

Sample page from *Virgin/Sargeant; BAD COP/BAD COP* by Chris Barber [6390 words]

## **FEAR AND LOATHING IN CALIFORNIA OAKLAND RIDERS - THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**By Chris Barber**

The streets of San Francisco and Bay area enter the 21st century, patrolled by a mysterious, new regime of cop-squad... Known as 'Oakland Riders', they give-away cocaine to innocent by-passers, enforce ritualistic foot-fetishism and shoot pet dogs on sight! Sounds like a weird science-fiction novel. Are these Keystone-antics the result of Acid-crazed, flower-empowered Height-Ashby hippies infiltrating the police force or are more sinister forces running amok? A new recruit blows the whistle exposing today's all-too-real Oakland Riders.

Keith Batt is a fresh-faced, idealistic new police recruit, barely out of his teens when he graduates from Oakland's 146th cadet academy, rearing to hit the streets, protect law-abiding citizens and fight the good fight against crime. It's June 2000 and in the tradition of countless rookie predecessors, officer Batt is assigned to work the nightshift (9pm to 7am) or 'graveyard beat' as old hands call it, in rough, inner city West Oakland. He is teamed-up under the supervision of a training officer, thirty-five year-old Clarence "Chuck" Mabanag, a wise-assed veteran.

OAKLAND is a poor, over-crowded neighbourhood, predominately populated by Blacks, Hispanics, and howling packs of stray hounds, left to rot by the WASP community; boasting the highest crime figures in northern California (largely drug-related). Local street gangs call the turf 'Ghost Town', because of its endless streets of eerie derelict Victorian houses and frequent rattle of surrounding gunfire.

### **INITIATION RITES**

This is a macho work environment and his hard-boiled peer group eyes the young-buck cop with suspicion; he has to act tough and grow-up fast, grab any opportunity to prove himself to compatriots. As well as Mabanag, another three or four cops share the beat, officers Frank Vazquez (aged 44), Jude Siapno (32) and Matthew Hornung (29); Officer Bruce Vallimont's name also crops-up.

On Batt's first shift (19th June 2000), Mabanag drives him over to meet the guys. Immediately pulling-rank, he lectures the novice on house rules and appropriate behaviour. *'You better not be a snitch...'* Mabanag warns him, *'What goes on in the car, stays in the car.'*

Batt notices how closely-knit the four officers are, forming their own little street-gang, aloof from their surroundings, with clandestine nods & winks, indifferent to external authority. Mabanag continues to instruct Batt on required protocol. *'Fuck all that you learned in the academy. Fuck probable cause. Just jump out and grab the motherfuckers. If you're a coward I'll terminate you myself. If you're a snitch I'll beat you myself... Snitches lie in ditches.'*

*'Are you ready to see the dark-side?'* Siapno interrupts, bracing Batt for the night ahead...

First emergency call received between 1 and 2 am, a stolen car report from Mr Kenneth Soriano, block 2500, Adeline Street. Soriano greets the officers on his doorstep, describing his cousin's vehicle and inviting them inside. But Mabanag notices a dog roaming around and threatens to shoot the pet if it comes within range. This winds-up their host, who admonishes the officer.

Mabanag takes umbrage at Soriano's disrespect and looses his rag, smashing Soriano's skull on the sidewalk and choking the hapless victim. Soriano is belligerently handcuffed as blood pours from his head. Siapno and Vazquez appear on the scene, responding to Mabanag's call for backup and the cop trio put-the-boot-in, mercilessly pounding the surprised, blood-spattered victim...