



CENTER FOR CIVIC INNOVATION  
AT THE MANHATTAN INSTITUTE

## **This Works: Crime Prevention and the Future of Broken Windows Policing**

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**WILLIAM BRATTON:** Thank you all for coming. This is an exciting evening for me in that for the first time I have the opportunity to be with both George Kelling and James Q. Wilson at the same time, and they are two individuals whose writings on crime and policing tactics have profoundly influenced my career, and as a result profoundly influenced the lives of millions of others who are significantly safer today thanks to their research.

In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that there are many people who are alive today who would not be if not for the writings of these two scholars, as well as the efforts of the thousands of police officers who have taken to practicing much of what they preach.

This conference is a significant event and I would like to thank the Manhattan Institute and the Milken Institute for making it possible.

The safest large city in America. That expression, coupled with the name Los Angeles, doesn't make sense to a lot of people. It just doesn't add up. Fortunately, I work for Mayor Jim Hahn, who

shares my vision and optimism, and believes that Los Angeles can become the safest large city in America. This is one of the reasons that I wanted to come to Los Angeles and return to policing, and so, about a year ago, for the first time in my professional police career, I applied for a job—as Los Angeles' Chief of Police.

I have never sought a position in all the years that I have spent in the field of criminal justice. I have always had the good fortune to be sought after, rather than having to go looking for great opportunities. And so it was somewhat humbling and something of a career risk competing for a position that I had no certainty that I would be offered.

In fact, when I entered the competition to become Los Angeles Police Chief (and it was very much like a competition) the then president of the police commission, who has since then become not only a terrific professional colleague but also a close personal friend, Rick Caruso, advised me through intermediaries not to even apply. In short, it was an intimidating process at the outset. But I

very much wanted to become the next police chief of this great city.

First of all, after the events of 9/11, I felt that I had more that I could contribute to public service, but also, having worked as part of the federal monitoring team for almost a year in Los Angeles, I felt that I had a true appreciation for the potential of this great city.

Eventually, I had the opportunity to meet Mayor Hahn and, similar to an earlier conversation I had had nine years before with another mayor—or rather another candidate, Rudolph Giuliani—Mayor Hahn had a strange belief that he could transform crime in Los Angeles. Mayor Hahn and I realized that we had the same kind of shared energy, the same shared belief that we could have a real impact on crime, on the quality of life, and on social disorder that Mayor Giuliani and I shared in New York.

*Of course, in 1990 nobody would have ever believed that New York City could become what it is today, arguably the safest large city in this country.*

Of course, in 1990 nobody would have ever believed that New York City could become what it is today, arguably the safest large city in this country. This year, crime in New York City is down again—by almost 6 percent. Unfortunately, homicides in New York are on the rise, and they're now neck and neck with Chicago as the murder capital of the United States. Regardless, for thirteen straight years crime has gone down in New York and that is a tremendous accomplishment.

What shaped Mayor Giuliani's views on crime and policing was his exposure to concepts from the two men that I have already mentioned, James Wilson and George Kelling. These two men created a true American policing innovation, an innovation that I, as chief of police, have always used as a cornerstone for all of the activities that my officers and I engage in. That innovation is "broken windows policing", a very successful, but at the same time controversial, philosophy.

And I say controversial because there are still those who don't believe that it is an essential com-

ponent of making any city a safer city, and certainly not in making New York or Los Angeles the safest large cities in America. But I believe in broken windows policing as a practitioner who has been in this field for over thirty years, and as someone who practiced what they preached so eloquently about five years before they even wrote about it in the late 1970s.

As a young police sergeant in Boston, Massachusetts, I was enlisted in that city's first neighborhood policing initiative, the forerunner of what came to be popularly known as "community policing" in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In Boston in the 1970s we were developing a program called neighborhood policing, based on the unheard-of idea that police should go into neighborhoods and listen to the concerns of the residents, because up until that time police didn't invite local feedback. We thought we knew what was right for a neighborhood and we focused our energy on serious crimes: rapes, robberies, and violent assaults. Indeed, the reporting of crime, the national reporting of crime, still focuses on those serious crimes. The Universal Crime Report and the Department of Justice victimization surveys still ignore quality of life crimes.

As a young sergeant, I began to hold police and community meetings in Boston. Four nights a week we would hand out leaflets in local neighborhoods, knock on doors, and encourage people to come to police meetings. "We're the police", we said. "We want to hear from you." At the time, I was armed to the teeth with various crime statistics. I knew every murder, every robbery, and every rape. We thought that we knew that community inside out.

And what did we hear from the community? We heard complaints about prostitutes, abandoned cars, and broken windows. That was a wake-up call for me at a very early stage of my career, the formative stage of my career as a young sergeant. I started to focus on what concerned the community, what caused them fear, and why it caused fear.

These seemingly minor crimes unnerved them because they experienced them every day. They knew before we did, before the experts did, that

the so-called victimless crimes have a victim-and the victim was the entire neighborhood. Ultimately, the victim was the city, and crime was a cancer that was destroying America's cities, but we didn't really recognize that during the 1970s. We really did not recognize it in an institutional way until Kelling and Wilson wrote their "Broken Windows" article in 1982, where they put into a strong, powerful voice a concept that resonated not only with people who lived in these fear-ridden neighborhoods, but resonated with the police that patrolled them.

