

## Vandal Squad: Inside the New York City Transit Police Department, 1984-2004

By Joseph Rivera

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**Vandal Squad: Inside the New York City Transit Police Department, 1984-2004** By Joseph Rivera

*Vandal Squad: Inside the New York City Transit Police Department, 1984-2004* has caused consternation throughout the global graffiti community with charges that author Joseph Rivera is profiting off the very criminals he spent his career incarcerating.

Graffiti writers have left a vivid trail and told their spellbinding tales the world over in countless books and magazines, films and videos, websites and events. They have shared stories of war and glory, of battles and triumphs, and have the pictures to prove it. But many have gone down for those ups; they've been caught in action or hunted as criminals, and brought forth to answer for crimes of vandalism. They've copped pleas or pleaded guilty outright; they've been sentenced to do community service, to pay fines, and sometimes even to serve jail time yet more often than not they got right back in action. No one knew this better than the New York City Transit Police Vandal Squad.

Founded in 1980, the Vandal Squad's mission was to protect the subway system from hardcore criminal acts of destruction like kicking out windows and throwing seats out of train cars. It was only with the Clean Car Program of 1984 that graffiti became the primary focus of this specialized Unit. On a mission to catch those who gained fame under tag names, the Vandal Squad had to identify and locate these individuals cloaked in anonymity (and often so transient they were referred as "ghosts") using every means available, including the NYPD computer database, Search Warrants, subpoenas, and even vandals themselves.

In *Vandal Squad: Inside the New York City Transit Police Department, 1984-2004*, former member Officer Joseph Rivera recounts the days and nights spent in pursuit of some of New York City's most notorious vandals. The only book on graffiti told from the perspective of law enforcement, Vandal Squad takes us inside the New York Police Department. Rivera's fast-paced tales of cat and mouse are presented alongside professional disregard within the Department. Featuring never-before-seen photographs and stories of graffiti's infamous Top 40, Vandal Squad offers an unprecedented look at the graffiti world from the other side of the game.

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**Amazon Best of the Month, November 2008:** Graffiti writers have become a pop culture fixture, and their outlaw mystique has helped spark a cottage industry of books devoted to their work. But as Robert DeNiro said in *Heat*, "There is a flip side to that coin." In *Vandal Squad*, Bronx-born Joseph Rivera chronicles his cat-and-mouse police work putting away many of the perps on New York City's Top 40 Vandal List: "Just seeing their faces when they turned and realized they were about to get bagged was priceless." In *Warriors*-era '70s New York, subway trains became a playground for vandals, and in 1980 the New York City Transit Police Vandal Squad was formed to combat these attacks with creative undercover work. Rivera's voice is authentically gruff in a just-the-facts-please style, but many surprises pop up throughout (he enlisted a popular tagger to design the logo for the Vandal Squad softball team jerseys). Rivera's work, coupled with Rudy Giuliani's zero-tolerance "Quality of Life" regime in the '90s, cleaned up (or as some might argue, removed character from) the subways and city streets, but *Vandal Squad* takes you back to a much grittier Manhattan. --*Brad Thomas Parsons*

Review

"The average New Yorker couldn't believe the unit existed. They'd refer to us as `crayon cops.'" --Joseph Rivera (Interview with New York Magazine)

Review

"After reading this book I found myself having a new outlook on the graffiti world's pro's and con's, and every aspect it took into cracking down on what some people would consider visual destruction and others would consider art."

### Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Lula Barnes:**

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive right now, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Sure, by reading a reserve your ability to survive enhance then having chance to remain than other is high. In your case who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this particular Vandal Squad: Inside the New York City Transit Police Department, 1984-2004 book as beginner and daily reading book. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

**Arthur Johnson:**

Reading a book tends to be new life style with this era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. Together with book everyone in this world may share their idea. Books can also inspire a lot of people. A great deal of author can inspire all their reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the story that share in the publications. But also they write about the

information about something that you need instance. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors nowadays always try to improve their talent in writing, they also doing some research before they write to their book. One of them is this Vandal Squad: Inside the New York City Transit Police Department, 1984-2004.

#### **Robert Baxter:**

The actual book Vandal Squad: Inside the New York City Transit Police Department, 1984-2004 has a lot of information on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was published by the very famous author. The writer makes some research prior to write this book. This specific book very easy to read you can obtain the point easily after reading this article book.

#### **Michael Espy:**

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