


Broken Windows

Professor Peter C. Moskos
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
www.petermoskos.com
copinthehood.com

James Q. Wilson &
George L. Kelling
The Atlantic, March

Readings at
www.petermoskos.com

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“Broken Windows” (1982)
by George Kelling & James Q. Wilson

- An unfixed broken window leads to decay, disorder, and fear, which in turn leads to increased criminality.
- Put another way: take care of the little things and the big things will take care of themselves.

What is a “broken window”?

- Crime or quality-of-life issues that create fear or usurps public space.
- Recognizes the community as a collective victim.
- “Broken Windows” are not just literal broken windows, but disorder that causes fear and goes against community values.

Broken-Windows Policing in Action

- Broken Windows is not a silver-bullet. You don’t “do” Broken Windows. You act based on community input of disorder, fear, foot patrol, and police discretion.
- Broken Windows is problem-solving process of police action.
- Broken Windows asks how can police work *with* the community to reduce fear and create a less criminal environment?

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“Signal Crime” as a mechanism

- The presence of signal crimes [Broken Windows] is more likely to stimulate a decline in levels of social cohesion and collective efficacy by degrading levels of mutual trust and confidence. Signal crimes shape people’s risk perceptions, encouraging higher levels of fear and anxiety.

Innes, Martin. 2004. “Signal Crimes and Signal Disorders: Notes on Deviance as Communicative Action.”
The British Journal of Sociology. Vol. 55(3) pp. 335-355.

Policy Influence of Broken Window

- In 2006, Bill Bratton said the *only* criminological study that influenced him significantly was “Broken Windows.”

Source: From *Crime & Justice News*, November 3, 2006.

What Broken Windows is up against...

- Academics who stress “root causes” or hold a Marxist “critical” view related to police and class oppression.
- Those who discount the effectiveness of police and crime prevention.

~~[The police] cannot control crime any more than they can alter the economic structure, the political system, the educational system, or fundamentally affect the birthrate or patterns of migration.~~

~~—Peter Manning (1979, 1999). *Police Work*.~~

~~(see also Koenig 1991, Bayley 1994, Manning 1997)~~

~~No war against crime will ever be won.... If crime rates in America are to decline in the long term, the causes will lie in major changes in social policies toward job creation, income maintenance, medical care, housing, education, drugs, and firearms.~~

~~—Michael Tonry (1995), *Malign Neglect*.~~

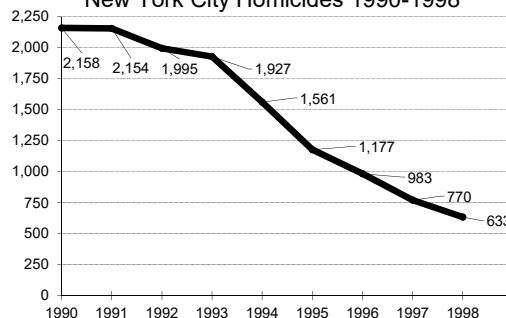
“Broken Windows” (1982)

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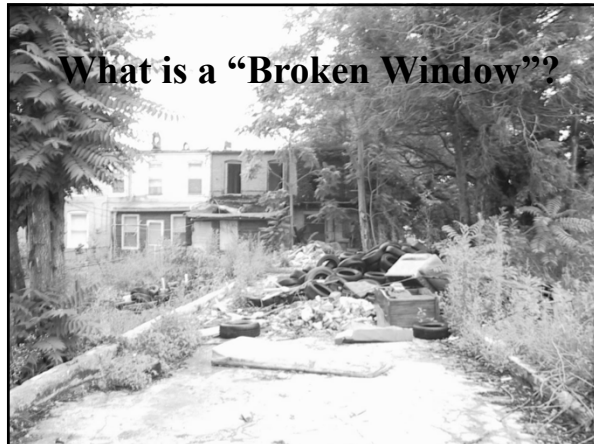
- Broken Windows says Root Causes matter. But as police, there’s little we can do about them.
- Broken Windows asks about personal agency (free will), crimes of opportunity, situational crime prevention, the urban environment, and, most importantly: ***The role of police in crime prevention.***

Crime can't go down? But it did!

