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A funny and revealing memoir of one man's journey into and out of the New York City police department.

In 2001, Paul Bacon was a typical young New Yorker: hip, liberal, overeducated, a little aimless. But then 9/11 happened. Hearing a call to duty—and lacking any better employment options—he joined the NYPD, with the earnest hope of making his hometown a safer place. Silly him.

In *Bad Cop*, Paul recounts his ill-conceived experiment in public service, focusing on his own professional handicaps: his glass jaw, his overly trusting nature, and his fear of confrontation. The book begins with his police academy training, when he falls in love with the beautiful cadet Clarabel (and develops an unhealthy attraction to his sidearm). The story follows him through an awkward apprenticeship and out onto the streets, where the touchy-feely Paul is transformed into the rough-and-tumble Officer Bacon. Through amazing accounts of his escapades on the Harlem beat, his memoir emerges as both a celebration and a send-up of the legendary force that protects New York—most of the time.

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From Reader Review *Bad Cop: New York's Least Likely Police Officer Tells All* for online ebook

Todd Huish says

I'm a sucker for a good memoir. I'm not as interested in biographies done by people about someone else but there's something very powerful about someone telling a story about themselves...if they can write. Paul Bacon can write pretty well but somehow his book left me a little flat. I heard him on *The Moth* and I really enjoyed the story he told about locking himself in the back of his own squad car. I had really hoped that the book would be a couple hundred pages of similar stories but it really wasn't. It was at times funny and poignant and depressing but somehow it never really grabbed me. He was just much better "in person" telling his story. I get the impression he had told similar stories many times and people constantly exhorted him that he should "write a book" so he did. He's really not a bad author and I didn't hate it by any means but I guess I was hoping for more.

Josephus FromPlacitas says

Candy-readable. (Meaning, it was so readable it went down like candy.) I finished it in three days and I'm such a victim of the Internet that I barely read anymore. Clearly he put a ton of work into making the writing really strong and straightforward. He has a real gift for humor.

But my James Frey detector did started ringing a little bit early on. The warning about composite characters had me wondering from the start. And the Clarabel Suarez character seemed a little too conveniently placed at the center of everything. Also the Moran character. Everything fit in a convenient arc, in a way that writerly plots are written rather than the way real life unfolds, particularly in massive bureaucracies with huge numbers of people. It reminded me a little too much of *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*, which had a huge case of the Freys.

Ahk says

I first heard one of the anecdotes here as a *Moth* story - hilarious. As a book, this is moderately funny and easy to read, and interesting to learn how NYPD cops are trained and what they do on the day to day. I can't rate it any higher, because the messages about the low morale and attitude of the cops and dreariness of the system are too discouraging.

Catherine says

Paul Bacon decided to become a cop in New York City when he lost his job in the aftermath of 9-11. He provides an inside look at going through the police academy, working in various departments and precincts, and experiencing burnout after just a few years. It's fascinating and a little terrifying how laissez faire most operations are. I heard him on *The Moth* when he told about locking himself in the back of a police cruiser, and hoped his writing would be as entertaining as his storytelling. Mostly it was, although the section about

his mnemonic devices for memorizing the police academy curriculum was tedious.

Nastassja says

Great read!!! I'm sad it's over :(

Very interesting true story about a guy who becomes a cop in NY after 9/11. Enjoyed it thoroughly, thought ending was a bit abrupt but I didn't mind. I highly recommend it :)

JoAnne says

I first heard Paul tell his story on The Moth radio hour and I had to read his book. I am very happy that this poor guy did survive his 3 yrs on the NYPD. I look at these officers a little differently now and what they have to put up with while trying to protect the citizens.

It is hard to believe new officers are put on the streets without someone to guide them. It seems to be baptism by fire.

A good read!

Suzanne says

For me, it was an enjoyable dip into my previous life and was able to finish it in one evening...

Kalle Wescott says

I had low expectations from this book (which was one of the few English language books I found to buy on a recent European visit).

A book called Bad Cop written by a first time writer named Bacon? Cue the bad (cop) jokes.

But it's a well-written, amusing tale, an easy read, and even poignant at times.... highly enjoyable!

