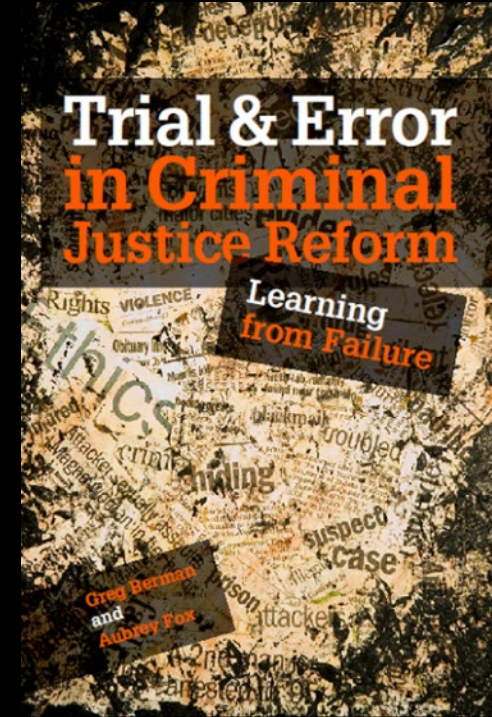
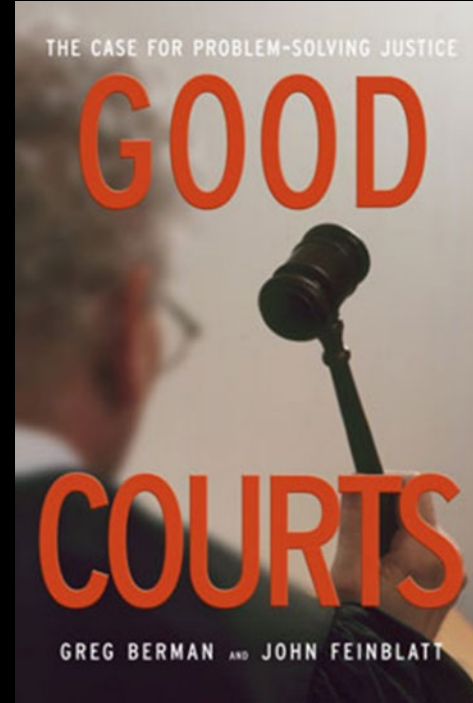
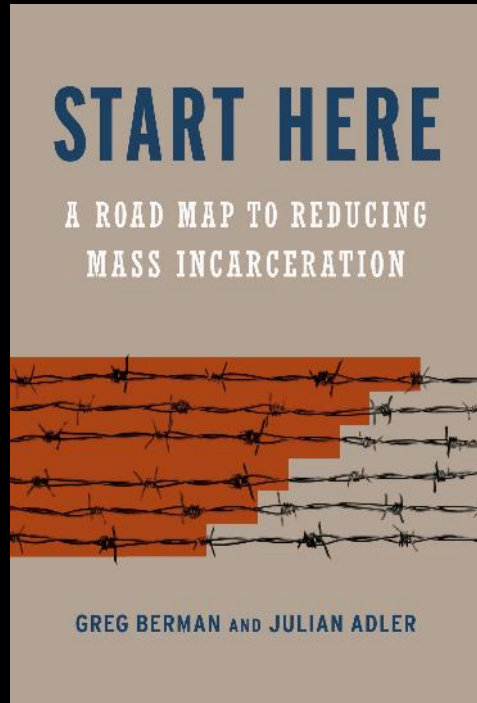