New York City Homicides 1990-1998



• 1990 total does not include 87 killed in Brooklyn Happy Land fire
 • Bratton was NYPD commission from 1994 to 1996 & Transit chief 1990-1992



1967 Presidential Police Task Force

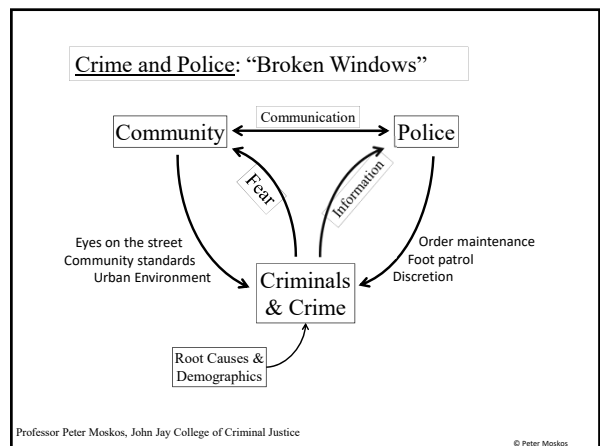
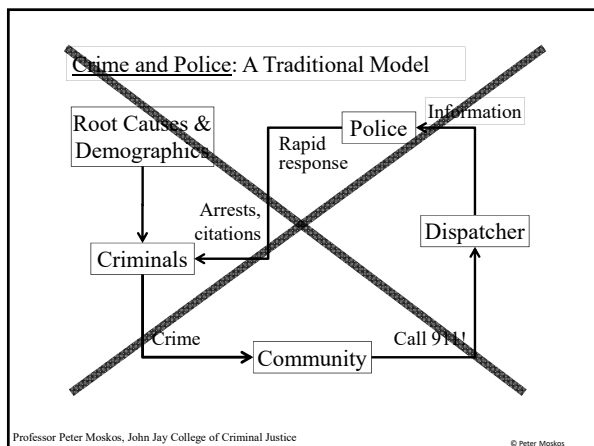
- Called for car patrol to replace most foot patrol and radio dispatch to limit officer discretion.
- But recognized: “The most significant weakness in car patrol is the general lack of contact with citizens except when responded to a call. Most patrol officers have few opportunities to develop closer relationship with persons living in the district.”
- – Presidential Police Task Force 1967

Impact of Car Patrol

- The telephone, more than any policy decision by the community or by management, continues to dictate how police resources will be used. ... It fosters the notion among operating personnel that policing consists simply of responding to incidents.
- – Herman Goldstein. 1990. *Problem-Oriented Policing*.

1967 Presidential Police Task Force

- Harlem survey in 1964: 39% considered “crime and criminals” as the biggest problem
- Harris poll: “most frequent complain of blacks is that of permissive law enforcement and police fail to provide adequate protection in black neighborhoods.
- – Presidential Police Task Force 1967



Broken Windows in Action

- 1) Accurate and Timely Intelligence (Compstat)
 - 2) Rapid Deployment
 - 3) Effective Tactics
 - 4) Relentless Follow-up and Assessment
- Relies on neighborhood's concepts of disorder, using foot patrol to maintain order and reduce public fear.

The Origin of Broken Windows

Robert Peel: Police patrol to prevent crime

From Peel's 1829 "Principles of Policing":

The principal object to be attained is "*the prevention of Crime.*" To this great end every effort of the Police is to be directed.

Source: Peel, Robert. 1829. Sanction of Establishment of Police. No 8 Augmentation. Home Office.

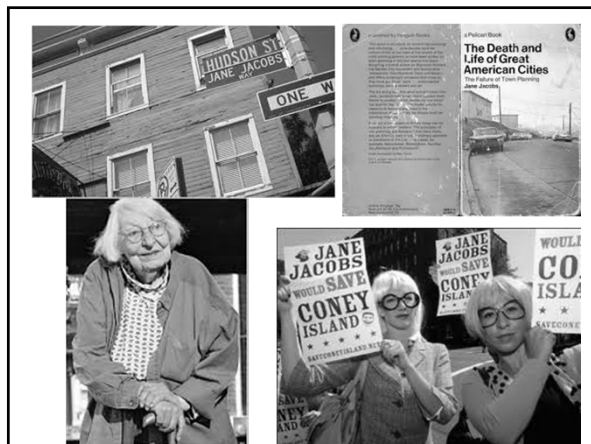
The Origins of Broken Windows

- Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities: Urban life as crime prevention*
- Goldstein, Herman. 1963. "Police Discretion: The Ideal Versus the Real": Police exercise discretion.
- Bittner, Egon. 1967. "The Police on Skid Row": Discretion defines good policing.
- Goldstein, Herman. 1979. "A Problem-Oriented Approach": "Means Over Ends Syndrome"

