratton showed his political savvy by getting out of the department when it was no longer advantageous to his career and he accepted a job heading the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority ("MBTA") police force in 1983. He explains how he took the unmotivated, unproductive organization and turned the MBTA police into a successful police force. Most of the descriptions detail how the officers needed new equipment, new cars, new uniforms, and new logos. Bratton takes particular pains to describe how these seemingly cosmetic changes drastically improved officer morale, thereby making the officers better and more efficient members of the force. Bratton essentially performed the same miraculous transformation from 1986-89, as chief of Boston's Metropolitan Police, the police department responsible for parks, reservoirs and some beaches, parkways, and highways.

In 1990, Bratton became New York Transit Authority Police Chief. Once again, the police force was unproductive and unmotivated. Bratton sought to make the subway a safe area and addressed some quality of life issues that made the subway a scary place. An effective strategy Bratton shares with the reader is the fare evasion busts. By taking a firm stance on turnstile jumpers and arresting these individuals in a very public way, Bratton not only got rid of many criminals, but also motivated the cops because they felt that they were actually doing something productive. The public also gained more confidence in the transit police. During this time, Bratton recounts how he used the media to help bolster self-confidence within the police force; the media featured Bratton in newspaper articles and this boosted police morale. However, the reader is left questioning how much of the media courting was for "police morale" and how much was for Bratton's own ego.

Bratton did not stay in New York, but returned to Boston in 1993 for his dream job: Boston Police Commissioner. However, his timing was wrong and, with a new mayor and a new administration, his time in Boston was quite short lived. Before the job in Boston even ended, he became a top candidate to become the new police commissioner of the NYC police department under newly elected mayor Rudolph Giuliani in 1994. With Bratton's reputation for cleaning up the subway and Giuliani's campaign promises to clean up the streets of NYC,

Bratton and Giuliani seemed to make a perfect match. However, in the end, the two would only work together for twenty-seven months.

Although Bratton is most famous for his position as the NYC Police Commissioner, Bratton discusses the position in a small portion of the book. Bratton is quite generous in giving credit to the top-ranking members of his administration for many ideas and policies started while he was NYC Police Commissioner. The strategies for improving the NYPD were based on plans for system-wide changes. Corruption had become a big problem; many ineffective police officials were removed from the force. Bratton details how his innovations such as Compstat, a monthly meeting which was, in essence, a public grilling of each precinct commander in an effort to hold the officials accountable for the activities under their command, led to an improved organization. Bratton achieved not only huge decreases in crime in only his first year as Commissioner, but also began to attract media attention.

Bratton highlights the attention he received from the media as the beginning of the difficulties with Giuliani. Bratton describes a situation in which Giuliani and City Officials, obsessed with Giuliani photo opportunities, would not allow the Commissioner's Office to take any attention away from the mayor. Bratton asserts that his team only had the best interests of NYC in mind; Giuliani and his team were so control hungry that they destroyed any successful program for which Giuliani did not receive complete credit and accolades.

Bratton does not tell the story of the power conflicts from a neutral third-party point of view. This is his story and has to be taken as such. It seems a bit unbelievable for Bratton to have suddenly become perplexed or surprised by the political nature of both his office and his relationship with Giuliani. By this point in the book, the reader already learned that Bratton is not politically naive. Bratton writes that he did not mind the media attention but that he was not encouraging it. This is another situation where the reader, after learning about Bratton's extensive courting of the media through the years, may find Bratton's innocent stance a bit self-serving. In the end, the sad reality shows that, although Giuliani and Bratton were seemingly a tremendous success together, the politics and personality clash became more important than the policing.

The book is most interesting when Bratton focuses on actual police strategies used. The implementation of new policies, such as crime maps showing where patterns of crime develop and community policing ideas, appear to be simple and obvious solutions; it is hard to imagine that these ideas were actually considered radical.

A substantial portion of the beginning of the book relays much unnecessary information concerning the early years of Bratton's life. Some of his background is necessary to understand who he is, but this section is rather monotonous and does not seem to give the reader any greater understanding of Bratton. Another criticism of the author is the painstaking detail used to describe all of his friends and team members, leaving even the most studious reader weary from keeping score of the players. Although Bratton attempts to give these individuals the credit they deserve, it sometimes creates an account that is quite hard to follow. One must also keep in mind the autobiographical nature of the book. Bratton

possesses the expertise and knowledge to produce a treatise on policing, but in this book he chose to give his own personal story with the emphasis on his good friends and other members of his inner circle.

Turnaround: How America's Top Cop Reversed the Crime Epidemic is interesting and replete with interesting recollections from Bratton but drags in many sections. Also, it is somewhat of a disappointment for anyone looking for anything more than a personal narrative. Bratton shares many of his ideas and police success stories with the reader. However, this is not a critical look at his ideas and strategies; Bratton does not recount any incident where his ideas did not work. Instead of a balanced, analytical look at what works and what does not work in police management, the book only offers Bratton's successful strategies. In the end, the book is a personal story providing Bratton with a forum to clap himself and his friends on the back.

Michelle L. Gallimore