

WOMEN IN POLICING:
WHY THEY LEAVE; WHY THEY STAY
Viewpoints of Female Officers in the Austin Police Department

by

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION *

OVERVIEW

In 1995, women constituted only 10% of the municipal police officers in this country, a representation significantly lower than that in the general labor force and the communities these officers serve (Seagrave, 1995, p.1,3). Such numbers alone testify to the fact that police work has historically been, and continues to be, a "male-dominated" profession. Studies on women in policing, a large number of which were conducted in the 1970's when females were beginning to go out on patrol, consistently demonstrated that women performed police work as effectively as men.¹ At the same time, female officers were found to be more communicative, less violent, and more respectful of citizens than their male counterparts (Belknap, 1992, p.4).

* Author's Note: My thanks to the administration of the Austin Police Department, particularly Chief Elizabeth Watson and Assistant Chief Bruce Mills who authorized and supported this project, the APD captains who helped facilitate it and, especially, the women who so generously shared their experiences with me. This work is dedicated to my fellow officers, male and female, with whom I share so much.

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See Heidensohn, 1992, p.94; Belknap, 1992, p.47; Daum, 1994, p.47.

This research coincided with changes taking place in the way society had come to view police, and the direction the profession was heading. Both internal and external pressures and needs were pushing departments away from a strictly law enforcement orientation. Community policing, or teaming up with the community to solve neighborhood problems, was the new criminal justice philosophy.² The new approach was extremely well suited to the skills female police officers brought to the job.³ Also, since Title VII of the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination based on gender, had begun to be applied to public sector employees, hiring and maintaining all-male police forces was no longer a legal option (Geller, 1991, p.274).

Police agencies determined relatively quickly that the goal of increasing the representation of women in their ranks would not be achieved by simply removing legal barriers. Although both voluntary and mandated affirmative action programs did improve the numbers (Seagrave, 1995, p.133), years of tradition, combined with public myths about police work and a still-powerful resistance on the part of male

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See Bennett, 1990, p.7; Kay, 1994, p.44; McCoy, 1988, p.5, 8.

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See Belknap, 1992, p. 64; Kay, 1994, p.1; McCoy, 1988, p.5,8.

officers, made it difficult for departments to recruit female applicants (Belknap, 1992, p.2). After hire, training (usually of the quasi-military style) was particularly difficult for many women to complete. And, after receiving their badge, women faced the biggest challenge of all - functioning in a culture and environment that was at the very least unfamiliar and at the worst hostile.

The stresses police officers experience, irrespective of gender, range from the physical (alternating boredom and excitement, rotating hours, injuries) to the psychological (social isolation, a critical public) (Ellison and Genz, 1983, p.52-54). Add to this mix the unique barriers women encounter such as sexual harassment, lack of acceptance by peers, and family/work conflicts, and it is not difficult to understand why attrition of female officers has been and continues to be a major challenge to police departments across the country, and a serious obstacle to overcome in any attempt to achieve gender balance in the ranks (Belknap, 1992, p.2; Seagrave, 1995, p.127).

Attrition in general is an extremely problematic issue for police agencies. Each officer represents a significant investment in a department's money, time and effort. Given the length of the typical hiring and training process, a vacancy may take up to

18 months to fill. Since departments have so much difficulty hiring female officers in the first place, retention becomes even more critical.

The literature on women in policing reveals a great deal about the stresses and pressures which female officers experience. These range from lack of peer support to family conflicts to sexual harassment. As the research points out, women cope with the conflicts and challenges of police work in a variety of positive and negative ways. Positive responses include exercise and the development of other healthful lifestyle habits, as well as approaches to work such as overachieving (working harder than necessary in order to gain respect), "going by the book" to minimize mistakes, and adding value to their work by gaining additional useful skills (Ellison, 1983, p.3). Negative responses include unhealthy habits such as smoking, overeating, and alcohol abuse (Seagrave, 1992, p.26). From a psychological perspective, two negative coping strategies are "invisibility", in which the officer

In December 1995, the Austin Police Department, primarily due to improvements in the pension system and a change in the recruiting process aimed at hiring more racial minority members, experienced an unprecedented number of officer vacancies - 95. This represented almost 8% of all sworn personnel, and created a major public controversy revolving around the potential impact these vacancies would have on public safety while the department was trying to catch up.

See Belknap, 1992, p.52; Haynes, 1978, p.1, 36; Seagrave, 1992, p.121.

does as little as possible to bring attention to herself and "coopting", or taking on a more traditionally masculine style, and, at times, a condescending attitude towards more feminine officers (Ellison, 1983, p.68; Flynn, 1982, p.352).

In 1983, Katherine Ellison and John Genz studied burnout in police work and found that support from supervisors, administration, co-workers and subordinates contributed significantly to the mitigation of negative job stress, and found lack of support to be a major contributor to burnout (Ellison and Genz, 1983, p.19).

Numerous researchers have found both male and female police officers to be motivated by practical as well as intangible professional incentives. Salary, job benefits, and job security are often rated as very important by employees of both genders. The challenge and independent nature of the work are also mentioned frequently. Female officers specifically appreciate the "familial" nature of the occupation, along with the variety, excitement and challenge.

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With the extensive parallels between police work and military service, it is likely that much of the research on women in the military would have applicability to policewomen as well. The personal and professional motivations of military

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See Daum, 1994, p.3; Ellison and Genz, 1983, p.19; Feinman, 1986, p.2; Harris, 1994, p.2; Poole, 1988, p.50.

women have been studied extensively by Patricia Shields. Both her 1985 and 1988 studies reflect a tendency on the part of women in the military to see their service as a mission rather than simply a job.⁷ In 1992, Frances Heidonsohn studied women in law enforcement, and reached the same conclusions.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

This study concentrates on the retention of female police officers in municipal police departments. The purpose of the research was to identify and analyze the factors which contribute to the decision of women to remain in a police agency. Demographics, stressors, coping methods, support systems, and personal and professional motivations were all examined. Recommendations were developed to enhance the ability of police departments to recruit and retain women officers, and opportunities for further research were identified.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 2, the Literature Review, provides background information on the research question, describes the problem, and places it in a historical context. The key concepts of the conceptual framework are identified: gender-related stress,

coping mechanisms, support systems, and professional motivations. Chapter 3, the Research Setting, describes the agency within which this research was conducted - the Austin Police Department. The chapter includes an interview with the chief of the Austin Police Department - Elizabeth Watson. Chapter 4, the Methodology chapter, focuses on the research technique selected for this project - focus groups. It includes a discussion of the strengths and weakness of this method, and the steps involved in preparing for and conducting focus groups. In Chapter 5, Results, the data from the focus group discussions are presented and interpreted in relationship to the working hypotheses that have been postulated. Chapter 6, the Conclusions chapter, consists of a summary of the researcher's conclusions, some recommendations for police departments, and possible directions for future research.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the Problem

Although the percentage of female officers in local police departments has more than doubled in the last twelve years, their numbers remain at only 10-12%, significantly lower than both the labor force at large and the populations these officers serve (Geller, 1991, p.288; Seagrave 1995, p.3). In addition, female officers continue to be disproportionately assigned to traditionally female-oriented units such as juvenile, sex crimes and vice, and have had trouble breaking into the mostly male-dominated, and, not coincidentally, prestigious positions such as street crimes, homicide and S.W.A.T. teams (Horne, 1980, p.60). Even fewer women have succeeded in attaining supervisory rank (Bennett, 1990, p.6).

Emphasis of the Literature Review

This study of the relevant literature examines the stresses that women encounter in the police field, the effect this pressure has on female officers, the coping mechanisms that women employ to deal with these experiences, and the support mechanisms which help the officers handle their difficulties. The professional

motivations of female officers have been discussed, along with the impact of their motivations on the likelihood that they will stay in the profession. A brief summary of the history of women in policing has been included to place the current issues in perspective, and there is an examination of the police culture, its parallels with the military culture, and the resulting implications for women entering the police field.

STRESSES OF POLICE WORK

The stresses of police work are well documented and range from physical problems created by unhealthy eating habits and rotating shifts, to the psychological pressure created by an increasingly critical public and a work environment which alternates between tedium and danger (Ellison and Genz, 1983, p.52-54). All these stressors are experienced by male and female officers alike, but with women there is a significant difference: by their choice of profession they have entered an unfamiliar and unwelcoming environment. The opposition and resistance they frequently encounter, particularly from tradition-bound male officers, can make a difficult job

As recently as 1992, Joanne Belknap researched policewomen on patrol and documented eight pervasive stereotypes that a majority of the male officers surveyed ascribed to their female peers. They included: female officers are physically and emotionally weak; they are both hard to supervise and poor supervisors; they tend to become romantically involved with their partners; and they expect special treatment (Belknap, 1992).

almost impossible.

Even when women are relatively well accepted by their fellow officers, they often experience difficulties related to their role as policewomen. Gender-related role conflict, both on and off the job, can be both frustrating and confusing. Female officers with children are faced with the necessity of balancing their work and family obligations. Clearly, police work offers challenges and difficulties which relatively few women are willing to tolerate.

As Joanne Belknap observed in 1992 (p.52):

Given all of the information on the concerns of women in policing, it is not surprising that there are so few policewomen. In fact, given the stress [they] experience and the resistance they face from their male co-workers, it is surprising that there are as many policewomen as there are.

THE WAY THE PROFESSION IS CHANGING

The fact that women have been virtually excluded from the policing field is particularly ironic given the metamorphosis the profession is currently undergoing,

The public has also had to adjust to the novelty of women in uniform. The media, particularly network TV, did raise awareness of the presence of women in the profession, but also tended to unrealistically stereotype both the nature of the job, and the role that female police officers played in it (Horne, 1980, p.65, 66).

both in philosophy and practice. Community policing, in which officers form a partnership with residents to control crime, has become the policing approach of the future. The crime fighter image is rapidly being replaced with a service orientation that broadens the scope of how police work is defined.

The importance of effective communication between the police and the public has been highlighted by the community policing movement, in which collaboration with citizens is a principal means of effecting public safety (Goldstein, 1990, p.119). However, even in departments which have not adopted the community policing approach, communication is often the key to resolving problems and defusing potentially dangerous situations. Gary Bennet (1990) and Sheldon Kay (1994) argue, in fact, that communication skills have become more highly regarded in police work than physical strength. They characterize tact, diplomacy and empathy as the new "weapons" of the successful police officer. It is in the use of these skills that female officers excel. So it seems, as observed in another context by John

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In Gary Bennet's 1990 survey of California police chiefs, the biggest change they cited as a result of the advent of women in policing was a more service-oriented style of policing. Other benefits included: a more positive work environment, more organizational flexibility, an improved departmental image, more organizational openness and more successful recruiting (Bennett, 1990, p.8).

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See Horne, 1990, p.100 and Kay, 1994, p.44.

Stuart Mill (as cited in Carrier, 1988, p.250) that "the things which women are not allowed to do [appear to be] the very ones for which they are peculiarly qualified."

STAFFING FOR A CHANGING PROFESSION

Some police departments, particularly the more progressive, realized years ago that the addition of women to their sworn ranks would actually enhance their ability to serve the public. The transition, however, could not be effected by simply opening up previously closed doors. Most agencies have had difficulty, despite their best efforts, in attracting women to a profession which is overwhelmingly male and retains a public image as extremely physical and dangerous.

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When women do apply and successfully gain entry into the training academy, they face an unusual series of challenges, both physical and psychological. Joanne Belknap (1992, p.57) argues that even at this initial (and critical) stage of their career, these female officers begin to feel a sense of isolation. Those policewomen who do complete the hiring and training process represent a major investment of a department's time and money. Since the entire recruiting/training cycle can take as long as two years, departments cannot immediately replace officers who leave. The

As explained more fully later, police work is much less physical and dangerous than the public generally perceives it to be (Horne, 1980, p.108).

loss to the agency and the community is difficult to measure in dollars and cents.

HISTORY OF WOMEN IN POLICING

The Early Years

Although women served as jail matrons in the last half of the 19th century, the first woman to officially hold the title of "policewoman" in the United States was Alice Stebbin Wells, who was commissioned by the Los Angeles Police Department in 1910 (Schulz, 1995, p.9, 21). Ms. Wells had neither a uniform nor a badge, and her duties were restricted to the "protection of young girls and women" and controlling their "moral decline" (Horne 1980, p.27-28). In 1915, the International Association of Policewomen was organized. Most members had a social work

A disturbing finding by Robert McIntyre in his 1990 examination of attrition of police officers in Vermont was that when male officers left a police department, 72% stayed in law enforcement, whereas only 46% of the women did so. So, ultimately, the loss may be to the entire profession (McIntyre, 1990, p.21).

These years reflected great change in the role of women throughout society. The women's rights movement, with its roots in the abolitionist cause, was gaining a toehold, and, helped along by the reform and temperance movements, the push for women's suffrage was well underway. The evolution of women's role in policing both paralleled and received reinforcement from these larger historical trends (McGlen and O'Connor, 1983, p.16, 20).

background and at least a bachelor's degree, and saw themselves as separate and distinct from their male counterparts (Horne, 1980, p.29).

In World War I, female police officers were utilized in a successful effort to keep prostitutes away from military bases and to nurture runaway girls (Horne, 1980, p.29). The 1920's represented a decade of expansion for women in the law enforcement field. With crime prevention receiving major emphasis, policewomen, considered effective in the dissemination of that information, were accepted in a limited role. Separate "women's bureaus" were established in many departments (Schulz, 1995, p.61) and some women even achieved supervisory status. Naturally,

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they wore not uniforms and were not armed. Most had a better education than their male counterparts but received less pay (Horne, 1980, p.30). The Great Depression saw women in all professions lose their jobs to men and police work

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Women's roles in policing and in the military have followed almost parallel evolutions. These institutions share a great many norms and values and the military is a prime recruiting ground for police departments across the country. Both organizations have historically been extremely resistant to the inclusion of females. Their patterns of utilization of women parallel each other closely and, although they have been driven by both social pressure and legislative mandate to allow women access, they remain conservative, traditional and (both in number and culture) overwhelmingly masculine organizations. The experiences of women in these fields, particularly vis a vis their male counterparts, are remarkably similar. (See Holm, 1992, p.60 and Blacksmith, 1982, p.83.)

no exception.

Although World War II allowed some women reentry into the field, at least for the duration of the war, the emphasis in policing had changed. Crime fighting had replaced crime prevention. The scientific management approach of August Vollmer and O.W. Wilson dictated a highly structured, militaristic organizational model (Schulz, 1995, p.81).¹⁶ This new emphasis deprived women of the niche they had created for themselves in many department.

Years of Transition

The 1950's saw the number of women in policing grow and their responsibilities change. Although policewomen were still working primarily in areas like communications and records, and wearing plain clothes or skirts, there was a slow

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During the 1930's, August Vollmer, Chief of Police in Berkeley, California, and O.W. Wilson, his successor and colleague, were major proponents of the "scientific" approach to policing. The principles included the use of science and technology in the fight against crime (for example fingerprinting, record keeping, and motorized as opposed to foot patrol), an effort to minimize corruption and political interference by concentrating managerial authority in the office of the chief, and the establishment of a rigid chain of command. The personal, service-oriented cop on the beat was replaced by an "objective, high-tech, professional" crime fighter (Geller, 1992, p.5,6).

but definite evolution taking place. Some departments like Los Angeles and New York City, were dramatically increasing their number of female officers. Finally, in 1968, the groundwork had been laid for women to take on patrol work (Schulz, 1995, p.115). Betty Blankenship and Elizabeth Coffel made history by teaming up to provide Indianapolis, Indiana with a most non-routine "routine patrol" team. The experiment was a success and the contention that only men could handle basic police work could never again be argued with the same conviction (Horne, 1980, p.vii).

The next fifteen years saw a plethora of studies whose purpose was to examine the performance of policewomen, with a particular emphasis on their success in patrol work. In the mid-70's alone, eight reviews of women on patrol were conducted nationwide (Heidensohn, 1992, p.94). The researchers concluded that there were no significant performances based on gender (Belknap, 1992, p.47; Flynn, 1982, p.317). In the words of researcher Peter Horne:

...it now seems clear that some women are good police officers and some are not - just like men. Our task...remains to define and measure a good cop - man or woman. All we know now is that gender is not a relevant characteristic of the effective police officer (Horne, 1980, p.ii).

This result becomes even more significant in light of the later determination that these studies contained a documented bias towards masculine traits, many of which are not used often in patrol (Daum, 1994, p.47).

Although the finding of female competence was a surprise to some, a bigger revelation still was the discovery that police work was much less physical (and less violent) than had been previously thought, and that 80 to 95% of patrol time was not even crime-control or law enforcement related (Horne, 1980, p.104, 108). It consisted, for the most part, of much more routine service-related tasks. Although these studies were significant in their effect on the attitudes of police administrators, the most immediate and compelling impetus for the hiring of women in a police function was provided by legislation and judicial mandate.

Title VII and Beyond

In 1972, Title VII of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1964, a law prohibiting discrimination based on "race, sex, color, religion, or national origin" began to be applied to public sector employees (Geller, 1991, p.274). The effect on policing was immediate. Within twelve months, Washington D.C., St. Louis, and New York City all placed women on patrol (Horne, 1980, p.33). Many height and weight standards were modified or eliminated, removing a major obstacle to women entering the field. To add a practical incentive for departments to comply, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration included in the Crime Control Act of 1973 a provision prohibiting the allocating of federal funds to any law enforcement agency

which discriminated on the basis of sex (Seagrave, 1995, p.114).

Affirmative action programs, both voluntary and court-ordered, became the means to increase the number of women in policing in the late 1970's and early 1980's (Seagrave, 1995, p.3), and very few assignments or ranks still remained off-limits to women. The appointment of Elizabeth Watson to head the Houston Police Department in 1989 was, in a sense, the culmination of a long and difficult journey for women in policing (Seagrave, 1995, p.133). It did not, however, signal an end to the myriad of difficulties women still face in the policing profession, many of which are directly related to the nature of the police culture.

WOMEN AND THE POLICE CULTURE

Parallels with the Military

The police culture, like that of any organization, is complex and multi-faceted. It has its traditions in the U.S. military, with which it shares many institutional values. Both organizations emphasize strength and toughness (both physical and emotional), the acceptance of personal risk, rules and order, secrecy, rigid authority and chain of command (Flynn, 1982, p.4).

Both the military and the police also see themselves as separate and distinct from the citizens ("civilians") they serve, symbolized by the specialized and

distinctive uniforms they wear (Faris, 1976, p.9). Both tend to limit their social contacts to others within the field, a practice which can have an insular effect on

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members' attitudes. One of the most important distinctions between the lay public and the police and military is the unique authority given the latter two to legally take both life and freedom. Or, as explained by military researcher Judith Hicks Stiehm:

Military and police personnel accept the capacity and willingness to use violence as part of their profession. They train for, plan and execute acts of violence, and they are rewarded for doing so (Stiehm, 1989, p.3).