**Center
for
Court
Innovation**

Smart Justice:
Lessons from New York

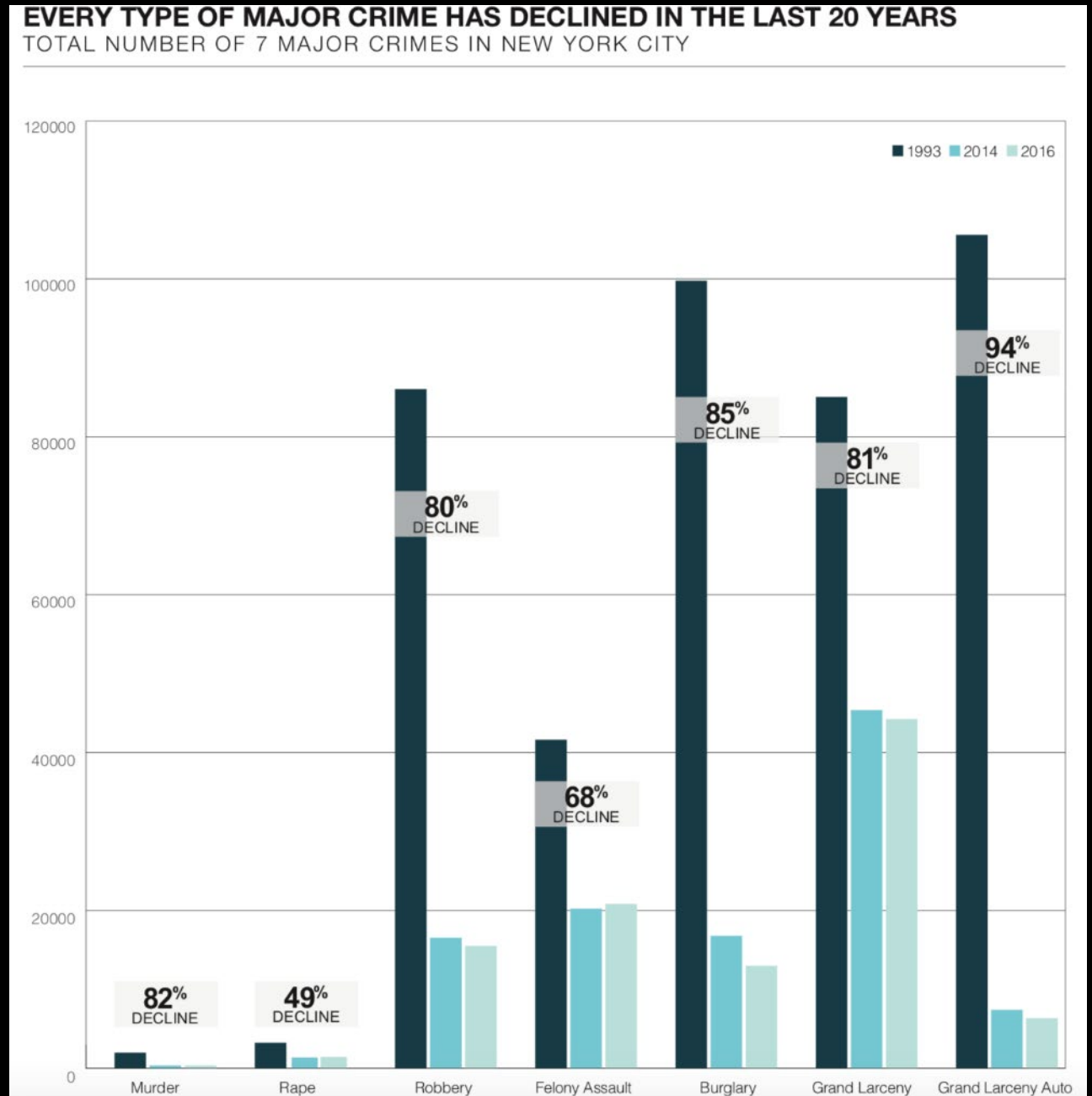
Greg Berman
September 2018

Structure



- I. Lay of the Land
- II. Red Hook Community Justice Center
- III. Lessons

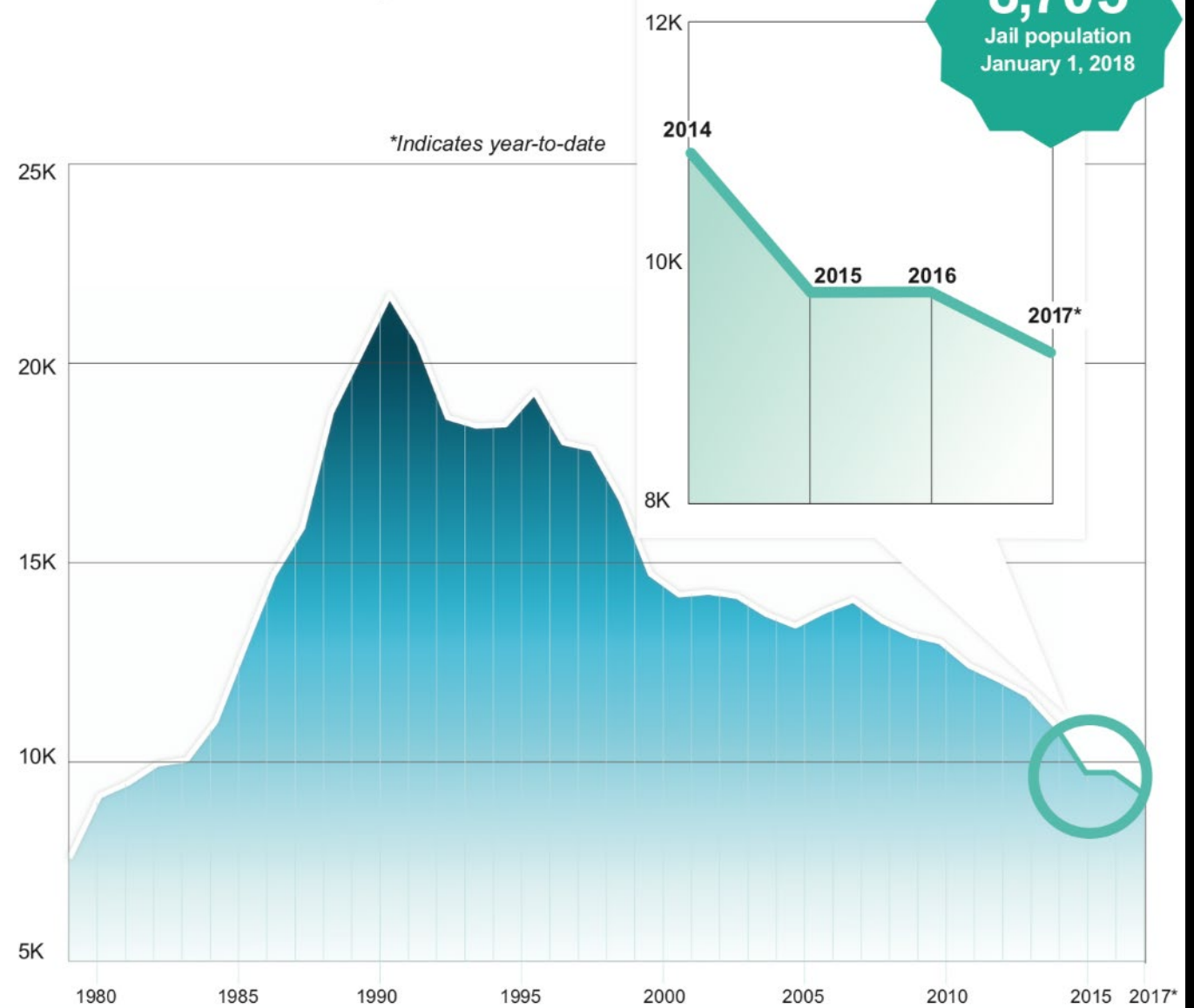
The New York Miracle, Pt. 1



Source: Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, New York City