We had a hard time establishing community policing in the American police profession in the late 80's and early 90's, but we finally managed to institutionalize it. We succeeded because rank and file police understood that in addition to serious violent crimes, quality of life crimes were tearing apart the civic fabric of the neighborhoods they were policing. Quality of life crimes destroy the citizens' trust and confidence in government's ability to provide its first obligation, which is public safety.

This is not to say that broken windows policing is a magic solution to crime. It is more like a powerful prescription that a doctor will use to cure a sick patient. It is an essential component, in many instances the essential component, but in and of itself it is not going to solve any city's crime problem. But it can be used in a variety of ways. It is even now, 20 years later, an incredibly misunderstood paradigm and crime control tactic, because many people still don't understand that it can be applied in many different ways.

We first showed the flexibility of broken windows policing in New York when George Kelling recruited me there in 1990 when he was doing consulting work with the Transit Authority. He encouraged me to come to New York and apply broken windows policing to subway crime with the idea that, far-fetched as it seemed in 1990, if it succeeded in the subways, someone would have enough faith in us to try it on the streets of New York.

We were successful. The reduction in subway crime and quality of life crimes attracted the attention of the then-candidate Rudy Giuliani, and George and I traveled to New York in 1993 and

spent a Friday afternoon with Rudy and some of his aides. The question he asked us was the central one Kelling had already anticipated: "Can you take what worked in the subways and make it work on the streets of New York?" We said we could. We continue to have confidence in broken windows policing, and we'll implement it again here in Los Angeles.

It will be a more difficult transition in Los Angeles than in New York, however, because the essential element that we had working in our favor in New York, and this is referenced in a very well-written article in *Governing* magazine on our efforts here, is that there are many people in Los Angeles who do not believe in the effectiveness of broken windows policing.

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There are many people who do not believe that police count, that police can make a difference, and who believe that crime is most significantly impacted by demographics, economic circumstances, or racism. I understand that crime is influenced by all those factors, but I don't believe it's caused by any of them. I strongly believe that crime is caused by individual behavior, and since all behavior is learned, the police can do something about controlling criminal behavior, correcting that behavior, by imparting a new ethic of order to our communities—regardless of their economic, racial, or ethnic make-up. The challenge for police is to do this consistently, compassionately, and particularly in a democratic society such as ours, constitutionally.

What we showed in New York, and what we will show in Los Angeles, is that in two very different cities with two extraordinarily different police departments, both in terms of size as well as tactics, traditions, histories, and styles of policing, that the police can make an enormous difference.

We are making a difference today. This year in this city, homicides are down by over 25 percent. Overall crime is down by about 5 percent. And that's

with a police force that is one-fourth the size of what I commanded in New York.

The main difficulty that we are facing here is that, unlike New York, where we had the ability by virtue of the sheer size of the department to impact the entire city at the same time, in Los Angeles the police are constantly running from fire to fire. We clamp down on one crime hotspot and then are forced to redirect our limited resources to another location. Our challenge here is very different, but we are approaching it in much the same way, with the same underpinning, that we need to focus as much attention on the signs of crime, on quality of life issues, at the same time that we focus on serious crimes. We are doing that through a variety of efforts and initiatives, Compstat for one—a program that I am sure you are all very familiar with.

*While violent crimes are much smaller in number than quality of life offenses, they greatly contribute to a sense of lawlessness because those crimes are the most reported in the newspapers and FBI crime statistics.*

But much depends on using broken windows policing or a focus on quality of life crimes to effectively influence how a city feels about itself and thereby influence actual crime. That was our great discovery on the transit system project that I worked on with George, and then again when I went into New York in 1994 and worked with one of the all-time great policemen, Jack Maple, the late, great New York City Deputy Police Commissioner, who truly understood how you could use the enforcement of quality of life crimes to enhance your ability to deal with serious crimes. While violent crimes are much smaller in number than quality of life offenses, they greatly contribute to a sense of lawlessness because those crimes are the most reported in the newspapers and FBI crime statistics. We discovered that we could impact more serious crimes through quality of life policing—through a weeding of the garden, as it were.

Let me use the example of the New York City subway system that Malcolm Gladwell used in his New Yorker magazine article "Tipping Point," an

article that ultimately became the basis for his *Tipping Point* book, an extraordinary book that in many respects supports the broken windows theories of Kelling and Wilson.

Gladwell endorses the idea that you can, as fast as an epidemic spreads, just as quickly diminish the impact of that spread and in fact tip it the other way. What we did in the New York City subway system, with Kelling's guidance and a lot of great thinking by many terrific police officers, was to deal with the issue of fare evasion, an issue that nobody really wanted to do much about.

Back then, this was a \$1.15 theft of service from the transit system. At the time, three and a half million people rode the New York subway system every day. However, those numbers had been declining dramatically because of a combination of fear of the system—at the time there was very little maintenance of the system, and every day there were fires on the tracks and train derailments—and every day they would encounter the subway version of the squeegee pest, or the petty criminal who vandalized the turnstiles, so that in order to get into the subway you had to go through the adjacent gate, and a beggar or petty criminal would be standing there with his hand out, intimidating you to give him money in much the same way that his counterpart at street level with a squeegee was intimidating you when you were stopped at a red light.