In the 1960s, **Jane Jacobs** described what makes neighborhood work (as opposed to how cities were failing): Density, mixed use, entertaining, eyes on the street.



THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN CITIES
JANE JACOBS



Jane Jacobs (1961):

- The public peace of cities is not kept primarily by the police, [but] by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves.
- It does not take many incidents of violence to make people **fear** the streets. And as they fear them, they use them less, which makes the streets still more unsafe.

• — *The Death of Life of Great American Cities* (1961)

Broken Windows and Community Policing

Wes Skogan offers four principle of community policing:

- 1) decentralized
- 2) problem oriented
- 3) responsive to citizens with respect to tactics employed and with priorities set
- 4) committed to joint solutions to neighborhood crime and order problems

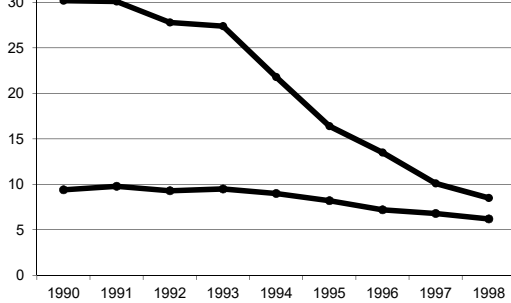
Skogan, Wesley G. (1997) *Community Policing, Chicago Style*
 Skogan (1990). *Disorder and Decline: Crime and Spiral of Decay in America*. The Free Press.

The New York City Crime Drop

- From 1990 to 2000, four of the seven major felonies—homicide, robbery, burglary, and auto theft—*dropped over 70 percent*.
- Between 2000 and 2015, crimes fell another 40 percent.
- Crime fell across the country during this period, but in NYC it dropped at *twice* the national average (which was 40%, 1990-2009).

[Zimring video after next 2 slides](#)

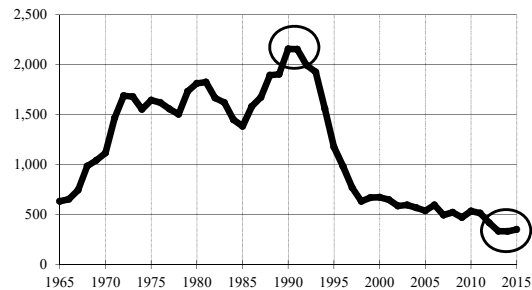
Homicide Rate: New York City vs. USA (per 100,000) 1990-1998



* US rate excludes NYC. 1990 NYC excludes 87 killed in Happy Land fire.

