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From Barbarized to Disneyfied: Viewing 1990s New York City Through Eve Dallas, J.D. Robb's Futuristic Homicide Detective

Abstract:

In 2058 New York, police detective Eve Dallas, the protagonist of J.D. Robb's futuristic murder mystery series *In Death*, is actually a throwback. In the first book, *Naked in Death*, Dallas's character is established largely as a personification of 1980s New York—a battered, but indomitable city struggling to curb crime, one haunted by a dark past. But the gritty world she represents comes face to face with a powerful capitalist New York when she encounters her eventual romantic partner, Roarke, the billionaire head of a multi-national corporation. In placing these vastly disparate New Yorks into the same narrative, Robb's novel challenges the "spiritual renewal" story that Mayor Giuliani and others had created to explain the sudden drop in New York's crime wave after 1993. Unlike that diachronic story—a fallen city redeemed by its leaders' adoption of corporate management practices—Robb insists on a tale of two cities, where New York's "barbaric" pre-1993 past and Disneyfied post-1993 future both exist in the same moment and defy any claim that New York was saved by corporate capitalism.

Keywords: J.D. Robb, futuristic New York, corporate capitalism narrative

1. New York, Spiritual Renewal, and the Continuing Tale of Two Cities

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, New York appeared to be reeling under an unprecedented crime wave. In the press, it was spoken of as a “barbarized city” (Hamill 62). *Time* did a cover story in 1990 called “The Decline of New York” that included a poll on how the residents saw the city and found that people considered it dangerous and dirty, with no improvement in sight. In 1991, William Stern claimed in *Forbes* that gentrification had come to a halt because “[t]he best and the brightest now think three or four times before coming to New York” (154). Post 1993, this media coverage shifted dramatically as crime rates seemed to fall, nose-diving after the mid-1990s to such an extent that the phenomenon has been termed a “crime crash.” [1] Suddenly, New York became the city hailed by John Marks and Jack Egan as a “national model for how cities resurrect themselves”, the city that Andrew Karmen cites as appearing in *Fortune* magazine’s 1997 list as “the most favorable place to do business” and one he terms “Disneyfied” because of a huge rise in tourism as a result of a drop in the fear of crime (9). One explanation for this comeback is the one that was offered by the new mayor elected in 1993, Rudolph Giuliani, and his Police Commissioners (first William Bratton and then Howard Safir): they cleaned up the city through new management tactics. In other words, theirs is a diachronic narrative of New York: a fallen city redeemed over time by the Mayor’s office and a revolutionized New York Police Department. Several scholars like Steven D. Levitt, Benjamin Bowling, and Andrew Karmen have disputed this narrative by questioning the objectivity of media reports, disputing the meaning of crime statistics, and offering new socio-economic interpretations of what was occurring in that time in New York and across the U.S. [2] This period and the contradictions it poses is represented in the romantic suspense series *In Death* by J. D. Robb (a.k.a. Nora Roberts). Despite being set in the year 2058, the series relies heavily on New York’s crime-wave era for its backdrop and presents an alternative to Giuliani’s “spiritual renewal” story.

While New York assumes the status of a character in many movies and books, Robb’s protagonist, Eve Dallas, a homicide detective, actually embodies it in this series. A decade-old veteran of the force, Dallas tirelessly polices the city, mimicking its non-stop nature. Driven, gutsy, and used to violence (though far from blasé about it), she brims with a cold energy that she channels into catching murderers and other lowlifes, yet she displays unexpected bouts of kindness, another evocation of New York’s reputation for urban ruthlessness peppered with rare moments of softness. But a more significant expression of this mirroring of the city in Dallas is her evolving economic and social identity, which is intriguingly dualistic as well. Through Dallas, whose personal and work identity Robb constructs as a personification of a battered New York that repeatedly has to deal with a wealthy New York, she challenges Giuliani et al.’s diachronic narrative of a once-wild city that has been saved by neo-liberal policies.

