



Policing the Fringe: The Curious Life of a Small-Town Mountie

Charles Scheideman

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From the 1960s through the 1980s, RCMP Sergeant Charlie Scheideman spent much of his time patrolling the "dark corners of the Interior of British Columbia" where "the citizens would meet the modern criteria for redneck: if their veranda collapsed it would kill more than four dogs; they think 'harrass' is two words, and so on." Such places weren't much fun to police but they were full of characters, many of whom make their way into Charlie's entertaining book, *Policing the Fringe*. We meet Walter and Wilbur, two Hixon hillbillies who went on a bender and decided it would be fun to stagger out onto the Cariboo Highway with a rifle and hold up passing cars, which worked well enough until they held up a motorhome from Alaska that turned out to be better armed than they were. We meet Petre, the hard-working hermit who was cheated out of his savings by three slick-talking mining promoters and waited to take his revenge—with an axe.

With wry humour and a policeman's eye for relevant detail, Scheideman recounts events that range from the ridiculous to the horrific to the tragic. Once he stopped a car in the Fraser Canyon driven by three normally responsible American fishermen, who on this occasion were careening wildly from one guard rail to another. Their defence? They had failed to allow for the added kick of Canadian beer. His most searing memory was of waiting for the embers of a burned house to cool enough so he could retrieve the bodies of two small victims while in a nearby house, party-goers kept right on partying. One of the most revealing accounts ever written about policing in small-town Canada, this book bristles with unforgettable stories about the author's 27 years working on the RCMP's front lines. It will give readers new respect for the men and women who patrol Canada's backroads—both because of the extremely taxing work they do and the good spirit with which they do it.

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