This enormous discretion is accompanied by an expectation that it will be exercised responsibly, and a corresponding requirement that all members of the profession be willing to risk their own lives in the performance of their duties.

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Many of the values inherent in the police and military culture, such as toughness and bravery, perpetuate the image of police officers and soldiers as warriors in the battle of good vs. evil (Flynn, 1982, p.368). The irony of this imagery is that it is, for the most part, out of date with the current roles

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See Seagram, 1992, p.121 and Shields, 1985, p.13.

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Few labels carry as powerful a stigma in police work as cowardice. It is considered more reprehensible to many officers than brutality or almost any other manner of unethical behavior (Based on this researcher's experience and a random sample of officers who were interviewed from 08-30-96 to 09-10-96 at the Austin Police Department).

these institutions play. The modern military has become primarily a peace-keeping or constabulary force. Even when the country is at war, the technological nature of modern combat undercuts the significance of physical strength (Shields, 1985, p.10).

Police officers spend the vast majority of their time handling routine, non life-threatening matters, and when dangerous situations do occur, good judgment and communication are generally the most effective means of resolution (Horne, 1980, p.104-110). Many officers must be surprised to learn, as observed by Frances Heidensohn (1992, p.99), that they have "joined an occupation believing...that strength, size, and force are vital, only to find that this is not so." The myth of police officer as warrior is, however, a persistent and powerful image with significant implications for women entering the field.

Implications for Female Officers

One of the clearest messages conveyed by the almost mythical portrayal of police work and military service is that these are jobs appropriately held by men. This belief persists despite compelling evidence that police work as it is being practiced in the 1990's consistently favors tact over toughness and collaboration

over coercion (Flynn, 1982, p.332). Myths, however, die hard, particularly when self-image is involved. It clearly is difficult to sustain the stereotype of a "macho man" when women can perform the work just as effectively (Horne, 1980, p.75). Or, in the words of one Illinois state trooper, "...if a woman can do it, the job isn't worth much" (Seagrave, 1995, p.129). Is it any wonder that women in policing represent a personal and professional threat to many male officers and that these men react to such a perceived threat by assuming a defensive posture? It is this defense of the status quo, often expressed in resentment and antagonism, that can create a hostile (and stressful) working environment for the female officer.

STRESS AND THE FEMALE OFFICER

The Work Itself

Police officers deal with people in crisis, face hostility from the public, work in an environment that alternates between tedium and danger, and are "on-duty" 24 hours a day. Is it any surprise, therefore, that the profession documents high rates of alcoholism, divorce and suicide (Ellison and Genz, 1983, p.45-47)? Female officers are exposed to the same stressors as their male counterparts, with the added difficulties of performance pressure, role conflict sexual harassment, and competing family obligations, to name just a few.

Role Conflict

Ninety seven percent of the female officers in a major metropolitan city who were surveyed by James Daum and Cindy Johns in 1994 expressed the belief that police work had changed them significantly. Although they described both negative (they were more cynical) and positive (they were more confident) changes, a number of the women pointed to a dilemma which represented a major source of job-related pressure for them - how to maintain their sense of identity in an environment which failed to affirm their existence. They had, in a sense, been asked to "be what they are not [and can never be] - male" (Daum and Johns, 1994, p.46).

Belinda Seagram (1992, p.10) describes the "multiple, conflicting expectations for behavior" which female officers face. This difficulty is most evident in these officers' efforts to establish relationships with male officers. If they are competent and assertive, or assume typical "masculine" qualities to gain acceptance, the men can find them threatening. If they assume a more traditional feminine role, they may be better liked but are "ultimately rejected as partners" (Belknap, 1992, p.51). Since some male officers have difficulty viewing women as co-workers, they may place them in categories with which they are more familiar, such as mother, seductress or lesbian (Belknap, 1992, p.5). While this practice may add to the comfort level of male officers, it has a harmful effect on the women who are

variously labeled.

A female officer's personal life can at times take on a schizophrenic quality. For example, taking charge in the work environment is encouraged and expected. In personal relationships, she may choose (or be expected to assume) a less controlling role. Switching styles so abruptly can make for psychological dissonance (Seagram, 1995, p.128). Since the social contacts of police officers tend to be within the organization, and "civilian" men can be put off by the job, single females often date their male colleagues, a situation that cannot help but change the work environment, and produce grist for the police rumor mill, sometimes resulting in additional labeling if the female officer dates more than one officer, or if relationships go sour.

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In actuality, most policewomen are aware of gender-style differences and see them more of a plus for the organization than otherwise. Belknap (1992, p.64) interviewed metropolitan policewomen and found they were extremely confident of their own abilities, felt they were just as effective as male officers, and in fact, believed themselves to be more communicative, less violent and more respectful of citizens than their male counterparts (Belknap, 1992, p.64). Apparently many female officers either enter the profession with, or somewhere along the line,

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Frances Heidensohn talks about "gossip as discipline" (Heidensohn, 1992, p.139). Also see Horne, 1980, p.174.

acquire a resilience that enables them to cope with negative reactions from male officers without losing their self esteem.

Family Obligations

For a policewoman with a husband and, particularly, children, the adjustments and demands are even greater. Family obligations represent a much more serious conflict for policewomen than policemen. Kerry Seagrave in her history of women in policing discusses many of the difficulties that are encountered. Unusual work hours, rotating shifts, and the need to be available 24 hours a day, make it difficult to maintain a sense of normalcy in a household. Single mothers, who do not have the assistance of a spouse, feel these problems most keenly, but even married policewomen say they experience pressure caused by the need to take on most of the family's domestic responsibilities.

Once a female officer is in an assignment with regular hours, she may not be inclined to seek promotion, since changes in responsibilities could cause conflict with her family commitments. When female officers marry within the force, they then must juggle not one, but two sets of conflicts. It is not hard to see why in a nationwide survey, the number one issue facing women in the work force was balancing work with family, and the number one reason female officers leave police

departments is conflicting work and family obligations.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment remains a serious problem in law enforcement. Anyone who believes it is no longer an issue need look no farther than the Christopher Commission report on the LAPD which followed the Rodney King beating in 1994. The Commission found, in addition to the highly publicized incidents of racism and unnecessary use of force, a continuing and pervasive pattern of harassment of female officers at the Los Angeles police Department (McCoy, 1993, p.6). Unfortunately, LAPD may be more typical of departments across the country than otherwise. Studies show 60 to 70% of women in police work report experiencing behavior on the job that would appropriately be regarded as harassment, a rate much higher than in other work environments (Brown, 1993, p.20). And experts agree that most of it goes unreported, perhaps as much as 95%.

The effects of sexual harassment on the victim are well documented and range from physical and psychological symptoms, to "diminished morale and

See Seagram, 1995, p.121-127, and Bennett, 1990, p.6.

See Heidensohn, 1992, p.139 and Thoman, 1994, p.31

productivity", to leaving the profession (Thomann, 1994, p.31). The Tailhook Scandal in the U.S. Navy brought sexual harassment in the military out in the open and many police agencies felt the need to address the problem through departmental assessments and training (Robinson, 1994, p.41). Although these are important initiatives, unfortunately they do little to change the culture. Research shows that a clear message (and action) on the part of the police administration can be the most potent preventative to sexual harassment in law enforcement (Thomann, 1994, p.32).

Peer Pressure

Although not illegal, as potentially devastating as sexual harassment, is the type of conduct which fits under the category of peer pressure and social ostracism. As mentioned earlier, police are a tight-knit group and relationships with fellow officers are critically important. Peers serve as "powerful sources of social rewards and punishments for an individual police officer" (Reynolds, 1979, p.13). Lee Reynolds and Michael Flynn in their report on the retention of minority and majority police officers make the point that "Recalcitrant organizations can be very effective in developing pressures upon the unwanted entrant which produce selective exiting from the organization." These can range from the subtle (social isolation,

over-protectiveness, and over-supervision) to the overt (discrimination in promotions and assignments) (Reynolds, 1979, p.7).

HOW WOMEN COPE

Individual Coping Strategies

Policewomen cope with these issues in ways both positive and negative.

"Invisibility", "coopting", "defeminizing" and "deprofessionalizing" are all negative coping strategies most female officers employ at some time in their careers.

Invisibility is a strategy which involves the officer bringing as little attention to herself as possible in order to increase the chances of being left alone.

Unfortunately for the "invisible" officer that includes positive and negative attention. Coopting and defeminizing involve taking on a masculine style and values in order to achieve acceptance. In its extreme form, female officers can assume a sexist attitude toward one another, particularly more feminine (hence less "effective") policewomen. Female officers who deprofessionalize make a conscious decision not to compete with their male colleagues (Ellison, 1983, p.68).

A coping mechanism sometimes employed in the case of sexual harassment was described by Jennifer Brown in her 1992 study of female police officers in Britain. "Neutralization" or the presumption by the victim that harassment is not

harmful, was found to be common among the policewomen interviewed. Many of the officers expressed the belief that women should be able to deal with such situations and defuse them (or, as described by one woman, learn to "give as good as [you get]"). The problem with this strategy, as Brown points out, is that it creates a false sense of security and perpetuates (or at the very least does nothing to stop) the pattern of abuse (Brown, 1992, p.20).

Culture As A Support System

Many of the values of the police and military are shared equally by men and women. Some are important enough to female officers that they can provide a "defense" against the difficulties they encounter on the job. One of the values which women seem to share equally with men in both military and police organizations is group solidarity and loyalty (Shields, 1985, p.16). This sometimes takes the form of exclusively male camaraderie, exemplified in the prediction that inclusion of women in the military would negatively impact "male bonding (Stiehm, 1989, p.7). It can, however, be a powerful force for both sexes. The familial nature of the military and police professions, with members brought even closer by occupational isolation and the fact that they "depend on each other, sometimes in life or death situations" (Pollock, 1994, p.126) make it clear why both cops and soldiers learn early on the

importance of taking care of their own.

Another value which women share with men in both professions is a sense of mission, or the tendency to see their profession as "not just a job, but a way of life" (Moskos, 1988, p.3). Charles Moskos (1988) and Pat Shields (1988) describe a military occupational orientation that is "institutional" as opposed to "occupational" in nature. The institutional service member has a "calling" and an appreciation for the unique aspects of military life such as discipline and the promise of adventure. Occupationally oriented soldiers are more attracted by the practical benefits of the
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job such as pay, job security and training.

These same professional motivations appear in research on police officers conducted by (among others) James Daum, Frances Heidensohn, and E.D. Poole, who found that psychological components such as the challenge and excitement of the job, the unconventional nature and status of the profession, the opportunity to form close relationships with co-workers, and a conception of police work as a vocation, not just a living, were extremely important to female officers. This sense of mission in particular was seen by Hiedensohn as a significant factor in many

female officers' decisions to stay with the job despite the harassment and other pressures they encountered (Heidensohn, 1992, p.125). Policewomen, like their military counterparts do, however, believe in the importance of more tangible rewards. Salary and related benefits, and job security do matter, particularly among
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 more experienced officers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Since the literature dealing with women who choose to remain in the police field is limited, this research was primarily exploratory in nature. The conceptual framework consisted of two working hypotheses and five sub-hypotheses. These working hypotheses were formulated based on the literature review and the researcher's twenty years experience in the field.

Working Hypothesis #1

Women who remain in police work have experienced gender-related stress and resistance to their presence in the profession.

Working Hypothesis #1 a

Women who remain in police work have developed coping mechanisms to deal with this pressure and resistance.

Working Hypothesis #1 b

Women who remain in police work have had support systems which have helped them deal with pressure and resistance.

Working Hypothesis #2

Women who remain in police work are motivated by both practical considerations and the nature of the work itself.

Working Hypothesis #2 a

Women who remain in police work find salary, job benefits and job security important motivators for remaining in the profession.

Working Hypothesis #2 b

Women who remain in police work find the challenge of the work, the status of the profession, and the opportunity for personal growth important motivators for remaining in the profession.

Working Hypothesis #2 c

Women who remain in police work see it as a mission or a "way of life" rather than just a job.

The focus group was the research methodology chosen to test these hypotheses.

The Austin Police Department was selected as the organization within which the research was carried out.

Chapter Three

THE RESEARCH SETTING

THE AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Austin Police Department (APD), the site for this research, is a major city police department, with 1524 employees, 946 of whom are commissioned police officers. The agency serves a population of 526,000 (Barton, 1996) with an ethnic breakdown of 4% Asian, 11% Black, 22% Hispanic, and 73% White (Flores, 1996). The gender breakdown is about 50/50 male and female. Austin is home to a major national university with over 40,000 students and has a highly educated citizenry. It has become a leader in the high technology industry and has what is generally considered a progressive (or liberal, depending on the point of view) social orientation. The ethnic breakdown for APD's officers is 2% Asian, 16% Hispanic, 10% Black and 72% White.

Women have been commissioned police officers at APD since 1975, but their numbers were initially very low and rose slowly. In 1978, there were still only five commissioned female officers working at the department. Currently, women represent 116 (or 12%) of the department's 946 sworn officers.

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THE HIRING PROCESS

The preliminary entry requirements at APD are very basic: candidates must be at least twenty one years of age, have a U.S. driver's license, and 30 hours of college credit.²⁷ Convicted felons or individuals who have recently used illegal drugs are eliminated from consideration.

After this preliminary screening the applicant undergoes a physical agility test, a psychological inventory, a test of basic reading skills, and a behavioral personality assessment. An extensive background investigation is conducted and the applicant is interviewed by a board composed of five APD officers (usually of high rank) and the staff psychologist.²⁸ Those who pass all phases of the process are placed on an eligibility list from which all police hirees are selected. The list, by law, remains in effect for one year or until all names are exhausted. Any applicant who "dies" on the eligibility list must repeat the entire process the following year (Vanderhule, 1996). At each stage in the process large numbers of applicants are eliminated.

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This education standard was implemented in 1995. Prior to that time, the department only required a high school diploma or GED.

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All phases of the process are pass/fail, but state law mandates that former military personnel (with certain restrictions) receive "bonus" points which can raise their position higher on the list.

A pool of three to four thousand is eventually narrowed to thirty to forty who make up the cadet training class.

TRAINING AND ASSIGNMENTS

APD has one of the longest training academies in the nation - twenty seven weeks. Classroom, physical, and practical training are all included. Cadets also ride on patrol with field training officers for four weeks, during which time they are both trained and evaluated by experienced officers.

After graduation, all new officers have the same assignment - street patrol. A minimum of two years must be served in this capacity before they become eligible for a specialized assignment or promotion. Specialized positions cover a wide range of assignments, from motorcycles to vice to crime prevention. Officers appear before a selection board and compete with their peers to fill these positions.

PROMOTION

Promotion to detective, the next higher rank, is also possible after two years service, although the mechanics of the promotional system make it unusual for a patrol officer with less than four years service to promote. Two years time in grade is required for all subsequent promotions up to the rank of Assistant Chief. Of the 116 women in the APD ranks, 82 occupy the entry level position of patrol officer, 16 are detectives, 12 are sergeants, 4 are lieutenants, 1 is a captain, and the

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department has a female chief of police (Bryant, 1996). After serving as chief of police in Houston, Texas, Elizabeth Watson, a career officer, was appointed chief of the Austin Police Department in 1993. She was interviewed by this researcher on October 24, 1996, and the issues addressed in this research were discussed with her.

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APD's promotional system is different from most major police departments across the country. The score on a multiple choice test, based on material related to the position sought is combined with points earned for service time with the department (to a maximum of ten points). The sum of these two numbers, and no other criteria rank a candidate on a promotional list. This system is used for all promotions up to and including the rank of captain. Only the three positions of assistant chief, who work directly under the chief are appointed. Most large departments have implemented some type of behaviorally anchored assessment system. APD's system can only be changed by law, or with the consent of a majority of the officers.

Interview with Chief Elizabeth Watson

Austin Police Department

10/24/96

Bobbie- Why have you stayed with a police career? What are the factors that have motivated you to remain in law enforcement?

Chief Watson- Well, actually, when I joined the department in Houston in, what was it, [19]72, I had no intention of staying. I was needing a higher paying job. And so I thought, "Well, I'll do that while I'm still floating my resume." So it was really never a career choice for me. That conviction [not to make law enforcement a career] became more solid after I was in the [training] academy, and I was told that I couldn't have my choice of assignments like the men; I couldn't have the uniform that the men had; that I would be rotated to the most unpleasant assignments simply because I was female. I thought, "This is not an environment that welcomes women."

I was in the [Houston Police] Department. I had gotten assigned to the Juvenile Division and I was in the department for, I guess it was maybe six months. And I remember so vividly there was a...well, at the time the situation that occurred was not particularly remarkable. One of the duties I had was [to handle] shoplifters. Female [shoplifters](or any juvenile shoplifter really, but primarily females) would be dropped off in [the] Juvenile [Unit] by the arresting officer. And then it was my job to do the interrogation, to do the paperwork, to decide whether or not this was a person that I needed to refer for further treatment or just call the parents.

So I had this one fifteen year old girl come in. And she was from a very wealthy part of town. She had never been arrested before and she had taken some jewelry. And she was very, very arrogant. She just thought that the whole business about having to come downtown was beneath her. And when I would ask her questions she would just stick her nose up in the air and be very curt in her answers. And I got annoyed with her and so I said, "Let me tell you something, little lady, this stuff you stole from this store is not worth the price you're going to pay, because you'll pay with your freedom." And I went into this lecture, okay? Just telling her,

"You're trying to tell me you've never stolen anything before. What you mean is you've never been caught before. And you're sitting there thinking, 'And I won't get caught next time either.' So be sure that next time you steal something that's really worth a lot, because you'll have an adult record...", and [I] just went on and on. I thought, "She wants to be haughty. I can be haughty. Watch haughty."

So I call her parents and they come down and get her, and I don't think another thing about her. And another six months go by and I'm still working in Juvenile and I get this call, "Officer [X], (which was my name at the time) report to the front." And it's really bad when somebody remembers your name. You know you're in trouble. So I thought, "Oh God." So I went up and this couple, parents, came up to me and said, "Do you remember our daughter?" and they named her. And I had no clue. I said, "Will you excuse me just for a moment? I'll be right back."

So I run back to the file and I pull this case. And it didn't even then hit me right away, and I thought, "Oh God. What did I do? It's been so long ago I don't remember." And then it started coming back to me which one this was and I thought, "Oh, I got it now. They're going to tell me I traumatized [their daughter] and so forth." So I go back out front and the woman starts to cry and she says to me [that] I have absolutely changed their lives. When their daughter was arrested she was out of control. She'd been dropping out of school. She was in with a bad crowd. And she came home [from her experience with me] a different person. And they thought that it would wear off.