In imitation of New York's reputation of always harboring two cities—current mayor Bill DeBlasio ran his campaign on the promise that the gap between the New York of the rich and that of the poor would be narrowed—Dallas ends up coping with these twin worlds almost from the first novel in the long-running series. As a police officer, she is a working class citizen who sees herself as blue collar and whose professional life unfolds in that milieu; by becoming the lover and eventual wife of a billionaire industrialist, however, she encounters the city's obscenely wealthy world and its occasionally criminal extravagances. Moreover, while she is an unwilling participant in this ritzy world, she slowly adopts the work strategies of its corporate czars, bringing the two New Yorks even closer, traveling from one to another both spatially and mentally. In creating this dualism in the protagonist, Robb offers us a New York that is always a patchwork of the disparities resulting from class war rather than one whose violent, seemingly working class past has been neatly replaced by a peaceful, law-abiding consumer capitalist heaven.

2. Working Class New York and Crime

Robb first positions Dallas as belonging to an unglamorous world through the personal history she gives her. Dallas has had an abusive childhood with a deadbeat criminal father, followed by orphanhood in an indifferent foster care system, leading to PTSD. In fact, her last name derives from the city in which she was found as a wounded orphan, making her a true urban refugee and street dweller. Dallas recounts that she received a very basic public school education and came to New York to be a police officer as soon as she could. She has been a functional workaholic for years, with little time or inclination for socializing outside of her job. When we meet her in *Naked in Death* (1995), the first book in the series, she is living alone and has nothing in her apartment that makes it seem more than a bare bones space in which to sleep between exhausting shifts at work. She doesn't cook, snacks on junk food, and often survives on coffee. Her clothing is utilitarian and she seems to have neither time nor money to spend on self-care beyond showering and trimming her own hair. It is a working class existence by profession and by lifestyle choice.

When Dallas starts to associate with a billionaire she meets in *Naked in Death*, the gap between her inherited (and chosen) class identity and his world is sharply drawn. Several scenes establish how she is made aware of her class (or lack thereof). For instance, take this confrontation with Roarke's butler in which she tells him to "pull the stick out of [his] ass" and explain why he treats her like "some sort of embarrassing rodent":

Shock turned Summerset's face paper white. "I'm not comfortable with crude manners, Lieutenant Dallas. Obviously you are."

"They fit me like old slippers."

"Indeed." Summerset drew himself up. "Roarke is a man of taste, of style,

of influence. He has the ear of presidents and kings. He has escorted women of unimpeachable breeding and pedigree.”
“And I’ve got lousy breeding and no pedigree.” She would have laughed if the barb hadn’t stuck so close to the heart. (290-91)

Eve’s working class identity is thus an inalienable part of how Robb portrays her. Like a significant portion of the city’s population, she is a salaried worker with little sophistication and a great deal of the city’s street smarts and attitude. She knows nothing about classical music but enjoys action-packed narratives, views haute cuisine with healthy apprehension while hoarding candy, and lacks a grasp of metaphorical and poetic language and canonical literature but is comfortable with physical and verbal altercations. Robb also paints Dallas as one of the hoi-polloi through her professional life of cleaning up the city. Here’s another encounter with the above butler when she has arrived at Roarke’s mansion after a violent store robbery:

“May I take your coat?”
She [...] thought she caught a flicker of smug condescension in those inscrutable eyes. Eve shrugged out of her jacket, watched him take the leather somewhat gingerly between his manicured fingers.
Hell, she’d gotten most of the blood off it. (68-9)

In other words, Dallas is somehow marked by the darkness of the streets and the lowlives she meets on a routine basis: drug dealers, con artists, flashers, petty thieves, street hookers, and murderers.

