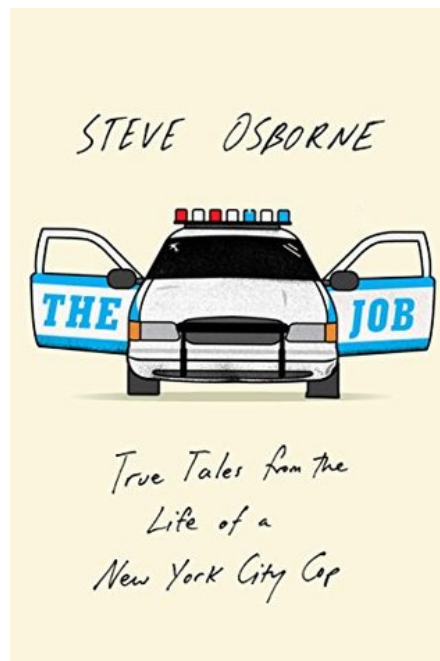




The Job: True Tales from the Life of a New York City Cop

Steve Osborne

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"How ya doin?"

With these four syllables, delivered in an unmistakably authentic New York accent, Steve Osborne has riveted thousands of people through the legendary storytelling outfit The Moth (and over a million times on their website) with his hilarious, profane, and touching tales from his twenty years served as an NYPD street cop. Steve Osborne is the real deal, people, the tough streetwise New York cop of your dreams, one with a big big heart. *Kojak? NYPD Blue? Law & Order?* Fuggedaboutem! *The Job* blows them out of the water with this unputdownable book.

Steve Osborne has seen a thing or two in his twenty years in the NYPD—some harmless things, some definitely not. In "Stakeout," Steve and his partner mistake a Manhattan dentist for an armed robbery suspect and reduce the man down to a puddle of snot and tears when questioning him. In "Mug Shot," the mother of a suspected criminal makes a strange request and provides a sobering reminder of the humanity at stake in his profession. And in "Home," the image of his family provides the adrenaline he needs to fight for his life when assaulted by two armed and violent crackheads. From his days as a rookie cop to the time spent patrolling in the Anti-Crime Unit—and his visceral, harrowing recollections of working during 9/11—Steve Osborne's stories capture both the absurdity of police work and the bravery of those who do it. His stories will speak to those nostalgic for the New York City of the 1980s and '90s, a bygone era of when the city was a crazier, more dangerous (and possibly more interesting) place.

The Job: True Tales from the Life of a New York City Cop Details

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From Reader Review The Job: True Tales from the Life of a New York City Cop for online ebook

Peacegal says

This is another memoir in which I liked the stories, I just didn't really care for the guy telling them.

As one might expect from a NYC cop, there is a lot of tough-guy posturing here, and it all gets tiresome after awhile. Osborne is constantly throwing in little jabs at liberals (or who he perceives as liberal) that consistently fall flat. People who do stupid shit like vandalizing police cars are "liberals?" Please. I'd imagine they are just apolitical hooligans, like most of the other violent criminals in this book. When Osborne cuts the bravado and just tells a story, or even just lets a little humanity shine in (his grief over a fatally wounded puppy is heartrending), this becomes a much better book.

Lynn says

I enjoyed these essays written by a retired NYC policeman. They felt true and they made me want to know the author better. I'd never really thought about a cop loving his job, that he might become an adrenaline junkie. The only cops I've met are fictional.....I felt like I met Steve Osborne.

Suzanne says

I read the audio book which was read by the author so that adds a little something extra. He says in the intro that he is a cop, not a writer, and that shows, more in some places than others, but the stories are interesting. I bet this guy is never at a loss at a party for a good story to share. Some of the stories are more entertaining than others, some are touching, and it's a bit repetitive in some places but overall it was a decent read. Kind of made me miss living in New York.

Amy says

This guy really wants us to know a few things:

- he's not a "librul"
- he's not a sensitive kind of of guy (but he really is)
- cops are all really good guys
- he gets a tingling in his "ball bag" whenever he's onto a good case
- he loves the term "ball bag"

The repetitiveness and simplicity (of his writing) were tiring, but as a spoken storyteller he's much more compelling. I powered through the book but it's pretty sub-par. Skip the book and listen to him speak instead.

Rana says

It's like people read that some of these stories came from his Moth storytelling sets and then didn't read the fucking book. oh man, the Moth is cool so this must be cool, five stars all around.

Uh, nope. A big pile of homophobic nope. Piss poor writing, not sure how that many exclamation points got past his editor, little context to anything.

And uh, excuse me? The Dead Dog story? Fuck you. Seriously, I would have maybe cared just a little bit if you didn't spend the first half of that story writing about how you were so worried that getting a small dog would make you look gay and that you suspected that people were questioning your sexuality.

matt says

A Staten Island mamaluke cop writes about "the job" in a way that I find both familiar, engaging and off-putting. Many of the stories here are compelling enough but his incessant comments about "liberals" and "whores" are grating (to say nothing about his homophobia and glorification of "manly violence"). Some reviews have mentioned how similar these stories are but I'll cut him some slack there. There's an authenticity in its repetitiveness--can you imagine how many times the cops at the bar he describes repeat the same story?

