

★★★★★ **Smart, Entertaining, and Sobering!**, June 19, 2011

By **Joyce Faulkner** (Pittsburgh, PA USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: True Blue - A Tale of the Enemy Within (Perfect Paperback)

True Blue is the story of Joe Sanchez' life as a NYC cop. The book came in during a really busy time for me. I read the first page and put it in my car to read at lunch and dinner in suburban restaurants like Bob Evans and Denny's. At least, that was my intent. However, it got lost under the front seat of my Acura for several weeks and since I was focused on other things, I didn't even look for it. Big mistake.

When I finally dug True Blue out from its dark hiding place, I literally couldn't put it down. Even though I'm not a wounded Vietnam Veteran and I've never lived in NYC and I've never been a Hispanic cop, Joe Sanchez lived my life. Oh sure, our trials and tribulations are different, but one Don Quixote recognizes another windmill jousting instantly. It's not that Joe doesn't see ugliness, it's that he knows beauty is out there almost in reach. His courage isn't the chest-thumping kind. Sanchez is an everyday Joe with a gritty determination to make things better for the community, for his family, and for himself.

For those who have given up on the world, this might seem foolish but like Quixote and through a veil of jokes and clever observations about his fellow officers and a vast array of villains, Joe is a wise and dignified man and maybe a little bit literary. He has a knack of defining character or telling a story with a few deft lines and he made me laugh, or at least smile and go 'ah', time and again.

For example, when a friend of his is killed, he describes his sorrow this way, "I stood under the shower hoping the whole thing would wash away. But the sound of water washing down the drain didn't bring any comfort. It sounded like blood draining out of a bleeding heart."

And he described a policeman this way, "This guy didn't look like a Hispanic. He looked like some big old guy from out of The Last of the Mohicans, and they called him Big Chief. He was a great back-up guy. Cheerful as you like, but all he had to do was stand behind you and look like the kind who could rip somebody's heart out with one whack of the tomahawk, and nobody gave you no crap."

And my favorite story took a mere paragraph, "Sure enough, when we opened the door, there wasn't even any creepy movie music to warn us what was going to happen. Psycho just came flying out at us with a big kitchen knife. Situation like this, you had to do something, even if the guy was a nut. I don't think I weighed it out, but I shot him in the right leg. He dropped the knife and went hopping off to a room on the left, yelling in pain. Potter and Velez went after him and cuffed him, and then, when he was restrained...bless her heart, his mom stood by him trying to comfort him. He was still her baby, even if he had been planning to stuff her and keep her in the cellar or something."

For all his immigrant earnestness, life as a cop wasn't always easy for Sanchez. He ran into his share of operational resistance. As his story develops you begin to see that Joe's career resembled the old saying, "Sometimes you eat the bear and sometimes the bear eats you." Since not everyone who wears a police uniform or works for the government sees the world the same way, Joe faced a

monumental challenge that changed his life.

True Blue is more film noir than memoir. It's chock-full of really, really bad guys who duke it out with tough-talking cops after eyeball-shaking car chases through shadowy cityscapes. Sometimes it reminds one of a dysfunctional Walton family where a brother in blue has your back in the morning and leaves you hanging in the afternoon. It's smarmy charm rivals fiction for readability and sheer entertainment. Yet, for all its action and clever dialogue, Joe Sanchez is my new hero. He's both human and endearing...and what happens to him is...well, I won't spoil the story...but you really must read it.

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