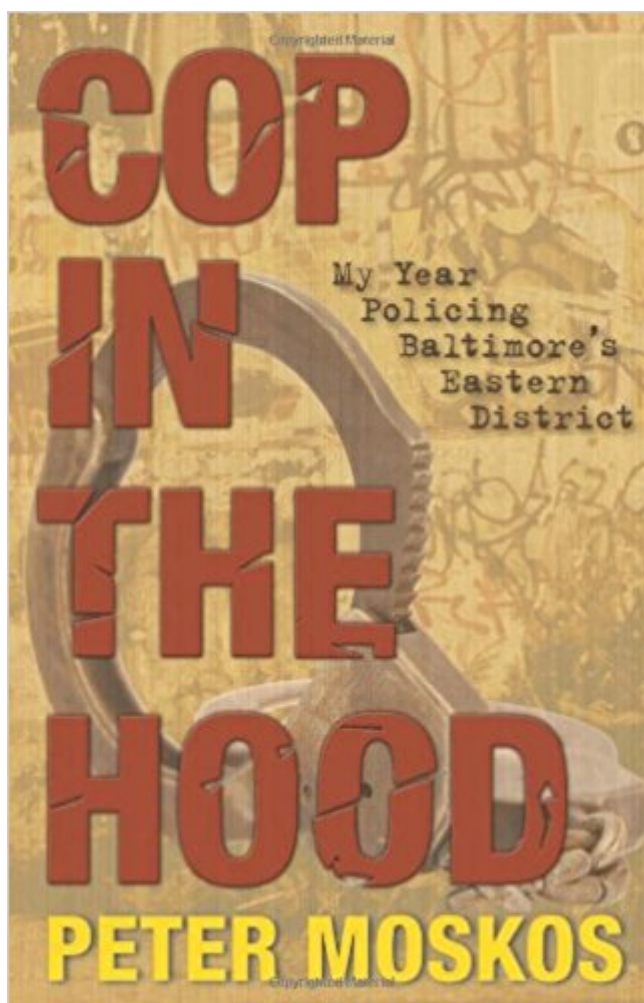


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# Cop In The Hood: My Year Policing Baltimore's Eastern District



## Synopsis

When Harvard-trained sociologist Peter Moskos left the classroom to become a cop in Baltimore's Eastern District, he was thrust deep into police culture and the ways of the street--the nerve-rattling patrols, the thriving drug corners, and a world of poverty and violence that outsiders never see. In *Cop in the Hood*, Moskos reveals the truths he learned on the midnight shift. Through Moskos's eyes, we see police academy graduates unprepared for the realities of the street, success measured by number of arrests, and the ultimate failure of the war on drugs. In addition to telling an explosive insider's story of what it is really like to be a police officer, he makes a passionate argument for drug legalization as the only realistic way to end drug violence--and let cops once again protect and serve. In a new afterword, Moskos describes the many benefits of foot patrol--or, as he calls it, "policing green."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Remarkable. . . . Moskos manages to capture a world that most people know only through the distorting prism of television and film, where police officers are usually portrayed as quixotically heroic or contemptibly corrupt."--Daniel Horan, *Wall Street Journal*"Moskos's overview of policing problems covers everything from arrest quotas, corrupt cops and excess paperwork to the reliance on patrolling in cars. . . . Moskos blends narrative and analysis, adding an authoritative tone to this adrenaline-accelerating night ride that reveals the stark realities of law enforcement."--*Publishers Weekly*"Riveting. . . . [A]n unsparing boys-in-blue procedural that succeeds on its own plentiful--and wonderfully sympathetic--merits."--*Atlantic*"Truly excellent. . . . This is one of the two or three best