The New York Miracle, Pt. 2

Average Daily Jail Population in New York City, 1980-2017



Source: Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, New York City

Caveat Emptor

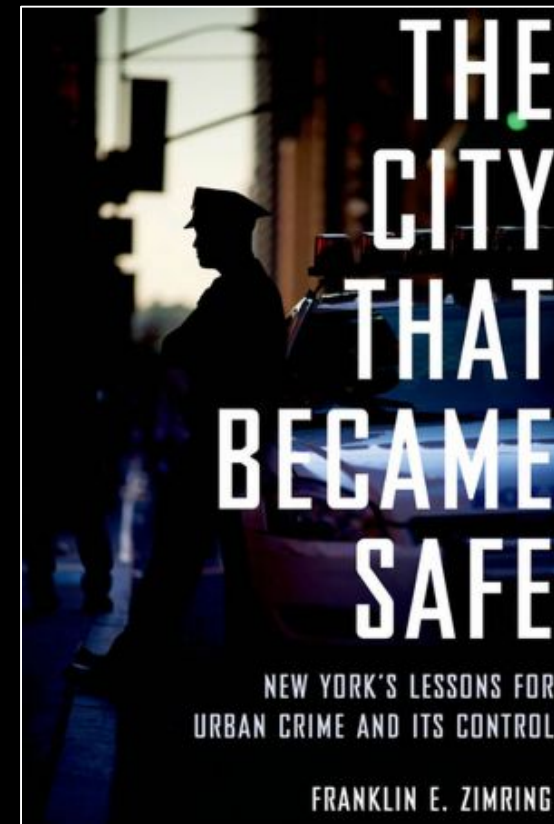
“The precise causes of New York's crime decline will be debated by social scientists until the Sun hits the Earth.”