New York City Homicide 1965-2015

1990: 2,158* homicides 2014: 352 homicides



* not including 87 killed in 1990 Happy Land fire

| Volume 23 Number 44 | | CompStat | | | | | | | | | | Citywide |
|---|--------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Report Covering the Week | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10/31/2016 Through 11/6/2016 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crime Complaints | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Week to Date | | | 28 Day | | | Year to Date* | | | 2 Year | 6 Year | 23 Year |
| | 2016 | 2015 | % Chg | 2016 | 2015 | % Chg | 2016 | 2015 | % Chg | % Chg | % Chg | % Chg |
| Murder | 5 | 5 | 0.0 | 13 | 23 | -43.5 | 291 | 305 | -4.6 | 5.4 | -37.0 | -82.6 |
| Rape | 20 | 28 | -28.6 | 112 | 107 | 4.7 | 1,251 | 1,218 | 2.7 | 7.8 | 7.8 | -55.4 |
| Robbery | 310 | 401 | -22.7 | 1,226 | 1,469 | -16.5 | 13,070 | 14,209 | -8.0 | -6.3 | -20.4 | -82.0 |
| Fel. Assault | 383 | 458 | -16.4 | 1,574 | 1,610 | -2.2 | 17,926 | 17,457 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 22.3 | -49.9 |
| Burglary | 236 | 310 | -23.9 | 992 | 1,252 | -20.8 | 10,954 | 12,774 | -14.2 | -23.5 | -30.9 | -87.2 |
| Gr. Larceny | 959 | 958 | 0.1 | 3,635 | 3,672 | -1.0 | 37,196 | 37,068 | 0.3 | -1.1 | 16.2 | -49.0 |
| G.L.A. | 164 | 149 | 10.1 | 574 | 615 | -6.7 | 5,496 | 6,280 | -12.5 | -15.5 | -37.8 | -94.2 |
| TOTAL | 2,077 | 2,309 | -10.05 | 8,126 | 8,748 | -7.11 | 86,184 | 89,311 | -3.50 | -5.67 | -3.62 | -76.50 |
| Transit | 59 | 51 | 15.7 | 218 | 220 | -0.9 | 2,030 | 2,066 | -1.7 | 6.2 | 12.0 | **** |
| Housing | 91 | 127 | -28.3 | 374 | 432 | -13.4 | 4,413 | 4,328 | 2.0 | 3.3 | 23.2 | *** |
| Petit Larceny | 1,560 | 1,537 | 1.5 | 6,392 | 6,353 | 0.6 | 69,117 | 69,185 | -0.1 | -5.3 | -0.9 | *** |
| Misd. Assault | 894 | 850 | 5.2 | 3,384 | 3,161 | 7.1 | 36,634 | 36,454 | 0.5 | -3.7 | -7.6 | *** |
| Misd. Sex Crimes | 78 | 71 | 9.9 | 317 | 262 | 21.0 | 2,919 | 2,696 | 8.3 | 23.8 | 12.3 | *** |
| Shooting Vic. | 16 | 29 | -44.8 | 85 | 88 | -3.4 | 1,048 | 1,161 | -9.7 | -12.1 | -32.1 | -79.7 |
| Shooting Inc. | 14 | 25 | -44.0 | 73 | 77 | -5.2 | 879 | 980 | -10.3 | -12.3 | -31.0 | -81.0 |
| Historical Perspective | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (Historical perspective is a complete calendar year of data.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1990 | 1993 | 1998 | 2001 | 2015 | '15 vs '01 | '15 vs '98 | '15 vs '93 | '15 vs '90 | | | |
| Murder | 2,262 | 1,927 | 629 | 649 | 352 | -45.8 | -44.0 | -81.7 | -84.4 | Murder | | |
| Rape | 3,126 | 3,225 | 2,476 | 1,930 | 1,438 | -25.5 | -41.9 | -55.4 | -54.0 | Rape | | |
| Robbery | 100,280 | 85,892 | 39,003 | 27,873 | 16,931 | -39.3 | -56.6 | -80.3 | -83.1 | Robbery | | |
| Fel. Assault | 84,122 | 81,121 | 38,868 | 23,020 | 20,271 | -11.9 | -29.7 | -50.7 | -54.1 | Fel. Assault | | |

Broken Windows is not the whole story

- Comp Stat: Computerized Statistics
- Precinct-level responsibility
- Hot Spots (putting “cops on the dots”)
- Lead paint?
- Immigration
- De-carceration

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- **Immigration:**
1.2 million immigrants came to NYC in 1990s.
1 in 3 residents of NYC is foreign born.
- **De-carceration:**
New York City reduced jail and prison population 11,000 (1990-2010) (Incarceration in the US increased 65%)

Frank Zimring, "The Decline in Crime in New York City," Vera Institute of Justice, Oct 29, 2010.
<http://www.vera.org/videos/franklin-zimring-decline-crime-new-york-city>

Bill Bratton



- Boston cop.
- Read Broken Windows
- Rose quickly through the ranks.
- 1990: NYC Transit Police Chief
- Chief of Boston P.D., 1991 until 1993.
- NYPD Chief in 1994.
- Crime dropped.

