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### **Cops and Cocaine : Dowd and The Diaz Organization**

“The story of cops and robbers, see if you can tell one from the other.” The story of the notorious most corrupt cop in New York’s history, Micheal Dowd is elegantly portrayed through Tiller Russel’s documentary film, *The Seven Five*. It embodies the life of a New Yorker in the drug ridden parts of the seventy fifth precinct and the life corruption and gang violence brought to it everyday. Russell, well known for his work in this documentary film, attempts to capture the day to day activities of these corrupt cops through the use of interviews of the various parties involved.

Micheal Dowd started off as an innocent police officer in the 75th precinct of New York, where he went about his daily police duties as he should. As drug related crimes rose, his job as a police officer grew to be grueling and difficult where he would have to handle 200 cases a day. This would snowball into him letting some people go, confiscating their contraband and any money they had but not turning them into jail. Overtime, Dowd and his partner, Ken Eurell, would become power hungry and confiscating drug money for themselves while letting the perpetrators back into the streets. As this escalated they would get involved with Adam Diaz, a notorious cocaine dealer, he would hire them for his services for 4 grand a week. In doing so, Dowd and Eurell would escort large amount of cocaine while in transport, use the police force to crackdown and bust Diaz’s competition, as well as tip off Diaz anytime the police force had any

leads on his organization. Over time, Dowd and Eurell would become Diaz's right hand men where they were deep into the crime syndicate which involved the selling of Pablo Escobar's cocaine in New York. It would later be revealed that a majority of the seventy fifth precinct contained dirty cops who worked with their employers who would be top drug dealers to mafia bosses. This corruption was not new, it would originate from the 1800's where cops would take bribes and take money in order to further their own agendas and views for the city. (Time)

Overtime this would escalate to the high scale corruption that is seen with the 75th precinct and Dowd. Dowd would later become addicted to the cocaine facilitated. This would lead to his eventual demise. The suffolk precinct would later receive a tip on a dirty cop and host an investigation at the 75th. Dowd, dumbfoundedly walks into his own arrest with possession of cocaine on his person. He later did get out on bail and decided to run one more job to get money and get out of the states with his partner Eurell. In doing so, Eurell started to cooperate with the DEA where he would shadow Dowd and eventually turn him into the Feds. Dowd would later be sentenced to 15 years in prison while Eurell walked out a free man.

“The question has been asked at least since Roman times: “Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?” Who guards the guardians?” (Murphy, 1) This has been a lifelong question where we battle to keep the people who are supposed to keep us in check on the straight line. During this time, police corruption was prolific throughout the world allowing for a shift in power in the government as well as the streets as gangs gained more power as they were now backed up by the law. (Campbell & Evans) As illustrated in the late 20th century, some police forces have left a legacy; an unpleasant one. Corruption and scandals riddled the NYPD in the 70's and 80's allowing crime to skyrocket and organized crime syndicates to flourish. This gruesome and

tragic facet of crime has been equivocally explained by Russell in this film. Portraying Dowd as both a cop and a criminal, allows the audience to understand the double life, these “dirty” cops were living and the lengths they go to in order to fulfill their greedy objectives. Russell uses a variety of interviews to portray the corruption that went down during the time. Adam Diaz, the crime boss of the Diaz Organization for whom Dowd worked for, was extensively interviewed as to his intentions for hiring police men for his underground drug dealing business. This allows the audience to see the truth of the actions that occurred during the time. The utilization of “Talking Heads” allows the audience to feel immersed in the film as if the interviewees were speaking to them. This connection strengthens an ethos appeal where many of the facts given are deemed to be credible and trusted due to the strategy Russell uses to connect with his audience. Russell also equips reenactments of the high speed car chases and shootings, while meshing in newscast video from the time. Paired with intense music and flashy graphics this allows the audience to feel immersed in the film to the point where as if they are at the scene experiencing it.

Russell does an amazing job in utilizing audio, graphics, and interview tactics to tell the story of Dowd and the corrupt 75th precinct. He successfully sheds light on an aspect of life which exists throughout the world. Russell invokes and induces a conversation about the possibility of corruption in the world, this allows the audience to apply the events explained today, creating a conversation of corruption in today’s governmental system here in the United States or governmental systems throughout the world. The application of these ideas illustrates the possible changes that should occur in order to secure our overseeing systems. Russell’s focus on the effects of drugs on the community also evoke a conversation about the various effects of the heavy use of drugs in a community. This can be paralleled to today’s opioid crisis where

many do struggle and could eventually spiral into what the cocaine crisis of the 80's and 90's did in New York and to their police departments. Russell's tactics allow for a wide application to many of the current events that do exist today.

### **Works Cited**

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