[They said] that she had started helping around the house, that she started studying. She started going to school and they just knew it wouldn't last. But now, six months later, she had an entirely new group of friends, she was valedictorian, [making] straight "A's", and they just wanted me to know that I had absolutely made a difference for them. And that is why I stayed. Because I thought, "If I can stay..." I remember thinking about that incident for so long, and I thought, "You know, I could stay in this business for twenty years and I don't have to do one more thing. Not one more thing." People spend their whole lives trying to make a difference. I don't know where she is today, but I think about her periodically. I think that's really why I came into this field. That's one [person I helped] that I know about. Maybe I've made other differences that nobody ever came back to tell me...that I made a difference. But I remember that.

B- The gratification of that must have been enormous.

W- It was enormous. It was really...it was a life-changing kind of thing, and I thought, "You know, if I can do that without even thinking about it, without..." I didn't know [what effect I had had.] [And I thought], "And maybe this is where I need to be." I think that [incident affected my decision to stay in law enforcement] more than anything else. More than anything else. But there were other issues that came up. There was a lot of discrimination against women in the department - a lot of barriers. Women police officers were kind of treated like civilians - as not really...

B- As second-class citizens?

W- Yeah. It was sort of like [their thinking was], "We have to put up with these women. And when will they realize that this is not where they need to be?" And it was especially so, I think, from my supervisors who were very much a part of the "good ole' boy" system. I started developing convictions. I would see different things happen. For example, back then, one of my fellow officers (a female officer) wanted to take maternity leave. And there was no such thing. She got a note from the doctor that she needed to be off for medical reasons after the baby was born. She was denied. She was told that that was an inconvenience to the department; that she chose to get pregnant and she certainly wasn't going to be rewarded or paid for being off.

And so she filed a suit about it. And the Captain told her, "I don't care whether you win or lose, I promise you'll lose. Whether or not...because you'll work night shift [in the] jail if you pursue this." She did pursue it. She was transferred to [a] night shift jail [assignment]. And I saw that kind of stuff going on. I remember [that officer] saying to me, "This won't help me. I'll have to pay a price. But it'll help you." And there were things like that, that made me realize I really did need to change [the department], and I couldn't change it going outside the system. I would have to come up through the system and change it internally.

B- How did you deal with the kind of stress that that caused?

W- I developed a very thick skin. I viewed myself in many ways like a turtle. I just absolutely put this shell around me so that no matter how hard the volley was, I just

wouldn't let it penetrate to where it would affect me personally. And everything that happened I would remember, "That's what I'm here to fix." So it became more of a...oh, I viewed it in more of a third-person context. I just developed sort of a psychological ability...

B- Like a depersonalization.

W- Yes. More to say, "This is really not about me. They're trying to hurt me, but they can't hurt me. Only if I let them. They're hurting the organization. They're hurting themselves. And this is more a statement of them than it is of me. I'm not going to let them say I'm less than who I am. But I will show them that they're wrong. And I'll show them by example. I'm not going to come after them and treat them the way they're treating me" - that kind of philosophical thing that I had really learned from my father growing up. He's told me so many stories. - He was a bit of a philosopher. And he would tell me stories from the military where he was treated badly because people didn't know how high a rank he had. And just different things. And I just learned from him that you don't...

B- Did you still have contact with him when you were on the [police] force?

W- Oh yes. I did.

B- Was he a great source of support for you?

W- Absolutely. He was. I joined in '72. He died in '76. But in those early years when I was going through so much, he would coach me. I would talk to him and say, "You know, this is crazy. I got into this field and I don't need to put up with this." And he would very clearly communicate to me that it was not me - it was them. And [he] helped me rise above it really. I think my philosophical orientation was shaped by him.

B- Were there other women [on the police force] that you could gain support from?

W- Well, there were women in the organization, but it struck me that except for this one [who filed suit] about the maternity [leave], they were basically women who had learned to cope in the system by going along, by not challenging. That there were penalties for challenging - you know, bad days off, bad shift, bad cases

[assigned to them]. They had learned to acquiesce. So there was not really any place to go. And all the women worked in the jail or in Juvenile. We were not allowed to work anywhere else. And they would point to... There were a couple of females who worked the runaway desk and they were detectives. And they were... it was a practice in the department at the time that if a woman took a promotion test (which detective was a promotion), that they were to voluntarily pass [up the opportunity] and let the man get promoted. And these women did not [do that], and so they were made relief clerks on the runaway desk as a penalty. And so the other women would point to them and say, "See? Is it worth that? Look at the price they have to pay. Yeah, they get more money, but look at the job they're doing. They're clerks. And at least you and I, we get to work cases." So, [the implication was], "Don't make waves". That's the lesson.

B- One of the themes that came through from talking to the women [officers] in this department was that, in terms of proving themselves, they could almost all remember a single incident where they had, at least in the minds of the other officers, proven themselves. And generally it was some kind of physical challenge that they took on. Do you remember anything like that?

W- Yes, I do. I remember... it was very important to me because I knew I was not regarded as a real officer, okay? I was very conscious of doing more than I really needed to do, to kind of assure them that I really was an officer and I really could help. And I remember having gone out [on patrol]. Well, we would go out all the time. We had, in Juvenile, a Sergeant who thought that women were being treated improperly [discriminated against]. And so he would put us out with a male officer and tell us, "Listen to the radio, and back up the officers on calls if there's anything involving a juvenile."

And so we were out one night... (The policy was subsequently changed. It was a terrible policy)... but anyway, we had gotten out there one night and a chase went out [over the radio]. And my partner and I were in plain clothes and a plain vehicle, okay? But we got in the chase because there was, at the time, no policy prohibiting it. And I said, "You know, [the officers] are not going to know who we are when we get there. It's a big department. They're going to think that we're the bad guys." And my partner said, "Well, no, I'm going to handle it. Lots of guys know me."

And so we go out and there's a foot chase through a field. So we pull up (he's

driving) and he barrels out of the car and on his way out he says, "You stay in the floorboard." [Laughs]. I said [to myself], "Oh, well, this is interesting." Needless to say, I barrel out and I am running along with him, and get there in time. The officers have already tackled somebody. Someone else, some other female starts running. I get her. I tackle her. And it was a simple thing. It was nothing. It was, "So what? Who wouldn't?" But it was a big deal [to them]. [The male officer said], "Well, you know, I haven't had men back me up that well." It was just, it was silly stuff. If it had been a man doing it you wouldn't even mention it, but because it was unexpected that a female would actually do anything...

And then there was another case, [with a] different officer. We had gone to a disturbance in an apartment complex and my partner had become involved in some kind of verbal altercation. And there was a crowd of males who were kind of closing in on him. And so I had...(I don't remember why we had a shotgun. We had picked one up at a prior scene or something). So I got out of the car and I just [makes a motion of racking a shotgun], and the noise made everybody back off. He [my partner] got back in the car and he said, "Oh my God, that was so good." That helped. Little things. So, yeah there were things...I think in hindsight it wasn't that I had done anything at all that was unusual, that was anything but instinctive, that any one of us would do, but it was so unexpected. The officers had such a negative vision of female officers that doing the normal seemed abnormal to them.

B- Did you ever think about quitting? Seriously think about quitting?

W- Seriously? No. I didn't seriously think about it. Well, that's not true. I did seriously think about it. After that incident in Juvenile [when the parents described my positive impact on their child], ...There were times when I was discouraged. But I would always relate back to that incident and think, "No, this is where I really do need to be. And these hard heads are giving me a tough time. Well, it's their problem." I remember when I went to Burglary and Theft and I was, I think, the second female to have worked [there]. And the one before me had quit under pressure. So, it was not a welcome environment. And when I walked in, several of the senior, the tenured officers there said, "You know, you ought to be barefoot and pregnant" - very blatant, bold kinds of things that would never fly today.

But I will say those times discouraged me. The Lieutenant told me my assignment every day was to go down to the pistol range and practice. And

everybody else was getting case assignments, and I was supposed to go down to the pistol range and practice. And I finally...after about a month I went to him and I said, "Why am I doing this?" And he said, "I just don't think that you're competent to serve in my unit." There were times like that, that I just...I really wondered when we would ever make it better, when it would ever get better.

B- Those are such horrible, outrageous experiences, and mine weren't that bad, but they were pretty bad. But the same kind of thing, I never seriously thought about quitting. And I guess what's interesting to me is, what's the payoff? There's got to be a huge payoff [for putting up with all that].

W- I never got a payoff in the department. I never expected one. I was always looking for the external gratification. I was always looking for the citizen that would come to me and say...I wanted a repeat of that experience in Juvenile. And periodically I would get them. Nothing of that scale, perhaps because that was the first. But, periodically there would be somebody that would thank me.

I took a lot of heat, I remember, internally, when I was a detective because I really tried awfully hard on all the cases. And folks accused me of making mountains out of mole hills. And why didn't I prioritize stuff? I would give a polygraph...I remember the Lieutenant chastising me about giving a polygraph test to a person who wasn't accused of a felony. Why was I wasting the polygraph time? There was no orientation toward how the citizen felt, or the fact that it was solvable, and I could make a difference. It was just like...you know, "Why are you wasting our time?"

B- Did you feel like you offered something to the citizens that possibly the male officers didn't offer in terms of concern and compassion, and a different perspective?

W- I didn't think about it in terms of male/female. I never did. It was always for me - my own wanting to do something that mattered. And I always viewed everybody else as wrong [Laughs]. I don't know...I know that's ridiculous. It reminds me of my little sister who kept making "R"s backwards in the first grade. And when the teacher said she was doing it wrong she said, "No, I'm right. Everybody else is wrong." I don't know why, but I did. I thought everybody else was just mistaken and I was going to do my thing and help people, whether or not there was another person in the organization that would. I didn't think about it in terms of gender

though.

B- A couple of questions: Do you think the fact that it was so challenging made it an unusual and particularly gratifying job? In other words, if it's this difficult and I have to put up with all this b-----, the fact that I'm able to do it gives me tremendous satisfaction.

W- I don't think that was a conscious thought. I think it was very much a motivator though. Because, like many people, I am one who will accomplish it simply because you tell me I can't. And because there was this unspoken expectation that I couldn't do the job, I was, by God, determined to show everybody, including myself that I could do anything I chose and just watch me. So there was this "chip on my shoulder" kind of feeling that was, I think, a part of my development.

B- I'm wondering about...when you talk about developing a resistance to the negative stuff that was coming, as a protective kind of thing, did that cause you any kind of role conflict in terms of your personal life? Having to sort of put on a show at work and then go home and be more yourself? Was the transition hard?

W- No, it really was...it became...My deflecting the criticism was very much a part of who I was. It didn't change when I was off-duty, okay? It just became part of me - that there's the world out there and then there's the world for me. I just don't care what the world throws me. I'll take what I can use and throw away the rest. It didn't matter. As a matter of fact, I had this view of the world and view of the police world that was: all the men think all the women are morons. And I accept that - that that's the way they feel. They are wrong. But I will not change it.

And so I violated my own doctrine and I started dating this officer, wound up marrying him, and we had never discussed, ever, whether or not he had a superior attitude, whether or not he thought women ought to be in the field [patrol]. I just took for granted that he was like all male officers and you know, that he would certainly not think I could do what men could do. So when it became time to promote, I didn't promote, simply because at this point I was married and I had to accept the fact that I was going to have to change at my level what I could change, but never would I promote over a man because it was part of the world. I wasn't going to sacrifice my marriage.

And I was really surprised when he got very upset with me for not competing on the Lieutenant's exam. So the next year I did, and I did well and he was just as proud. I think that too helped me to realize, "Wait a minute. They're not all like that. I just had some bad experiences and so I've stereotyped. What I need to do is seek out the ones like the one I married who [are] you know, very traditional, very "police", and yet able to see another point of view."

B- One thing that has come through from talking to you and the other women is that so much of the motivation has been internal. They have "the right stuff" when they come on board, which makes it hard to know what the department could do in terms of recommendations, to make it more likely that women will stay? That part's been difficult for me.

W- Do women disproportionately leave?

B- Well, no. But the problem is there are so few to begin with. They actually don't [leave more frequently than men]. The attrition rate is approximately the same now. But there are so few who come in to begin with that every loss [of a female officer] is a significant loss.

W- I don't think there is anything that the organization can or should do, other than aggressively recruit women. We aggressively recruit minorities. Why do we not aggressively recruit women? The only way, really, to change stereotypes is through exposure. The more minorities we have, the more women we have...That's why I believe so much in representation. But it's the only thing that will work. You can't put people in a classroom and say, "Be sensitive." It doesn't work. If you, through interaction, begin to see something you couldn't have seen in a classroom then it changes.

B- There's even a critical number where studies show attitudes begin to change. I think it's about 15%. They can even pinpoint the number. But we're not there. We've been at 11[%] for a long time. So, in terms of the department, really nothing in your career, early on in your career, that would have made a difference...well, obviously you still stayed. So you made that decision. But is there anything the department could have done to reinforce it?

W- You know, in a way, I think if the department had tried to keep me, I would

have felt less challenged, and I might not have stayed. I don't think my determination would have kicked in if I had come into a friendly environment - or at least one that was artificially friendly. I think that's what it would have seemed to me - that it was artificially friendly. Because really, the environment is more what you have happen in the hallway and the water fountain, than what the policy says and what is permitted in terms of, you know, the external focus. I just...I think I probably would have become cynical. This is all theoretical, but knowing the way I react to things. And really it's not different from the way the officers react now.

There's the stated policy and there's the practice. And they have some cynicism that what you say and what you do are different. I think I would have done the same. I think I would have looked at discrimination as being verbally unacceptable in a police form but in practice, rampant. And that would have made me cynical and I probably would have left. But since there was not even a policy or an expectation that it wasn't okay to treat you like garbage...and that's why I say, I don't think it's something the department, through policy, can do - other than to establish tone. I do think it's unacceptable to have the kind of remarks made that were made to me. But I think now it's socially unacceptable. Back then it was socially acceptable. So I think that the times that we're in are different. But I really believe that recruitment and representation are the issues - where the focus needs to be.

B- Do you like being a cop?

W- I love it.

B- Do you like the fact that you are a cop? Is it part of your identity?

W- That's an interesting question. I have been asked that of late. I don't think it is. I don't think it is. I think it used to be. I don't think it is any more because in a way I'm now a Chief, which is a whole different kind of orientation. I didn't know it when I got into it. I think I was a cop, as part of my identity, always. But I have changed. This role as Chief for, I don't know how many years, six years, it's very different. I have at some point stepped out of the world of policing. I'm an administrator - a C.E.O.

B- The balance has tipped?

W- Yeah. I was surprised. I was in a meeting about a month ago with some of my colleagues, police chiefs, and we were talking about training, and who in the country was going to rally this mobilization that needs to occur around the whole idea of leadership, and so forth. And someone said to me, "Well, why don't you do it?" And I thought, "I can't do it. I'm the head of a major [police] agency. I don't have time." And someone said, "So, that's your identity? You're the head of a major agency? You're not a person in your own right?" And it really struck me that that was a possibility, as part of my thinking, that I now am a chief of police. I'm a major city chief of police. And I have been for a number of years. I don't know. That may be part of my identity as chief, as opposed to officer. It may be. It's very hard for me to get outside of it. I guess you become what you do.

B- Exactly. But earlier on, was the fact that you were a police officer, not just that you were a part of that environment, but all the things [being a police officer] represented in terms of... righting the wrongs of society and a higher value system, and all those things were important to you?

W- All those things. And it never went away. You know, it never went away. When you're off-duty, you're in plain clothes, nobody knows who you are, and you're still looking and still aware of who you are and what your responsibility is. I remember thinking, "I just don't know what I would do if I weren't armed. I will have to be armed all my life. I will have to die a police officer so I can go about armed, because something could happen and I..."

B- You would feel obligated to take action?

W- That's right.

B- Thank you very much Chief.

End of Interview

This interview with the APD Chief of Police was designed to supplement the data collected in the primary research. With over forty potential subjects available

for the study, however, in-depth interviews with all participants would have been much too time-intensive. A survey instrument could not have communicated the complexity, emotion, and general tone of the responses. Since it was also expected that group interaction could facilitate data collection, the focus group was the methodology selected for this study.

Chapter Four

METHODOLOGY

APPROPRIATENESS OF THE METHOD

Focus groups are group interviews typically involving six to ten participants, with a moderator who supplies the topics, promotes interaction and keeps the group focused. The interaction of the group members is the key to the collection of useful data (Morgan, 1988, p.9, 43). The focus group method was chosen for this study over other research techniques for several reasons. First, the nature of exploratory research lends itself to this methodology. Since there is relatively little known about the topic being examined, relevant issues can be explored in depth. Focus groups are also an excellent device for generating and testing research hypotheses (Morgan, 1988, p.21). The groups' responses were used to test both the researcher's working hypotheses and sub-hypotheses. As anticipated, the discussion also generated several new hypotheses.

The research produced primarily qualitative data. Qualitative data is usually collected through focus groups, participant observation or interviews (Morgan, 1988, p.15). Participant observation has the advantage of minimal researcher influence and benefits from its relatively natural setting. Due to the time frame

allowed for this project, participant observation would have not been a practical research method to employ. Also, since perceptions, feelings and opinions, and not overt behavior were the focus of the research, observation could not have yielded the relevant data. Interviews would also have been too time-consuming, and would not have allowed for the group interaction, which is such an important benefit of focus groups (Morgan, 1988, p.20-23).

Beyond the seeming match between the nature of this research and the focus group technique, this methodology was selected to take advantage of an unusual research opportunity - access to a large number of experts from which to collect data. The researcher's position within the organization and personal relationships with most of the potential participants made it likely that she would obtain their cooperation and, hopefully, their trust.

ADVANTAGES OF FOCUS GROUPS

In summary, the primary advantages of focus groups are:

- 1) Focus groups are a good research method for obtaining qualitative data and for conducting exploratory research.
- 2) Focus groups allow you to examine topics in depth, clarify responses, and probe for a deeper understanding of the issues.
- 3) Focus groups allow for interaction between group members that creates an entirely different dynamic than that which is generated by other

research methods. Participants can react to and build on the comments and experiences of other group members.

- 4) Focus groups are an excellent method for testing hypotheses and generating new ones (Morgan, 1988, p.20-23).

DISADVANTAGES OF FOCUS GROUPS

The focus group method has three primary disadvantages:

- 1) The moderator may inadvertently bias results by providing cues about the kinds of responses he/she expects.
- 2) Member responses may be affected by dominant group members. Other, more passive members may be reluctant to contribute.
- 3) Focus groups, as with all field research, have limited generalizability.

The first two disadvantages were, in fact, realized in the research (as explained in more detail in the Conclusions chapter.) Generalizability, however, was not a major issue, since this project was, in essence, a case study.

