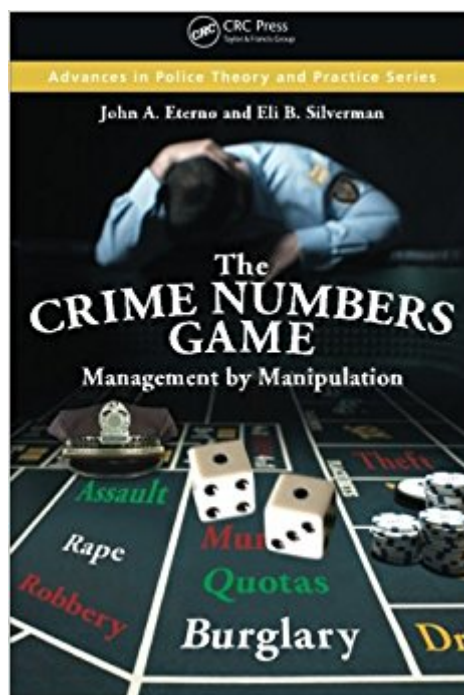




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The Crime Numbers Game: Management By Manipulation (Advances In Police Theory And Practice)



Synopsis

In the mid-1990s, the NYPD created a performance management strategy known as Compstat. It consisted of computerized data, crime analysis, and advanced crime mapping coupled with middle management accountability and crime strategy meetings with high-ranking decision makers. While initially credited with a dramatic reduction in crime, questions quickly arose as to the reliability of the data. *The Crime Numbers Game: Management by Manipulation* brings together the work of two criminologists—John Eterno, a former NYPD captain, and Eli Silverman—who present the first in-depth empirical analysis of this management system—exposing the truth about crime statistics manipulation in the NYPD and the repercussions suffered by crime victims and those who blew the whistle on this corrupt practice. Providing insider insight into a system shrouded in secrecy, this volume:

Documents and analyzes a wide array of data that definitively demonstrates the range of manipulation reflected in official New York City crime statistics
Explores how the consequences of unreliable crime statistics ripple throughout police organizations, affecting police, citizens, and victims
Documents the widening spell of police performance management throughout the world
Reviews current NYPD leadership approaches and offers alternatives
Analyzes the synchronicity of the media's and the NYPD's responses to the authors' findings
Explores the implications of various theoretical approaches to Compstat
Offers a new approach based on organizational transparency

Presenting a story of police reform gone astray, this book stunningly demonstrates how integrity succumbed to a short-term numbers game, casting a cloud on the department from which we can only hope it will emerge. For more information, check out the authors' blog, *Unveiling Compstat*, at blogspot.com and their website. Eterno and Silverman's work in this book was cited in the article *The Truth About Chicago's Crime Rates: Part 2* in the June 2014 issue of *Chicago* magazine. The authors' studies on crime were featured in a November 1, 2010 *New York Times* article and their comments were published on the editorial page. Their work was also cited in a November 30, 2010 *Uptowner* article about police manipulation of crime statistics. Silverman and Eterno described a proposed strategy for improving community confidence in the integrity of crime statistics in a January 24, 2011 *Daily News* article. On August 22, 2011, Eli Silverman commented on a recent rise in NYC crime statistics in a *New York Post* article. On November 29, 2011, the *Village Voice* featured an article written by Silverman and Eterno on crime statistics manipulation and recent corruption scandals. Eli Silverman was interviewed by the *Plainview Patch* in a December 20, 2011 article about people's perception of crime in a community. The book is cited in a February 23, 2012 *Wall Street Journal* article about a lawsuit filed by a NYPD officer. John Eterno was a featured guest on *Talkzone Internet Talk Radio*

on February 25, 2012. Eli Silverman spoke in a February 27, 2012 NY1 Online video about concerns regarding NYPD's stop and frisk policy. The book was profiled in a February 27, 2012 article in The Chief, a weekly newspaper for New York civil service employees. The authors appeared on a March 26, 2012 local ABC news program about underreported crime rates. thePolipit blog discussed the book on April 2, 2012. John Eterno was quoted in an April 9, 2012 New York Times article about the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policy. Eli Silverman was quoted in a May 2, 2012 DNAinfo.com article about rising New York City crime rates. A New York Times Op-Ed piece referenced Eli Silverman on May 13, 2012. John Eterno's Op-Ed piece entitled "Policing by the Numbers" appeared in the New York Times on June 17, 2012. The book was cited in a June 19, 2012 Mother Jones article. John Eterno was featured in a Reuters TV program about the NYPD's "stop and frisk" policy. Eli Silverman testified on April 4, 2013 in a class action lawsuit related to the NYPD stop and frisk policy. On July 14, 2014, an article written by John Eterno and Eli Silversman about Police Commissioner Bratton's stop-and-frisk policy appeared in the New York Daily News.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"[This book](#) is absolutely worth reading. It raises serious concerns which, if true, amount to a terrible management system which has been allowed to run amok—raising some frightening civil liberties issues. It should be read by anyone involved in law enforcement and public safety statistical analysis because it highlights many possible ways to game the system and then describes the unintended consequences of such gaming."[—Nick Selby](#), in *Police-Led Intelligence*

