

[Share](#) [Report Abuse](#) [Next Blog»](#)

Law Enforcement Corruption

CONFIDENTIAL: REPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT CORRUPTION TODAY !

CLICK HERE TO REPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT CORRUPTION (Provide as much information as possible: full names, descriptions, dates, times, activity, witnesses, etc.)

Blog Archive

- ▼ 2011 (213)
 - ▶ August (2)
 - ▼ July (9)
 - New Jersey Town Settles Police Assault Suit
 - Cops Accused Of Beating Teen Outside Stationhouse
 - [PA Cop Charged with Corruption of a Minor](#)
 - Sheriff to Pay \$200,00 in Profiling Case
 - DA Plays The Role of A Redcoat
 - [A Look Back At Corrupt Cops](#)
 - Cop Guilty of Molesting Daughter
 - Tulsa Police Corruption Trial Delayed
 - Mob Figure May Unearth Corruption of Lawmen
 - ▶ June (15)
 - ▶ May (39)
 - ▶ April (55)
 - ▶ March (18)
 - ▶ February (35)
 - ▶ January (40)
- ▶ 2010 (133)
- ▶ 2009 (251)
- ▶ 2008 (284)



REPORT ANY CORRUPTION BY LAW ENFORCEMENT TODAY !!

EMAIL INFORMATION TO:

[CLICK HERE TO REPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT CORRUPTION](#) (Provide as much information as possible: full names, descriptions, dates, times, activity, witnesses, etc.)

Frank Brady - telephone: 347-632-9775

Email:

LawEnforcementCorruption@gmail.com

or

FrankNBrady@gmail.com

Sunday, July 3, 2011

A Look Back At Corrupt Cops

Corrupt cops, brothel-lined streets: A look back at police departments in the time of Schmittberger

The New York Daily News by David J. Krajcek - July 3, 2011

The big German was exiled from a lofty perch in midtown Manhattan after corruption gumshoes discerned - and this will come as a shock - that gambling dens in the city's Tenderloin district were paying off cops. Schmittberger, the top cop there, was held accountable. This was big news in New York because Schmittberger was regarded as the rare honest cop, a difficult position to stake out in that era. "The police department was totally corrupt," Michael Bosak, a retired city cop and amateur police historian, told the Justice Story. "There was no Civil Service. You paid to get on the job. You paid for promotions. You paid for your command. You had to go out and earn money to kick upstairs to your bosses and Tammany Hall."

Schmittberger, who emigrated from Germany as a toddler, bought a police beat in 1874, at age 22, after first trying a career as a candymaker. He landed under Capt. Alexander (Clubber) Williams, whose nightstick was the law in the midtown vice district, just south of today's Times Square. Whatever your itch, you could scratch it - or have it scratched for you - there in the devil's anteroom. Broadway was lined with clip joints that preyed on bumpkins. There were more French hookers than bellhops at many hotels. W. 27th St. was lined with nearly two dozen brothels, some of which lured customers with sketches posted at the stoop of the human fare within, like a restaurant menu. There were sneak-a-peek cancan clubs, bawdy saloons, dusky tea shops that offered side orders of opium, and a gambling den for every dozen men. Whatever your angle, as a vice proprietor you had to pony up or face Clubber Williams' wrath. "Everyone

Technorati Profile

had to pay," said Bosak. Schmittberger became Williams' bagman, picking up payoffs from the district's "evil resorts," as the newspapers called them, and delivering envelopes to Clubber's headquarters, Bernard Courtney's Saloon, at 315 Seventh Ave. The money flowed up through the ranks and into Tammany coffers, and everyone along the way took a share. Schmittberger and Williams played good cop/bad cop. Both were big men, but the German was more approachable. He was seen as an ally by the downtrodden, including blacks, Jews and even the finger-wagging holy-rollers and suffragettes who paraded through the Tenderloin. He became a pal of Police Commissioner Dewitt Wheeler, who lived at the Gilsey House hotel, not far from Courtney's joint. (He got his first promotion, to the old rank of roundsman, when he found the commissioner's missing dog.)

For 20 years, Schmittberger led a comfortable life as a corrupt cop. He and his wife raised seven kids on the East Side - a daughter and six sons, whom he liked to dress in scaled-down police uniforms for family portraits. But by the early 1890s, police corruption was so flagrant that the Legislature mandated an investigation that was led by Clarence Lexow, a senator from Brooklyn. To the horror of his fellow bluecoats, Max Schmittberger - by then a captain - became the NYPD's first Frank Serpico when he agreed to give frank testimony about how cops worked the graft racket. Small vice shops paid \$20 a month, he said, but monthly fees went as high as \$200 - the equivalent of roughly \$4,000 today - for lucrative gambling dens or the European steamers docked on the West Side.

As a rule, he said, each rank took a 20% cut as the envelope ascended from the bagman to the Tammany fat cats. The German stunned the city by naming Clubber Williams as the king of Tenderloin corruption. Time has tarnished Williams' reputation, but the newspapers - probably on the take - had all but nominated him for sainthood in his day. When he was promoted to inspector in 1887, a broadsheet blew him this kiss: "Capt. Alexander S. Williams has attained the reward long deserved by his services as the city's most stalwart and energetic guardian of the peace and of the law ... More popular action could not have been taken." Schmittberger's testimony led to the hiring of reform-minded Teddy Roosevelt as police commissioner in 1895. He forced out both Williams and Thomas Byrnes, the chief of detectives, even more famous and at least as corrupt. Schmittberger became a pariah among colleagues, although he was protected by alliances with Roosevelt and Lincoln Steffens, the muckraking journalist. Tammany never forgave him for squealing, and he was subjected to one corruption investigation after another. When Schmittberger was frog-marched to Staten Island in 1906, a fuming Steffens wrote that the cop "has been hounded ever since he set out to do right." He was cleared and promoted in 1909 to today's equivalent of chief of department, the NYPD's top man in uniform. He held the job until his death in 1917, of what was described as "nervous fatigue." He had been a cop for 43 years. So was Max Schmittberger a good guy or a bad guy? "Was he honest by today's standards?" said Bosak. "No way. But he was part of the crooked system that was in place then, and he played the system. He was just as crooked as the next guy, but perception was more important than reality. And the perception was that Schmittberger was honest." He is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx - beneath a suspiciously lavish monument, as Bosak pointed out.

Posted by Law Enforcement Corruption at 9:45 AM

0 comments:

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)