It is through this professional topos that Robb further develops Dallas’s working class identity; her construction of New York City as backdrop to Dallas’s work in several novels, including *Naked in Death*, is particularly worth comment in the context of the crime wave narrative with which this article began. Specifically, Robb cements the plebeian nature of Dallas’s existence by setting up her work life in a New York that is ostensibly of the future (2058) but often reflects the late 1980s and early 1990s (the decades of the crime wave), when articles like the one by Hamill mentioned above lamented a devolving New York, the apple that had rotted to the core. In other words, Dallas’s New York is often grungy and raving, evoking the dangerous city described in the 1990 *Time* article “Decline of New York.” In it, Joelle Attinger wrote,

Last year 1,905 people were murdered in New York, more than twice as many as in Los Angeles. In the first five months of this year, 888 homicides were committed, setting a pace that will result in a new record if it goes unchecked. [...] This summer, in one eight-day period, four children were killed by stray gunshots as they played on the sidewalks, toddled in their grandmother’s kitchens or slept soundly in their own beds. Six others have been wounded since late June.

Robb evokes this 1990 city in three ways: through an off-stage shooting incident Dallas was involved in, the serial killer case she is handling, and in descriptions of New York's neighborhoods.

Naked in Death begins with a recounting of a domestic violence altercation in which Dallas has killed a man who had battered his wife, then locked himself in with their daughter and murdered her while high on drugs. She describes how

[h]e'd used the kitchen knife to slice her to pieces [...] There was so much blood. She was so small, but there was so much blood. On the floor, on the wall, all over him. I could see it was still dripping off the knife. Her face was turned toward me. Her little face, with big blue eyes. Like a doll's [...] There was blood dripping off the knife, and splattered all over him, and he kept coming. So I looked in his eyes, right in his eyes. And I killed him. (106-08)

The incident closely resembles a real one that made headlines in 1990, when a Queens man (a recent immigrant from the Midwest) lost his temper with his six-day old son, "chopped up the infant and threw him to [his] German shepherd[.] When the cops arrived, there was [nothing] left of the [child] except the blood [on the] floor" (Hamill 61).

Apart from this gory tale of an innocent's murder, Dallas's primary case in *Naked in Death* involves violence against prostitutes committed in a manner that harks back to the murderous environment of late 80s run-down New York as reported in the *Time* article and other sources, and conjures up the specter of working class crime. In fact, Robb's descriptions of the shooting deaths of the prostitutes so strongly evoke the 1990 news coverage of New York by people like Attinger and Hamill that a reader familiar with that coverage could be excused for thinking that this case is actually set in that crime wave, almost always portrayed in contemporary media reports as an inexplicable pathology. It seems likely that Robb is borrowing from journalists like Attinger—declaimer of the city's moribund state in the 80s—in portraying Dallas's professional life as marked by the fallout of such madness. She is faced with a serial killer of licensed prostitutes, many of whom are shot to death with guns that have been banned since 2023, guns commonly used by "urban gangs and drug dealers" in the previous century (145). At one point, a character even describes the serial killings as "twentieth-century weapons, twentieth-century crimes, with twentieth-century motives" (85). The case thus calls to her mind a grimmer New York, one that lasted into the novel's fictional turn of the millennium until the advent of a socio-political crisis termed the "Urban Wars" led to a gun ban (49). Dallas even states that before guns were banned "there were over ten thousand deaths and injuries from guns in the borough of Manhattan alone" in the year 2016 (279).

But even as the mention of the historic gun-ban is meant to suggest a break from New York's violent criminal past in the novel's fictional universe, a past that is being temporarily resurrected in 2058 by these old-fashioned murders, Robb's descriptions of the city further suggest that that

past is not quite history. In other words, though the crime that Dallas encounters in this novel is supposed to be an aberrant throwback in a New York that has become more civilized, much of the 2058 New York that Dallas encounters during her work hours resembles the representations of early 1990s New York, too: cacophonous and dirty. Attinger, for instance, said that over the 1980s, when New York seemed to be booming economically, another side of it was undergoing decay, leading to the eventual chaos of 1990:

Since 1980, cutbacks in federal aid have cost New York billions, with funds for subsidized housing alone dropping \$16 billion. Despite a series of state and local levies that now place New Yorkers among the most heavily taxed citizens in the nation, the city has never recovered from those setbacks.