Broken Windows in the subway, 1991



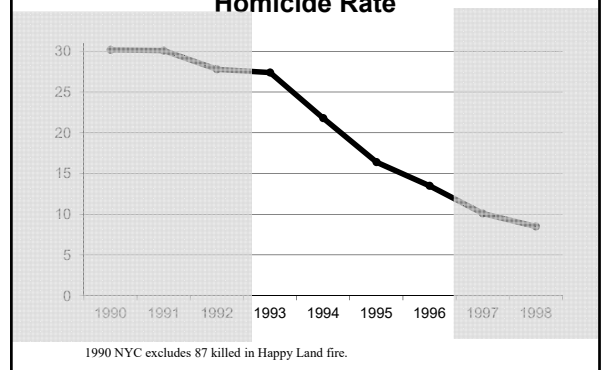
Pay your fare!

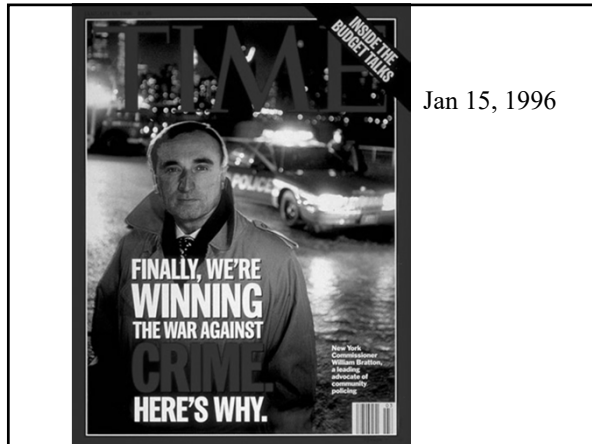


Citing turnstile jumpers allowed police to:

- 1) check for warrants
 - 2) frisk for weapons
 - 3) write a citation (which often led to an arrest)
 - 4) send a message that the little things matter and that the police are in charge.
- Felony crime on the subways dropped immediately.

Bratton's New York City, 1st term Homicide Rate



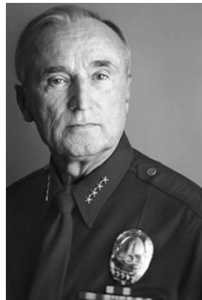


Jan 15, 1996

Mayor Rudy Giuliani

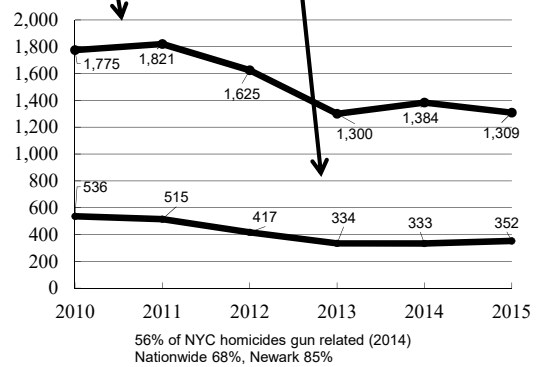


Rudy Giuliani Fired Bratton in 1996

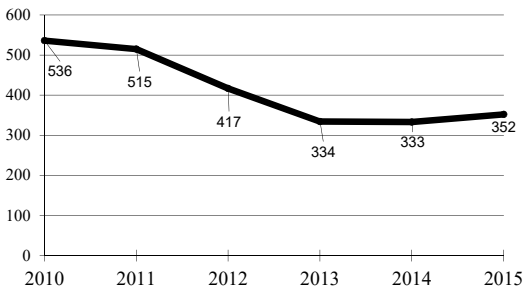


- In 2002 Bratton took over LAPD. Murders declined (after 3 year increase from 654 to 312 (2002-2009)).
- Bratton returned to NYC (2014-2016) under Mayor de Blasio.

NYC Shooting & Homicides 2010-2015



NYC Homicides 2010 - 2015



Three main attacks on Broken Windows

- 1) Unfair to the poor and minorities.
- 2) The theory is wrong: disorder does not cause crime
- 3) Broken Windows is Zero Tolerance

Opposition to Broken Windows

1) Unfair to the poor and minorities?

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Opposition to Broken Windows

1) Unfair to the poor and minorities?

The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.

—Anatole France (1894), *The Red Lily*.

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Opposition to Broken Windows

1) Unfair to the poor and minorities?

Response: It's not about race or poverty, but crime and community standards. All communities deserve good policing. (Besides, minorities and poor suffer the most from disorder and crime.)