IMPLEMENTATION

This research was conducted at the Austin Police Department. The target population was all female APD officers with at least ten years experience with the department. Officers were encourage to participate, but attendance was not mandatory. Interviews were conducted on-duty and officers who were unavailable

or who strongly objected to participating were excused. Diversity was achieved in participant age, rank, race and assignment, however since twenty one is the minimum age for beginning employment with APD, no participant was younger than thirty one years of age.

The research site was one of APD's police sub-stations, located at 812 Springdale Road in Austin. Three group interviews were conducted on October 8, 9, and 10, 1996, respectively. Five officers participated in each discussion, and the researcher served as moderator in each case. Discussion time ranged from 1 1/2 to 2 hours in duration and, with the permission of the participants, the interviews were tape-recorded. The data collected consisted of transcripts of these taped conversations.

Participants for the research were recruited based on two criteria: 1) a minimum of ten years experience with APD was required, and 2) the members needed to be available mid-week, between 9am and 5pm. Individual intradepartmental memos were sent to each officer explaining the project and requesting their assistance. The officers' captains were also provided project information and authorization was requested from them for their personnel to participate. The only distinction made when composing the groups was the conscious decision to form one group consisting solely of supervisors, and two

groups of non-supervisory officers. This is consistent with Morgan's recommendation that a group be as homogenous as possible in background (1988, p.46) to facilitate discussion.

No-show rate was just over fifty per cent, a rate much higher than that predicted by Morgan (1988, p.42). Since the researcher had significantly overbooked participants, however, this did not cause complications. In fact, a smaller group made for a more intimate setting and allowed each group member more participation time.

The researcher, serving as moderator, introduced the project by explaining the purpose of the research. Each question was presented, followed by discussion. Moderator involvement was low to moderate. Although the moderator knew all the participants personally, and they, to varying degrees, knew each other, group members were assured that confidentiality regarding their identities would be maintained. This familiarity appeared to actually facilitate discussion by creating a relaxed, supportive atmosphere. Also, the fact that the moderator herself was a police officer enhanced, in the researcher's opinion, both the nature and candor of the discussion.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Based on the working hypotheses being tested, specific questions were

formulated and posed to the group.

Working Hypothesis #1

Women who remain in police work have experienced gender-related stress and resistance to their presence in the profession.

1) Have you experienced job-related stress based on your gender?

It was expected that the participants would have experienced gender-related job stress.

2) Describe the nature of the stress.

Lack of peer support, family conflict and sexual harassment might all have been mentioned.

Working Hypothesis #1 a

Women who remain in police work have developed coping mechanisms to deal with this pressure and resistance.

Working Hypothesis #1 b

Women who remain in police work have had support systems which have helped them deal with pressure and resistance.

3) How did you deal with the stress?

It was expected that the group members would have developed both positive and negative coping mechanisms to deal with this pressure. It was also anticipated that support systems, both on and off the job, would be considered important to the participants.

Working Hypothesis #2

Women who remain in police work are motivated by both practical considerations and the nature of the work itself.

Working Hypothesis #2 a

Women who remain in police work find salary, job benefits and job security important motivators for remaining in the profession.

Working Hypothesis #2 b

Women who remain in police work find the challenge of the work, the status of the profession, and the opportunity for personal growth important motivators for remaining in the profession.

Working Hypothesis #2 c

Women who remain in police work see it as a mission or a "way of life" rather than just a job.

4) What have been your principal motivations for remaining in police work?

It was expected that salary, benefits, working conditions and other practical considerations would be mentioned by the participants. The challenge of the work, the independence it affords, the professional status, and the nontraditional nature of the job might all have been cited. Participants were expected to talk about a service orientation and a feeling of the police department as a "family".

5) Do you have any recommendations for the Austin Police Department on how best to retain women officers?

This question was not designed to test any working hypotheses, but, by tapping

into the participants' experiences and insights, possibly generate new ones.

Summary Table 1

Hypothesis	Questions	Sources of Evidence
H 1 Gender-related stress	Q 1 Have you experienced gender-related stress? Q 2 Describe the nature of the stress.	Affirmative responses Lack of peer support Family conflict Sexual harassment
H 1a Coping mechanisms	Q 3 How did you deal with it?	Positive mechanisms Negative mechanisms
H 1b Support systems		On the job support Off the job support
H 2 Practical motivators and nature of work H 2 a Practical motivators	Q 5 What have been your principal motivations for remaining in police work?	 Salary Benefits Job Security
H 2 b Intrinsic motivators		Challenge of work Independence Professional status Nontraditional nature
H 2 c Police work as mission		Service orientation P.D. as family

Chapter Five

RESULTS

The results of the focus group research will be discussed in relationship to the two working hypotheses and five sub-hypotheses which have been proposed, and the key concepts which make up these hypotheses. All results will be presented in narrative form.

HYPOTHESIS #1

Women who remain in police work have experienced gender-related stress and resistance to their presence in the profession.

All fifteen participants had experienced job stress which was directly related to their gender. Lack of peer support, sexual harassment and family obligations were all mentioned.

Peer Support

Particularly prevalent among group members was the perceived need to constantly prove themselves. There was general agreement that male officers had been automatically accepted, and assumed to be competent until it was proven otherwise. For female officers, the reverse was the case.

I think there was always a sense of me being treated differently.

[There's] a different set of standards.

I've always said that when men came out [of the academy] they were accepted - just automatically accepted. And then if they screwed up...But the women - no. You had to prove yourself first, and then you were accepted.

...you basically have to outdo (triple, quadruple, whatever) whoever else is [out] there.

There were several officers that didn't want to work in the district next to me, because I was a girl, until I had...proved myself over and over and over.

Many of the women related a "moment of truth" when they had individually proven themselves to their male co-workers. Generally such incidents involved a physical encounter of some sort where the female officer had demonstrated that she could and would use physical force if necessary.

...it didn't hurt that the first shoplifter that bucked up against me that [a male officer] stood back and watched me handle, he went and told everybody what a wonderful job I did...with this guy.

[Some officers] called me over to a [mentally ill person] after they'd [told] him I was going to arrest him. And they stood and watched [me do it].

I saw that...a lot when I first came out. A lot [of the male officers] would just kind of step back [to see if you could handle it].

[After helping officers subdue a violent suspect] ...everybody walked up to us and said, "Hey, y'all did good."...it was those little things that helped us gain respect on the streets.

[In reference to a situation where she had pulled out a shotgun to control a crowd] I think in hindsight it wasn't that I had done anything at all unusual, that was anything but instinctive, that any one of us would do, but it was so unexpected. The officers had such a negative vision of female officers that doing the normal seemed abnormal to them.

Sexual Harassment and Hostility

Although all the women reported facing some discrimination and hostility, the range and intensity of experiences was very broad. To a large extent, the nature of their experiences appeared to be dictated by the actions of those in their immediate work group ("A lot of it depended on the shift you went to and the group of people.") Almost all of their stories, both positive ("Well, I was real fortunate. The guys on my shift...were very, very helpful.") and negative ("You can't win for losing. Just forget it.") dealt with their fellow shift members, or officers they worked with directly. Almost half the group members characterized the degree or mistreatment as fairly low ("...not too many guys have given me a hard time.") About the same proportion describe some serious problems such as intimidation, disparate treatment and discrimination in assignments.

Apparently the shift I went to already had preconceived notions. They did not want a female on the shift.

[The field training officer] tried to make it as hard as he could on me. He intimidated me so bad ...I came home probably every night and almost cried...[Toward] the end I was talking about quitting.

[I was told] "No, women are not on [motorcycles]. And there will never be any women on bikes."

...that was about the time that nobody wanted to be on walking beat...They needed three new people in walking beat...and I came home and I said, "I know they're going to pick me. I just know it." And sure enough they did. And I was so bitter about it.

...after I was in the [training] academy I was told that I couldn't have my choice of assignments like the men; I couldn't have the uniform that the men had; that I would be rotated to the most unpleasant assignments simply because I was a woman.

Derogatory comments about women were considered common, many of these reflecting the belief that females should not be police officers.

[The] sergeant would call me [by a male name] because he had never had a woman on his shift and "he wasn't about to start now."

They approached me and said, "You know, we don't believe that women belong here and you have to prove a lot to me."

This shift was like, "No, we are not going to have a woman!" And I went to that one.

Personal and sexual comments were also frequently made.

[This officer] used to tell me, "God, you look good in those pants." or "is that you or your [bullet-proof] vest?"

Guys...think they can say anything and they don't have to pay the same price for saying it. They will suffer no repercussions.

...I received verbal harassment until I moved out of that sector. I begged to be moved.

[This officer] basically told me that the only reason I was let on the shift was so I could be the 'party girl' and be their little slut.

An attractive woman will come on somebody's shift and everybody starts acting like...dogs in heat.

I've never had anyone criticize my work. It's always the way I talk, the way I dress, the way I wear my hair...[comments like], "Don't you think your butt's too big to be wearing those pants" Things like that. Or, "Why won't you date me? What's wrong with me?"

...you hear people say things about you and they hurt so much.

Mentally they put you through a lot.

Participants mentioned the labeling process that goes on in police departments and the difficulties they experienced when they were stereotyped or stigmatized.

I don't know how many times my name was written on the men's bathroom wall...'For a good time call...'

The men always want to know who you're dating, who you're seeing.

If you're not s----- around, you're gay.

If I talked to [officers], if I was nice to them, then I must like them and want to go to bed with them.

You can't have a buddy. You can't have a friend, someone to talk to...you get stigmatized. Either, "she's messing with him" or "she's sleeping with this guy." ...You've probably heard it and been through it, everybody in here [has]. When they come on to you...if you don't s----- them it's because you're either gay or...something's wrong with you. You're confronted with so many things down here it's pathetic.

A disturbing finding was the descriptions of police supervisors (sergeants and lieutenants) who either participated in the mistreatment of the women, or when it was reported to them, failed to take action. Chief Elizabeth Watson describes her first days in the Houston Police Department's Burglary and Theft Unit.

I will say those times discouraged me. The lieutenant told me my assignment every day was to go down to the pistol range and practice. Everybody else was getting case assignments and I was supposed to go down to the pistol range and practice. And I finally, after about a month I went to him and I said, "Why am I doing this?" And he said, "I just don't think that you're competent to serve in my unit."

Other officers' experiences echoed the theme:

What made me mad was [this supervisor] never gave me a chance. He just took one look at me and...he didn't want me, and I almost quit. He told me...the best thing for [me] was to go ahead and resign. He actually tried to get me to sign the paper. He brought me in there and said, "Just sign this." I said, "No...I don't want to" and I went back to the academy in tears.

[One] thing...that supervisor did to me and [the only other female officer on the shift] was that right before our six month probation was up, he decided he was going to make us ride with our [field training officers] to see [whether we were] doing a good job. Well, the class before it, which was a male officer...didn't do it and the class behind us didn't do it either and he was a male officer too. And I said, "That's not right."

I did have one incident [of harassment], but it was my immediate supervisor.

Finally, three of the group members (20%) described situations involving threatened and actual sexual assaults, ranging from pinching to attempted rape. One

of the threats to commit an assault came from a supervisor. According to the group members most of the serious incidents were not reported. When they were reported, little action was taken and repercussions to the offender were minimal.

...on the sexual assaults, it was mainly because they found me attractive, they wanted to date me. I said, "No" and they were like, "By God, you're not telling me no." And they just never heard it.

This has happened more than once...where [an officer] grabbed my hand and forced it on his 'manly bulge'.

...there was this officer, and he'd talk to you and touch you, and reach and pinch you.

...when the physical altercation started [with my supervisor], I just really didn't know what to do.

[This officer] crawled up my leg and grabbed my breasts...

I told my sergeant about [the assault] within days. My sergeant laughed. He thought that was real funny.

I drove out to the lieutenant and I told the lieutenant everything that had happened. And I was removed from the shift. And nothing ever happened to him. Nothing.

With most of us, nothing's happened to the guys.

Family Obligations

The conflict the job presented with family obligations was mentioned by many of the women. Rotating shifts, which require a great deal of night work were responsible for many of the difficulties.

I think that...rotating shifts [and] family obligations...hold women back.

The rotating shifts that patrol goes through is real detrimental to anyone with families.

[When I was] pregnant...the detectives, a couple of them, were real red necks and they'd give me a hard time about how I was being treated differently or something like that.

...if I was stuck on rotating shifts, I might have leave. If...I never saw my child...she's more important than this job.

...women get punished when they have children.

We're penalized, really, for having kids. The mentality is..."Well, if you want to be a wife and mother and have kids, then you don't need to be doing this job.

As far as promoting, I'm studying [for the promotional test]. But my family comes first.

Role Conflict

There was no evidence to indicate that the women had experienced pressure from the need to assume different roles in their personal and professional lives.

None mentioned conflicting behavioral expectations as a problem. Also, contrary to expectation, they did not express the belief that being a police officer had

significantly affected their social contacts with the opposite sex (although many described a tendency to keep their profession a secret from casual acquaintances to avoid being stereotyped).

You always feel like you're an outcast. They know your job. I mean if you were an engineer, they wouldn't treat you [differently], but because you're a cop...you go to a party and it's, "Here's my friend...the cop."

People ask me what I do and I've always told them, 'Public Relations'. I don't tell somebody I'm a cop until I've gotten to know them fairly well. People limit you. They think that all you can talk about is cop-related.

...it's not that I'm not proud of what I do. It's just that I like to be treated like normal people...and once you say that [you're a cop], man, that's down the drain.

...they really do equate you with their worst experience [with the police] ...unless they get to know you first.

HYPOTHESIS #1 a

Women who remain in police work have developed coping mechanisms to deal with this pressure and resistance.

By far the most common coping mechanisms employed by the women in these focus groups were "neutralization" and overachieving, although depersonalization was also useful. Many members of the group had experienced what would be considered coopting behavior on the part of other women. There was no evidence to support the existence of "invisibility" or deprofessionalization. Many participants described experiencing a certain defeminizing process, but it appeared to be more a natural evolution than a conscious adaptation of behavior.

Neutralization

Neutralization, as discussed in the literature review previously, is a coping technique in which the individual downplays or minimizes incidents in order to better deal with them. Evidence that this has occurred with group members is the fact that most of the women who characterized the harassment as "relatively little", subsequently described situations in which they either personally encountered resistance and hostility, or knew someone who did. One of the participants, for example, characterized her treatment as "just like one of the guys", then immediately went on to describe a situation in which her back-up stood by while she handled a resisting prisoner alone.

I've had my battles with other people in the department - men...but it wasn't enough to discourage me or make me want to leave.

So in general I was very lucky at this department [in the way I was treated] because I have had good friends that did have to fight an uphill battle.

...overall I don't see a lot of...differences as far as having been treated in the department, male-wise or female-wise.

...I know [#2] had an incident when she was getting in a fight in east Austin and [the male officers] stood back to see how she would do. And luckily, I never had to do that.

[my experience] wasn't bad. I mean at times it was.

I really don't have those bad experiences to share from the past, you know.

the other women that were here around that time.

...it's amazing really that I didn't have some of the struggles y'all had.

Depersonalization

An ability to depersonalize any mistreatment and stay focused appeared to be critical to many of the members' coping with difficulty and hostile attitudes. Also the women seemed to have a conscious awareness that discriminatory behavior was aimed not at them as individuals, but to the presumed threat to the status quo.

The way I approach it and what works best for me is if a guy is that way...I just blow it off at first.

...all the crude comments that are made...I just would let it go.

...I just thought, "This guy [who harassed me] is an a-----." And I just didn't have anything to do with him.

[I] laughed ...[remarks] off more than anything...It just didn't bother me really.

...that kind of stuff I got [suggestive remarks] I just turned and threw it right back at them. And I never had a problem with anybody. I mean they'd leave me alone.

I developed a very thick skin. I viewed myself in many ways like a turtle. I just absolutely put this shell around me so that no matter how hard the volley was, I just wouldn't let it penetrate to where it would affect me personally.

I know there were things happening and things being said that I probably just blew off and didn't tune into them, because they hurt too much. And I wouldn't concentrate on those.

concentrate on those.

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I am not sweet and nice any more. I'll never be able to go back to [that]...and there is an armor, there is a shield [around me]. There is a coldness, a hardness that some people can penetrate. Others can't.

Overachieving

Overachieving was the most common coping technique of the group members. There were over twenty references to working hard, pride in work, gaining respect etc. in the discussions that took place. Despite the potential for discouragement, the women were uniformly confident in their abilities.

...we did things without being compensated for it...and [we were] glad to do it. [I] volunteered as a cadet, worked evening shift and volunteered to work over four or five hours and never got paid for it. But I enjoyed the job and I was eager to learn.

I take a great deal of pride...in every [report] I turn in, even if it's just a potted plant...that's been stolen off the front porch. I put the same amount of effort into that as I do the rape that I'm sent to St. David's [Hospital] to investigate.

I was very conscious of doing more than I really needed to do, to kind of assure them that I really was an officer and I really could help.

I'm always striving to do better.

...I wanted to work [the training problems] right - every one of them.

I probably learn something new almost daily.

I could probably do any job in the police department that anybody else is doing...

Coopting

There was some evidence of coopting in the stories of women officers who had made it more difficult for other females. Some female colleagues were characterized as "more critical of each other [than the men]"; "more apt to shun", "be mean to", or "put down other women".

Women are more apt to make up their mind and judge another female.

I've had more problems with other female officers. Especially when I first came out.

I had some of my worst criticisms from other women down here...there are a fair amount of women down here that automatically do not like other females, and I don't understand that. I mean, we've all struggled to get to where we've gotten. We should band together...

I do think women are more critical of each other.

I think women are just women and women are b----s.

HYPOTHESIS #1 b

Women who remain in police work have had support systems which have helped them deal with pressure and resistance.

Support systems of various kinds were mentioned by most participants, but were not emphasized as much as the researcher had expected. Both internal (peers, supervisors) and external (family, friends) sources of support were cited.

Internal Support

Officers they worked with gave many group members reassurance when they were experiencing difficult times. One participant described a situation in which several shift members confronted a co-worker who was harassing her and threatened to "kick his a--" if he didn't knock it off. Another told a story about peers who convinced the training staff that she should not be fired.

Several members of the group mentioned other female officers as a source of advice and support. One described being insulted by and pressured to date a co-worker, and the directness of a more senior female officer in "having words with him" when she found out about it. Another woman who had been threatened by a supervisor sought out the highest ranking woman in the department who was available, and reported the incident directly to her.

...in my cadet class we had thirteen females and it was a lot...so I didn't feel isolated. But it was nice to see the other women on patrol. I just felt a comfort there for some reason.

[another woman]...eventually came to [my sector] and that was really nice. It was nice having another woman around.