The system at the time was having a hard time dealing with the problem of fare evasion. Fare evasion, in the form of scruffy characters who would go under turnstiles, or over turnstiles, because it seemed that nobody was maintaining them or even cared about them, increased to 250,000 people a day and was growing worse all the time.

How did we know that? The subway system documented it. They would literally have people go out once a month, stand at every turnstile, and count the fare evaders. We had a very accurate understanding of the problem, but the subway police had a mentality that they didn't want to address minor crimes like a \$1.15 fare theft.

Subway police management didn't want to deal with it because to make an arrest in New York City

at that time would take approximately twelve to twenty-four hours of police administrative time—an entire day, in other words, to process a \$1.15 theft of service. This meant losing an officer from the subway system for significant periods of time, and since they only had about 700 officers on the system at any given time, if they were making a lot of arrests there would be nobody left to police the rest of the system.

We developed a number of strategies to increase the number of arrests while still reducing arrest-processing time. We designed "bust busses", so that instead of taking prisoners twenty miles down to the central booking facility, we brought an arrest bus right to the scene. We would arrest people below ground, get them up into the bus and process them there. Those that didn't have outstanding warrants could be quickly processed and then released. Those that had warrants would be held.

And what did we find? Thanks to a very cost-effective arrest procedure, the system actually raised police morale. In a nutshell, cops like making arrests. That's what they do. But they don't want to make arrests that don't have any impact. They don't want to make arrests that keep them chained to a prisoner for twenty-four hours. They want to be part of something that they feel is going to have a demonstrable impact.

Once our program was underway, officers discovered that one out of every seven people we were arresting for fare evasion was wanted on a warrant. Often times, these warrants would be for very serious crimes: murders, rapes, and so on. One out of every twenty-one fare-evaders, at least initially, was carrying some type of weapon—ranging from a straightedge razor on up to Uzi submachine guns. Eventually this process excited police because they had a good chance of catching significant offenders without exorbitant effort.

And, perhaps most importantly, crime began to go down. Fare evasion began to go down. Why? We were using the police in a very public, visible way to control behavior. We were going after minor types of crime, and yet we were also having a significant impact on more serious crimes. If you're

a felon coming into the system to commit a robbery, you're not going to pay \$1.15 to ride the subway. Criminals are very cost-efficient that way; if you are intent on stealing through theft or violence, you won't contribute to the MTA. Given that practical reality, cracking down on fare evasion provided a significant disincentive for other crimes as well.

Now, thirteen years later, crime in the subway system is down almost 90 percent from what it was in 1990. The MTA no longer counts fare evaders. There are so few now that it is not economically sensible to put out counters every month to keep track of them, and the MTA system now has five and one-half million riders.

It is a system also that has approximately one half the police that we had back in 1990. Why? Because there's not all that much for them to do now. We went after the broken windows, the so-called signs of crime, in a way that contributed to the reduction of serious crime.

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Broken windows works. Not by itself, but as part of a master set of strategies. No two cities in this country, no two cities in the world are alike. This is not cookie-cutter approach. What we're designing in Los Angeles is in many respects very different than the strategies we employed in New York, and as you're going to hear from the panelists, very different in many respects from what worked in Boston.

The ailments that afflict cities seem to have a certain commonality, but when you look at it quite closely, it's like the illnesses that affect any individual. While there might be certain common elements to disease, how it impacts your particular body might be very different from how that same disease would impact the person sitting beside you. Similarly, in the policing of cities you need to be good at making broad diagnoses, but broken windows policing is an essential treatment that has to be molded to new circumstances and different environments.

When it comes to broken windows policing, I'm a practitioner of a philosophy that is no longer a philosophy. It is a reality. But it is a reality that still needs to be better understood, and I hope that in the next hour or so that you'll hear from the people who truly understand it how it works and how it can be adapted.

**JAMES Q. WILSON:** Chief Bratton said that crime in New York City has declined for thirteen straight years. He also went on to praise quite generously George and my contribution to that development by citing the "Broken Windows" article in *Atlantic Monthly* magazine.

*The police, however, need help. They cannot do this alone. They need help from other civic agencies.*

But I want to clarify at the outset that crime went down in New York City for many reasons, of which patrolling to deal with quality of life crimes was only one. The Compstat program, the effort to hold precinct commanders—or in Los Angeles, district commanders—accountable for individual crimes in their area on penalty of not being promoted if you failed to do so, was also a very powerful crime reduction tool, as was having more police officers to patrol the city—and, I would add, Los Angeles desperately needs more police officers. I could also note the street crime unit that the Chief Bratton used to take guns off the street in order to reduce the temptation people face to use guns to commit crimes. Each of these programs, along with quality of life policing, helped bring about a tremendous reduction in crime.

