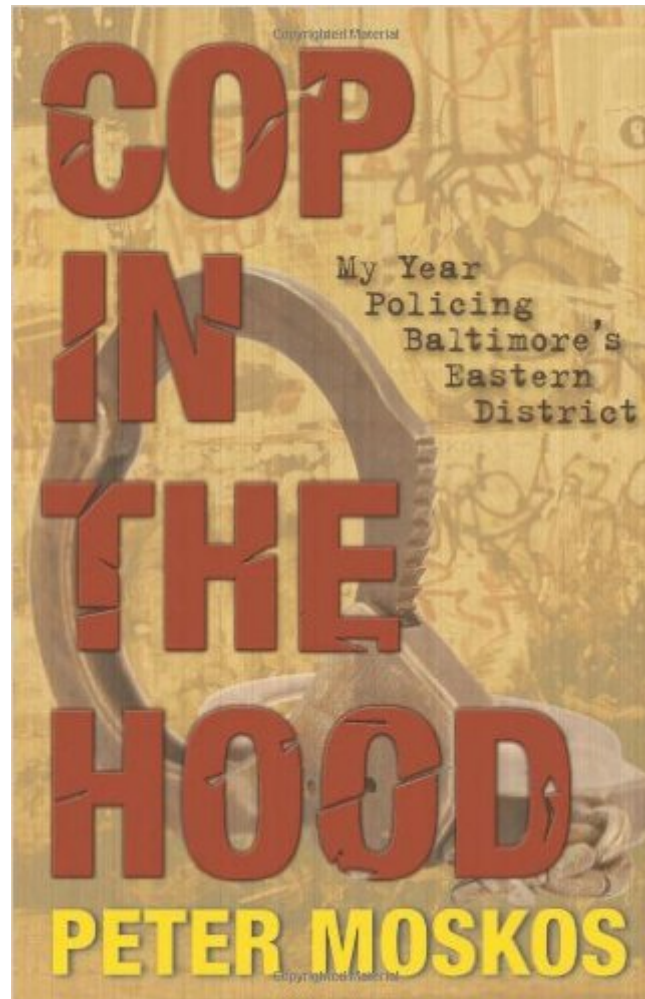


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# Cop In The Hood: My Year Policing Baltimore's Eastern District



## 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

Despite the terrible cover (even by academic press standards), this looked right up my alley for a number of reasons: (1) a good friend just moved to Baltimore and I've been trying to read more about the city, (2) I know mainstream Baltimore pretty well and was interested in learning about a part of the city I've never ventured into, (3) I've been a big fan of *The Wire* since season one, and wanted to see how closely reality coincided with that drama, and (4) I've been on a bit of a "academic as participant/observer" reading binge lately, including books like *Brothel*, *Rolling Nowhere*, and *Gang Leader for a Day*, and wanted to compliment those with a inside look at policework. Like those three books, this one was born from academic roots, as Moskos was scouting

around for a project for his PhD dissertation. After approaching and being rejected by several city police forces, the Baltimore PD accepted his proposal to work as a cop for a year with the knowledge he would write about his experience.

Moskos' book recounts his 14 months on the beat and his training as a Baltimore city police officer. The book is an abridged version of his doctoral dissertation. Turning a dissertation into popular reading is difficult and the book falls down in a number of places. A long history of Prohibition suddenly turns up at the end and is only partially well woven into the text. There are other drifts into facts and figures, as well, and the effect tends to be more didactic than illuminating. For example, there is a needless listing of arrest statistics for Moskos and his colleagues, where a sentence or two about the range of arrest records would have sufficed. Like many ethnographies, some of the most interesting details are in the footnotes (actually, endnotes here), often told more concisely and succinctly written than much of the main text. There also are longitudinal survey data that don't get discussed at all until the endnotes and would seem to have materially affected Moskos' relationship with other officers. He tends to minimize the impact of writing a book on his relationships and observations, beyond his introduction to the force and one wonders how well he actually monitored all of that. In addition, very routine, often difficult aspects of policing such as domestic violence (mentioned in passing) and dealing with the mentally ill (no mention at all) get little coverage here. Despite the detail, the book really fails to get at a certain level of depth in terms of the relationships among cops and the motivations to join and remain on the force. Indeed, some interesting information on racial and gender differences in motivation to join the force turn up in the endnotes and apparently will be part of another publication.

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