External Support

Fathers, mothers, sisters and friends were all mentioned as important sources of

support. One participant described her philosophy of life as being greatly shaped by her father. "I would talk to him and say, 'You know, this is crazy. I got into this field and I don't need to put up with this.' And he would very clearly communicate to me that it was not me - it was them. And [he] helped me rise above it really."

Another described a close friend as providing the encouragement that kept her from resigning during a very difficult time. One officer talked about coming home and venting to her mother and sister. "It was a way of me being able to let it go and it was gone."

By far, however, the most often mentioned source of support outside the department was the officer's spouse who, more often than not, was a police officer himself. (Of the fifteen focus group members, nine either were currently married or had been married to an APD officer.) Most felt that having a spouse who was also an officer offered to them an almost unique type of support. One woman described calling her officer husband on the phone crying when she felt she was not doing well in training. He comforted her and assured her that training was meant to be challenging, and he knew from his own experience that mistakes were to be expected.

I am so glad to be married to another officer because I could tell him, "Do you know what happened to me today?" and he knew what I was talking about.

...we both talk about work to vent.

...my husband works here also which, we both work at one place, so it's kind of nice.

...the other thing that kept me here was the fact that I married an officer.

...I'm married to a cop too. I think for me that has a lot to do with my stability here.

I can't imagine coming home to someone that has not shared law enforcement.

Some of the senior women whose husbands were officers and approaching retirement expressed apprehension about working in the department when their husbands were no longer members of it.

...its going to feel so different when he's not here. And I'm not sure how I'm going to handle it.

That's going to come up with us too...and that really worries me.

I just don't want him to go. I don't want to be here by myself.

We're acting like little bitty kids like, "I don't want to be left", but it's like you feel like you've been left because they're not here to share with you day in and day out.

Rather than focusing on support systems, the focus group members emphasized their own self-sufficiency. Some had planned to be a police officer for most of their lives, and were determined to succeed. Others, who had not looked at the profession as a vocation, nevertheless responded to the personal challenge it

presented. A sense of strength and resilience was conveyed by these women. They projected both focus and determination.

It's just something I always was going to do, knew I was going to do, and did.

I've never seen myself doing anything else either, ever since I was a little kid.

I think it was the way I was brought up...the way I was raised...I was taught not to rely on someone else, that you have to be self sufficient...and I think that's why I stayed.

For most of us it's a career and the ones that come in here and it's just a job, they're not going to hang out. They're not going to stay. They're not going to have what it takes.

I was not going to let anyone run me off from what I want to do. This is my job. This is my dream. This is my life.

HYPOTHESIS #2

Women who remain in police work are motivated by both practical considerations and the nature of the work itself.

As expected, pay and job security, the nature of the job, and a sense of police work as a mission or "way of life" were all mentioned by group members as motivations for remaining in the job.

HYPOTHESIS 2 a

Women who remain in police work find salary, job benefits and job security

important motivators for remaining in the profession.

Economics

In each group, the first person to speak mentioned job security, job benefits and pay. Most participants considered the pay quite competitive with the private sector, particularly the officers who lacked a college degree. Health benefits and, as might be expected with senior officers, the retirement system, were also important.

I know why I'm still here, and it's mainly job security. I'm a single parent and it was a secure job and I stay in it mostly to support my family.

When I started, it was [just] a job. It was work.

I think money is definitely a part of it...I was just applying for a job and they called me...and so for me, I didn't have this life-long dream to become a cop or anything. It just was a matter of economics. Then I liked it. I enjoyed it.

When I joined the department...I had no intention of staying. I was needing a higher paying job.

...it was amazing to me that you got paid to go to the [training] academy. And you got paid pretty well.

There's a couple of reasons that I've stayed. One is being vested in the retirement system. I want security in the future. Two, the pay is pretty darn good...Three is the benefits, the health benefits, the retirement benefits, the life insurance...those are the kinds of things that keep me here: security, benefits.

I came for a job. I came because I had just gotten a divorce. I needed the work. I needed to supply food and shelter for my son. And that has kept me [here] I think more or less.

...the reason I stay is because I'm vested [in the retirement system]. And

I'm looking forward to retirement.

...you might as well stay where you... have good benefits, decent benefits, and you've got your retirement and you're vested.

Actually, it's more money motivating at this point - to earn more money.

Pay is a big part of my reason for staying. I also have a husband and two children, a mortgage, so benefits are real important.

...we've got good job security - there's that - and the retirement system's there.

At one point I probably looked at my career more. Now I look at my family more, what my job can do for my family.

HYPOTHESIS 2 b

Women who remain in police work find the challenge of the work, the status of the profession, and the opportunity for personal growth important motivators for remaining in the profession.

Status was not an important factor as described by the members of the focus groups. They emphasized instead the challenge the job represented and the nature of the work.

The Nature of the Job

The variety of activities and assignments, the opportunity to deal with people one on one, the independence and control over your own time, and being able to work outside rather than in an office were all important.

I stay here because this is what interests me. I haven't had a boring day yet. Every day I get up and want to go to work. This is what I want to do.

I loved [the job]. It was everything I wanted it to be.

There's so many varieties of work to do.

I loved the street...I just enjoyed the freedom that you have on the street.

There's so many opportunities...there's so many jobs to do - police jobs. You can have all kinds of...career experiences.

One reason I've stayed is I still like the job, I still like police work.

I have a lot of enjoyment from my job still. There are days when it's not so great, but for the most part we still get a lot of good feelings from doing things.

Personally, dealing with the people - the public. I enjoy that the most...I enjoyed being out - not in an office.

I like working with people.

I came down here because of the [nature of the] job. I still enjoy the job.

I just enjoyed the freedom that you have on the street. I don't like riding a desk. I like working with people and dealing with people and being out and about.

I love it. It's a great job.

...I like the department. I like what I do.

I love [being a cop].

There's nothing else that I'd want to do.

The Challenge

Another major motivator for the women in the focus groups was the opportunity to take on challenges and succeed. In a sense, the difficulties they encountered had an energizing effect on most of them. The satisfaction they gained from triumphing under adverse circumstances was mentioned again and again.

I took it as a challenge and...I guess what gave me more incentive to do well was that.

I never really thought I'd make it as far as I did. Before long, it became a challenge.

...like many people, I am one who will accomplish it simply because you tell me I can't. And because there was this unspoken expectation that I couldn't do the job

HYPOTHESIS #2 c

Women who remain in police work see it as a mission or a "way of life" rather than just a job.

The perception of police work as a "mission" or "calling" was a concept strongly endorsed by most of the participants. The opportunity to promote justice by holding people accountable and "making [offenders] responsible...for their actions" was important. They also conveyed a sense of being a part of something larger than themselves, and appreciated what being a police officer represented to

them in terms of commitment to certain ideals. Most significant of the components of police work as a mission was the opportunity to help people, "make a difference" and make the system work for people. It was a sentiment expressed frequently and with strong emotion. It was clearly a major motivator for many of these women, and although they were realistic about the limits on what any one officer could accomplish individually, there was very little evidence of cynicism.

That's why I came to work here. I was going to make the world a safer place for people to live in. Isn't that naive? But I'm serious. That was my motivation. I wanted to come down here. I wanted to right the wrongs, clean up the neighborhood, make people accountable for their actions. One thing's for sure, we have job security, because that will never happen.

I enjoy making [offenders] responsible, if I can, for their actions against others.

...when I came on, I had a lot of pride [in the department]. And I thought, you know, that police officers are people that have high values and high goals. I wanted to hold those values.

The morals and character that in those days people respected police personnel for having, I thought that was important too.

People spend their whole lives trying to make a difference...I think that's really why I came into this field...maybe I've made a difference that nobody ever came back to tell me.

One of the reasons I stay is I know I can make a difference, and I know I do.

I know how these people feel when someone has broken into their car, been in their house or whatever.

I still like helping people.

I think that when I came into this line of work, my object or what I thought this job entailed was to help people.

I think initially, not just women, but I think all of us joined the police department or want to be cops to help people...those who can't help themselves.

I [have been] victimized and I know what these people go through. And I don't care if it's a 25 dollar theft or a 25,000 dollar theft. Each person that's victimized, that's important and if I can help, I want to.

If I can make that person feel better...and sympathize with them [by saying], "Well, gee, that's hard", that's a part of my job. [They may think], "Well, at least that officer, she took an interest." I hear from so many people that when the officers came out here they could barely be bothered. And I think that's wrong.

When you can resolve situations or help people, I think that's what I enjoy most about the job.

I hear stories all the time about people...who were stopped by the police and what [the officer] did...it's quite embarrassing the way some officers treat people.

...I do it from the heart.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Although not all the expected evidence was found, the research findings clearly supported the working hypotheses. The overwhelming majority of the participants in the study reported experiencing gender-related stress. These included, as predicted, peer pressure, sexual harassment, and family conflicts. Rotating shifts, particularly, were singled out for the deleterious effect they had on family life. Role

conflict and conflicting behavioral expectations were not, however, considered a significant source of stress.

Coping mechanisms had been developed to deal with pressure and resistance and included neutralization, overachieving, coopting and depersonalization. There was no evidence of defeminization and deprofessionalization. Support systems, both within and outside the department were of help to the officers, but were not

Summary of Findings

Table Two

Hypothesis	Evidence
Hypothesis #1 Experienced Gender-Related Stress	Strongly Supports
Hypothesis #1 a Developed Coping Mechanisms	Supports
Hypothesis #1 b Relied on Support Systems	Mixed
Hypothesis #2 Practical and Job-specific Motivations	Strongly Supports
Hypothesis #2 a Salary, Job Benefits Important	Strongly Supports
Hypothesis #2 b Nature of Job Important	Strongly Supports
Hypothesis #2 c See Police Work as Mission	Strongly Supports

characterized as being as significant as expected. Motivations for remaining with the job aligned closely with the research hypotheses. Economics, the nature of the job itself, and the vision of police work as a mission were all important to participants. Rarely, however, were these mentioned in isolation. Almost always there were multiple motivators, sometimes depending upon the stage the officer was at in her career.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

IMPORTANT FINDINGS

Besides providing evidence to support the hypotheses that were being tested, the focus group discussions yielded new and unexpected information, both in content and emphasis. For example, while it was expected that the female officers would have experienced lack of acceptance and sexual harassment, the seriousness of some of the mistreatment, particularly the sexual assaults was not anticipated by the literature. Another surprise was the extent to which supervisors allegedly participated in or did nothing to stop the harassment.

Rotating shifts were expected to present difficulties, especially to the officers with children. What was not anticipated was the amount of emphasis placed on this factor. The number one recommendation the participants made for departments wishing to make the environment more welcoming to women was to establish some form of on-site child care.

One finding which was not emphasized in the literature was the incidence of female officers who were married to male officers within the department and the importance of their marriage in helping them cope with the problems they

encountered. Some expressed the belief that being married to a fellow officer made a crucial difference in their decision to stay with the department. As mentioned in the Results chapter, support systems were not emphasized as much as anticipated. What was noted instead was the group members' strong sense of self-sufficiency, and personal commitment to stay with the job despite its drawbacks.

Two motivators which have been classified as subsets of police work as a mission and the nature of the job respectively were mentioned frequently enough that they deserve special recognition as primary and distinct motivators. One is the intrinsic reward gained through the opportunity to help people and "make a difference". The other is the personal satisfaction of tackling difficult challenges head on and seeing their efforts pay off.

Two characteristics of the women who participated in this study which came through most clearly by the content and tone of their observations and experiences were resilience and determination. The difficulties they had encountered, rather than discouraging them, had served to motivate them to perform at a higher level. They had clearly experienced an unusual amount of resistance, hostility and mistreatment. Rather than becoming discouraged or losing confidence, they had responded with renewed commitment and a refusal to accept the artificial limitations which had been placed on them. They had kept their sense of perspective, sense of

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humor and sense of self.

Based on these findings, certain recommendations have been made with the aim of aiding law enforcement agencies in the recruitment and retention of female officers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Put in place an aggressive recruiting campaign to increase representation of female officers.
2. Implement a strong anti-sexual harassment policy, provide training and make sure all officers are made aware of avenues for reporting which go outside the chain of command and even the agency (for example the city human resources officer or the EEOC.)
3. Communicate at every opportunity the agency's commitment to fair and

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There were some mistakes made in the collection of the data which, although not critical in nature, need to be identified. Most deal with moderator involvement. 1) The discussion at times lost its focus. Morgan (1988, p.55) makes a distinction between information that is interesting and information that is important. In retrospect, some of the discussion was probably more interesting than important. Luckily, there was time to obtain both interesting and important data; 2) The moderator, as an acquaintance and peer of the panelists, became involved in the discussions, detracting from her neutrality; 3) Each group was not asked the research questions in exactly the same way; 4) The moderator at times provided "clues" to expected answers, by sharing with one focus group the responses of the others; and 5) There was some imbalance in the number of contributions made by each group member. Although these errors are regrettable, it is the researcher's belief and hope that they are not significant enough to invalidate the results.

respectful treatment of all officers. Work to create an atmosphere in which all officers are appreciated for the contributions they make to the organization.

4. Monitor behavior, and take swift, decisive action when discrimination takes place. Particular emphasis should be on accountability of supervisors.
5. Emphasize the importance of supervisors modeling appropriate behavior and ensure accountability for those who do not.
6. Recognize the importance of professional bonds and peer support and consider the impact of all transfers on the morale of the officers involved.
7. Consider providing on-site child care 24 hours a day.
8. Consider permanent, fixed shifts rather than rotating hours.
9. Maintain competitive pay and benefits.
10. Work towards a promotional system that allows officers to stay on the street without losing out on promotional opportunities.
11. Strive to the extent possible to achieve representation of women in higher ranks.
12. Recognize and consider the impact of personnel changes on officers who have spouses within the department.
13. Reward and reinforce work behaviors which fall outside the crime fighting category, particularly those which demonstrate caring and compassion.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Certain themes emerged during the course of this research that lend themselves

to follow-up. Since only female officers were involved, for example, an obvious companion study would involve a comparison of male and female officers' attitudes and experiences vis a vis the research topics. Gender bias obviously would not be an issue for male officers, but sources of stress, coping mechanisms, support systems and professional motivations could all be explored and compared.

An observation made frequently during the discussions was the participants' contention that police work had changed fundamentally since these officers had joined the department ten to twenty years ago. Most indicated that the changes were not for the better. Less loyalty to the organization, less camaraderie, less compassion on the part of officers, less willingness to sacrifice, and less dedication to police work as a mission were mentioned.

The group members expressed disappointment at the "me first" attitude of some newer, younger officers and the term "whiners" found its way into the discussion more than once. An interesting area of inquiry could examine whether the newer officers' outlook is typical of the attitudes ascribed to the so called Generation X.

One of the three focus groups this researcher conducted was composed

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By the same token, the participants also recognized that the department had become much more welcoming to women. They experienced much less overt discrimination and derogatory comments about female officers were considered less acceptable.

exclusively of supervisors. Although they did not respond to this particular set of questions in significantly different ways from the patrol officers who participated, the experiences of female supervisors, and how they compare to male supervisors and lower ranking female officers is an area that appears to be relatively untapped. Since many officers remain in an agency until retirement, an opportunity exists to conduct a longitudinal study with the same group of officers at five, ten, and twenty years of service.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The field of policing is undergoing significant and rapid change. Law enforcement is under pressure from both inside and outside to make the changes necessary to keep pace with society (Home, 1980, p.3). Police agencies are moving toward a problem-solving or community policing model that will require a shift in the traditional police culture. Female officers with their greater openness to change, and service orientation, can facilitate this change and at the same time improve the public image of the police, which has suffered in recent years (McCoy, 1993, p.5,8). Progress towards this goal will, however, require information and insights gained through further study. Research can provide vital clues to the many questions that remain. It is crucial this research take place and every effort made to keep the

"opening door for [women] in law enforcement [from turning] into a revolving door"
(Reynolds, 1979, p.7).

Appendix One

Focus Group Number One

October 8, 1996

Conducted at the Austin Police Department
East Sub-Station

Bobbie- Why do you believe you have stayed with a police career?

#3- I had to think about that for a minute. I know why I'm still here, and it's mainly job security. I'm a single parent and it was a secure job and I stay in it mostly to support my family. That's why I'm here. Also, the more I look at it, I really do like police work because it offers me the opportunity to support my ministry. So, I like working with people. I like helping people. So I do it from my heart. And it offers me the opportunity to do that.

#5- I think initially, not just women, but I think all of us joined the department or want to be cops to help people. I think all of us have that knack or something inside that wants to help people in general. As the years go by and as you learned the little games that are played, especially in the court system... that's one of the things that I was real shocked about - is that you yourself can do a good job and help people, but once it's out of your hands and into the criminal justice system it almost becomes just such a game. It's whoever can put on the best show in court will end up on top.

That was a real disappointment for me, because I think I came into this job real naive, thinking that if you go out and you do a good job and you catch the bad guy and he goes to court, that he's going to get punished. And when that was not the case, I thought, "Well, why do police even bother to make that kind of effort?" And I think what it all boils down to is that both as a male and a female that you want to go out and help people in general-those who can't help themselves.

B- Some of your motivations may very well be the same thing as a male officer's motivations. I expect that some of it is unique and then some of it also just crosses over, and you share the same kinds of things as the male officers you work with.

#3- I'm a police officer, but I'm not all that into putting people in jail because I have seen people who were mistreated, that were punished for things they really didn't do. And I know a lot of things I was punished for that I didn't do. So I really take to heart what people say, and I really dig a little bit deeper. Being in the police department I have worked in a lot of different areas, just about everywhere in the department and it has given me a knowledge of our system, and what our system can be, and so I work through the system to try to help people.

Even with the job that I hold right now, a lot of people don't look at it as police work. They see this a separate thing in my neighborhood like community policing. And there's so many ways to help people and there's so many ways to apply your police skills, so you can do a variety of work. If I don't like catching bad guys, and I'm getting too fat to run and catch them, then I can help y'all.
[Laughter].

So there's so many varieties of work to do. If I don't want to do that, I'm in a position where I can learn computer skills, writing skills. I can learn to write for the department. I can learn to speak for the department. I've learned to put people in jail. Every layer of policing has something that you can learn. As far as bettering yourself, it has been a college for me, for one thing. And when they speak of on the job training, there's been a lot of on the job training programs. Sometimes, on the job training can cost you your life, but then that's what makes you work a little bit harder at trying to work at it.

#4- In a way, I've been on the line [patrol] the whole time I've been an officer- the whole time. And I think that in a way my viewpoints might be a little bit harsher. And I have come to the determination that it is not my job to decide whether I've arrested you wrongly or not. Not that I went out to arrest someone that is innocent, but that I made the judgment based on the facts that were given to me.