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Opposition to Broken Windows

1) Unfair to the poor and minorities?

“The idea that we can engage in policing that’s racially proportionate is absurd. Quality-of-life enforcement is driven primarily by citizen complaints. We go where the calls come from. We go where the victims are. If those numbers are racially disparate, or disproportionate, well, that’s the reality.” – Bill Bratton, October, 2014.

<http://www.capitalnework.com/article/city-hall/2014/10/8554692/bratton-broken-windows-criticism-absurd>

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Opposition to Broken Windows

2) Disorder does not cause crime (societal conditions provide mutual causation for disorder *and* crime)

Response: Studies support Broken Windows. (And isn't a focus on fear and quality-of-life good for it's own sake?)

Anthony A. Braga, Brandon C. Welsh, and Cory Schnell: “Can Policing Disorder Reduce Crime? A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis.” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. July 2015, vol 52(4)

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Opposition to Broken Windows

3) Broken Windows ≠ Zero Tolerance

- Opponents of Broken Windows have tried – generally with success – to equate Broken Windows and “zero tolerance” policing.

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Broken Windows ≠ Zero Tolerance

- I consider the phrase “zero tolerance” not credible and smacking of zealotry. Linking order maintenance activities and “zero tolerance” for disorderly behavior goes beyond semantics. It is an equation that I have never made, find worrisome, and have argued against.
– *George Kelling*, 1999.

“Broken Windows and Police Discretion.” NIJ.

Broken Windows ≠ Zero Tolerance

- All violations are not broken windows.
- Just because it’s a crime doesn’t mean it’s a Broken Window; don’t blame Broken Windows just because something goes wrong.



Broken Windows ≠ Zero Tolerance

- All violations are not broken windows.
- Broken Windows supports police officer discretion and community collaboration. Zero Tolerance limits discretion, battles the community.

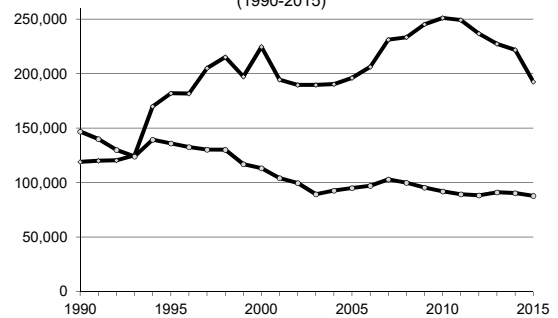
Broken Windows ≠ Zero Tolerance

- All violations are not broken windows.
- Broken Windows supports police officer discretion and community collaboration.
- Zero Tolerance measures success by internal police stats. Broken Windows focuses on community standards of fear, public disorder, and crime.

In NYC, Broken Windows morphed into Zero Tolerance

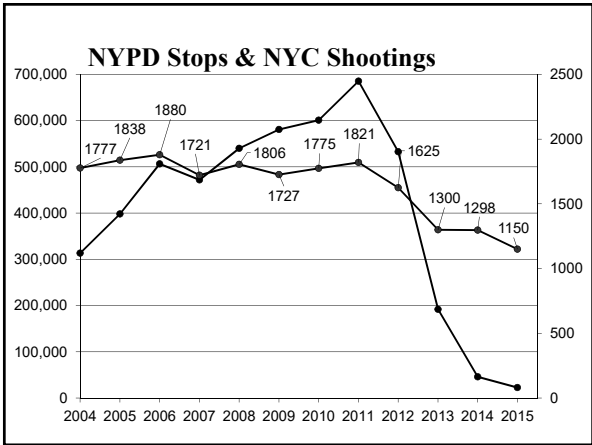
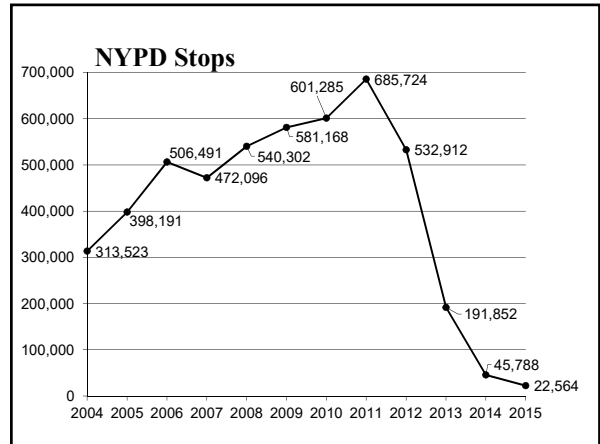
- The *means* became the *ends*. “Stats” (arrests and citations) become the goal rather than maintaining order, reducing fear, and less crime.