What all these factors had in common, and this commonality didn't sit comfortably with many criminologists in the country, was that they were based on the common perception that the police could make a real difference. George and I had been working in this area for many decades, and when we began it was clear that hardly anyone thought that the police or even the prisons would make a difference in crime rates. The conventional wisdom of the day was that you couldn't reduce crime without addressing its "root causes". People spoke about root causes

as if they knew what they were, but when pressed it turned out they weren't quite sure. It might mean changing the class structure of society, altering our culture, or eliminating the desire to join gangs—changes that, if they could be done at all, could be done only over several generations.

The view that George and I have had, and continue to share, is that the criminal justice system can make a significant difference. While society is waiting for root causes to change, and while we are building government programs to help them change, we can make our communities safer.

The police, however, need help. They cannot do this alone. They need help from other civic agencies. They need help to maintain streets, to fix stop signs. They need help from the building inspection department. They need help from the courts. They need help from all government agencies whose behavior, while they often don't see it this way, profoundly affects the quality of life in neighborhoods.

And one of the things that broken windows policing means is that the police are responsive to complaints from neighborhoods, which at first glance do not seem to be police business at all. This traffic light is out. There is garbage in the street. The building across the street hasn't been inspected and it is on the verge of collapse. Truly, broken windows policing is more than policing. We should really talk about broken windows government.

That is to say, making city government focus on local neighborhoods. There has to be a coordinated effort to bring efficiency and accountability together at the local level where citizens need it the most. And here I mean the supervisors who run schools, building maintenance programs, street maintenance, and the like. All of these agencies need to act together to identify what is important to individual neighborhoods.

Let me tell you a little bit about what broken windows policing is not. It is, first of all, not a single tactic. The tactic depends on the conditions in the city. In some cases it means getting rid of graffiti. In other places it means dealing with prostitutes hanging out on street corners or rowdy teenage gangs. In other cases it means tearing down or fix-

ing up abandoned buildings or eliminating seedy motels that have become centers for the drug trade.

Secondly, broken windows policing is not zero tolerance, though that phrase has been hung on it, as if the police could eliminate crime by having no tolerance for any infraction however small. Even in New York City with 38,000 officers on patrol you cannot practice zero tolerance policing. What you can do is use the police to address those aspects of seemingly minor crimes that if left unattended will cause the conditions of public order in neighborhoods to deteriorate.

This doesn't mean harassing everyone. Indeed it doesn't really mean harassing anyone. It means dealing with those small signs of disorder that you believe, if left unattended, will create a problem.

And, finally, broken windows policing is not indifferently to community concerns. Indeed it is part of community-oriented policing. If you talk to people in crime-ridden neighborhoods in any serious way, they all say the same thing. They want their neighborhood repaired. And there is a broad agreement as to what that repair entails.

Broken windows policing means that you are responding, I think, to what people say are their major concerns. Broken windows policing began with an experiment done in Newark, New Jersey, orchestrated by the Police Foundation when George Kelling was its research director. The Foundation thought it would be an interesting idea to see if foot patrols would make a difference in neighborhood crime. This experiment was carried out over the objections of most police officers, which thought that foot patrol by officers would have no effect on the crime rate.

Consequently, foot patrol was instituted on an experimental basis in certain selected neighborhoods, and the behavior of people and offenders in those neighborhoods was compared with similar neighborhoods where foot patrol was not instituted.

What did we find? We found that foot patrols did not have much of an effect on crime rates, just as the police chiefs had told us. But what it did have an effect on was public confidence. What

it did have an effect on was how willing people were to use the street, to feel comfortable in the street, and to feel safe in the street. Public satisfaction with the condition of their lives went up, even though the crime rate did not change. This may seem strange, but it is not.

The average person on a typical day is not the victim of a crime. The average person walking to the supermarket or going to the bus stop or passing rowdy teenagers on the street corner is, however, the subject of potential disorder or intimidation. Eliminate the disorder and the intimidation and more decent people use the streets.

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George and I, in our article on broken windows, offered the speculation that if public order improved, crime rates might go down. Now there's a lively debate among social scientists as to whether the crime rates have gone down as a result of this, and like all arguments of this sort it is difficult, if not impossible, to make an absolutely non-controversial argument that we were right, but George will offer you some reasons for thinking that we could very well be right.

But even if we were wrong, even if the crime rate does not decline when you address minor offenses, public happiness undoubtedly goes up, and the police, like all civic agencies, have a responsibility to attend to public happiness.

We wanted to revive the traditional police officer's concern for public order. In the 19th and early parts of the 20th century, public order was the focus of police activity. They were the watchmen on the street corners. They would shout when they saw a fire. They would set up a hullabaloo when they saw a violent offense. They were people there to convey to the community and to those who would disturb the community that the community's preferences came first.

The police, beginning in the middle of the 20th century, became exclusively crime fighters, and by crime fighters I mean they sat in patrol cars, waited

for a radio call, and then went out and tried to find, often unsuccessfully, perpetrators of a major burglary, robbery, rape or homicide. Restoring order maintenance restores the police to their older and more traditional function without at all abandoning their commitment to becoming serious crime fighters. Will this reduce crime? We think so. And in his remarks I hope George Kelling will tell you why we think so.