-- Michael Jacobson,
City University of NY

The screenshot shows the City Journal website. At the top is a navigation bar with links for Home, About CJ, CJ Books, Archives, Links, Subscribe, Contact Us, and Advertise. Below this is a section titled "New York's Tomorrow" featuring a small version of the article's cover image. The main article is by George L. Kelling and is titled "How New York Became Safe: The Full Story". The sub-headline reads: "A citywide effort, involving many agencies and institutions, helped restore order." The article text begins: "Just 20 years ago, New York City was racked with crime: murders, burglaries, drug deals, car thefts, thefts from cars. (Remember the signs in our windows advising no radio?) Unlike many other crime problems, New York's were not limited to a few inner-city neighborhoods that could be avoided. Bryant Park, in the heart of midtown and adjacent to the New York Public Library, was an open-air drug market; Grand Central Terminal, a gigantic flophouse; the Fort Authority Bus Terminal, "a gun gauntlet for bus passengers dodging beggars, drunks, thieves, and destitute drug addicts," as the New York Times put it in 1992. In July 1985, the Citizens Crime Commission of New York City published a study showing widespread fear of theft and assault in downtown Brooklyn, Fordham Road in the Bronx, and Times Square in Manhattan. The study, titled 'The City That Became Safe', was a landmark report that laid out a blueprint for urban safety. It was the first time that a city had ever published a study of its own crime problem. The study was a landmark report that laid out a blueprint for urban safety. It was the first time that a city had ever published a study of its own crime problem." A "Table of Contents" sidebar is visible on the left, and a "More by George L. Kelling" sidebar is on the right.



The book cover for "How New York City Reduced Mass Incarceration: A Model for Change?" by Franklin E. Zimring features a purple and white color scheme. The title is in white text on a purple background. Logos for the Brennan Center for Justice and Vera Institute of Justice are at the top.



“Fewer inmates are behind bars in New York on any given day than at any time in the past 24 years...While the plunge in the city’s crime rate has undoubtedly been a critical factor, a number of other large cities where crime has also fallen have not seen a parallel drop in their jail population. Instead, steps taken by the city, including special courts to deal with nonviolent offenders and programs to deter former convicts from returning to jail, appear to be bearing fruit...New special community courts in Midtown Manhattan, Brooklyn, Harlem and the Bronx as well as drug courts and mental health courts, are meting out alternative sentences like street cleaning or drug treatment instead of jail time.”

“As Crime Rate Drops, New York’s Jail Population Falls to Lowest Level in 24 Years,”
New York Times, June 10, 2010

The
New York
Times

Red Hook, Brooklyn

- **Neighborhood** – surrounded on three sides by water; home of one of New York's largest public housing developments
- **Location** – a Catholic School that had been vacant for two decades
- **Catchment** – three police precincts with a population of 230,000 people



Red Hook Community Justice Center



Criminal Court: approximately 6,600 criminal cases per year – includes summonses, misdemeanors, and selected non-violent felonies

Family Court: approximately 60 juvenile delinquency cases per year

Housing Court: approximately 1,000 filings per year (cases from Red Hook Houses)

The Courtroom



Goal: to identify and address the issues that bring people to court

In less serious cases, this means:

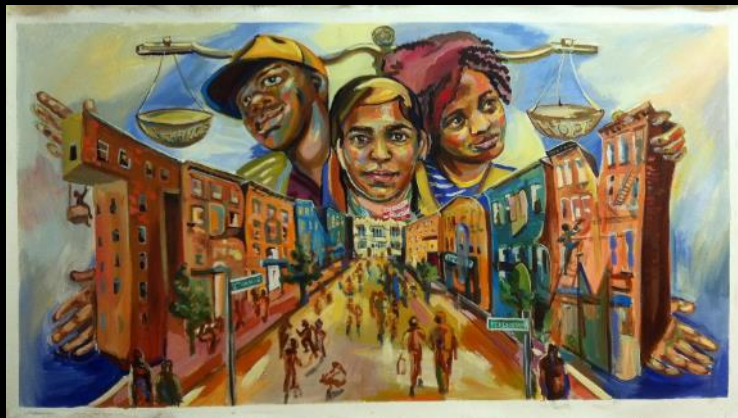
- Short-term groups, community service

In more serious cases, this means:

- Comprehensive assessments from on-site social workers for issues involving substance abuse, mental health, trauma, abuse
- Rigorous compliance monitoring by the court

Three out of four defendants at Red Hook receive community restitution, job training, individual counseling and other alternatives to jail or fines.