Most brutally hit have been basic social services [...] Even the basic rudiments of civil behavior seemed to evaporate along with the glitter of the boom times. [...] The streets have become public rest rooms for both people and animals, even though failure to clean up after a pet dog carries fines of up to \$100. What was once the bustle of a hyperkinetic city has become a demented frenzy.

Compare this to the description of a stretch of Broadway Avenue that Dallas calls Prostitutes Walk, where two of the murdered prostitutes lived:

Broadway was noisy and crowded, a party where rowdy guests never left. Street, pedestrian, and sky traffic were miserable, choking the air with bodies and vehicles...Even at this hour there was steam rising from the stationary and portable food stands that offered everything from rice noodles to soydogs for the teeming crowds... Eve double-parked and, skirting a man who smelled worse than his bottle of brew, stepped onto the sidewalk...She was propositioned twice before she reached the door. (Naked in Death 3-4)

As with Attinger's New York, Robb's bears the signs of moral and physical decay. Yet the area is only a bit run-down, and homicide is not quite a routine happening for the neighborhood, so the murder Dallas is there to investigate appears to be the harbinger of the spread of a criminal impulse normally limited to historically dangerous sections—precisely as Attinger proclaimed was happening in late 1980s New York: “[D]eadly violence, once mostly confined to crime-ridden ghetto neighborhoods that the police wrote off as free-fire zones, is now lashing out randomly at anyone, anytime, even in areas once considered relatively safe.”

We see one such “crime-ridden ghetto” (from where violence can allegedly start “lashing out randomly” to “relatively safe” zones) in *Naked in Death* when Dallas ends up in the much seedier section of Prostitutes Walk because of another murder:

A few months of working this neighborhood, and a cop stopped needing to puke at the sight of a corpse. Chemi-heads, the street LCs [Licensed Companions], and just plain bad asses liked to wale [sic] on each other along these nasty blocks as much for entertainment as for business profits. From the smell that had greeted her outside, someone had died out there recently, or the recycle trucks hadn't been through in the last week. (81)

It is a New York on the verge of a breakdown caused by the decline of civic services—stinky, irrational, predatory, one similar to what Attinger described for *Time* in 1990:

[C]rime, fueled by the drug epidemic, has jumped 25%. Since 1987, the number of street sweepers has been slashed from 1,400 to 300, trash collections in midtown Manhattan have been reduced by a third, and what used to be daily rounds in the outer boroughs have been reduced to twice a week. Epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis and syphilis have pushed the health-care system to the breaking point. As many New Yorkers are waiting for public housing as there are existing units, leading occupants to double or triple up in a frantic bid for shelter.

In *Naked in Death*, the second prostitute who is killed isn't living in public housing but her internal monolog before the murderer arrives tells us that she has little money to spare and lives in the seedy area of Prostitutes Walk in a tiny apartment because she has no other options as a new immigrant to New York. Repeatedly, then, the novel creates a *mise-en-scène* of crime-wave New York, with its attendant social and economic depredation.

3. Corporate Capital New York

Though Dallas is completely mired in the run down New York (evocative of the 1980s) when *Naked in Death* begins and continues to be so through the series, her move toward couplehood opens the window to a world of bourgeois privilege that exists *simultaneously* in the same city. In this, Robb chooses a different path to portraying New York compared to the one-sided news coverage of the 1980s, which downplayed the presence of the wealthy elite in favor of portraying the city as overrun by barbarians (see endnote [2] again). The places and people Dallas encounters because of her lover (and later, husband), Roarke, represent a very different New York than of her usual acquaintance. When she first visits Roarke in *Naked in Death*, here is how his mansion at 222 Central Park West is described:

Its four stories towered over the frosted trees of Central Park. It was one of the old buildings, close to two hundred years old, built of actual stone... There was lots of glass, and lights burning gold behind the windows. There was also a security gate, behind which evergreen shrubs and elegant trees were artistically arranged. Even more impressive than the magnificence of architecture and

landscaping was the quiet. She heard no city noises here. No traffic snarls, no pedestrian chaos. Even the sky overhead was subtly different than the one she was accustomed to farther downtown. Here, you could actually see stars rather than the glint and gleam of transports. (67-8)