**GEORGE KELLING:** I have the unenviable task of speaking after Chief Bratton—the police chief who will go down in history as the police chief who bridged the 20th and 21st centuries—and James Q. Wilson, a political scientist who is not just a most eminent political scientist, but is probably the most eminent social thinker in the United States at the current time. I will then be followed by Gene Rivers, who is one of the most eloquent preachers and social activists in America. Clearly, I am the odd man out in a room full of eloquent leaders.

*The problem in the subway was not homelessness. The problem in the subway was lawlessness, and it didn't take much to end that culture once you figured out what the problem was.*

Even so, I want to return to the New York subway program Chief Bratton mentioned earlier because I think it is relevant, very relevant to some of the things that are happening in Los Angeles.

How many of you rode the subway in New York City in the 1980s? That was an experience. It was like something out of Dante's *Inferno*. But if you read the *New York Times* in the 1980s, you would have believed that crime in the subways was caused by homelessness. If you talked to the police, the problem was homelessness. If you talked to the Transportation Authority, the problem was homelessness.

And yet, as Chief Bratton recounts, if you went into the subway and studied the crime there, the idea that homelessness was driving it was ludicrous. Of course there were some homeless people down there, but really there was just a culture of lawlessness. Anything went in the subways. As a result,

criminals could intimidate people, could block the subway turnstiles, and could jump over the turnstiles with impunity. It was a social environment that was absolutely out of control.

Solving this problem from a police point of view was not all that complicated. All you had to do was have some leadership, and all you had to do was do some policing along the lines that Jim talked about. You simply had to take seriously the idea that minor offenses matter. If you ride in the New York subways now, it's a completely different culture. It has a different feel to it. It is a different place than it was in the 1980s.

A critical part of the equation, and I think Jim hinted about this in his remarks on Compstat and some of the other contributions that Chief Bratton has made, is that before you try to fix a social problem, you had better understand exactly which problem you are facing.

The problem in the subway was not homelessness. The problem in the subway was lawlessness, and it didn't take much to end that culture once you figured out what the problem was. I should add an addendum to what Chief Bratton said. It took us fifteen months to sell that idea, defend that idea, and to get leadership who would pursue that idea, but once Chief Bratton took over, the culture was changed within a matter of months. The idea that you needed years and years and years to change a culture or even a police culture, has been shown to be a lie.

Now the reason why I emphasize this is because during one of my early trips to Los Angeles last November, Chief Bratton asked me if I'd give him a hand with a few problems here in Los Angeles, and he gave me a few easy ones. I started out with violence in MacArthur Park—Skid Row. Now, as everyone knows, Skid Row makes the New York City subways seem like a picnic by comparison.

When I began to research Skid Row, I read many articles in the *Los Angeles Times* claiming that crime in Skid Row is driven by homelessness. That is the general cultural perception, that there is a homeless problem there. That is simply untrue. There's a culture of lawlessness there, and if you would just go



and stand on a corner, or walk around the neighborhood, you will see that there is no social order in that community. The problem is not homelessness. To be sure there are some homeless people there, but that's not the problem. The problem is a culture has developed there that tolerates anything and everything.

Now we have to figure out what to do. In many respects the Los Angeles Police Department knows what to do. However, the police are also sure that they will be sued for their efforts. We will have to constantly justify what we're doing. But the evidence is there that you can restore order, and restoring order is not harassment. It is not criminalizing the poor. In reality, it's the poor who suffer the most from social disorder and crime and the problems of Skid Row.

When Jim first asked me if I wanted to co-author the article in *Atlantic Monthly* after the Newark foot patrol study was published, he was quick to point out to me that I would be in for some real criticism in my profession. And he also said that I was going to be called a racist, and worse. And all of that did in fact happen. But we have an obligation to publish the truth because there is a desperate need for order in the poorest neighborhoods and communities, especially in minority communities. They can't protect their own property, they can't let their children play in the streets, and as a result a culture of terror develops that diminishes those communities to the point where many of them are virtually unlivable.

But no sooner had the article come out than the police readily accepted the idea. At first it was "yes, you're right, but we have too many calls for service, we have too much serious crime that we have to concentrate on", etc. But the police knew how devastating social disorder is in poor neighborhoods and once we put quality of life in policing into an idiom that police officers could understand there was this real "Eureka!" moment among the rank and file officers. This feeling mushroomed when one day it was discovered that one in ten fare beaters either was carrying an illegal weapon or was wanted on a warrant for a serious crime.

Not all fare beaters are serious criminals, but a lot of serious criminals are fare beaters.

In other words, serious criminals are busy doing a lot of bad stuff, and they're busy at it quite often, and because they have no respect for any laws at all they open themselves up to the kind of interventions that Jim has talked about and that Chief Bratton has implemented.

The criticism against broken windows policing goes something like this. Jim and I are order fanatics. We have a housekeeper's mentality, a place for everything and everything in its place, and what we want to do is to impose White Anglo Saxon Protestant values on minority communities, and that in fact we are cultural imperialists who are systematically trying to force our views of order and culture onto poor people and minorities.

