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Badge 387: The Story of Jim Simone: America's Most Decorated Cop

Robert Sberna

Kent State University Press (Jul 29, 2016)
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This gripping and timely portrait of a highly decorated police officer sheds light on the challenges of inner-city policing.

In *Badge 387*, Cleveland-based journalist Robert Sberna weaves skillful biography with gritty true-crime episodes to portray the life and heroism of long-time Cleveland patrolman Jim Simone, nicknamed “Supercop” by local media for his crime-fighting feats.

Sberna knows how to set the stage for dramatic showdowns. Some chapters read like sensational page-turners as the action builds and climaxes. But the book ultimately transcends its procedural trappings. To find the foundations of Simone’s character and humanity, Sberna devotes an enormous amount of ink to Simone’s stint in Vietnam as a young platoon sergeant. In the madness of war, where lines between good and evil are often blurred, Simone finds singular purpose in pursuing the good, though he’s never able to leave behind the scars and trauma of war.

Most importantly, the book plumbs the dynamics of inner-city policing and the relationship between cops and minority communities plagued by crime. Though sympathetic to the police officer’s perspective in fatal shootings, the book raises important points about judgment and restraint in the line of duty. *Badge 387* proffers an example of an officer who holds himself to the highest standards of conduct, transparency, and accountability. Not only does Simone regularly interact with the community he serves, Sberna demonstrates, but he strives to police everyone the same, including city officials and officers in his own department who break the law. In a time of national discussion and debate about such issues, *Badge 387* increases our understanding of law enforcement.

SCOTT NEUFFER (Winter 2017)

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