NYC Misdemeanor & Felony arrests
(1990-2015)



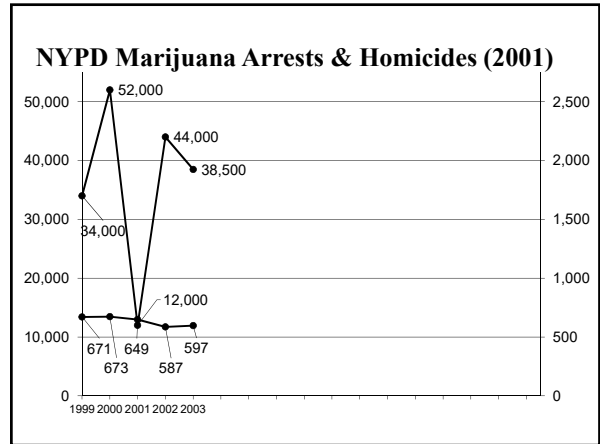
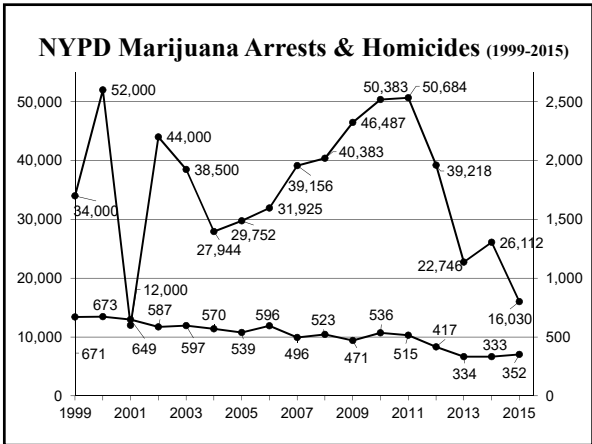
In NYC, Broken Windows morphed into Zero Tolerance

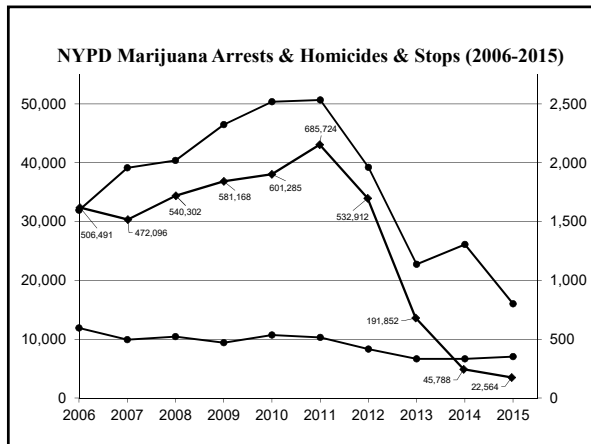
- Between 2004 and 2010, misdemeanor arrests increased by one-third in NYC (190,000 to 251,000). Shootings constant.
- Between 2011-2014, stop, question, & frisks decreased from 686,000 to 50,000. Shootings down.



In NYC, Broken Windows morphed into Zero Tolerance

- 2015: Fewest arrests since 1997. 8% of all arrests (22,000) for misdemeanor marijuana possession. (Down from 25% of all arrests in 2011.)





Broken Windows in Action

- Examples: NYC Subway graffiti & turnstile jumping, NYC Crime Drop, Port Authority Bus Terminal, 42nd Street Partnership, other cities (Lowell, Mass).

- Braga and Bond (2008). Policing Crime and Disorder Hot Spots: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Criminology* 46:3, 557.
- William H. Sousa (2010). Paying attention to minor offenses: order maintenance policing in practice. *Police Practice and Research* 11:1 (February 2010), 45-59.

Does the public narrative match public opinion?