*The problem is a culture has developed there that tolerates anything and everything.*

Well that's an interesting argument, and it's especially interesting when I talk about broken windows policing in African American communities. Does anyone seriously think that any parent, regardless of race or culture, wants their daughters propositioned for sex on the way to school? Is that a cultural tradition that we want to preserve and pass down to future generations? If you think about it, the idea that somehow minorities and poor people revel in conditions that encourage social disorder and crime is simply an insult to the poor. It's an insult to minorities that assumes that they somehow enjoy living in broken neighborhoods.

As a matter of fact, research by Professor Wes Skogan at Northwestern University demonstrated that if you go across races, across cultures, you discover that people intuitively know what social disorder is. They want something done about it, and they want something done about it very badly.

When we first started meeting with focus groups in the subway we would get, for example, different cultural groups together, including African American women, and ask them what they thought of our proposals. Surprisingly, they were

disappointed in our proposals because they didn't think that we were going far enough. They lived in constant fear and were the victims of repeated insults and aggressive begging, so much so that they really wanted much more in the way of order policing. Our interaction with the community convinced us that the idea that poor people and minorities tolerate disorder, prostitution, and crime is the brainchild of academics who are out of touch with the communities whom they claim to represent.

Another area that I would like to draw attention to, whether we are talking about the subways or Skid Row, is the issue of problem analysis. If you start to do good problem analysis and identify accurately the problems you face, it will soon become apparent to you that police can't solve the problems alone. They're important, they're essential, but they have to develop partnership strategies with other city agencies, with faith-based organizations, and with other community organizations devoted to positive social change.

*How are you going to get the community to retake ownership of that park?*

If you want to deal systematically with MacArthur Park, for example, you're going to have to think about who owns that park. How are you going to get the community to retake ownership of that park? How are you going to protect and maintain community ownership over time? I know that Chief Bratton and the Los Angeles Police Department can go in and get control over that park very quickly simply by assigning enough police to the area. But they can't maintain that level of policing indefinitely and four months from now they would probably have to do it again—and again after that.

Police need to realize very quickly that you can't sustain that level of policing without appropriate ownership by the community. This is true, first of all, because real social order is only sustainable when the community reclaims parks and streets for itself.

By the way, when Chief Bratton took over the subway police in New York, there were close to 4,000 assigned subway police and it was an environment entirely under control. Right now it re-

mains an environment entirely under control with only 1,600 police officers—less than 50% of peak levels. In other words, if you make the commitment, if you restore order, if you keep order, you need far less police eventually, but you can't do it on the cheap, at least at first.

Jim's statement that Los Angeles is a notoriously under-policed city is entirely true, but I don't think many people really appreciate how true it is. Chicago is the nation's third largest city. Chicago has between 13 and 14,000 police officers. Los Angeles is the nation's second largest city and it only has 9,000 police officers, and as a result it is constantly forced to shift resources around the city to respond to spikes in neighborhood criminal activity. Over the long term, this is not a successful strategy for crime reduction.

The final point that I would like to make is that there is a lot more research that needs to be done on quality of life policing. For instance, a criminologist in England checked to see what kind of people park illegally in handicapped parking places. Not surprisingly, they have terrible driving records.

In Newark, the city has decided that it is tired of bicyclists running over and intimidating pedestrians. The first day they enforced the traffic laws regarding bicycle riding the police arrested three people who were carrying high-powered guns.

In short, we need to capitalize on the discovery by Chief Bratton, Jack Maple, and others that certain quality of life crimes are also indicators for more serious offenses. Broken windows, as I initially framed it, was focused around the idea of restoring community order, i.e. ultimately empowering the community to control itself. It turned out as we put this idea together that it also fit very well with a well-known axiom of criminology. Five percent of offenders commit over 50 percent of serious offenses. A small number of people create an enormous amount of havoc. But what researchers are discovering more and more is that habitual offenders are also committing a lot of minor offenses along the way.

Jim did a study in the 1970s with Barbara Boland looking at the relationship between aggressive traf-

fic enforcement and levels of crime. Now a lot more work needs to be done, but they found that people who drive badly on the road are the same people who park illegally in handicapped parking spaces, who evade fares on the subway, and who are rude to you when you pass them in the street. These people create all kinds of social havoc, from the minor to the significant. The good news is that they're a small number and we can do something about them.

Now that realization is shaping how we've been thinking about violence in Skid Row. We know that there is a relatively small number of very serious criminals out there, everyone knows who they are, but the police and the community have not been cooperating for a long enough period of time to identify these people and focus our efforts on getting them out of the community. I think that that is changing now, and we are dedicated to making a difference.

**EUGENE RIVERS:** Jim made a very important point during his articulation of broken windows policing when he said that there is no cookie cutter approach to quality of life policing and that there are a number of significant factors that have to be in play for it to effectively reduce crime in inner city neighborhoods.

Chief Bratton and I have been working together since the early 1990s. I met Chief Bratton when he was the police commissioner in Boston, and Boston, as many of you know, was a racially polarized city as a result of busing during the mid-1970s and then the crack epidemic during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

During the crack epidemic in the late 1980s a whole series of new racial tensions emerged that were driven by very, very aggressive policing tactics on the part of Chief Bratton's predecessor. When Chief Bratton took over leadership of the Boston Police Department during the early 1990s, a new set of strategic conversations evolved because it had become clear that the use of force alone was necessary but insufficient to effectively reduce crime.