Outside the Courtroom



The Justice Center engages the public in a variety of programs designed to prevent crime, including community clean-up events, youth development projects, and peacemaking.

Results

Independent evaluators tracked 3,000 defendants from Red Hook and conventional court for 2 years:

Incarceration: Only 1 percent of the cases receive jail sentences at arraignment.

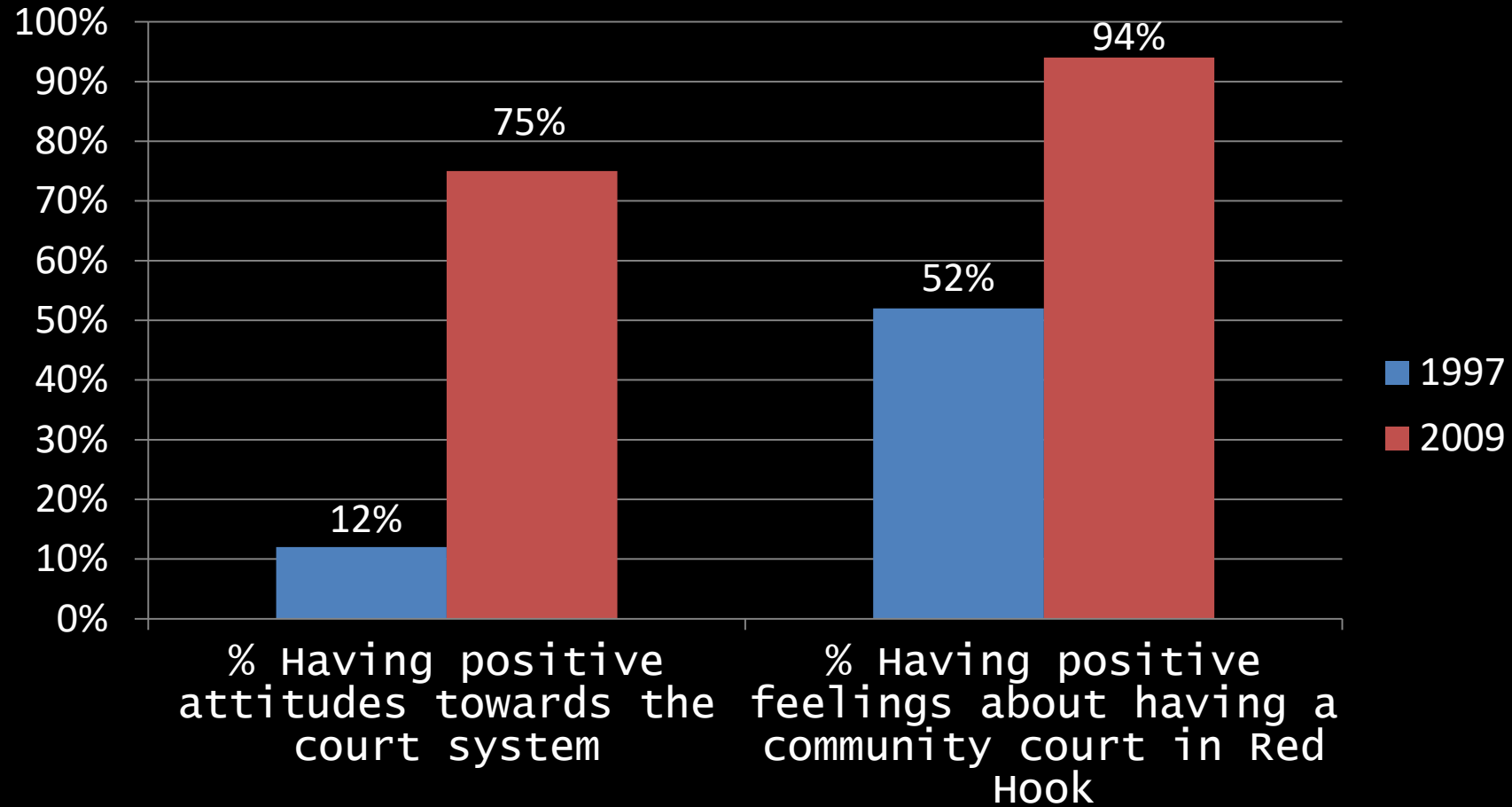
Fairness: Offenders at Red Hook were more likely to perceive the judge's decisions as fair than offenders in the comparison group.

