

No, I had never been out to the East Side, not till that first night of work. Let me tell you, I was not too excited when I got the assignment either. Back when I was in college and lived down town I had hear about the East Side. People talked about it like it was this mythical place, the lost golden city or something except with gangs and thugs, not gold and jewels. I imagined it was this slum, a total ghetto you know? I pictured it like you see on TV and in the movies; a bunch of lazy people who didn't want to work, lots of illegals taking advantage of the government. That's what people made it sound like when they talked about the East Side, so that's what I assumed it was.

Even on the force when other officers heard where I was headed, they just shook their heads and said, "Watch your toes out there man, that's the one part of this city where you really need to be on your game." And my family and friends did it too when I told them where I was working, made it sound like going off to war. The basic reaction I get from people when I tell them I am a police officer working on the East Side is a squinty eyed, "Oh." And they do that thing where they suck the air in through their teeth and you know they are thinking..."outch, that sucks..."

It's really not all bad though, there are some totally normal neighborhoods, and in fact the majority is nice places, respectable homes and decent people. I might live up in the Silver Creek area, maybe. Probably not though. It's really just the west side, with so many people crammed into such a small area. That's what you hear about on the news, that's where the reputation comes from.

I think it's sad actually, the reality of what's going on out there. You have parents who work really hard, tell the truth I was surprised at how hard people work, that's one stereotype that was broken right away. You have two parents working two jobs each to