



Danger, Duty, and Disillusion: The Worldview of Los Angeles Police Officers

Joan C. Barker

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An insider view of an urban subculture! While much of the literature on police analyzes critically what they do, few works address issues of how police officers feel about their chosen profession, their worldview, or their visions. This refreshingly original and unique ethnographic contribution by anthropologist Joan Barker exposes the human element—one rarely seen by non-police—of officers working for the often-controversial L.A.P.D. During her twenty years of fieldwork, Barker gathered valuable information through formal, in-depth interviews and firsthand experiences, distilling her findings into an illuminating, coherent account. She discovers that five phases of occupational socialization normatively mold officers' experiences and perceptions. "Fleshing out" her discussion is the compelling narrative of "Fred," a traditional officer whose authentic voice reveals feelings and attitudes that manifest the essence of the human who does the job of policing. An "insider" view of an urban subculture usually known only from its public presentation.

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