Recidivism: Adult offenders at Red Hook were 10% less likely to be re-arrested than offenders who went through conventional court; juveniles were 20% less likely to be re-arrested.

Source: A Community Court Grows in Brooklyn: Comprehensive Evaluation of the Red Hook Community Justice Center, National Center for State Courts, 2013.



Public Trust



Lesson #1: Procedural Justice



“I went to Brooklyn Criminal Court before Red Hook, horrible place, horrible. They should do a tour there, just so people could see. I wouldn't wish that place on my enemy. Red Hook is 100 times better...[The Red Hook judge] allows you to speak...he likes to interact and get your opinion. I don't get the feeling that he's one of those judges that that looks down on people. To me, he's fair, I'll put it that way. **The court officers treat you like a person too, not like that other court over there.** I learned that there's two different types of ways that courts treat people. You have these obnoxious goons and then you have those that look at you like, ok, you made a mistake.”

Lesson #2: The Importance of Training

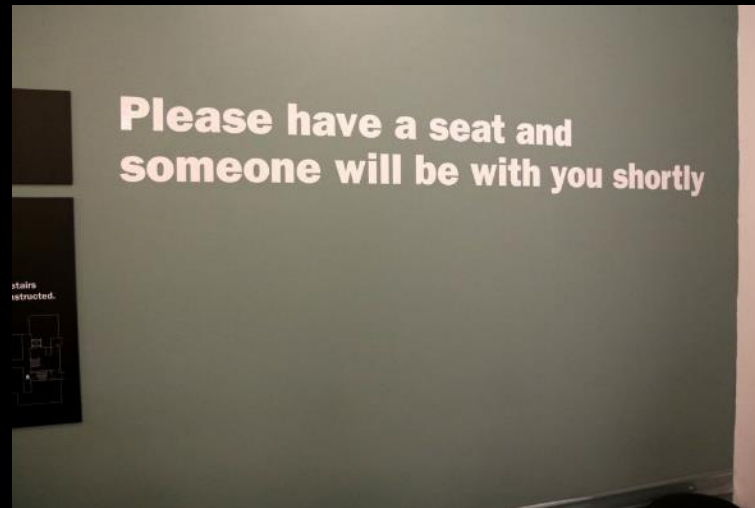


The Justice Center provided intensive training up-front to staff on community engagement techniques

Lesson #3: Architecture Matters



Many courthouses are designed to intimidate users; tweaking architecture can send powerful non-verbal messages.



FLOOR	Room Name	Room Number
2	ADMINISTRATION	202
	INTAKE	206
	DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION	209
	KINGS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY	208
	GED CLASSROOM	207
	GROUP ROOM	205
1	MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM	101
	COURTROOM	100
	HELP CENTER	102
	COURT CLERK / CASHIER	
	VICTIM SERVICES	
	LEGAL AID SOCIETY	104
	YOUTH COURT ROOM	109
L	YOUTH/COMMUNITY PROGRAMS 1	LL1
	YOUTH/COMMUNITY PROGRAMS 2	LL2
	COMMUNITY SERVICE	LL3
	MEDIA CENTER	LL4