conceptual analyses of 'cops and robbers' I have read. It is mandatory reading for all fans of *The Wire* and recommended for everyone else."--Tyler Cowen, *Marginal Revolution*"Moskos provides readers with an inside look into being a cop, just as Ted Conover (*Newjack*) gave readers an inside look into being a prison guard. Both books are equally compelling. Moskos, like Conover, became an insider. . . . Moskos writes with clarity, compassion, insight, and knowledge."--Choice"*Cop In The Hood*, by Peter Moskos offers readers a riveting insight on experience as a police officer in Baltimore, Maryland's crime infested eastern district. . . . The insight of the author coupled with the actual quotes of real police officers provides the reader with an exceptional view of police behaviors and the day-to-day obstacles that officers face while policing the communities they patrol."--Monica J. Massey, *Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Today*"For anyone interested is what being a police officer in Baltimore City is really like, Peter Moskos' in-depth, academic, and realist account in *Cop in the Hood* is a must-read. . . . Whether one agrees or not with Moskos' opinion on drug legalization, one will most certainly enjoy this enlightening and authoritative work on policing a rough area of Baltimore City."--Sean O'Donnell, *Baltimore Republican Examiner*"Anyone interested in the study of disadvantaged neighborhoods should read this book, if only to understand the ways in which police influence the daily life in modern cities."--Andrew V. Papachristos, *American Journal of Sociology*

"A devastating critique of America's failed war on drugs. *Cop in the Hood* is a powerful and truly unique document in the sociology of criminal justice. Using an original blend of personal experience, adroit cultural interpretation, and hard-edged sociological analysis, Moskos sympathetically dissects the social context of the drug users' world, and shows us this tragedy close up from the police perspective."--Orlando Patterson, Harvard University "*Cop in the Hood* is a thoughtful, highly entertaining record of a police officer's year spent patrolling one of the country's toughest urban districts, delivered by Moskos, who wore the uniform. For those who are interested in crime and how things work, and for readers seeking a reasoned look at the war on drugs and its implications, this is the handbook."--George Pelecanos, writer and producer for *The Wire* "*This riveting tale of policing begins honestly and continues with great sincerity and pathos. A sensitive and timely account of the daily trials of police work by someone who knows Baltimore's streets firsthand, Cop in the Hood challenges journalists, social scientists, and others who profess knowledge of the inner city to walk those streets before making bold declarations and righteous claims for policy and redress. A must-read.*"--Sudhir Venkatesh, author of *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets* "*Peter Moskos, a sociologist by training, somewhat inadvertently became a police officer.*

Cop in the Hood is the fortuitous and fascinating result. It gives the reader the real dope from someone with the training and ability to put the street into the larger context. Highly recommended."--Alex Tabarrok, George Mason University, cofounder of marginalrevolution.com

"Cop in the Hood is an extremely valuable study centered on patrolling a drug-infested Baltimore police district. Readers interested in drug policy, criminology, or policing cannot help but to learn a lot from this book. I know that I did, and I am grateful to the author. Many of his insights are eye-opening. His voice is unique and essential in debates concerning drug-policy reforms."--Jim Leitzel, University of Chicago

this is a book written by a John Jay College Professor Peter Moskos , about his 14 months as a Baltimore Police Officer working in the Eastern District. The Eastern District is described as an area of poverty, violence and rife with drug abuse and drug dealing .Moskos provides insight into the inadequate training provided in the Baltimore Academy , low morale of some of the officers and the futility of the war on drugs that is centered on arrests. Moskos compares the drug war to prohibition and makes some interesting and informative comparisons. Peter Moskos makes the case for legalization, regulation and taxation of narcotics to lessen the impact on African -American youth in Baltimore and the financial strain on the Criminal Justice system. Moskos is in favor of more community oriented Policing that favors foot patrol over Radio Motor Patrol and education over legislation in treating drug abuse which he considers a non- violent offense. While there are stories of crime fighting on the streets of Baltimore this book is more an examination of the drug problem with its inherent violence in the City of Baltimore, how it is handled by law enforcement and how the approach should be changed for the better. If you are interested in the problems of the Criminal Justice System and the Police role in it, with a focus on the City of Baltimore you will find this book interesting and informative. Recommended.

A clever book that takes you through one of America's toughest city blocks on the map. The writer gives insight on what it is to police as someone who views themselves as honorable. This book is definitely not a book where you learn the ins and outs of Baltimore. It safely skims over everyday action that can frighten a conservative. It does not include the everyday survival that all inhabitants of Baltimore are required to endure. This book points out a magnificent use of police that can potentially be used to bring the value back to city life. Only three stars because you can not gain access into the hood without real humble people allowing you to use their life as a science project. In "On the Run" the lady tells you why Philly allowed her to write the book. This author writes this

book as if Baltimore inhabitants lacks people willing to talk. Baltimore is a social city. The people who help have names. Not the criminals the old ladies.....not very believable without them.

