

Tour of Duty: Complexity of Police Work

Steve P. Danko Sr.

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A memoir pertinent to ongoing conversations about the behaviors of American police forces, *Tour of Duty* by Steve P. Danko Sr. offers an intimate perspective on the profession from a former police officer with extensive experience in the field.

Danko served with the Baltimore Police Department for twenty-five years. During that time, he witnessed both the best and the worst that humanity is capable of, from citizens and from those in uniform. In forty-two chapters dedicated to specific events, dates, and professional realities, Danko carefully and conversationally recalls his personal history as a police officer in a major city. The chapters themselves read like a police blotter, revealing the scope of crimes that the author was tasked with over the course of his career.

The memoir includes rookie stories that fellow officers will surely identify and sympathize with, as well as stories from later in Danko's career, leading up to his retirement. He writes "to show the general public how exhausting and demanding the job of [a] police officer is, both physically and mentally." His sense of urgency crescendos midway through the book in a chapter entitled "2015 A Year of Civil Unrest."

Danko retired from the police force in 1987, so he was arguably removed from said year of "civil unrest." Perhaps for that reason, some might find his views regarding recent events, including 2015 charges of police department brutality, difficult to digest. He is unapologetic in putting forward a belief that law and order are slipping into disregard, that police officers' authority is being undermined, and that elected officials' responses to controversial police actions are misguided at best. Nevertheless, by this point in the memoir Danko has established himself as a trusted narrator—particularly in the chapter entitled "The '68 Riots," in which he describes responding to turmoil in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, concluding "personally, I don't think the city ever recovered."

Bookending the chapter concerning events of 2015 are stories from Danko's days on the job. The contrast of past police work with portrayals of current events provides an interesting perspective. Danko's work suggests that blame for problematic occurrences should not be assigned to all in uniform.

Danko writes with casual style and an approachable tone. His book will strike familiar chords with those affiliated with police forces, and will be informative to those who want a glimpse into the unfamiliar world of police work. At its heart, *Tour of Duty* is an absorbing memoir with contemporary relevance, written to thank the men and women navigating their own tours of duty in American police forces.

AMANDA SILVA (January 13, 2016)

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