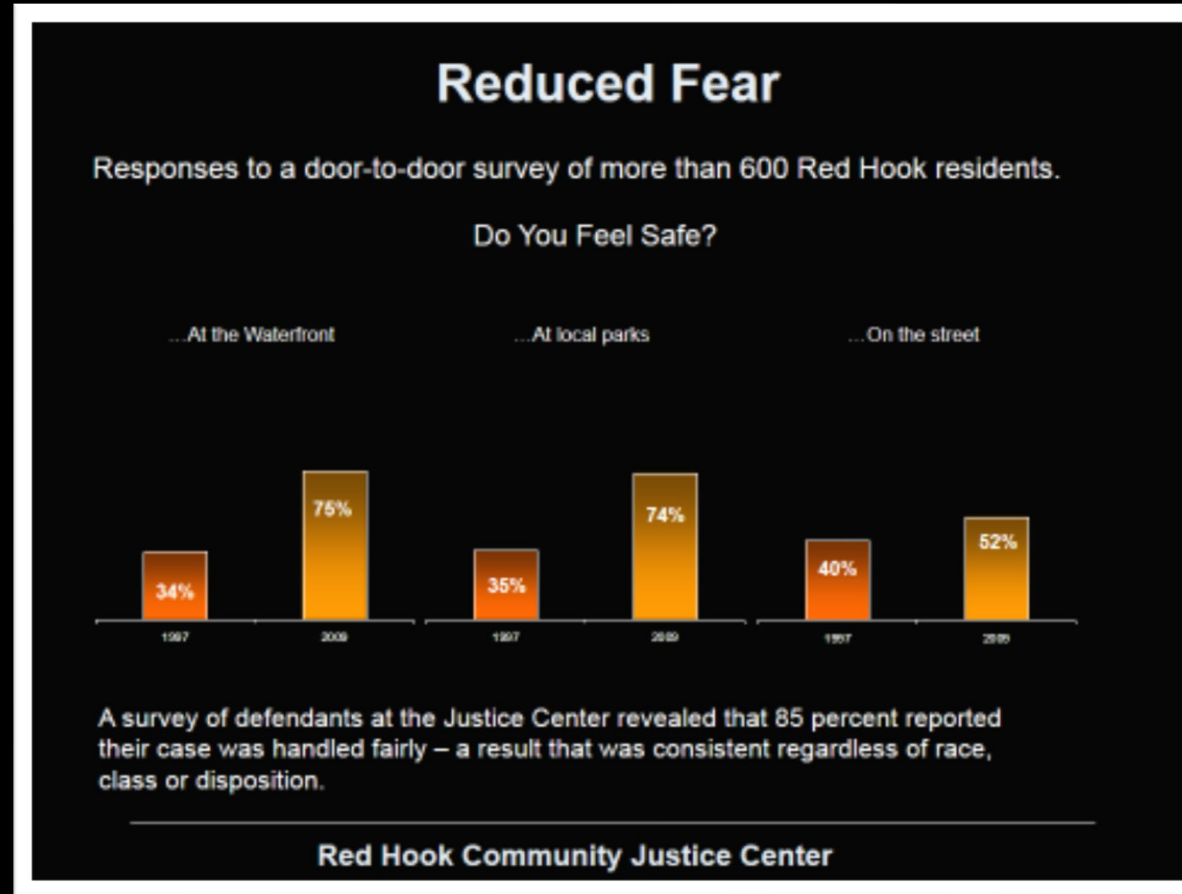
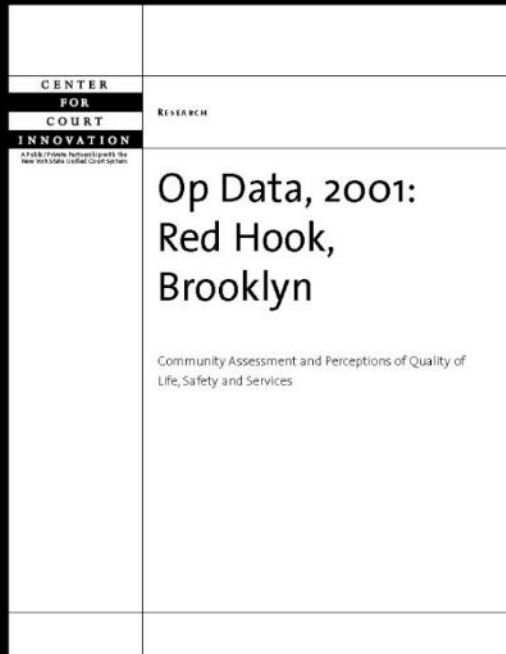
Lesson #4: Mission/Messaging



“Improving relations between the justice system and the local community” has been an explicit part of the rhetoric of the Red Hook Community Justice Center from the start; this mission statement is repeated in almost all of the project’s written materials.

Lesson #5: Measuring Results

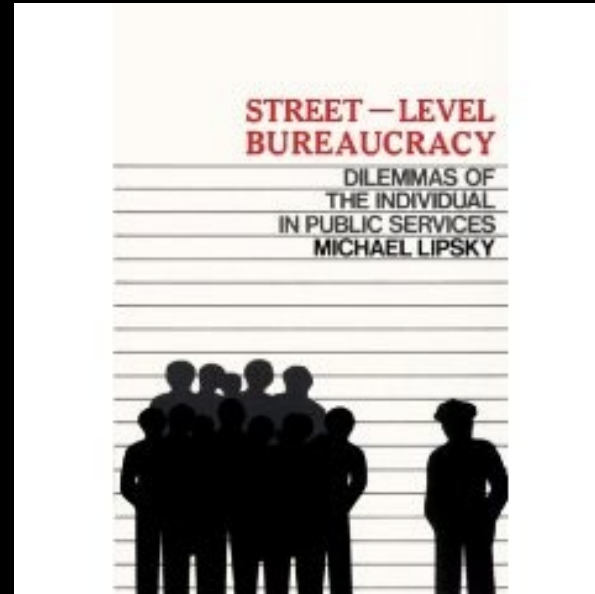
The Justice Center has made a sustained investment in documenting public attitudes through surveys and focus groups.



