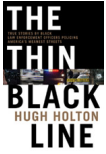


Book review: “The Thin Black Line” by Hugh Holton

Written by Terri Schlichenmeyer



Last night promised to be a nice, quiet night. Just you, a bag of something salty, and the remote control for the TV.

And then you heard a loud noise. Knowing it was no slamming door, sure it wasn't a car accident, positive that it was gunshot, you called 9-1-1. Suddenly, your quiet evening wasn't quiet any more.

Imagine what it's like to be on the receiving end of your emergency call.

In the new book “The Thin Black Line” by Hugh Holton, you'll read stories – in their own words - from African American policemen and women who patrol our toughest cities.

Just over 200 years ago, a New Orleans “free man of color” pulled on a uniform and became America's first documented black police officer. In this book, through stories from almost thirty active and retired police men and women, homage is paid to the high level of commitment possessed by those who marched to that first cop's beat.

Book review: “The Thin Black Line” by Hugh Holton

Written by Terri Schlichenmeyer

From Los Angeles and a cop who was influenced as a child by the Watts Riots, to Washington D.C. and a policewoman who knew her indifference to corpses meant it was time to find another line of work, this book takes a look at what it's like to fight crime on the streets and racism on the job.

In Chicago, a policewoman investigating a rape finds that it coincidentally hits too close to home. Also in Chicago, a black undercover cop learns to trust his fresh-faced, blonde, white female partner on a drug bust.

A cop from Louisiana recalls the juvenile cases he's been involved with, and the sometimes-heartbreak that comes with such crimes.

Many law enforcement careers are birthed in the military. In this book, you'll read an Indiana Vietnam, and how it tempered him for his current job as a corrections officer in a prison. cop's memories of

And before you think this is all really serious stuff, read the New York officer's story of a run-in with a cool cat – literally.

Book review: “The Thin Black Line” by Hugh Holton

Written by Terri Schlichenmeyer

I was a bit surprised by “The Thin Black Line”, for several reasons.

I expected a lot of shoot-‘em-up stories but while gun battles are in here, that’s not the focus. I thought this book might be much more emotional – ranging from overt chest-thumping to tattling rants about bad departmental practices – but there wasn’t much of that, either. Most surprising, many of the stories lack the extreme heart-pounding excitement you’d expect in a True Crime oral history book.

Still, I liked it.

Before his death, author and Chicago Police Department veteran Hugh Holton gathered officers from several states and metropolitan areas to talk about whatever it was they wanted to discuss. Therefore, some of these stories ramble. Others are funny. Some will make you check your doors. Some will make you angry.

All of them will make you glad there are people brave enough to become cops.

Book review: “The Thin Black Line” by Hugh Holton

Written by Terri Schlichenmeyer

For better or worse, if you’ve ever connected with a police officer, read this book. “The Thin Black Line” is one to do time with.

“The Thin Black Line” by Hugh Holton

c.2009, Forge

\$25.95 / \$28.95 Canada

320 pages