It was also interesting to learn how things work behind the scenes in the NY police force.

I hope Bacon writes more books.

Amy Chan says

Finished it in one go. A simple, hilarious, but insight book into the life of police point from a very unique perspective. It really show us that police are just human - some nicer, some more aggressive, some patient,

some impulsive, some mature, some acts like high schooler... In the end, they are regular people just doing their job and trying not to drive themselves crazy.

Mysterium says

My partner saw this little ARC gem in a charity shop and asked my opinion of it knowing I once wore a badge and a gun and knew a bit about NYC and its finest. I had never heard of the book, but a cop memoir by a lad named Bacon just had to have a few laughs in store. This was the best entertainment a dollar could buy (and it helped out a good cause as well).

Bacon's book is a funny, tongue-in-cheek look at his "career" as a NYPD officer following 9/11's tragic events. So many people wanted to step forward to assist after the event, and Bacon, a man with a quick wit and a solid heart signed up. NYPD is an amazing breed of LEO's. They have a language, culture, and technique as diverse as the city, and as a whole, are a decent bunch of lads who do their duty 200 percent. Like any other public service gig, there are those who essentially walk upright without too much drool that just play the game.

Bacon's honest assessment of NYPD life from the academy to the beat is non-flinching, direct, and damn honest. We see him evolve from a self-proclaimed liberal to a somewhat hardened beat cop during his short span as a cop. The portrayal of "cop life" is accurate and pulls no punches. He is his biggest critic, so this isn't some inflated ego making fun of a profession that he left at a point that could be considered too soon.

Quick read that holds your attention. I look forward to more from Bacon, as this little bit of serendipity was a nice introduction to an awesome writer.

Carol Wrenn says

Wait! What's your name?

Paul.

Paul what? Cops go by last names, you know.

Bacon, I told her reluctantly.

Baker?

No, Bacon, like breakfast.

Like pig? Man, you're gonna get a lot of shit for that.

Long before I found instructions on how to unlock my handcuffs with their own key, I found out how to open them with a bobby pin, a lead pencil, a fingernail paring, a piece of belly button lint. (That didn't work.) Finally I found that my handcuffs were the double locking variety. The key had to be turned 360 degrees in both directions. I quickly freed myself, with tremendous relief, since I had to report to the police academy the following day.

Are you locked out of your car?

Actually, I'm locked in my car. Pg 251-253

Three years later, I still wear a lot of heavy equipment to work. My job is dangerous, and I'm under

extraordinary pressure. Every day I see grown men and women walking around in their underwear, drinking in public and neglecting their children. This all happens in Maui; but I'm not a cop anymore, I'm a scuba instructor.

Megan says

Well-written but ultimately underwhelming. I enjoyed Bacon's tales of his life on the job, but as is so often the case with this kind of memoir, his recounting of his personal life was less riveting and accounted for most of the dry spots in the book. It felt as though Bacon has already told these stories many times over and was phoning it in when it came to typing them up for the book. The "romance" is cringe-inducing, my least favorite part of the book.

Liz says

When I was in high school, someone recommended me to join a group of kids who were being mentored for possible careers in law enforcement. I have no idea why I seemed like a good match, and after the first meeting I bowed out. Now I can imagine, thanks to this author, what I would have been like if I had somehow ended up as a cop: scared, inept and unmotivated. His adventures as part of NYPD are entertaining to read, if maybe a little bit pathetic. Here's hoping most of our women and men in blue are better suited for the job than he was (or than I would have been).

Jan says

Well, if there's one impression I came away with by the end of the book, it's that I concur with the author: he's the least likely person on the planet to become a police officer. I can't say that I'm thrilled with the current state of policing in the United States, but that doesn't mean that someone like Bacon--who was too afraid/softhearted to even hand out tickets half the time--is the answer.

I cringed a lot reading this book. But I also found it entertaining. It occasionally made me laugh, and I thought it held some interesting insights into the NYPD. I'm glad I picked it up.

Ben Baker says

Beyond fascinating look at the real life New York cop life not seen in procedurals on TV. Makes you appreciate the boys in blue just that little bit more. (NB: Not "The Boys In Blue", 1982.)