John A. Eterno, Ph.D., is professor, chairperson, and associate dean and director of graduate studies in criminal justice at Molloy College. He served as a sworn officer with the New York City police department (NYPD) and retired as a Captain. His various assignments included patrol, teaching at the police academy, conducting research, and commanding officer of several units. Notably, his research for the NYPD on physical standards won a prestigious Police Foundation award. He is also responsible for the research leading to increased age and education requirements for police officer candidates. He testified at the New York State Civil Service Commission and before the City's Department of Citywide Administrative Services in this regard. His work on mapping with the NYPD also earned him the Enterprise Initiative Award from the New York City Mayor's office. Eli B. Silverman, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus, John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Graduate Center of City University of New York. He has previously served with the U.S. Department of Justice and the National Academy of Public Administration in Washington D.C. and was Visiting Exchange Professor at the Police Staff College in Bramshill, England. He has lectured, consulted with, and trained numerous police agencies in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Asia, and Australia. His areas of interest include police performance management, community policing, policy analysis, training, integrity control, Compstat, and crime mapping.

Eterno and Silverman, have done a great service to the NYPD and Police departments everywhere by writing this book. They expose the perils of over dependence on statistics in effective policing. Compstat is removing the human element from the equation and the long term ramifications will be disastrous. A must read for every member of the NYPD and any department ruled by statistics based models. Don't become a drone, think before you act. Remember sometimes "Discretion is the better part of valor".

It's a good book, so critic about this policing model, but the interesting it's other overview about this system.

Excellent book on the shortcomings of Compstat, it's what NY experienced and what Chicago is experiencing with Compstat. A must read for law enforcement it exposes Compstats weaknesses

Excellent, well-researched, & well-written exploration of the way Comstat has been used--&

misused--in New York City policing. Eterno & Silverman present a clear picture of the way the push for 'better' crime stats has led to distortion of crime data & deception of the public. They clearly know their material & have excellent sources in the NYPD. I'm also impressed by the authors' appreciation of (and sympathy for) the pressures placed on NYPD officers. Many officers seem to be struggling with ethical & morale issues because of what the Mayor, Commissioner, & NYPD management are pushing them to do. That's probably one reason why some have been willing to break through the blue wall of silence. It's very troubling that this book hasn't received the publicity it deserves! The public deserves to know this information.

This volume exposes the underbelly of policing gone awry. The authors vividly document how a valuable policing management system has been turned on its head adversely affecting the cop on the street and citizens alike. I highly recommend this valuable book to all interested in issues such as crime statistical manipulation, stop and frisk, racial profiling and quotas in policing in New York City and elsewhere. It is very well written.

In June 1986, I accepted an appointment to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Bureau for Municipal Police (BMP). BMP is the state oversight office that interfaces with several hundred county and municipal law enforcement agencies and regional municipal police training academies. Early on in my time at BMP, I observed one day two employees poring over a map that they were studding with pins of various colors. They were working on a management study at the request of one of our municipal police departments. The pins represented calls for police response for various levels of offenses. This analysis would help develop a report that would give the police chief the data he/she needed to make a case for increased manpower and resources to be presented to budget making authorities. I recall asking whether there was not some computer software that could do this kind of mapping. Less than a decade later, that question was answered in the affirmative in a very big way. In 1995, the New York City Police Department unveiled and implemented its COMPSTAT program -- pride and joy of both Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Police Commissioner William Bratton. While serving as chief of the transit police department, Bratton had encountered a lieutenant named Jack Maple whose office walls were covered with maps of the transit system on which he kept track of subway crime. Maple called the maps the "charts of the future." He used them to discern crime patterns and dispatched police officers to "hot spots." Bratton was impressed with the results Maple's method generated. When he was appointed police commissioner in 1994, he took Maple with him to One Police Plaza and put him to work