Roarke epitomizes a successful corporate capitalist, and in his orbit, she inhabits a different New York from the one in crisis described earlier. This New York is wealthy, high-tech, well ensconced in the twenty-first century, removed from the dirtier city. When she visits his Midtown headquarters, it's markedly different from the grime of Prostitutes Walk:

Slick, shiny, sleek, the building itself spread one hundred fifty stories into the Manhattan sky. It was an ebony lance, glossy as wet stone, ringed by transport tubes and diamond-bright skyways.

No tacky Glida-Grills on this corner...No street hawkers with their hot pocket PCs dodging security on their colorful air boards. Out-of-doors vending was off limits on this bite of Fifth. The zoning made things quieter, if a little less adventuresome. Inside, the main lobby took up a full city block, boasting three tony restaurants, a high-priced boutique, a handful of specialty shops, and a small theater that played art films.

The white floor tiles were a full yard square and gleamed like the moon. Clear glass elevators zipped busily up and down, people glides zigzagged left and right, while disembodied voices guided visitors to various points of interest or, if there was business to be conducted, the proper office. (86-7)

As the description shows, Dallas's New York contains twin worlds simultaneously, that of the lethal Prostitutes Walk and of glossy corporate consumerism. While this has been true of the real New York as well, such descriptions of sanitized prosperity were scant in the media before 1993; they began to appear everywhere *after* 1994. But Robb opts to ignore that 1993/1994 divide. She takes the mid- to late 90s rapturous media descriptions of the city and its alleged miraculous resurrection and places them smack alongside the bloody murders that suggest pre-1993 New York. In this, she creates a far different narrative than people like Hamill, who in 1990 bemoaned the New York of the crime wave era as an "American Calcutta" (and dismissed any other aspect of it with a brief "[t]he rich, of course, live well-defended lives") and Vince Beiser, who in 1995's "Why the Big Apple Feels Safer," described it at length as shiny and safe:

In Manhattan, police are also getting a hand from so-called business-improvement districts (BIDs), groups that collect fees from firms in a specific area to provide extra sanitation, lighting and security services. Since they began in 1988, BIDs have multiplied to cover much of midtown and downtown Manhattan. The extra lighting and hundreds of security guards have had a clear impact in formerly crime-plagued areas such as Times Square and Grand Central Station. (3)

As I stated earlier, Giuliani, who had been elected mayor in 1993, took credit for this post-May 1994 shine, attributing it to the “zero tolerance” policy he had adopted along with his police commissioner, Bratton (formerly the Chief of New York Transit Police) (Vitale 101). Their cleaned-up city, they insisted, was vastly different from the horrific one of the 80s and early 90s due to the tactics they adopted. Articles like “New York New York” (1997) waxed eloquent on the rise of this Disneyfied New York:

Graffiti have all but vanished from subways; streets are visibly cleaner, and Times Square, once the city’s defining eyesore, is now a corporate playground. This month, MTV began shooting its daily news show from a glass box on the square--unthinkable even five years ago, when prostitutes, drug dealers, and windblown trash would have made a depressing backdrop [...] After years of doldrums, the city’s overall economy has come roaring back to life. The bull market may be benefiting 100 million Americans, but the center of it is Wall Street, and the Street is booming, attracting companies and people from all over the world. [...] Similarly, Deutsche Bank, Germany’s biggest financial institution, has gone on a hiring spree in New York and now occupies a huge new tower in midtown Manhattan.