Aggressive policing as an isolated tactic alienated the communities it was supposed to protect. It

promoted racial divisions, but did not necessarily reduce crime, and it was in this context that Chief Bratton recognized the importance of community policing and building strategic partnerships with the community.

As a direct result of the foundations that Chief Bratton laid through strategic partnerships between the law enforcement community and the institutions of civil society there was, over the early 1990s, a 75% drop in violent crime in the city of Boston, especially in youth and gang-related violence.

This is a very significant fact, especially in light of the developments in Cincinnati, Ohio. The unfortunate death of Nathaniel Jones and the political theatrics which followed subsequently suggests that the kinds of discussion that we're having here this evening are absolutely essential to promoting understanding between local communities and police.

*Aggressive policing as an isolated tactic alienated the communities it was supposed to protect.*

This is no less true in the context of Los Angeles, which, as you know, has a violent crime epidemic of its own, but has also exported a culture of violence to the rest of the country through Los Angeles based gangs. This means that if we are to effectively address violent crime in the U.S., we must deal with the challenge presented in Los Angeles and particularly gang violence.

There are a couple of things that I think are very interesting in light of the larger issues I just mentioned, and I would call this "broken windows plus", and here I mean engaging the community to address in an honest way the nature of the problem it faces.

When George mentioned the academic critique of broken windows policing, I was reminded of my mother. She didn't know it, but my mother, a black Pentecostal in North Philadelphia, was a broken windows theorist because she intuitively understood that the slightest indication of disorder was something that had to be corrected immediately, because she understood that once disorder takes

hold of a community it is all downhill from there.

This was intuitively obvious to her, and so I was raised in a context where I was assigned to sweeping sidewalks, not just ours but the entire block, because she understood that if we permitted decay in our neighborhood, everyone would suffer.

She and other neighborhood parents would take their sons and deploy us to maintain order in the neighborhood. We hadn't learned yet what the theory was, but she understood that a clean neighborhood and a clean block were safer places, and the appearance of order would create disincentives for others to litter, or urinate on a wall, or throw beer bottles into someone's front yard.

And so Chief Bratton and I are helping to bring this philosophy back to Los Angeles. Chief Bratton and I have approached Bishop Charles Blake from the West Angeles Church, and he has agreed to provide leadership for a new initiative to mobilize black churches to work in support of broken windows policing.

*I also believe that we need to rethink how we think about crime in the inner city.*

I also believe that we need to rethink how we think about crime in the inner city. Anyone that goes to what we now call South Los Angeles, what used to be called South Central, anyone who goes and hears any of the anecdotal stories regarding the violence in that area could not escape the impression that that area is literally terrorized by crime. Terrorism is the right word to use because there is no other term that adequately describes the breadth and depth of the violence that people have been subjected to for over twenty years. However, media coverage rarely uses that term, even though I think that they should. If we can address terrorism across the world at the cost of a billion dollars a week, why can we not devote at least limited resources to addressing the terrorism in our cities that happens every day?

Now, part of the challenge politically is that that would force a re-definition of terms because the

race card could no longer be deployed as a way of obfuscating the issue and dodging the empirical fact that there are disproportionate levels of violence in the inner city. In Boston in the early 1990s, my house was shot into. In July of 1991, some young men looking for another hoodlum shot into my house. They emptied a 9mm Glock and a .45 into my house, with the first three bullets going into my then three-year-old son's bedroom.

That was the turning point for me. Prior to 1991 my view was that all of these young brothers in trouble with the law had just lost their way. They were all well-intentioned young men, they probably wanted to do the right thing, and with maybe a job or some kind of recreational activity these young men would become responsible community members. In July of 1991 I learned that I was wrong as my son ran terrified into my bedroom.

That was a turning point in Boston's history, because it was in the context of the scourge of drug violence that the black clergy began to organize and say publicly that we had to redefine the black community's relationship to law enforcement and deracialize the issue and in a collaborative way mobilize our faith communities to mentor, monitor, and minister to high risk youth with the assistance of law enforcement. We realized that we had to reject the use of the race card as a mechanism to avoid accountability on the part of the community as well as law enforcement.

We revolutionized policing in Boston, decreasing crime by 75% and bringing about a corresponding decrease in the number of civilian complaints. And we accomplished all of this in a city that had a history of being notoriously racially divided.

My thinking, as we've been working with Chief Bratton, is that we must now begin a new discussion and a reconceptualization of how crime terrorizes our communities. We have to emphasize that strategic partnerships with the police, along with measurable outcomes, must be the end game of any political discourse about crime reduction.

The broken windows model must be expanded, deepened and extended so that we can begin a new conversation between America's different com-

munities. The challenge of gang violence in Los Angeles is absolutely crucial in this discussion because as Los Angeles goes, so goes the country. Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia all follow the criminal patterns generated in Los Angeles.