Jane Arbour says

This is awful. I can't believe one man can spend this much time talking about his own balls. This guy is the poster child for our problems with policing today. He thinks "perps" have magic powers that protect them from physical violence, including cops hitting them intentionally with cars. He "drags" a rape victim back to the scene of the rape to catch the rapist. He tells his readers that the victim of a brutal and horrific stabbing will think twice before she opens her mouth again to get involved in her sister and brother-in-law's arguments. What fucking planet am I on?

Leanna Pohevitz says

I appreciate police officers who defend citizens more than I could ever explain. Accordingly I loved some of his stories and think I got a better understanding of how much it takes to be a cop especially in the NYPD. I also couldn't help but cry during his 9/11 recap chapter. I was however disturbed by how often he spoke about checking out women on the job. Even when he was answering a rape call he talked about how hot the other woman with the victim was and that she might also be a pole dancer. Kind of made me nauseated. Especially while simultaneously mentioning his wife throughout. He also talked about going looking for people to arrest. I'm not sure what the goal of a police department is but I guess I never thought of the police as actively hoping someone is doing something wrong. It felt gross whenever he said it. Overall I appreciate the insanely difficult work he did and I'm glad I got to read about it but I'm pretty sure he wouldn't like me or my political views too much. Such is life.

Paul says

Actual rating: 2.5 stars.

I read an enthusiastic review of this book in the New Yorker and decided to buy a copy. Note to self: be more skeptical of New Yorker reviews.

This is a collection of cop stories, told by a cop. I gather that many were originally oral presentations, and perhaps they worked better that way. In print, the stories are repetitive, long-winded, and shallow. A few of them conveyed some of what it is to be a big city cop; most, though, were more about protecting said cop's ego.

Steve Osborne's stories don't come close to telling us what it is like to be a cop. He doesn't address even a single one of the many acknowledged issues we're all aware of: bad cops, corruption, racism, quotas, falsification of evidence, brutality. In his stories, the cops are all good guys and everyone else -- especially minorities -- is a perp. Anyone who hates cops is a "liberal."

Apart from admitting that he loved his wife's little dog and that being a cop put a strain on his marriage, Osborne is remarkably unreflective. There are no lessons here, and not much honesty.

I was disappointed.

Frieda Vazel says

This book felt like standing in line in some small pizza shop and overhearing one of its regulars, the one who is slightly too old to be doing their bit on the ladies so they do their bit on the guy who ladles the sauce. And you know you don't want to hear what he is saying because he gave you that great, heartwarming "how-you-doin!" and you don't want to spoil the good feeling by hating him. But he talks so loudly. And he talks so much. And he talks with so much confidence that he discovered the answer to this or that major political or philosophical question through a story he has to tell that involves him telling someone something. Ugh. You just want your stupid pizza already and you're avoiding eye contact because you know you will overhear him checking out another woman, and there it is, that cringe worthy gorging himself with the sight. Ugh, why don't these people have any self awareness whatsoever? To think that the know-it-alls and busy-bodies and goodly-eyes and bust-em-uppers are our police. Oh, mercy! The appetite is gone!

John says

Perhaps many cops, mainly those in large cities, have stories to tell about experiences such as these. The good, the bad and the ugly. But they are not conveyed to a broad audience. No (maybe few) recorders exist in local bars where cops may gather. With this book, though, we have a cop who is articulate enough to not just tell, but write. And emotionally moving and gripping his stories are. Certainly not like what's depicted on TV cop shows or in the movies. I'm struck by the many times he was required to make split-second decisions; wrong decision confronting a "perp" with a gun and you're dead (or fired, demoted or castigated in the media). Although he's most often hard-nosed, at other times he's compassionate, like the time he violates

department rules and turns over dead druggie mug shot to his grieving mother. She has no recent photos of him, yet even with numbers across his chest it will likely be displayed on her dresser between Jesus and Mary.

Doubleday Books says

When I first heard we'd be publishing this book, I had no idea it would be so timely. With NYC cops in the news so frequently now, Steve Osborne is the perfect voice to welcome us, hilariously, heartily, and sometimes harshly into the reality of the street beat. His life is not one of mayoral disputes, union negotiations, or media controversies; it's a life of stories, simple stories of humans he must hear and help. Now retired, Osborne works wonders retelling those stories he lived, and in doing so does his duty as a writer as well as he did as a cop. - JG, marketer

Hana says

Gritty, often darkly humorous stories from a New York City cop. I briefly dated one of New York's finest and I can attest that Osborne fits the mold. These guys are tough. They do an incredibly dangerous, difficult and essential job. And most of them do it well.