But I feel like that when we get into this line of work, unless you can diversify and get off the street, and do other things, that you do not gain any skills (like learn to do computer work) unless you go outside and get that education on your own. That is really, really hard to do when you're on rotating shifts and then if you have family responsibilities, etc., etc. And I think that, that does hold women back. I know that there are only so many positions open for people to get out off the line, to experience or get into other areas - just to give them a break maybe, from just the

regular on the line, on the street, work.

B- That's an important thought. Keep that thought because one of the followup questions that I want to ask is about some of the difficulties the job has presented, both rotating hours like everybody experiences and the difficulties that may be unique to women. I'm real interested in that.

#4- I think that's true for men also. It's not gender specific. The men can also be in that same boat. But they may not be carrying the complete burden. It depends on their situation whether they're carrying the family burden like with children and stuff... if they're a single parent... if they're the ones that actually have custody of their children. So in that respect it may be harder on women if the women are the ones that have the kids.

B- But you stuck around. And, what do you think was going on? You're still here.

#4- I think it was the way I was brought up, the way I was raised. That I was taught not to rely on someone else to care of me. That you have to be self sufficient, to have something to fall back on, if things don't go the way you planned your life out. And I think that's why I stayed. It might be an insecurity on my part. It's either insecurity or wisdom. (Laughter). I'm not sure which one it is.

#5- So you've been on the line a lot.

#4- I was commissioned in '81. I came here in '84. I've been on the street the whole time. I raised my children since the time they were little - all the way through. And I've been on rotating shifts until a year ago, when I came to the 700's [day patrol shift].

B- Wow! That's unusual.

#5- That is very unusual.

#4- And it was hard, since rotating shifts are very taxing, as everybody knows I'm not trying to pat myself on the back. I think it would be great for people to rotate in and out. It gives you a breath of fresh air. I am going to get promoted this year.

(Applause). That's going to give me a breath of fresh air. But when I studied, I studied to get off the street. Now I get to go back to the street as a line detective. Thank goodness my kids are older now.

B- Would you like to have worked in other areas? Did the opportunity not present itself or the timing wasn't right?

#4- I just never got selected when I went before any boards or anything like that.

B- How about you other guys?

#2- I loved the street. I've got to admit, I didn't picture myself running around in a patrol car at 40 years of age. But I spent a little over 10 years on the street, and it's because I wanted to be there. I loved it. And I miss it.

B- What is it do you think it is about the job that makes you say, "Hey, this is where I want to be, I don't want to go anywhere else?"

#2- I just enjoyed the freedom that you have on the street. I don't like riding a desk. I like working with people and dealing with people, and being out and about. I don't really know how to explain it. I've never really seen myself doing anything else either, ever since I was a little kid.

#5- Were you influenced into joining a police department by a male figure, a female figure, or somebody who...

#2- I didn't know a single policeman growing up. Nobody in my family has any law enforcement background. I don't know where it came from. I really don't. It's just something I always was going to do, knew I was going to do, and did. I started down here, I think, a little too young. I didn't have as much life experience because I was at such a young age when I started. And I think that, that, like [#4] was saying, tended to skew my ideas, and observations and thoughts about people. But I just always loved the streets. I don't think from the things that I hear of what goes on out there now that I would like it anymore, but, like I said, I never wanted off. I just liked it.

B- How has the job held up to your expectations?

#4- I found the job to be tough.

B- Tougher than you thought it would be?

#4- Tougher than... I enjoyed it right at first, and I would say for the first couple of years I enjoyed the job. It's not that I don't enjoy it. I still have times when I enjoy my job. There are times that are gratifying, rewarding, and there are times when you get kicked in the chin, or worse, you know. But I think the job is real difficult, and being a male-dominated field... When I see another female officer, this is just the way I feel, and she really, really... I mean you look at her from behind and you can't tell that she's a woman anymore, it's maybe the way she's dressed or whatever, then I'm going like, "Have we lost ourselves, or are we in competition with the guys? What's happening to us, as women?"

#5- That's very interesting for me. Working with men ten hours a day, forty to fifty to sixty hours a week, you learn a lot about men.

#4- You pick up their language.

#2- You do.

#4- You might not normally speak that way, and you do.

#2- Even their body language.

#5- I am harsher now. For me to go to a crime scene and look at, you know, blood and guts and all that, it's not as dramatic for me.

#4- But that may not be a bad thing.

#5- I think it's a self protecting thing.

#2- It has to be. In order to be able to continue looking at this stuff day after day, you have to be able build you a little wall, a little shield, put that behind it, and be able to leave it and go on.

#5- I also...one of the things that I was... When I first came down here, being that I was from El Paso, and the majority of the population out there is like 75% Hispanic, and of course I had... There was only one black guy in my school. And for me, my association with Blacks was totally nonexistent. I had a lot of white friends and a majority of Hispanic.

When I got into this work and got introduced into the Black culture, I was almost on a... I guess, you know, they saw me as the adversary because of the uniform, but not because I had any attitudes towards Blacks in that way. It was hard for me to pick up on the language because I was like, " Boy, put me out somewhere where all the Mexicans are at. They speak Spanish." And now it's just totally opposite.

B- Let's talk about things that have, I guess, made it tougher and then how you handled that. We talked about things that go with the job, period, like rotating shifts. What else?

#2- When I first came down here (and I know it's not like this any more, although there are instances) I was real fortunate in that I had a good group of guys to work with. But that was back in "You don't want females on your shift" days. In fact, my first Sergeant would call me "Andrew" because he had never had a woman on his shift and he wasn't about to start now. (Laughter). And there were several officers that didn't want to work in the district next to me, because I was a girl, until I had overly proved myself over and over and over. I didn't consider that a detriment at the time. I mean it was just accepted. It was going to happen and I knew it was just something to deal with.

I think that, that is a lot better now, because the people that are coming out now [of the police training academy] are accustomed to females having always been here. But I do hear a lot of females, younger ones, whining about how they're not treated [right]. And I just sometimes wonder what they would have felt like if they had gone through back then, and put up with the stuff we put up with through those years.

B- What helped you put up with that stuff?

#2- Laughed it off more than anything. I have spent most of my life around men, the jobs that I had before I came here. I was the world's biggest tomboy

growing up and always into sports and stuff. It just didn't bother me really.

#1- I can relate with [#2] on that. I remember, and you do too [indicating moderator] because you were there, when you first came out [of the academy] and there weren't that many women and they had to have you on that shift, and I remember officers telling me... I mean they approached me and said, "You know, we don't believe that women belong here and you have to prove a lot to me." And I'm like, "Okay." And the way I received it... You know, at first you're ...To me I was angry, but I said, " You know what? I'm going to prove to you that I can..."

B- Took it as a challenge?

#1- Yeah. I took it as a challenge. And what was... I guess what gave me more incentive to do well was that. Plus the first time I did do something, made an accomplishment, like I caught a burglar, when one of those guys that had just told me he didn't want me here came up and said "Oh, man, you did a good job." That's when I said, "Well, you know, it's working." I remember those days extremely.

#5- And isn't it weird that you...it's almost like...I know when I first came out there was already females down here but it depends what shift you go to. If you have a shift that they're hardcore a----- and they treat you that way... I mean, you may have two rookies coming out and one's a male and one's a female and they don't treat the male that way.

#2- Oh no.

#5- And he could be just as big a f---- up, if not worse than the female, you know? And you basically have to outdo (triple, quadruple, whatever) whoever else is on there. And it's almost like...I mean I can remember one of the shifts that I was on and one of the guys always saying, "You don't need to be doing this" and looking up my reports, and I'm like, "What are you? My father?" And then it got to be a real...I ended up being friends with (and you know the situation on this one) [referring to #1] being friends with two of the other officers on my shift who were my FTO's [Field Training Officers]. They basically went over and told this other guy, "You better cut your s--- out, otherwise we're going to kick your a--." You know? "You need to leave her alone and let her do her job." And then, it goes back

to "Well, they're protecting you because you're a female". You're stuck between a rock and a hard place.

#1- You are. I remember not going out on traffic [not getting on the radio to announce a traffic stop] because when I did five [patrol] cars would show up. So I got in trouble for not going out on traffic. (Laughter).

B- For not going out on the radio?

#1- Yeah.

B- Yeah.

#3- I had a whole different experience. I worked at the police department before actually going into the academy, so, you know, my negative experiences were as a civilian, most of it. And so I found if I could live through that part, then going to the line or going through the academy was something totally different. I can say that I didn't experience a lot of the negative things that some of the others did, because some of the people that were instructors in the academy, I was familiar with them. So they didn't really give me a really, really hard time.

But, in the academy I had incidents with the males. You know, I had one guy that [inaudible], and I said, "You don't need to do that because I can write you up" [document the incident in writing for disciplinary purposes]. And when I told somebody what he had said, he got in trouble for it, so... They had the macho thing going among them and stuff. And one of my first times on the street... [while I was] going through the academy... if they said jump five times, I jumped five times, you know. And I lived, through the practicals that they had, so I knew that just from life in general and I was a little bit older too.

But when I actually did go to the streets, my first day was in a car by myself. After having, you know, I had some pretty good FTO's, but I could write the reports and I could take control of the situation because that was just my nature, you know? That wasn't hard for me, to talk to people or to tell them what I wanted them to do, to get over what I wanted them to do. And so that was a strong point in the cadet part when we did our field training. But when I hit the street [graduated from

the police academy], the officers that were on the street, you know, they wouldn't really come and back me up [on calls] but they'd come and make talk. And we had a Captain, I don't know if any of y'all remember. What's his name? But he's dead. [Laughter]

#1- Captain [X].

#3- Yeah, [X], that's him. But he was like the father of everybody that was down here. And whatever he said went, regardless of who you were. And there was one incident where I made a traffic stop and, you know, I told them I was making a traffic stop. I told them where I was and when they came, when they got there, I had the guy under control, right? So then they told [X] and, you know he kind of cut me loose. And then there was another incident where me and all the big muscular guys were working together. And there was this big crazy guy and there were six male officers, three on each side. And you know, in the beginning we let the guys handle it, we didn't get in the way.

#5- You'd get run over. [Laughter].

#3- Yeah. So, okay, he has all these beer bottles, he has all these sticks and stuff. [So I told the other female officer that was there] "Let's just gather up his property and take it to the car." So we were, you know, walking, and they were struggling with this guy. And so, he had all this long, pretty hair, you know. So we went and put all the stuff in the car, and I said, "Girl, we better go help them. They're going to talk about us". You know, 'cause we didn't help them. You know, you're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

I said, "We probably ought to go on over there and help them". So we go over. And so now we've got four people. [The other female officer] and some other guys on this side, and I'm with the three other guys. And I'm talking about the muscular guys, "Officer A" and "Officer B", guys, you know into lifting weights. So they were like, "Put your hands behind you! Put your hands behind you!". And the guy would just, he'd go like this [demonstrates moving her hands forward] and he'd get that far and he'd just [say], "Ha, ha, ha, ha." and come back like this. And so, I couldn't...there was no room for me to get there and pull, you know. So I just grabbed his hair, and when I did his hair, and started to pull on his hair he said, "Oh, please, let my hair go!". I says, "Oh... this bothers you, does it?". And I pulled on it

some more. And he said, "I'll do anything you say". They [the male officers] were still pulling. They didn't hear him speaking and saying what he was saying. I said, "Okay, guys, let him go." And they looked at me, you know, like, "We're not going to let him go." I said, "Yeah, you can let him go. Go ahead and let him go. Let him go, he'll still do what I say. [Won't] you?" [The prisoner yelled], "Yees! Yees!" (Laughter). I said, "Okay, what I want you to do is put your hands behind you." And so he threw his hands behind him, they handcuffed him and we walked him to the car. [The other female officer] and I did it.

And I mean, you know, everybody was...by this time we had an audience and everybody started applauding. They had witnessed the way that we did it. And so everybody walked up to us and said, "Hey, y'all did good. You did good". This was the people in the audience. "That was really good how you took him to the car." And I said, "Yeah, no problem".

But, it was those little things that helped us to gain respect on the streets, you know? That's how [the other female officer] got her car stolen. And I had just left her. If we'd been together she wouldn't have got her car stolen.

#1- I remember that.

(Some tape lost when tape changed. Discussion centered around an acceptance of physical limitations (as a female officer) and learning to work within those limitations. Verbal ability was mentioned by several participants as an important alternative to physical force.)

B- Let me ask you this, how many of you guys feel that you're going to stay until retirement? Everybody? 100%?

#3- I have got five years [until retirement].

#1- Personally, I'm at a point where I'm ready to go, but I'm going to stay [until retirement] because of the time [I've already put in the department].

#2- I think most of us are at the point where we'd be stupid not to [stay until retirement]. We've got too much time invested.

B- Do you have any feel for at what point y'all decided, "I'm going to spend the rest of my life, the rest of my working life...?"

#2- I've always felt that way.

#1- Yeah. I made that decision when I came in.

#3- I had tons of jobs, so...

#2- This was my career.

#4- I've often felt like I would like to do something else but I didn't think it was going to [happen].

#5- It's true. It's almost like this job ...you are this job and this job is you.

B- It's part of your identity.

#3- There's so many opportunities. You know, there's so many jobs to do - police jobs. You can have all kinds of experiences - career experiences. My plan is to... I've got like five years. I'm going to retire and be a full-time student. I don't have a degree. And this is what...they say I need one. I haven't needed one this far, you know, mainly because what I'm doing is what everybody else is doing. And I've been with people...everything I do is with people that are...that have degrees, and they're asking me what to do. And I want to have one just to say that I've got it.

B- Have y'all ever in your careers seriously, seriously thought about quitting?

#5- I have.

#1- I have.

#2- Yeah, I have.

B- I have [too]. So it sounds like about 50-50.

#1- I think what happens is you go through phases like the guys go through. You see a lot of disappointment. In my case, like tomorrow, if I won the lottery, I'd walk out of here. (Laughter). But it's because, only because, of the changes I've seen. And to me they're negative because my outlook at this department when I came on - I had a lot of pride in it. And I thought, you know, police officers are people that have high values and high goals, and I've seen a lot of things deteriorate and so it's really, it's been...

#2- Disappointing.

#1- Disappointing, yeah.

B- So the sense of police work as a calling, for want of a better word... so being a police officer represented some things to you personally?

#1- That's how I felt.

B- I did too.

#1- When I became a police officer it was because...first of all, my brother in law was a cop, and so I thought, "Man, he..." This guy to me walked on water. I mean, he still does. I just admired him. He had so much fun and I thought, "Everybody likes cops." And they have ethically high standards.

#2- Boy, that was a long time ago. (Laughter).

#1- I'm sorry. I'm old. (Laughter).

#5- Now it's firemen.

#1- Yeah, it's firemen. But it's true, that was my big thing for coming down here. I wanted to hold those values, you know?

#2- Uh huh. I agree. The morals and the character that in those days people respected police personnel for having, I thought that was important too.

#3- Well, I basically lost all so-called friends, you know. And I don't mean just really lost them, but you know, if they were doing something, they'd be over here and [saying], "We want to respect [#3] because she's a cop."

#5- You always feel like you're an outcast. They know your job. I mean if you were an engineer, they wouldn't treat you that way, but because you're a cop it's...you go to a party and it's, "Here's my friend [#5], the cop." (Laughter.)

#2- Exactly. People ask me what I do and I've always told them "Public Relations."

#3- Me too.

#5- I say I work for the city. I say, "Wastewater". (Laughter)

#2- I say I work for the city, and when they say, "What do you do?" I tell them, "Public Relations".

B- I have kind of mixed feelings about that, because I use it as a crutch sometimes, you know? If I think that I'm not going to have anything particularly interesting to offer, [I might say], "I'm a cop". (Laughter). And suddenly everybody's like, "Oh, really?"

#2- I don't tell people that. In fact...

B- But by the same token, sometimes that is a double edged sword. I find myself doing that and then I kind of kick myself and go, "Oh, come on."

#2- I've never done that. I don't tell somebody I'm a cop until I've gotten to know them fairly well. In fact, back when [X] and I were dating, I think we'd been out twice before he even realized I was a cop.

#1- I didn't tell [Y] either.

#2- And it's not that I'm not proud of what I do. It's just that I like to be treated like normal people when I'm out in a situation like that. And once you say that [you're a cop], man, that's down the drain.

#5- One of the things also (my sister does this a whole lot and she's two years younger than I am), is introduce me around [by saying], "Oh, this is [#5], and she's a cop". And I'm like, "Jesus Christ". [Laughter]. She didn't do this after I told her, "You know what? Don't do that. Don't do that."

#3- People limit you. They think that all you can talk about is cop-related.

#5- Exactly. Or they always want to tell you [about the] cop that stopped them.

#2- Yeah.

#1- Or ask your advice.

#3- "What should I do about...?"

#2- Or, "You know I got this ticket..."

#5- And I'm like, "You know, [looking at her watch] I'm off the clock. I don't know" [Laughter].

#4- It ruins your 10-7 [dinner break]. [Laughter]. You go 10-7 and they come over there and they go, "I have a question."

B- "And I bet it's not what to order either."

#3- "I know you're having lunch..."

#5- "I don't have an answer [to your question]. Because I'm off right now."

#3- "Call 480-5000" [the main Austin Police Department number]. [Laughter]

#5- Exactly.

#1- That's what I meant about the dual role though. Because [for example] we don't hang out with cops so we don't have to discuss [police work]. We try not to.

#3- I had a real bad experience within the first year of being a cop. Somebody

had done something and that was one of the ways that I stopped telling people that I was a cop. Because all before then I'd go to the washateria with a big old gun in my belt. (Laughter) But we were at church, and I was going just to visit with another cop, and she introduced me and you know, the minute that she said she was a cop...This lady had a neck brace on, alright? And she had been assaulted by a police officer. She didn't know...she really didn't know what they were going to do with the whole situation. But she made me feel like a snake on the ground the way she related. She related me with him [the officer who assaulted her] to the point that it made me almost cry. And I'm like, "Well, Louise, I'm really sorry that, that happened, but everybody's not like that."

#2- Well yeah, you're right. That's a very good...they really do equate you with their worst experience, Aunt Jo's worst experience, or whatever they want to. Unless they get to know you first.

#3- And so I stopped [telling people I was a cop]. That's one of the reasons I started being "Public Works".

#2- Well, I figured "Public Relations", that was being honest.

#3- Yeah, it was.

#2- We do relate to the public.

B- Let me go ahead and see about wrapping up so I can cut you guys loose...

#4- I just wanted to ask...

B- Go ahead.

#4- ...if the other ladies here, you know, how you feel about your spouse [being in police work]? And I am so glad to be married to another officer because I could tell him, "Do you know what happened to me today?" And he knew what I was talking about. And for me that was...

#1- We had a rule, actually our first rule was not to talk police work. It was just because both of us didn't want to do it. And then, especially after the kids came

along, you really had to be careful talking about anything because, you know, something might slip out. But now, I guess because of frustration we both [talk about work to] vent.