Lesson #6: Respect the Frontlines

“Policy implementation in the end comes down to the people who actually implement it.”

-- Michael Lipsky



Lesson #7: Don't Overpromise



“We just have to be more honest... We’ve assumed that we would not win public support with modest results.”

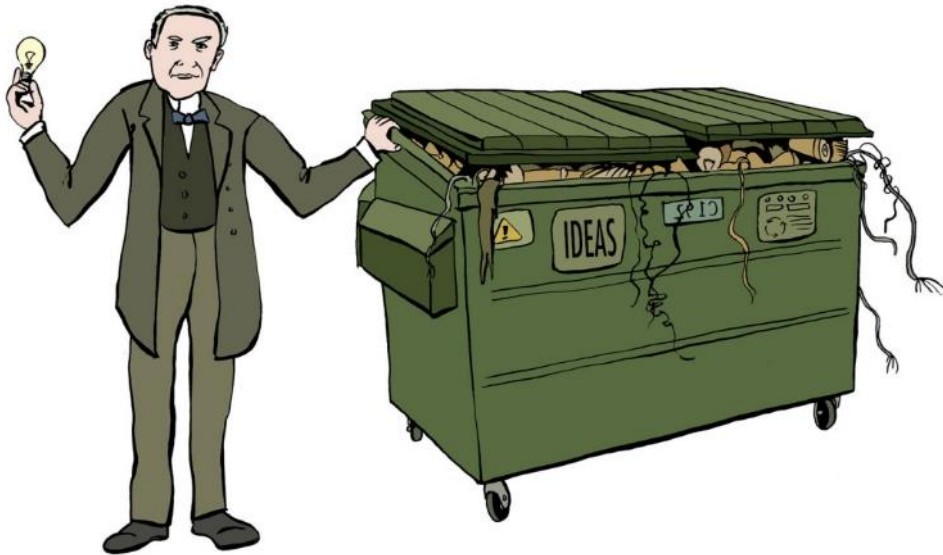
-- Joan Petersilia, Stanford University

Lesson #8: Failure Is Part of the Process

I HAVE NOT FAILED 5,000 TIMES.

I have successfully discovered 5,000 ways that do not work and I do not need to try them again.

—Thomas Edison



“Very seldom do police chiefs say, ‘We had a great idea that just didn’t work. We’re going back to the drawing board to do it differently.’ That’s what a scientist would say without batting an eye, but a police chief often doesn’t feel that he or she has that kind of latitude.”

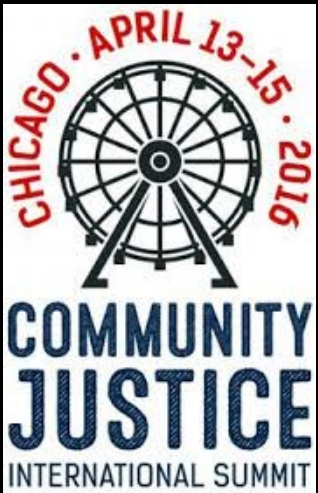
-- Michael Scott, University of Wisconsin Law School

Lesson #9: The Case for Radical Incrementalism

“Epidemics seldom end with miracle cures. Most of the time in the history of medicine, the best way to end disease was to build a better sewer and get people to wash their hands. 'Merely chipping away at the problem around the edges' is usually the very best thing to do with a problem; keep chipping away patiently and, eventually, you get to its heart. To read the literature on crime before it dropped is to see a kind of dystopian despair: we'd have to end poverty, or eradicate the ghettos, or declare war on the broken family, or the like, in order to end the crime wave. The truth is, a series of small actions and events ended up eliminating a problem that seemed to hang over everything. **There was no miracle cure, just the intercession of a thousand small sanities.**”



-- Adam Gopnik,
The New Yorker



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