implementing his program in the nation's largest police agency. Maple called his program COMPSTAT. Within a decade, COMPSTAT had become hugely influential as the paradigm of police performance management programs. It was aggressively promoted by the NYPD with the result that it was ultimately adopted in one form or another by police departments across the nation and beyond. In the years since the COMPSTAT "revolution" hit American law enforcement, crime in most cities has been in steady and often dramatic decline. Many have credited the adoption of statistics-driven deployment of manpower and resources with this historic drop in levels of serious crime. While it certainly has contributed, those who study the administration of justice and the phenomenon of crime are far from quick to ascribe that decline to a single police tactic. In fact, after nearly two decades as the NYPD's signature crime-fighting tactic, COMPSTAT is beginning to exhibit some very negative, though not unforeseeable, consequences. As COMPSTAT has evolved in the agency that pioneered it, one of the distortions that has emerged is ascribable to one of the hallmarks of the program. Precinct commanders are held strictly to account for any short-term increase in crime statistics. A spike in reported crime can dead-end a commander's career. Regular meetings to review crime statistics held at One Police Plaza resemble the Spanish Inquisition. The tone of these meetings can be quite harsh. There is tremendous pressure on commanders to produce ever downward-trending statistics. That pressure extends down through every echelon of the NYPD. COMPSTAT has effectively created a culture of top-down bullying in the NYPD. Coincidentally, the currently controversial "stop-and-frisk" practice that is so oppressive to young black and Latino men is part and parcel of that culture. Not only must statistics trend ever-downward, but indicators of police activity must increase. Since Bloomberg and Kelly came to office, the number of stops-and-frisks has increased seven-fold. Almost 700,000 people were affected last year, the vast majority of them young black and Latino men. The findings of the first book length review and evaluation of the COMPSTAT era in New York City were published in January. In that COMPSTAT has been so pervasively influential in American law enforcement, its conclusions are most troubling. Dr. John A. Eterno, Director of Graduate Studies in Criminal Justice of Molloy College and Dr. Eli B. Silverman, Professor Emeritus of John Jay College of Criminal Justice report their findings and conclusions in their explosive new book *The Crime Numbers Game: Management by Manipulation* (CRC Press, 2012). Simply put, Drs. Eterno and Silverman came to the conclusion that the relentless pressure on precinct commanders to deliver the ever downward-trending statistics that their superiors and political bosses demand has led to such abuses as downgrading reported crimes, undervaluing stolen property and, most egregiously, discouraging victims, including victims of sexual assault, from reporting crimes committed against

them. The cumulative and aggregate effect of this culture of bullying has been to corrupt and undermine the morale, ethics and morality of the entire NYPD. Add to that the impact of the massively pervasive stop-and-frisk program on the city's black and Latino communities, then you have a police department that has completely lost its way. It is time for new leadership. The most striking aspect of the Eterno/Silverman research is derived from their analysis of responses to a survey the two disseminated among some 1,200 retired NYPD commanders that posed questions about whether they had felt inordinately pressured to deliver the statistics demanded and expected by One Police Plaza. Analysis of some 400 responses indicated that this was indeed the case and that that pressure became seriously acute after the implementation of COMPSTAT. Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Commissioner Raymond Kelly have staked their prestige and success on the consistent decline in crime and New York's reputation as "the safest big city in America." There is no question that crime has been in decline since its peak during the violent crack epidemic in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Certainly, modern technology, forensic scientific capability and management and accountability initiatives like COMPSTAT have contributed greatly to that decline. But these account for only part of the story, of which much remains to be told. Significantly, during the period in which Drs. Eterno and Silverman were conducting their research, a compelling and shocking story was emerging from within the NYPD itself. In Brooklyn's 81st Precinct, Police Officer Adrian Schoolcraft spent almost two years documenting the pressure put on him and his fellow officers to bend to the demands from above, including recordings of roll call instruction relaying those demands to the rank and file made during 2008 and 2009. Schoolcraft first brought his concerns to the NYPD's hierarchy. When they went unheeded, he brought them and his recordings to the attention of The Village Voice whose reporter Graham Rayman in 2010 produced a prize-winning multipart story on Schoolcraft's allegations. ("The NYPD Tapes: Inside Bed-Stuy's 81st Precinct," Village Voice, May 4 2010) Schoolcraft very shortly thereafter found himself taken into custody by the NYPD and clapped into the psychiatric ward of Jamaica Hospital for six days. He has been on unpaid suspension ever since and the city faces his multi-million dollar lawsuit. More recently, Mr. Rayman pried loose a departmental report on the Schoolcraft allegations ("The NYPD Tapes Confirmed," The Village Voice, March 7 2012). The report was completed in 2010 but never made public. It is an almost complete vindication of Officer Schoolcraft and his charges. It also comports with the findings and concerns outlined in the Eterno and Silverman book. Both the report and the book merit careful review by law enforcement executives, prosecutors and defense attorneys, and lawmakers throughout the nation. Terry O'Neill, Director The Constantine Institute, Inc. Albany NY[...]

This is a very important book because, while focusing on the NYPD, it illustrates very well how public policy generally can be determined by the desire of policy makers to present the public with a positive image of their work, rather than focusing on accurately evaluating and improving their policies. It is essential reading for anyone concerned with the future of law enforcement and criminal justice in America.

It seems that the NYPD are trying to make as many arrests as they can for petty crimes, like trespassing, and reduce the figures for bigger crimes, like burglary. Why else would a burglary be downgraded to trespass, and attempted murder become "reckless endangerment," while more and more summonses are given out for quality-of-life offenses? Raymond Kelly has done, in my view, a terrible job. But it was Mayor Bloomberg who gave him the job, so I think he holds the blame too.

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