#4- That was helpful for me [having a spouse that is a cop]. What was pent up in there would just pound out. And he would be offended [by what had happened to me], you know? And he had been there and he knew what I was talking about.

B- Maybe he even knew some of the people you were talking about. That helps too. [Laughter])

#3- Well, my mother and my sister were real good for that. They'd always wanted to know what had happened [at work]. It was a way of me being able to let it go and it was gone. Unless I told it, everything was gone. And it was real interesting because one situation I got into was a real "do or die" situation and my sister told me that she woke up. She said, "You know I woke up this morning, and I couldn't go back to sleep for nothing." I said, "Was that about 2:30 this morning?" And she said, "Yeah. How did you know?" And I told her, I said, " Girl, I was in this chase and this man had this gun and he was shooting at me." And, you know it was all...it was really ironic how they had entwined with me. If something was going on they could, you know, sense it. But then, I didn't have a spouse.

B- Yeah, but still the support was there.

#5- I won't answer that question [whether it is helpful to have a spouse who is a police officer] on the grounds that it may incriminate me. [Laughter]

B- Fair enough.

#5- Considering [my husband] works for you [the moderator]. [Laughter]

#2- I've been married both to a non[-cop] and a cop.

B- See, that's interesting.

#4- I can't imagine coming home to someone that has not shared law enforcement.

#2- Really, it wasn't that bad. [Laughter] No, I would come home and generally I would think things out in the car and more or less get it out of my system in the car on the way home. Because I didn't want to talk about it at home, you know? The first marriage was to a cop, and that was all good and fine and stuff, but now I get enough.

So I would just... after I married the non-cop(which I definitely preferred) I would just get it out of my system before I got home. And sometimes he would ask me, you know, "How'd it go? What did you do?" He could usually tell by my mood if I had a good day or something had really bothered me or something. Occasionally he would ask me if there was something bothering me, and then I'd tell him.

B- Well, let me kind of summarize a little bit, and then see if there's any last things that you guys want to add, which would be great. Some of the themes I heard as far as things about the job that have appealed to you have been the job security, the variety of assignments, the challenge of the job. That made it more difficult, but then when you succeeded it made it more satisfying. [You also mentioned] an ability to blow stuff off and an awareness of your own limitations, and working within those. What else? Anything else? Or anything that you guys would like to add?

#5- One of the things we didn't talk about was how we see ourselves. For me..., like, you're [the moderator] the only Captain here. We're [the other participants] all patrol officers. And I remember being in the academy when you were there and you told me you know, "We need more females down here and we need more females in the ranks."

And, at that time I thought...the plans that I had were to be out on the line ten years, because I figured I'd get my ten [seniority points [toward promotion] then. Because I wanted to do this job and I liked it and I was excited about it, and I wanted to, you know, go out there and do a good job. After about four years I started really starting to get comfortable out on the street. Enough to...my abilities were kicking in at that time.

And once I was out seven years I knew that I wanted to stay on the line at some level, but not at a patrol level any more. And I wanted a job where I'd be able to probably do a little bit of both, you know, investigative and patrol work too. So I thought, "Well, I'll apply for the Gang Unit" because I was working Frank

Sector off of Riverside and knew a bunch of little gang bangers. And I just enjoyed doing that type of work. And now that I've got ten years [with the department], I'm going to finish school up, and I'll study [for promotion] next year. But, it's not because... Like the work that I'm doing right now, the job that I have right now working in the Gang Unit, I love it. It's a great job. And I didn't even mind rotating shifts. If I could be on a permanent evening shift that's what I would go to. But I just...it's time to go on [and get promoted].

Actually, it's more money motivating at this point - to earn more money. And it's not because I don't like the job or what I'm doing. But I want to earn more money at this point, and I want to go into a [investigative] Detail. I don't want to go to Burglary. I don't want to go to Theft. I want to go to either Robbery, maybe Homicide, a unit like that. Not Narcotics. I don't really...I've never really been into the dope aspect of it, although I've worked it. But, I just have really enjoyed patrol a whole lot.

#1- That's what I was about to say, in 18 years, like [#5] I have enjoyed this job. I don't think there was a day (until recently) that I didn't want to come to work. I miss the street. The only reason I'm not there is because of my two boys. That's basically the reason. But I miss it. And it's just...it just depends on the individual whether they want to promote and sit behind a desk or whatever, you know?

#3- As far as the job itself, I don't know at the time that I wanted to quit the Police Department because of the Police Department [per se], but I wanted to quit work because I was tired of working. You know? (Laughter) I've never had the opportunity to stay home and just really be a mom. And by then [when I retire] I'll be a grandmother or something..

(Demographic questions regarding participants' assignments within the Department.)

B- Well, I'd like to see if there's anything else that you guys can think of that specifically bears on the fact that you've stayed [at the department] for ten plus years. Well let me ask you this- do you think there's anything APD could do that might make a difference in the future for women as far as whether [they stay]. Because a lot your motivation sounds internal. But is there anything APD could do, and I'm thinking about maybe family conflicts...

#1- I was going to say, that's the only...I mean, I'm sure you know having kids too, with a family (and we've talked about it in the past), you want to retain your identity. I mean, you're a woman. You want to remain that way. What I'm saying is, they don't help you. They don't support you. That is the kind of thing that falls on you and your husband, or [just] you.

#2- The rotating shifts that Patrol goes through is real detrimental to anyone with families. But I don't know that there would be any [alternative] since they don't want fixed shifts and this and that. But the shifts that patrol does work are very hard on women.

#1- Day care [would help].

B- Child care?

#1- Yeah, child care.

#2- Any type of day care would be helpful.

B- Okay.

#5- I don't have kids, but that would be something that could [help] within the Department. I know like the IRS...

#2- We've talked about it forever but...

#1- Especially now with more women coming in...I guarantee you...

#2- There's a lot more of a need now.

#1- And not just for the women. There's single guys here that are raising their families that want something or somewhere to put their kids.

#3- I think that the promotion system stinks.

B- Okay.

#3- And I think that because I could probably do any job in the police department that anybody else is doing with some.... Everything is on-the-job training anyway for the most part. And I think that it's...you know, like the testing system that we go through [for promotion]. Although I understand the testing system, I don't think that it makes me any less of a person or my abilities as a leader to do whatever's to be done [if I don't do well on the test].

Money-wise... you know, everybody wants...With the amount of years and things that I have, I think that my hourly wage should have automatically... the pay raises we have gotten through the years haven't been what they should have been, whether I excelled in leadership roles or not. And that has been detrimental to my well-being within the department, or whatever. And it has helped me to say, "Well, maybe I can go ahead on and try something...you know, just stay, and maybe it will change." Because if you stay long enough it does change. And that has kind of helped along in that area. But overall, I don't see a whole lot of, you now, differences as far as having been treated in the department, male-wise or female-wise. I can't really just pull anything out.

B- Any changes (in the department) that would be helpful?

#3- The leadership. Or if you could...longevity. If you got longevity pay with your years, and really saw something other than five or ten cents, that would probably be more encouraging. And to try some other type of, way of promotion. I don't know what it would be, but...

#2- This is not a job for females who don't have whatever that inner thing is. Guys will tend to last longer in this job than women because women look at other things, and they have different ideas and different callings, I think, than men do. It's hard for women. For most of us it's a career and the ones that come in here and it's just a job, they're not going to hang out. They're not going to stay. They're not going to have what it takes.

B- When you say "career" you mean...?

#2- Whether you spend twenty five years on patrol or whether you advance up through the ranks, or whatever you do...

#5- You know you want to stay in this field.

B- The expectation is you're going to be a police officer for the rest of your working life.

#2- Right. And the ones that come down here and just look at it as a job, or just, [something to do] after I get out of college, those are the ones that aren't going to stay.

#3- I came for a job. I came because I had just gotten a divorce and I needed the work. I needed to supply food and shelter for my son. And that has kept me [here] I think, more or less. And at one point in my life, I tell you what was detrimental to me, where the [inaudible] came was when I saw my peers promote and the change that they exhibited. It was so...It was like [addressing the newly promoted friend], "Hey, so and so." [And then he responds], "Uh, it's Sergeant." And I'm like, "Oh. Okay." And those type of changes.

And I'm ... if I make friends with somebody, then that person is my friend. I'm going to do or die for that person as my friend, regardless of who you are. Even the ones that are down there scrubbing the floors, you're still my friend and I'm going to be the same with you regardless. And to see that [people change so much when they promote], that has made me not even care about the money because I said, "Look, if it's going to make me change, if it's going to change my attitude, then I don't want that."

#2- You may have come down here for a job, but you have expressed a lot of the same inner ideas and feelings and thoughts that I've heard all of us be talking about. Whereas we were looking for...I mean this is where we were headed period, maybe you started out that this is going to be a job so I can take care of my family, and blah, blah, blah, but you accidentally stepped into the right thing, you know?

#3- Well, I think it was more or less because I deal with people and this was an opportunity for me to deal...

#2- Had you not wanted to stay here, you wouldn't have. I mean, money-wise or not, you'd have found something else to do.

#4- I think that young person, say, that's twenty one or twenty two today in 1996 (we're talking about females) that come to this department are going to have a different outlook than what I had when started in '81 and I was thirty, thirty one years old. Because I was already "ancient" to begin with.

#2- I think that's something we're not seeing as much though, is twenty one and twenty two [year old officers]. Most of the ones that are going through the boards and stuff...

#4- I think times are changing, so I don't think you're going to see as many women getting in late. Nowadays you're going to see younger women, more younger women getting in it.

B- This is really interesting because we have got two different motivations (somewhat different)- the security aspect and the nature of the job itself. And they're both powerful to people. Anything else at all?

#1- I'd like to see how many people actually saw themselves here at forty, forty five [years old].

B- I never even saw myself as forty years old. [Laughter]. I couldn't imagine that would ever happen.

#2- I saw myself here to retirement. But I started real young.

#1- But, I mean, could you imagine yourself [here], you know...[Does an impression of a "little old lady".] [Laughter]

#2- Like I said, I didn't picture myself in a patrol car at forty. I figured at some point I would promote and go inside.

#1- But I'm at the point that I feel that way.

#4- I can't imagine myself at fifty five and on the street.

#2- I can't either.

#5- It's almost like...I don't see how you cannot see yourself that way, because it comes full circle. You might promote and get an inside job and go to a different [investigative] detail, but everything is drawn back to the line. If you're a supervisor, and you're, like [the moderator], she's a Captain, but she's Captain over a patrol division. And so, she's been in inside jobs and everything else, but she still... I mean she goes out on the street every now and then. Not as much as she used to. There are some people I can picture, like [Officer X], I can picture that guy fifty five years old, still going out to 12th Street, and doing the exact same thing.

#1- That's what I meant when I asked the question, because I can't see [being here at that age], but I'm already old and I still...if somebody makes me mad I'm going to pull them over and say, "Hey!".

#5- I know. Right?

B- I never...I kind of took it a year at a time. I don't know what I'll be doing in five years.

#4- That's how I feel now. I kind of feel like I'm kind of plodding along. If things got where I was very, very, very unhappy, I would have to make some changes.

#3- I can't see myself staying here five more years. I'm really toying with it. I know that in five years I can retire, get a check of some sort and rob somebody's son for the rest of what I need. [Laughter] The whole thing is, I cannot imagine...There was an old man here when I first came. He was old, you know, he actually was.

#1- [Officer X.]

#3- No. [Officer X] too, but this was another old man.

#1- [Officer] X made an impact on me.

#3- And I was constantly going like, "What is he doing still down here with all of this?" And I think he was...I think they had to force him to retire. He was old, okay? (Laughter)

B- Was he in CIB [Criminal Investigation Bureau]?

#3- Yeah, he was in CIB. I would never, you know, stay that long. And also, I looked at [Officer X] and he was still a patrolman.

#1- Right. That was who made me think...

#3- And I said...my thing was, "I will not stay down here twenty years and still be a patrol officer." Look where I am. Twenty years and I'm still a patrol officer.

#5- See, I used to look at Officer X like that. I did. I used to look at Officer Y, and he would come over [on a call I was on] and talk all sorts of s---, and I was like, "He's still good out on the street".

#4- That's right. That's exactly right.

#5- He is still good at doing that.

#2- I pictured being here [at the department], but not in a [patrol] car

#5- But I think it all goes back full circle, because the whole...the department is all built on patrol. And I think if we remember that...I know I sound like Chief Watson now. [Laughter] My name may be Elizabeth, but the last name's not Watson.

#1- Keep talking. That will rule out what I said earlier.

#2- (Pushing the tape recorder closer) Speak into the microphone. [Laughter]

#5- "Chief Watson, do I get brownie points?"

#2- My name is "Officer X." [not her name].

#5- But, you know, like especially working the gang unit, we rely on patrol for a lot of information, and I know a lot of the things that we do at the police department center around patrol. As good as it may be, or as bad as it may be, ultimately we come around and have to be back out on the street. In an unmarked or marked car.

#2- Or a horse [mounted patrol].

(Some conversation lost while changing tape, that related to female police officers' treatment of other female officers.)

#1- You remember when some women would put down other women. And some wouldn't because...

#2- I think women are just women and women are b-----s.

#5- I've had more problems with other female officers. Especially when I first came out. There was the shift that I was on, I worked with three other female officers, and that was a lot for one shift.

#2- That is a lot. In fact, I've never had another one on my shift.

#5- There were four of us on a ten officer shift.

B- Is it competitiveness [that makes women fail to be supportive of each other?]

#5- I think it's more personal for me.

#1- Yeah, I think a lot of it is...well, I remember men saying, " Oh man, we got women here and you guys [women]don't do any good." And I think it's that, because that gives you competitiveness, and then, like you said, sometimes it's just personal.

#2- Women are more apt... I think women are more apt to make up their mind and judge another female, and shun or be mean to them, or whatever the guys are. Guys just, the relationships I've seen with men over the years, it takes a good bit for one of them to say, "You know, he's a real a-----." Women, they make their judgments right away.

B- Real quick, before we leave. One thing none of you guys have mentioned is sexual harassment.

#5- I've had...actually I've had probably two incidents. You know, there are

certain things, working with guys all the time, the way they...when guys get together with each other they're crude.

B- They're nasty.

#1- They act like animals.

#5- But this is...you have joined a man's world and I don't think that they really know. They're kind of like, "How can we be, how can we not be, how far can we go? Where I have actually experienced sexual harassment has been on two different occasions, one very early on where I felt..I didn't tell anybody because I thought this guy is just...he's just weird.

I didn't tell anybody about it. So, it got to the point (It was with [Officer Z]) and it got the point where I finally came to [another female officer] and told [her], "Hey, look, this is what's going on. I don't know what the deal with this guy is, but, you know, he's doing this, this, and this." And [she] ended up having words with him and then...

#1- Then I ended up having words with him.

#5- Then [#1] ended up having words with him. And then, you know, it just snowballed from there. I'm thinking, "You know, I shouldn't have ever said anything." Now that I'm a lot more aware of sexual harassment,[had I known then what I know now] I would tell you right now, I would have just gone out and filed on him - just gone out and filed.

And then another one was with [Officer B]. And [B.] used to tell me, "God, you look good in those pants." or "Is that you or your [bullet-proof] vest?" And I would be like, you know, "What the f--- is up with you?" That's exactly what I would tell him, "So, like what the f--- is up with you?" And I said, "Not that you'll ever get a chance to see." And I just thought, "This guy's an a-----." And I just didn't have anything to do with him.

Come to find out...my brother-in-law's a cop in El Paso, and he has been there for...he's a dinosaur now. He was telling me that they have a lot of problems with sexual harassment in that department, where females just... they can't even have

pictures in their gym of muscle men or muscle women because people are offended by that. And that's extreme to me. That is way too extreme.

They've got...they have gotten to the point in that department where the women are just filing sexual harassment right and left. And so I was telling him about some of these things that are happening to me and he told me, "Just from what you're telling me you'd have a real good case [of sexual harassment]". The way I approach it and what works best for me is if a guy is that way I think, "You know, I don't know what's up with you." But [I] just blow it off at first.

#2- Well, sometimes you can't do that. The one instance that I had down here that I would really consider sexual harassment...I mean, I love to tell dirty jokes. I love to, you know, do all that, but I did have one instance[of harassment], but it was my immediate supervisor. And I didn't have a lot of ways out. And I ended up, after a good long period of time, having to come up with a way to deal with it and protect myself as much as I could. And he had to resign basically because of what happened, of what he's done.

It was...started as incidents like you were talking about, you know, "Look at that bumper". And making remarks like that. But it got much to be a much more serious deal. And I didn't know what to do about it at first. I really didn't, because that's just not...That's very different in this world [police] than it is out in the real world. It's handled a lot differently, it's taken a lot differently, and it caused me a lot of problems, it really did.

#5- And I think you can...you yourself are probably the best judge of the whole situation. Because they may come up to you when nobody else is around and tell you something.

#2- Oh, I got to where I carried a tape recorder with me twenty four hours a day. He was constantly calling me in the office and telling me, "Sit down. Shut the door. I need to talk to you", and all this kind of c----. And it just got way, way out of hand. And actually I had a tape recorder on me and running when the physical altercation started. It wasn't...I just really didn't know what to do [about] it. It took me a good while to decide what I was going to do. In the meantime, I just tried to keep my distance as best I could, but sometimes you can't.

#1- Yeah. It's hard to do at this job. I remember when I came down, you know, your goal was to get through this job, and do the best you can.

B- Fit in?

#1- Right.

#5- That was enough pressure.

31- Right. And you were talking about the way we coped with things - like when I went out [socially], I went out with three other male officers from my class. And we became dependent [on each other], you know? We cried on each other's shoulders and all that, but then what do you do? You get stigmatized. "Either she's messing with him or she's sleeping with this guy."

You can't have a buddy. You can't have a friend, somebody to talk to. And then the old situation, you've probably heard it and been through it, everybody in here[has]. When they come on to you..., you know, if you don't s---- then it's because you're either gay or ...

#5- Something's wrong with you.

#1- Yeah, something's wrong with you or "Yeah, she's always messing with this guy." You're confronted with so many things down here it's pathetic.

B- Yeah, I mean I pretty much assumed that nobody had been immune from that. It almost goes without saying, but I was particularly interested in how much effect it really had on y'all. And yeah, I had quite a bit [of harassment].

#1- Mentally, they put you through a lot.

#2- I was going to say, I went through a period of about, probably about a year and a half before I felt like... It struck me hard. It made me realize even more about how vulnerable a person I was mentally. When you come down here and you expect, like we were talking about earlier, to be aggressive and be in control and do all this other stuff, and then all of a sudden, when you're still in that vein, then [when you're harassed], you're not [in control], and there's nothing you can do about it.

And it took me... I had a lot of problems dealing with it.