This narrative disregards the reality that *Naked in Death* acknowledges: spaces for privileged groups that had occupied the top of the economic ladder existed before and after the crime crash (while the poor, especially people of color, struggled in many neighborhoods pre- and post-1993). While it suited the Mayor and the NYPD to claim that a once-fallen city had now become a safe zone for natives and tourists of every stripe, the city’s structure had always included economic inequalities, with obscenely wealthy living alongside poverty-line residents (Bagli). As noted by Karmen and admitted even by Attinger, 1980s New York was not entirely an apocalyptic wasteland; there was plenty of wealth even as many areas of New York were in crisis:

High finance and a booming real estate market transported New York to a paroxysm of unbridled capitalism, with all its attendant glitz and excess. At the height of the bull market, 60,000 new jobs were being created annually, luring droves of hyperambitious baby boomers to the canyons of Wall Street and midtown Manhattan. Nicknamed “the Erector set,” a stable of real estate developers transformed the cityscape, throwing up 50 million sq. ft. of glistening office monoliths within Manhattan alone. New fortunes upended the city’s social lineage, shoving Rockefeller and Astor aside for Trump, Steinberg and Kravis. The new barons redefined wealth beyond Jay Gatsby’s wildest dreams, ensconcing themselves in palatial aeries groaning with old masters and nouveau exorbitance. (Attinger)

Both the “huge new tower in midtown Manhattan” that Marks and Egan declare a sign of the new and improved 1990s New York and the “glistening office monoliths” and “[n]ew fortunes” of “barons” living in “palatial aeries” of Attinger’s 1980s New York exist in the city in which Dallas

encounters Roarke as a suspect in the serial killing of prostitutes. In other words, Robb brings the two New Yorks (of Have-Lots and Have-Nots) to a head in the same time period even if the media and Mayor had made them seem like two distinct historical phases in the life of New York City; for Dallas, it is not time but space that separates the two, with Roarke's world distanced from places like Prostitutes Walk by a car-ride and high-tech security.

In sum, just as the actual city in the 1980s saw a combination of Have-Lots and Have-Nots, with those at the bottom of the economic ladder perpetrating and suffering from the worst crimes while the wealthiest lived well (though there were criminals from that class, too—more on that later), *Naked in Death* contains both worlds, something the media reports in the late 80s and early 90s often ignored. So unlike the “spiritual renewal” narrative pushed in the press by Mayor Giuliani and Police Commissioner Bratton—a diachronic one of an 80s crime wave New York followed by the 90s' crime crash and a cleaned-up New York—the novel presents these New Yorks as synchronic, with one existing side by side with the other, a fact that Robb underlines by having Dallas's feet planted in both worlds personally and professionally.

Starting with *Naked in Death* and continuing in the novels that follow, Dallas's work takes her back and forth between these New Yorks. She works in downtown Manhattan and all over the city, including Queens, and ends up living in Roarke's Upper West side mansion (though she expresses more bafflement at the glossier city and its upper class when she encounters them than she does toward the dirty city of honest criminals). Even more interestingly, Robb uses her to suggest that the two worlds are not all that different in terms of criminal potential, flouting the barbarized-to-Disneyfied narrative in this additional way as well. Dallas discovers that the first victim in *Naked in Death* was murdered by her grandfather, a right-wing old-money Republican Senator who had sexually abused her and her aunt; additionally, the serial killer of the other prostitutes turns out to be his aide. The senator's crimes are framed against the backdrop of his hypocritical crusade to police private morality and repeal the ban on guns, and his seemingly gentlemanly aide is shown to be a power hungry sociopath with a homicidal contempt for women. While it is possible that Robb chose these characters as murderers under the influence of the extensive airtime Karmen says the 80s- early 90s media often gave to cases in which privileged people killed someone, the murder investigation's conclusion emphasizes that New York contains many cities, and the poor, squalid one does not equate with crime (as articles like Hamill's had suggested) nor the rich, sanitized one with rectitude (Karmen 58-59). [3] These cities are contemporaneous rather than chronological (unlike what the “spiritual renewal” narrators argue about the crime crash), and their synchronic existence points out the structural inequalities that New York contained. Affluence is not absent in Robb's New York as it was in media coverage of the city during the crime wave—it is at the heart of its persistent problems and Dallas never overlooks that in her cases.