The reason that myself and many other community leaders are coming to Los Angeles to work with Chief Bratton is that we see that the future of the country and other cities depends in large measure on how violent crime issues are addressed here. What kinds of resources are we putting at the disposal of the law enforcement community? What civic institutions must complement and supplement the work of the police department? These are all critical questions and we will work with Chief Bratton to solve them all.

**PETER COVE:** I'm going to talk to you a bit about recidivism and the issue of how recidivism impacts crime and communities, and what we might be able to do about that.

First of all let me just give you a statistic that caught the attention of Dr. Lee Bowes, who is the CEO of America Works and also my wife, and I about three years ago. Statistics show that over 600,000 people are paroled every year just from state penitentiaries in the United States, and within three years almost 70 percent of them are going to be reincarcerated. That's seven out of ten. That number is staggering when you consider the impact of crime on our communities, and the cost to society of maintaining thousands of jails across the country. If you just think about what that really means, in terms of lost lives and lost resources, it is a very troubling picture.

Our company, America Works, has been in business about 22 years. We were the first for-profit welfare-to-work program in this country. We found, through working with single mothers and working with other people who were on welfare, that if you moved them very quickly into work environments and then supported them while they were on the job, you could really make a tremendous difference in their lives in terms of freeing them from welfare dependence, in raising the life-

chances of their children, and in expanding America's base of human capital.

We spent many, many years working with welfare recipients, but we were also aware that we were not working with many men. Most people who are on welfare, as you would know because they're single heads of households, are women. There are a few men, but the majority were women. About three and a half years ago Lee and I looked into this and we said that we had to do more to reach out to men.

As a result, we talked with a number of criminal justice experts, and perhaps the most important thing that was said to us was by John DiIulio, who was head of the Faith-Based Initiative at the White House, but he is also an expert on faith-based initiatives in prisons with offenders. We talked with John, and John said to us, "remember what it was like when you started America Works by focusing on welfare to work? There was hardly anyone in the field." He said that is where prison to work is now. And he said that if we could do something about reducing recidivism, we would have a major impact on crime.

*What civic institutions must complement and supplement the work of the police department?*

Lee and I thought a lot about that and decided that we were going to try and build a program and we did. We were very fortunate to have a contract under the Giuliani administration for welfare to work recipients, but it allowed us to take in ex-offenders as well, and we went to Giuliani and other people in the administration, and we said, do you want us to do this, because it's going to generate quite a lot of exposure. We intend to take in large numbers of paroled offenders, and we're going to find them employment. They responded enthusiastically and so we made this a part of our mission.

We did it for a couple of years, at which point the Manhattan Institute financed Columbia University's SIPA Department, School of International and Public Affairs, to study the question of whether or not work reduced recidivism. Now, I caution you

that this was a small study, not the kind of project that you would build a national policy on, but it was very suggestive because it showed that you may be able to have a significant impact on crime by using work as an intervention for people emerging from the prison system.

We are talking with other cities about expanding our services and—if our initial success holds up—the potential gains are enormous. Just think of what we could accomplish by reducing recidivism by 10 percent, 20 percent, 30 percent, or even 40 percent. Take, for instance, California, where, unlike New York, the state has had a huge increase in prisons over the last ten years. If you could start to reduce the cost of prisons by reducing recidivism, you could make a major impact on the state tax burden. You could make a major impact on crime. You could really have a significant impact on the quality of life issues that we've been talking about today, and, based on what Chief Bratton has done in New York and elsewhere, that impact would be revolutionary.

*If you could start to reduce the cost of prisons by reducing recidivism, you could make a major impact on the state tax burden.*

I truly believe that work does reduce crime. I've seen it. I've watched it work first hand. What you have to do, and this is very important, is you have to have an intervention with parolees right as they're coming out of prison, because if you don't do it then you lose them. We have to engage these people and help them become re-engaged in their communities. Work gives them that engagement and resocializes them. They have to show up at work, they have to meet standards, and as a result they will gain a sense of accomplishment.

What was surprising-and encouraging-to us was that companies were more than willing to hire them. In fact, they're doing as well or better than our welfare-to-work recipients. We are addressing the second half of the puzzle, because many of these men have left behind women and children when they entered the penal system—women who then enter welfare. This is an anecdotal observation, but I think that by giving these men self-esteem we may be able to bring about some family involvement by these men in their children's lives. We may be able to bring about some family reunifications or even marriages at some point. Work does do that. It socializes people and as a result we really feel that we can have a very significant effect with this program.

As I mentioned earlier, we are now talking to a number of cities around the country about opening more offices, and I want to say something about this. It's a technical observation, but I think that it is very, very important. It is not well known, but there is federal funding available for programs like this through the Food Stamp entitlement. If you enroll someone on Food Stamps, you can then draw funding from the federal government for what's called Food Stamp Training. And, best of all, you can access as much money as you need for individual job training. It is a significant way of building prison-to-work programs, and we think that this is a terrific starting point given the current fiscal climate.

There are, as I said, over 600,000 people coming out of jail every year, and the number of programs in this country is de minimis in terms of integrating these people into the mainstream economy. If we're right that work really does reduce recidivism, we can't afford to pass up the opportunity to help these people become productive, law-abiding citizens.

**NOTES**

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