

Undercover policing in america essay



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Undercover Policing First off to define being undercover is disguising one's own identity or using an assumed identity for the purposes of gaining the trust of an individual or organization to learn secret information or to gain the trust of targeted individuals in order to gain information or evidence. Being a undercover officer is a very hard task. You have to surpress your whole identity to fool another person into believe you are someone that your not. It is a very effective method of policing but also very difficult, most well established criminals know how to tell whether or not a officer is infact undercover.

Undercover policing helps stop various crimes ranging from the most popular being drug conspiracies, prostitution, gangs, and extremeist groups such as the Al-Queda, neo-nazi's, The Klu Klux Klan, and other various political groups. Undercover officers or agents gather valuble information effective enough to convict some of the worlds biggest criminals. These investigations can range from a few hours. Such as " buy and bust" operations where a narc trick drug dealers to sell them drugs and then arrest the offenders on the spot, to long-term deep investigations that take months.

These investigations usually bring down gangs and extremist groups such as the Branch Davidians. Undercover officers are impacted greatly by their work.

Both pyschologically and physically. In order to pass for a criminal, the officer must psychology become a habitual offender, in both their actions and thoughts. One mistake could jepordize the whole operation that took many months, even years to build. It is a very stressful job.

These agents must become friends and confidants of the criminals they are investigating. They must know in detail about the crimes committed and at times even participate in them.

A undercover officer must subside his or her feeling of guilt and morality in order to perform their job effectively. A great example of this is in the following quote found in a newspaper article in the Adirondack Daily Enterprise: "" Hardcore gangsters would be going to jail today, but for years I've been calling these gangsters my brothers. I was both proud of my work as an undercover agent and sad about the ramifications my work would have for some of the men I've grown close to... I knew their kids' names and they told me they loved me. This quote is by ATF agent Queen would knew that some of the hardcore gang Mongols he helped put into prison would have " died for me".

If one is uncovered as being an undercover agent, that person would very likely be killed on the spot depending on who he is dealing with. It is a very dangerous profession. What does it take to be an undercover officer maybe one of the questions you are asking yourself, well in order to be a successful undercover agent one must posses various traits that are not found in everyone.

A successful undercover operation only becomes successful if at the end of the day, all law enforcement personnel return safely home to their beloved families and one wrong move can jeopardize the whole thing.

Undercover officers must be resourceful, manipulative and assertive. They must posses good negotiating skills, are professionally and personally

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mature. Also, a key into being an undercover officer is that one MUST communicate back with his or her chain of command. He must be advised constantly on his next move.

Keys to undercover safety are as follows: Planning, an operation must be carefully planned and executed by plan. Practice is also key, you cannot expect a person to know how to act in a moment when adrenaline is pumping through their veins, or when they are inhibited by fear.

Good communication procedures must also be put into place, so the agent has adequate means of communicating back to his or her command station. Surveillance is also a major aspect. In many cases surveillance plays a major role in the conviction of the accused, and finally a major key to safety is removing the undercover agent from the arrest scene.

It cannot be known that this person was involved in any way even after the arrest has been made because of the risk or retaliation by other members of the gang or family members of the criminal. Since the time that Marx wrote on undercover work there has been almost no comprehensive analysis of undercover practices. Marx was able to give a historical account of undercover practices in the early eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England and France and subsequently in the United States.

French and English innovations of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries underlie American undercover practices. One of the most notable originators of the use of covert operations in France was Francois Vidocq. Vidocq's great innovation was to have police agents become directly involved in the criminal world. He believed that " crime can only be fought

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by criminals” and that “ it takes a thief to catch a thief”. His first detectives were former criminals. They were paid from secret funds not shown on the official budget.

His tactics led him to make significant arrests within the Paris underworld. Role-playing was an essential element which allowed the police to be indistinguishable from the criminals. Undercover officer also face the risk of becoming habitual drug users. They usually tend to use marijuana, which very easily could make the officer attempt to try other, much stronger drugs in order to keep his cover. This is also a very dangerous aspect.

Drugs mess with your psyche, where they handicap you to not being able to perform your assigned job duties.

This is when the police force has to intervene to stop the agent from further entering into the investigation, where he or she has the ability to harm themselves, reveal their identity or even worse get themselves killed. The following paragraphs give you insight on how an undercover officer spends their workday, “ The most important task an undercover agent faces is maintaining his cover. It is his assumed identity that allows the agent to remain undercover. Any time an undercover agent is in public or with people who do not know that he is an agent; he must work hard to maintain this cover identity.

This may include speaking with an accent, responding to an assumed name and remembering various facts about the cover identity, including the persona’s supposed areas of expertise and personal history. Depending on the type of assignment, this can take up the vast majority of the agent’s

workday. If the agent is working undercover with people who would have reason to doubt his identity, he agent must take extra care to avoid arousing suspicion. In addition to concealing her true identity, an undercover agent must always be thinking about to how to fulfill any assigned objectives.