This is not to suggest that Dallas is a speaker for a specific class position. She functions to remind us that New York's dual nature continues to exist under the adoption of neoliberal philosophy. While compassionate and tolerant of petty criminals (unlike Giuliani, Bratton, and his successor, Howard Safir, with their "zero tolerance" and "broken window" theories), she is also independent and data-driven, calling to mind Bratton and Giuliani's adoption of a set of statistics-focused business management strategies that are now termed "COMPSTAT". [4] Bowling explains COMPSTAT culture as follows:

[R]egular 7am meetings at headquarters in which computer generated maps of crime and police activity are displayed on huge screens to an audience of up to 200 people including police brass, district and US attorneys, parole, schools, Port Authority police and the media (Bratton 1998: 232; Gorta 1998). In these meetings (likened by a police cartoonist to being in front of a firing squad), the Chiefs grill precinct commanders in detail about the 'hot spots'—what's going on, and what they are doing about it. At the same time resources and responsibility were decentralized to precinct level with more direct accountability to headquarters (see also Silverman 1996; Allen and Wright 1997). (543)

Karmen further notes that COMPSTAT numbers became the department's equivalent of a corporation's fixation on profit and loss statistics and methods meant to rapidly raise the former and minimize the latter through data-management and exchange. Dallas embodies this model to a great extent, reporting to her commanding officer periodically during a key case, coordinating the deployment of multiple subordinates to various duties, and holding regular meetings to share information and update strategies during every investigation. Giuliani and Bratton's corporate style of managing work and getting results is thus a visible element of her professional life over the course of the series. While Dallas is known to be a dogged, meticulous cop even before she meets Roarke, a corporate wunderkind, she can be seen to increasingly adopt a COMPSTAT-style model of policing after meeting him, partly as a result of his sophisticated off-grid computer network that allows her access to information and partly due to his own management style. In other words, she accepts Roarke's vast resources and business acumen to both crunch data for effective decision-making and to apprehend suspects. She also begins mobilizing larger tactical teams with every novel, adding to her crime-solving unit in a manner that mimics COMPSTAT's (corporate-culture based) strategy of making separate bureaus cooperate, share data, and aggressively identify, predict, and prevent criminal activity.

Dallas also reflects the "brand" that the mayor and Bratton created for the NYPD in keeping with the above philosophy. Her traits and work style contain echoes of Giuliani and Bratton's 1994 rhetoric that they were a new administration and police force, an ass-kicking hardworking bunch cleaning up the mess that their predecessors and bleeding heart liberals had made of the city (Karmen 87-92). Karmen describes that NYPD culture as follows:

A new philosophy replaced the former bureaucratic mindset: manage the NYPD like a corporation. Set crime reduction goals at headquarters. Hold local precincts responsible for meeting performance standards. Imbue commanding officers with an entrepreneurial spirit and encourage them to take initiatives and to reject the old organizational culture in which supervisors responded with caution and resisted change. (94)

This “new” NYPD brand of a goal oriented and efficient police force is visible in how Robb portrays Dallas. She is incorruptible and does not put up with anything coming between her and her investigation, even if it is her chief of police—who is discovered to be corrupt by the end of the first novel and ousted. [5]

While these elements show the adoption of a corporate-inflected management style on the rise at that time, the series maintains Dallas’s commitment to a suspicion of the wealthy world, both the one where people have inherited money and power and the one where corporate capitalism has created new moguls. In fact, before deducing the actual killers in *Naked in Death*, Dallas suspects Roarke of being the murderer because of his mysterious past, a conviction strengthened by seeing his collection of banned weapons, hearing his libertarian views on government, and suspecting that his wealth might make him inclined to commit crimes without fear of reprisals. His class position as bourgeoisie par excellence and her low opinion of it is pretty evident (Kamble 53-54). She is equally skeptical of class hierarchies when the senator insists that even though his granddaughter was a prostitute, she could not have possibly associated with the other murdered hookers; on hearing this, she thinks to herself in disbelief, “[s]o, prostitutes had class systems” (114). When she arrests him for rape and murder, she does it on the Senate floor where his patrician privilege is on display and when his aide attacks her in her home, she pummels him as if he is the embodiment of the deadbeat father who raped her and the father who chopped up the child in the incident at the beginning of the novel—the city is home to all manner of criminals, none mapping neatly onto a class position or group nor confined to an era. Dallas does not disallow the possibility of a wealthy perpetrator even as she begins to inhabit the rarified circles of upper class New York and takes on some of its business management practices.