As a huge fan of HBO's *The Wire*, I picked up this book hoping to reveal more details of policing one of America's most dangerous cities. Unfortunately, *COP IN THE HOOD* never materialized into anything more than a short-timer's rather mundane overview of generic police work that suddenly gets pushed aside to make room for the author's justification for the legalization of drugs and increased foot patrols. As tantalizing as the book's title is, the subtitle is more revealing: *"My Year Policing Baltimore's Eastern District"*. Writing a book about policing "the hood" with only one year of experience had me thinking the author must have gone through hell in that short period of time, but that certainly wasn't the case. Starting with his stint at the academy, Moskos wastes no time "eye rolling" the entire training process as a bureaucratic necessity and a waste of time for the Harvard-educated recruit. While some of Moskos's criticism of the academy process makes complete sense, a negative and somewhat arrogant tone accompanies his words, hinting that his new job as a police officer is beneath him and he has even become one yet. This tone resonates throughout the book and the more I read, the more I questioned the author's purpose in writing the book and wondered why he really became a police officer. While there are a few bits of interesting observations peppered throughout *COP IN THE HOOD*, there is nothing that sticks; no memorable experiences/stories and nothing that really depicts his personal duty as a cop just his opinion of how his fellow officers performed, with a few quotes here and there. He paints a fairly clear picture of the hopeless misery associated with the drug trade and poverty, but that isn't unique to Baltimore. Moskos illustrates a law enforcement system that is hampered by relatively ineffective rules and procedures that basically does nothing to resolve the drug-related high crime rate (also not unique to Baltimore). Observations and opinions occasionally backed by quotes reads more like a thesis or dissertation on how law enforcement and the legal system is helpless in fighting crime; Moskos's current career as a college professor certainly alludes to this. The longest chapter in the book is dedicated to arrest rates and their impact on job performance and effective police work (an inverse relationship) it is not particularly interesting. Following this chapter, out of nowhere, Moskos churns out a lengthy and much-detailed chapter on Prohibition and

its failures as an argument for legalizing drugs. Salient points are made on the issue, but by this point readers are getting lectured rather than learning more about what police work is like in the hood. I find it sad that the two police ride-a-longs I've experienced proved to be more exciting and memorable than any part of COP IN THE HOOD. I was looking forward to the book but ultimately ended-up disappointed in that I wasn't reading an immersive depiction of policing in a dangerous, high-crime city, but a political piece (Moskos admits to being a liberal and he even references Rush Limbaugh's drug addiction for added measure) as if we don't get enough of this on a daily basis already. Moskos, one year of policing don't warrant, in my opinion, enough expertise to take this book where he eventually takes it and if he was that committed to fixing the problem(s), maybe he should have stayed on the force longer and worked on actually making a difference (and not just quit). For those looking for a sobering account of how dangerous, stressful and unappreciated police work truly is, try Connie Fletcher's "What Cops Know". If you want to understand more about policing in drug-infested Baltimore, you'll get a better understanding by simply watching all 5 seasons of "The Wire".

This book is as much about the war on drugs as it is about the author's short tenure as a Baltimore cop. The book is written in plain English. Very reader friendly. I finished it in about two sittings. Whether or not you enjoy the book may depend on your opinion on the war on drugs. If you believe that the war on drugs is tantamount to prohibition, you will probably enjoy the book. If you believe that the war on drugs is winnable, you probably won't like it. Either way, Cop In The Hood provokes thought, and the author, Peter Moskos, makes a good argument for ending the war on drugs. Highly recommended if you are interested in the field of law enforcement, or in the topic of drugs and the war on drugs.

I have never read a work of non-fiction that gave a more interesting glimpse inside such a mysterious world. I think that for someone who is not in law enforcement, you will never get a better feel for it than this book.

Moskos gives the reader great insight into the world of policing after being on the streets of Baltimore for 14 months as a cop.

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