I recently read Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption, a superb and moving story about death row inmates and America's incarceration epidemic. I agree with Bryan Stevenson that we jail too many people, that incarceration has become the go-to substitute for mental health facilities and drug treatment programs. And there is no doubt in my mind that the harshest penalties are meted out on people of color--too often unfairly. But I was born and raised in New York City. I spent most of my life there and lived through the crime waves of the 70s and 80s. So I know that there is another side to the story. Guys like Steve Osborne were on the front lines of a war zone.

There will always be cops who turn bad, who snap, or make the wrong decision in a crisis. Nowadays we civilians get to watch them on video. But before you judge too harshly consider reading this book. It short, the stories are dramatic, moving and often quite funny. There are no policy prescriptions here, but you'll get a real sense what life is like for city police and how hard it is for cops to do their jobs and yet stay human, faced day after day with the ugliest side life--and death.

Content warning: R for graphic violence, scenes of death, extreme language.

Curren says

I listened to the audiobook version of this book. I think it enhanced the book because I could hear the stories read in the author's own thick New York accent. Once you hear him talk there is no mistaking that he was a NYC cop! The stories were good - reminiscent of NYPD Blue - and brutally honest. The stories in this book are not described through rose colored glasses. I haven't head the F-bomb dropped so many times in one book! But I expected as much.

Some stories were more interesting than others, but they all held my attention and even had me held in slight

suspense a few times. Surprisingly, the most powerful stories were not the ones about police work, but the personal stories the author shared about his dad's death and his dog, and being a cop during 9/11. I was seriously crying during the dad and dog stories. But it's not all emotional, I chuckled several times throughout the book, too.

The main reason I gave it 3 stars instead of 4 is the editing. I realize that the author is not a writer, but a retired cop just telling about his life. However the editing could have been a LOT better. He switches from past to present tense during his stories and it was very noticeable. I also think some of the descriptions could have been toned down. For example he describes his cop intuition as a tingling in his "ball sac" and then repeats that phrase many times. I seriously would have been fine had he just alluded to it instead. I'm no prude, but it was a bit much. I mentioned the cussing, which was excessive. Cussing doesn't bother me at all, but he cussed a LOT. It was almost overused to the point where it was distracting.

Would i recommend you read this book? Yes, as long as you aren't expecting a literary masterpiece I think most people will find it an interesting read. With all the drama and protests surrounding police in the news lately it's interesting hearing stories from a police perspective. I think a lot of people don't realize how hated cops are in some areas. Will this book magically change the views people have? Probably not, but it will at least spark some thoughts, or at the very least entertain you for a little while.

Spoiler below:

The story about his dog is about the dog being killed in a car accident. It is extremely difficult to read without crying. But the story showed a softer, more emotional side to the author and was very touching. Just warning any animal lovers out there!

Hilary says

I love the Moth podcast and police stories, so a book of stories from a veteran NYC cop who's appeared on the Moth seems like a sandwich made of peanut butter and even more peanut butter: right up my alley. (Jelly, you have always been a waste of time, and one day, a hard rain's gonna fall, and not the kind that's an oddly late-in-the-game vehicle for Christian Slater.)

There's definitely a difference between telling a story and writing one, though, and the Moth format (usually combining several different stories by different people) also allows for a diversity of voices and subjects that isn't present in this book. Osborne doesn't claim to be a well-established writer (in fact, he even repeats that claim several times, as if to show that he's also new to the world of editing), and there are more sentences ending in exclamation marks than you'd expect in a non-self-published book. That doesn't mean that these stories aren't entertaining, because they have their moments, just that they may be better suited to the stage than the page. (With rhymes like that, I'm clearly better suited to never being allowed to express an opinion in any medium.)

The biggest issue here is the cultural shift that's occurred from Osborne's time on the force during the crime-heavy, New Crack-era, Wild West NYC of the 1980s and early 1990s and today, particularly in light of the police stories that have dominated the media for the past year. Like every police officer in a 1980s movie, Osborne wanted to be out where the action was, not stuck behind a desk, and it's hard to read about an officer calling himself a "cowboy" or joking about how he should have shot two robbers he was locked in a life-or-death struggle with. Those ideas would have played perfectly in *Death Wish* or *Cobra*, where

someone like Sly could shoot up an entire grocery store and make it all okay by quipping, “I don’t shop here,” but today, this just seems a bit outdated and insensitive.

Osborne’s occasional jokes about his disagreements with “liberals” (a term and comedic vein that also feels at least three decades out of place) suggest he’s more than prepared for this sort of namby-pamby second-guessing of his stories, but I think he’s missing the point that there’s a difference between portraying yourself as a cowboy and being a jerk. A story about struggling with two suspects with a gun who are trying to kill you? I’m in. Needless asides in that story about how the world didn’t need those people in it, or seemingly blaming a victim for speaking up for her sister against an abusive husband? I’ve got to be at least somewhat morally conflicted there, which is a shame, because that’s an otherwise compelling story. Those detractions aren’t too frequent or prevalent, but they’re there just often enough to make me uncomfortable.