The series suggests that crime and wealth are twin inhabitants, not stages in the city’s evolution; barbarized New York has also always been Disneyfied, but it’s an on-going fairy tale with a perilous happy ending. As in *Naked in Death*, Dallas continues to traverse New York’s twin cities in later cases in the series, and she serves to solidify the impression that there were (and are) two sides to New York, with criminals inhabiting both. Dallas’s work and personal life serves to challenge Giuliani and Bratton’s story of NYC even though she is cop trying to clean up the city. If Giuliani and Bratton created the “spiritual renewal” myth of New York, one reiterated by news media who wanted to tell a tale of improvement without questioning the narrative’s truthfulness,

Robb's depiction of New York counters the linear chronology of a fallen city redeemed by a corporate religion.

Endnotes

[1] There is no disputing that there was a crime crash. Crime rates, including murders, rose in the 80s, peaked in 1990, declined slightly until 1993, and then plummeted (Karmen 98).

[2] Levitt argues for other, unrelated reasons that might have caused the drop in crime, such as a larger police force, a drop in the crack epidemic, mass incarceration, and the impact of *Roe v. Wade* legalizing abortion. Andrew Karmen, in his review of the media coverage of the crime wave and the 90s crime crash, cites Attinger's article as one of many hysterical pronouncements of the city's demise and critiques this trend of making the entire city seem to be engulfed in violence and downplaying its wealth. Karmen locates the date for the start of the crash and also casts a doubtful eye on post crime-crash articles, such as "New York New York" in *U.S. News and World Report*, that trumpeted the city's resurrection after 1994, downplayed any sign of the persistence of violence, and praised New York's boom (12-13). This cleaner, positively Biblical, story of decline and resurrection is somewhat distant from the truth, Karmen finds—New York experienced violence and crime both before and after the crash, and it also had immense prosperity at both times. It was just the case that before the crash, media coverage gave a limited, even erroneous, impression of the nature of the crimes and made it seem as if New York was a completely fallen city; these reports did not pay much attention to the presence of an extremely elite and cushioned population that enjoyed the city's benefits. Karmen has argued that the 1980s impression of violent crime in New York was erroneous, with most sensational media reports characterizing murders as perpetrated by serial killers and violent offenders when the reality was that robberies, domestic disputes, the drug trade and petty spats led to young underprivileged men of color being victimized by others like them (35). Similarly, after the crash, effusive rejoicing left little room for coverage about persistent social problems (especially race and class-based) that relate to crime, to police brutality, and to how new gentrification was being achieved at the cost of the marginalized (Karmen 11-13). It is not that news reports ignored all signs of continuing troubles. Marks and Egan point out in "New York New York" that "In spite of all the positive changes, the city's comeback has a long way to go. As suggested by the case of Abner Louima, allegedly beaten and sodomized with a wooden stick by police, even the reduction in crime may have its pitfalls. Giuliani points out that police brutality did not start under his administration. But the now notorious line "It's Giuliani time," allegedly uttered by one of the police officers as he was beating Louima, has been used by opponents of the administration."

[3] Hamill talks of the criminal behaviors of panhandlers, "roaming gangs of teenagers," "armies of New York drug addicts," "regiments of the homeless," and other dangerous "derelicts" (62-65).

[4] "Zero tolerance" and "Broken Windows" philosophies advocate crackdowns on any activity that the police see as a gateway to larger offences, with the logic being that curbing petty offences prevents escalation toward worse crimes (Karmen 114).

[5] Bowling and others have noted that the NYPD was deeply mired in dysfunction in the 1980s, including corruption at various levels of the organization (538). *Naked in Death* appears to pointedly treat that as a tradition to which Eve does not belong.

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