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# Kelly Can't Cut It on Crime *or* Community

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THE chorus of praise for Mike Bloomberg's pick of Ray Kelly as police commissioner has given the impression that everybody is happy with Ray Kelly's return to NYPD. Uh-uh.

Some of us are afraid that the appointment of Kelly is a throwback to the bad old days of the Dinkins years — when crime was out of control and Mayor Dinkins fancied that "community policing" might drive the thugs off our streets as well as improve police-community relations.

It did neither. Instead, it left aggressive panhandlers in the subways; pesky squeegee people on the streets and menacing beggars in front of the ATMs — all groups the mayor pitied.

Minorities, meanwhile, were not only unsafe in their homes and on the streets but were also virtually absent in the top ranks of the NYPD.

Now, without even a half-hearted effort to recruit a diverse pool of applicants, Bloomberg has tapped Ray Kelly for a reprisal in his old job as police chief of this tough, multiracial town.

I don't get it. The truth is that Ray Kelly was a lightweight police commissioner with no distinctive record in either stamping out crime or safeguarding citizens' civil rights. His *community policing* was all but a joke on the meanest, dope-peddling streets, and his reputation as a disciplinarian of bad cops was hardly noticeable.

Like Dinkins, Commissioner Kelly gave lip service to racial harmony and engaged in publicity charades, like going to black churches for Sunday services, at least around the time he was seeking reappointment to his post.

That outreach to minorities was mostly hype, photo ops and symptomatic of everything thin and gimmickry that was sickening about the Dinkins era. Indeed, when I joined a group of civil-rights leaders to meet with Commissioner Kelly and urge concrete actions to discipline bad cops, he chafed and said he could get that kind of carping criticism on a street corner in Harlem.

Mayor Giuliani thought better about minorities *and* civil rights. He brought in a new team, led by Bill Bratton, to take back our streets from the marauders and the thugs. Rudy introduced equal protection of the law into those dour minority communities, neighborhoods that needed to see and feel cops breathing down the necks of the criminal element. He forced the dregs and the muggers out of the subways. Rudy Giuliani and his police commissioners — Bill Bratton, Howard Safir and Bernie Kerik — did that.

How quickly we forget. Like we have already forgotten Mike Bloomberg's promise to keep Rudy's crime-fighting policies intact.

Bloomberg might've done so by tapping as commissioner Bernie Kerik's top deputy, Joseph Dunne — a veteran top cop who shares the credit with Kerik for striking successes in cutting both crime *and* civilian complaints against cops.



**Joe Dunne: More fit to head NYPD.**

Dunne is genuinely loved by minority and community leaders for his sensitivity for civil rights and his competence as a crime-buster. Last time out, he nearly got the job instead of Kerik — and nonetheless stayed on to help out the winner. But Bloomberg let Dunne get away.

Retirement for the likes of Joseph Dunne, so fit and ready, would not have been an option had Bloomie gone to him, as a mayor-elect should've, and said: "I need your help to keep this city safe."

Now everything seems to be going backwards, spinning out of control. There's been a shocking spike in shootings and homicides over the past several weeks; the thugs and lowlifes are emboldened; they are counting down the days left of Giuliani's and Bernie Kerik's terms in office.

And the mayor-elect who said on the campaign trail he wanted to replicate Giuliani's success in crime-busting quizzically has the top brass at NYPD submitting their resignations and reapplying for their jobs or else putting in their retirement papers. And back in the saddle at the top of NYPD is Ray Kelly, a Dinkins retread.

That's why some of us are frightened that New York is going backward to the bad old days of charade, mediocrity and racial stupidity in policing.

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