- More blacks (38%) say they want a greater police presence in their local communities than do whites (18%) (10% blacks want less) (2015)
- “Great deal of respect for police” up 12% in 2016 to 80% of whites and 67% of nonwhites.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/196610/americans-respect-police-surges.aspx>
[http://www.gallup.com/file/poll/184520/Race TV Police and African Americans 150806.pdf](http://www.gallup.com/file/poll/184520/Race%20TV%20Police%20and%20African%20Americans%20150806.pdf)

An Ideological Crime Divide

- *Conservatives* emphasize criminals and the need to control them.
- *Liberals* emphasize “root causes” (racism, poverty, jobs, schools, housing, addiction) and de-emphasize police and crime control.

An Ideological Crime Divide

- Litmus test: was Baltimore a “riot” caused by rioters or an “uprising” caused by police and society?
- Litmus test: are police the problem or the solution?

#BLM: “We can live in a world where police don’t kill people.”

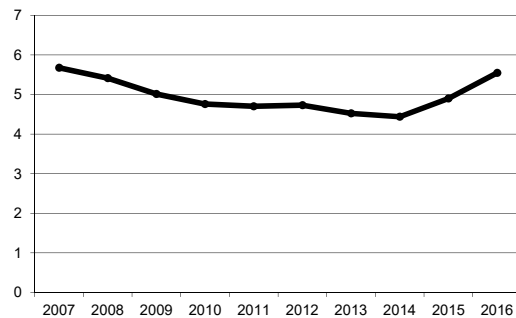
- Can we?
- First demand of #BlackLivesMatter Campaign Zero is to “End Broken Windows policing.”
- End enforcement of public drinking, marijuana possession, disorderly conduct, trespassing, loitering, disturbing the peace (including loud music), spitting, jaywalking, biking on sidewalk.

<http://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision>

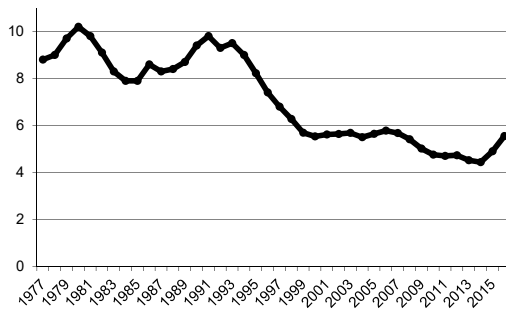
Post-Ferguson, largest quickest increase in homicide in US history

- 2014-2015, 10.4% increase in murder.
- 2015-2016: 13.1% increase (predicted Brennan Center)
- There has never been a 25 percent two-year homicide increase.

USA Homicide Rate (per 100,000) 2007-2016

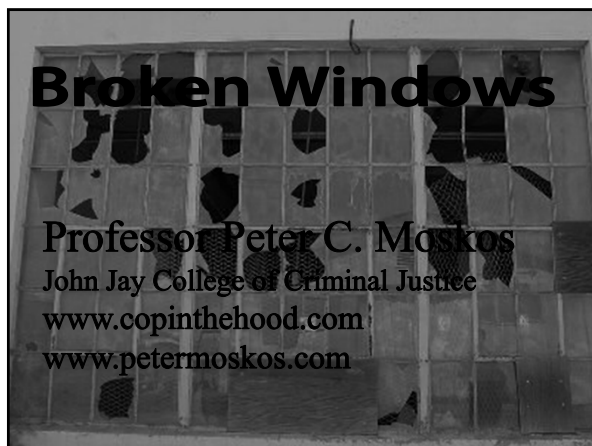


USA Homicide Rate (per 100,000) 1977-2016



The Legacy of Broken Windows

- 1) Broken Windows got police back in the crime prevention game with a *police*-centered approach to problem solving and crime reduction.
- 2) Renewed police focus on quality-of-life issues, public fear, reducing disorder, and police discretion.
- 3) “Gave police an excuse to do what the public wanted them to do.”



Broken Windows Case Study: Graffiti

1968: Julio began to write his tag “Julio 204.”
 1971: “Taki 183.” A seventeen-year-old Greek-American, Demitrios, Lived in Washington Heights. Tagged all over New York City. The *New York Times* did a feature story on him in 1971.
 After tagging came “throw ups” and “top to bottoms.”