

New York Exposed: The Gilded Age Police Scandal that Launched the Progressive Era

By Daniel Czitrom

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On a Sunday morning in early 1892, Reverend Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst ascended to his pulpit at the Madison Square Presbyterian Church in New York and delivered one of the most explosive sermons in the city's history. Municipal life, he charged, was morally corrupt. Vice was rampant. And the city's police force and its Tammany Hall politicians were"a lying, perjured, rum-soaked, and libidinous lot." Denounced by city and police officials as a self-righteous "blatherskite," Parkhurst resolved to prove his case. The bespectacled minister descended his pulpit and in disguise visited gin joints and brothels, taking notes and gathering evidence. Two years later, his findings forced the New York State Senate to investigate the New York Police Department. The Lexow Committee heard testimony from nearly 700 witnesses, who revealed in shocking-and headline-dominating-detail just how deeply the NYPD was involved in, and benefitted from, the vice economy. Parkhurst's campaign had kick-started the Progressive Movement.

New York Exposed offers a narrative history of the first major crusade to clean up Gotham. Daniel Czitrom does full justice to this spellbinding story by telling it within the larger contexts of national politics, poverty, patronage, vote fraud and vote suppression, and police violence. The effort to root out corrupt cops and crooked politicians morphed into something much more profound: a public reckoning over what New York-and the American city-had become since the Civil War.

Animated by as vivid a cast as New York has ever produced, the book's key characters include Police Superintendent Thomas Byrnes and Inspector Alexander "Clubber" Williams, the nation's most famous cops, as well as anarchist revolutionary Emma Goldman, the zealous prosecutor John W. Goff, and an array of politicos, immigrant leaders, labor bosses, prostitutes, show-business entrepreneurs, counterfeiters, and reformers and muckrakers determined to change business as usual. *New York Exposed* offers an unforgettable portrait of a city in a truly transformative moment.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*New York Exposed* takes us back to the rollicking, dangerous, fascinating New York of the 1890s, yet still contains many parallels to and lessons for our own time. Careful and rigorous history, it nonetheless reads like a gripping police procedural, filled with some of the most colorful and outrageous characters of our past." --**Kevin Baker**, author of *The Big Crowd*

"Czitrom offers a walk on the seamy side of Gotham in the 1890s, peopled with brutal cops, corrupt politicians, conniving businessmen, evangelical zealots, exploited immigrants, earnest reformers, and sensationalist media. Using a yellowing 6000 page transcript of an 1894 legislative hearing as his Rosetta Stone, he vividly illuminates the era's nexus of politics and criminality. A tour de force of investigation and interpretation." -- **Mike Wallace**, author of *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for History

"[Czitrom's book] resonates today in echoes of police brutality and corruption, income inequality, restricted immigration, vote suppression, links between evangelicals and politics and, as Professor Czitrom writes, 'the nation's profound fear and distrust of New York City.'" --Sam Roberts, The New York Times Bookshelf

About the Author

Daniel Czitrom is Professor of History at Mount Holyoke College, and the author of *Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan* (North Carolina, 1982). He was the history advisor on BBC America's production of *Coppers*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Darren Custer:

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Daniel Miller:

New York Exposed: The Gilded Age Police Scandal that Launched the Progressive Era can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to place every word into delight arrangement in writing New York Exposed: The Gilded Age Police Scandal that Launched the Progressive Era however doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource details that maybe you can be among it. This great information can easily drawn you into completely new stage of crucial thinking.

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