#5- How long were you down here before that happened?

#2- About nine years, nine or ten years.

#5- See, I had just gotten out of the academy when this was happening to me and I was like, "What's going on?"

#2- That's why I said, that kind of stuff I got [suggestive remarks] I just turned and threw it right back at them. And I never had a problem with anybody. I mean they'd leave me alone. I'd just...It'd stop. I didn't let it be fun for them any more. I didn't look bewildered or concerned or confused or bothered or whatever. I just threw it right back at them and once you take the joy out of it, then they'll go find somebody else.

B- Unless they're total a-----s.

#5- See, for me [not letting it bother me] didn't necessarily work because I felt the pressure of being out on street and wanting to do a good job and you know, fitting in and everything.

#2- Well, I may have been lucky, because like [#4] I had previous [police experience] at another department. And so that helped a lot. Whereas that other department was totally different from here. That was over at [Travis] County [Sheriff's Department], and what you did have out there was maybe one other person. It was a lot different from here. But sure, that has something to do with it. But I think that, a lot of the time, I think this sexual harassment thing has gone way overboard. I think in the end women are going to get hurt by it - you know, job-wise.

B- By being overly sensitive?

#2- Uh huh.

#5- Especially in this job. Because just like you, I'm like with the guys right in there too [telling dirty jokes etc.] and I'm just as crude sometimes, probably just as

guilty of, you know, some things.

#2- But we get by with it. [Laughter]

#5- And that's going to be really something, when that happens [a male filing sexual harassment on a female].

B- I'm surprised it hasn't happened yet.

#2- That's another thing that put me happened to me in that situation. I had to reexamine...you know, all these years I've never had a problem like this, and treated all these guys this way, and now here I am in this situation, and I thought I was pretty well understood down here. You know, it really threw me for a loop. It really, really did.

#4- And then, being a supervisor made it exceptionally hard for you. If it had been a co-worker you could have just...

#2- Well, I was real fortunate. The guys on my shift, (there were two of them that I was finally able to talk to about it) they were very, very helpful. And eventually the entire shift picked up on what had happened, and they were very, very helpful to me. They really were.

#3- I had one incident where I walked... (I don't know if I was a police officer then or not) but there was this officer and he'd talk to you and touch you, and reach and pinch you or something. And my automatic reflex was to slap him.

#2- Amen. [Laughter]

#1- Good girl.

#3- I mean I'm like, "Pow!"[gestures as if she's slapping someone]. But then looking at sexual harassment, I probably did more sexual harassment than people did to me. [Laughter] Because I'm always telling people, "Baby, you look fine."

#5- I was talking to a...well, the guy that came here from, where was it Great Britain? That interviewed you? [indicates moderator]

B- Yeah.

#5- He was down here doing a paper on female officers, and I was asking him how they treated female officers out there because in England they don't even carry guns. So they have to rely a lot on their physical abilities. And he said that the females are just not put into positions where they're out on the street.

B- I heard that too.

#5- They're in a lot of clerical [positions] I guess.

B- The U.S. is worlds ahead of just about any other country [in their equitable treatment of female police officers].

#5- And I asked him, I said, "So, what's your impression of...evidently they'd been through a couple of states and interviewed several females, from patrol officers to high ranking like Chief Watson. And he said that he found it [strange], that American women in general, that they would even want to do this job. With the amount of crime in the United States and the different areas and just knowing that you get into this job and your potential for being killed at any given time is a lot greater than Susie Homemaker.

B- Yeah.

#2- I'd probably strangle myself with the beaters off the mixer if I was to stay home. [Laughter]

End of Focus Group 1

Appendix Two

Focus Group Two

October 9, 1996

Conducted at the Austin Police Department East-Substation

B- So tell me why you decided to stay in a police career. Anybody? You're here. You're [all] still here.

#4- I'll go first. There's a couple of reasons that I've stayed. One is being vested in the retirement system. I want security in the future. Two, the pay is pretty darn good for the educational level which I have, which is just some college. Three is the benefits, the health benefits, the retirement benefits, the life insurance that's offered plus the added things you get are really good. You can't get it in the private sector. That's not to say you couldn't go to another job with a state agency, like as an investigator for the lottery commission, or something like that, maybe you could get the same kind of benefits. But those are the kinds of things that keep me here: security, benefits.

#3- I'll have to agree with [#4]. When I first came on I think my ideas were different. When I started it was a job. It was work. It wasI really felt like the police department was like family. I really felt close to everybody on my shift. That has changed. Police work has changed in that I don't feel like we're a family any more. There's very few people down here that I probably would trust. It's kind of changed a lot. That part is not like...And the work too has changed from when I came down here.

So now my focus is more like [#4] in that the reason I stay is because I'm vested. And I'm looking forward to retirement. I quit college. I never graduated with a degree and the amount of money I'm making is good compared to what I could do if I left here. But part of it is that, it's that the job is not what it was when I first started. It's changed a lot.

#2- One reason I've stayed is I still like the job. Yes, it's completely different. I

was single when I started. I loved staying up at night and doing all the work and putting people in jail and everything. Since that time I've married, had a child. I don't like shift work any more. I realize that's part of [the job], but now I'm in a position where I'm not working nights. So that's nice, and I've been able to do that. I know sometimes people aren't [on a routine schedule] and get stuck working shift work and that's just the way it is. But, we've got job security - there's that- and the retirement system's there. And my husband works here also, which, we both work at one place, so it's kind of nice. A lot of people wouldn't want to work with their spouse. And with the promotion [I was promoted to Detective less than a year ago], it's moved me into something new.

And I don't know where I want to go from here, if I want to stay at...At one point I probably looked at my career more. Now I look at my family more, what my job can do for my family. Plus, I thought, "There's nothing else that I'd want to do." If I have to work, which I do, there's nothing else that I'd want to do. So you might as well stay where you've been and you have good benefits, decent benefits and you've got your retirement and you're vested. And everybody... you're comfortable with the job even though you don't know very many people in uniform anymore (new people). And like I say, I still like police work. It's just... it has changed.

#5- I would say I have to agree. I also only have like three years of college. Plus, even if I left, people with degrees don't start off making what I make here. Pay is a big part of my reason for staying. I also have a husband and two children, a mortgage, so, but benefits are real important. I also like the four tens [ten hour, four day work week]. I think four tens is very beneficial to our family, with my kids. Plus working the 7th platoon gives me an opportunity to see my kids in the morning and when I get home at night. So, it's keeping me pretty happy.

As far as promoting, I'm studying [for the promotional test]. But my family comes first. I'd like to promote just because I'd like to do something a little bit different. I have a lot of enjoyment from my job still. There are days when it's not so great, but for the most part we still get a lot of good feeling from doing things.

#1- I think...I agree with everybody, pretty much. But I do have a college degree. I don't know when I first wanted to be a police officer. I know in ninth grade I did. [That was] my goal throughout high school. I graduated. I wanted to get a degree

and then go into law enforcement. I came down here because of the [nature of the] job. I still enjoy the job. I still like the street. I still like rotating shifts, even though I just promoted [to Detective]. Right now I do not have a family. I do not have kids. The job is still real important to me and obviously I focus on my career. Realistically, I know that when family starts coming into it, then you make adjustments because that's going to be your priority. Yes, the benefits are good and the retirement. But I still enjoy police work. I still like helping people.

I agree. [Police work] is not the same. And I bitch and moan and groan on a daily basis with things. That it just seems like we are going downhill. I know things have to change. But overall, I like the Department. I like what I do. I love the four-tens. Luckily, working in [the] Theft [Unit]...that's one of the only Details that does still work four-tens. I love my three days off. I hate just having two days [off].

#3- I still enjoy the job. But the job is not what it was when I started. When you mentioned... when I think about doing something else, there's nothing else I'd want to do. I just wouldn't. I wouldn't enjoy it. It's just that I can see [the job] changing. And I don't see it changing for the better. I see it changing for the worse. And that just makes me sad sometimes. The camaraderie, the getting together with your shift, you don't see that any more. [You'll hear someone say] "Let's have a shift party, let's get together and just have a barbecue." And then [somebody responds], "Well, no, I've got to..." It's just that, that I really miss.

That was the part that...maybe I needed it when I came on. When I came on, I didn't really have a family here. It was [just] me when I moved here and when I joined the police department, I said, "Oh gosh, [I've found a] family." And that part, I guess is what I miss. Because I still like the work. I just don't see myself doing anything else. I love it. There's good days and bad days. But I just sometimes wish we could...I just see the difference in the department.

B- Tell me about the job in terms of what you guys like [about it]- both the technical part of it like being out in a car, and also what is it you like about being a cop, that goes beyond the [job] tasks?

#3- Personally, dealing with the people - the public. I enjoy that the most. I didn't stay on the street in a [patrol] car very long, but went to Sixth Street [a downtown

nightclub area patrolled on foot]. But [I] just [like] dealing with the public. When you can resolve situations or help people, I think that's what I enjoy most about the job. And when I was on Sixth Street, I enjoyed being out - not in an office. I'm in an office [Recruiting] now and I think now that's what...I go nuts. I can't even close my door. I've got to leave it open and walk the halls and be in everybody's business like, "What are y'all doing?" I've got to be around people. I've got to be dealing with people. I think that...I love being outside, on Walking Beat and on a bike [bike patrol]. I love being on a bike. But also the fact that I could deal with people.

#5- Other than the four-tens, what I like is that we don't have a supervisor looking over us. We're not inside. There something different every day.

B- Independence? Variety?

#5- I think that's a very big part of being able to go out and motivate myself and do the kinds of things I like to do - look for the kinds of stuff I look for [on patrol].

#4- That's what I was going to say. I was going to come back and annotate my first answer about why I stay. Some of the reasons I stay (the benefits, the retirement, the being vested, all that stuff) I guess that if everything fell apart, I'd stay for that. But I like the job. I like working with people. That's one of the reasons I've been on patrol for fifteen years and I never wanted to promote. I didn't want to go inside [to criminal investigation]. I didn't want to shuffle paper.

Now my priorities are changing. I want to promote. I want to make more money so that when the retirement gets here I can make the highest level of pay. That's means that I'm going to have to sacrifice being on the street. But what I don't like about being on the street is shift work. So the seventh platoon with fixed hours, and the four-tens is perfect.

And I was always a proponent for fixed shifts, but the majority of the department didn't like that, so, you know, as an APA [Austin Police Association] rep[resentative], I didn't pursue it when we had the opportunity. But I think if we ever went to fixed shifts, people would be a lot happier, because [for example] like #1 and #2 would like probably evenings or nights and stuff (well, maybe not now because [#2] is a mother). But some of us people that are older, would like a little stability, like the daytime hours and being able somewhat to live like a normal

person. But the other thing I like about [police work] is I'm naturally nosy and I love being in other people's business and now it's my job to do it. [Laughter] So I have the right to be a nosy person and get paid to do it, which is perfect for me. What can I say? And I'm bossy too. So I get to be bossy, you know? Of course, you have to know how to control all of that, because otherwise you get complained on all the time. But it's great.

Plus, the other thing that [#5] said. I love to be busy, because I love my ten hour[shift] to go fast. So even if the call load is zip, you can be busy. You can look for crooks, and you can run cars [check license plates on the computer] and you can make traffic stops and you can make your day busy if you want to. And if you're having a bad day and migraines and cramps, and the call load is slow, you can just cruise through the day at your own pace.

Now, on some shifts when the call load is blowing the roof off the place, you don't have that luxury, but for the most part you do. You have the luxury of being able to set your pace and what it is...once you take care of what you have to take care of, then you can spend your time doing the aspects of the job that you like, be it a traffic person, or a burglar person or a dope person...

B- You're in control of your own time.

#4- Right. Exactly. Those [that I mentioned earlier] are some of the other reasons I'd stay but not... sometimes those things are not the greatest either.

B- How about you guys?

2- Being inside [in detective work], you still get to be a little bit nosy, because that's part of it. Face it. And you get lots of reports every day to look into and it's fun to look through and see what's going on. Now sometimes it's a real pain what you have to do to solve [the case] or some person that you don't really want to deal with or whatever. But that's probably one of the things that you like [about] being inside.

Otherwise it's not fun being stuck in an office, where there's no space and the case load is so bad; where you're working on ten things at once and your supervisor is bringing you something that you've got to take care of; people calling and bitching

at you. Sometimes you get really stressed because you're doing the best that you can, yet you're not getting anything accomplished. So, that's what I miss about being outside. Maybe not being on rotating shifts.

Before I got promoted I was doing License and Weights [a unit responsible for enforcing traffic and equipment violations on large trucks]. It was brand new and it was fun, and it was something different. I enjoyed that and I really miss being outside. Being cooped up now is a little bit tough. But there are good points and bad points about all of it.

The digging into things... [is interesting] and when you're typing on the computer, trying to find this person and "boom", you find out he pawned the property. You say, "I got you now." That is the fun part. We still don't get to get out and do much investigation on the street because of the call load. I'm sure if I worked in Robbery or something like that, (person crimes are more important than property crimes) I would feel differently.

You know, when you can solve some stuff, by phone or the computer it makes you feel kind of kind of good. And we still don't go out and arrest people that we get warrants for, but you know, pretty much, once you've got your warrant, you've got them. So, it's fun mostly, but there's parts that [make you] pull your hair out on a daily basis. Like yesterday, I found that I made three or four mistakes, which was stupid, because I was in a hurry. And that's real frustrating because I had to clean up what I did yesterday.

#1- I think that when I came into this line of work, my object, or what I thought this job entailed was to help people. And I don't...I was raised, I don't want to say strict, but high morals, and although my sister didn't think we ought to be accountable for things we did, I always felt that way. And I don't know if that was something in my upbringing, but [I feel that way] still to this day. And that's one of the things that does frustrate me about this department. How come I'm held accountable on a daily basis, but yet everybody else gets away with [things], and I have to go and fix other people's mistakes? They should be held just as accountable - other officers I mean.

I'm nosy too. I like being in people's business, and so what I do is I get to get into the middle of something and make someone, if it all possible, accountable for

doing these wrongful acts to these people. And granted, it's just property crimes at this point, being [that I have been] promoted and stuff. But, you know, that's just as important. A couple of years ago, I came home, when I was working Vice. We had take-home cars. My truck was stolen. My P.O.V. [personal operating vehicle]. I was hot. And it was one those things. I called and an officer came out and I was livid. I think they found [finger]prints, but nothing was ever done. And I know sometimes you can't. But I was victimized and I know what these people go through. And I don't care if it's a \$25 dollar theft or a \$25,000 theft. Each person that's victimized, that's important and if I can help, I want to.

When I was on the street, I know there's time when I was criticized because people's idea was 'you take calls and you put people in jail'. No, that's not our job, to put people in jail. Our job is to go out and remedy a situation. And just because someone's been drinking, does not mean they go to jail for P.I. [Public Intoxication]. That [arresting the person who's been drinking] takes me away from the more important crimes, robberies and whatever, that may be going on when we're busy. When half my shift is in the jail for P.I. arrests... If that's the only thing I can do [making an arrest], that's the only thing I can do to remedy. But I want people to be held accountable, and I enjoy looking into things and if I can, making [offenders] responsible, if I can, for their actions against others.

B- Do y'all in general have a feeling of righting the wrongs of the world? Being a part of a system that does that? Is that important to you?

#4- That's why I came to work here. I was going to make the world a safer place for people to live in. Isn't that naive? But I'm serious. That was my motivation. I wanted to come down here. I wanted to right the wrongs, clean up the neighborhood, make people accountable for their actions. One thing's for sure, we have job security, because that will never happen. Ever.

I, unlike [#1] have not been a direct victim, but my son's car's been burglarized twice. And the first time they tore out a \$2,000 stereo system that he worked so hard to put in - his boom box on wheels which I hated. I cried. It hurt. So I know how these people feel when someone has broken into their car, been in their house, or whatever. And I guess that's why I try harder than some cops down here. It just irks me when they won't even try to take a set of [finger] prints [at the crime scene].

#1 - And I want to interject there, about other officers not being held accountable. I was on the streets working Frank sector [southeast Austin], I don't know how many calls I got to go to Southside Wrecker because a car had been burglarized or stolen or whatever. There were latent [finger print]s, and the officer who was at the [crime] scene that recovered the vehicle [had said], "I don't take finger prints. That's not my job."

Well, I hated doing it too. But that's part of my job. And now I have to go out after the fact. How long has it been in a storage unit and your affirmative link [to the crime] is...you know, the time span here on a good criminal case... and I have to go take fingerprints because that officer didn't do his job. And that used to make me angry. I hated [taking the fingerprints] as much as the next [officer]. And even in cases where I knew there were no prints there, it made [people] feel better [if I tried to get prints]. Throw a little powder down...

#5- Or at least explain to them the reason why you can't print something.

#1- Right.

#5- Like somebody wants a brick printed.

#1- Exactly. Because I've gone out on, I don't know how many burglaries, and they'll tell me this is their second or third time and the officers [never took prints]. [And the victims will say,] "Oh, that's how you take finger prints? The other officers never did that." You know?

#3- That's what I was talking about that I like about the job. Dealing with people. If I can make that person feel better or you know, if they got broken into, and sympathize with them [by saying] "Well, gee, that's hard." That's a part of my job. [They may think], "Well at least that officer ...she took an interest." I hear from so many people that when the officers came out here they could barely be bothered. And I think that's wrong.

#2- I hear stories all the time about people, neighbors, or whatever, who were stopped by the police and what they did. And, of course, there's two sides to everything. But it's quite embarrassing the way some officers treat people. It just

seems that newer officers coming into this line of work don't give a s--- about...

#4- They have an attitude.

#2- I don't know. I just don't understand it.

B- Is it the compassion? It's not there?

#2- It's gone. I think that the people I worked with several years ago on the street, as a whole, tried harder to be better police officers and not just, "Well, I'm a cop so I'm not accountable for anything. I can go out and do whatever, and nothing's going to happen to me.

#4- "I'm a cop and you're not."

#2- Right.

#4- How many times do you hear that?

#3- I think sometimes it comes back to being women too. I don't want to say that, but I know I felt...I knew when I came out there on certain things I just had to talk my way out of something. I couldn't use force. I learned that real fast. And so I tended to do that. I would go in the direction of more talking and try and resolve rather than go in there and go, "Okay, you're going to jail and you're going to jail". Like [#1] said, I didn't go in [the attitude] that, "Everybody's going to jail, by God." [It was more like], "Let's talk this out. Let's just..." And that might have been a part of it too.

I had to try talk to people, to relate to people, because I wasn't going to go in there and knock some heads and stuff. That was kind of the way though [knocking heads] too when I came out, among officers. [Like the] oldtimers. Like if you had a pursuit or somebody ran from you, if they didn't go to the hospital, by God there was a problem. That might be part of it.

#5- Even when we were at the academy I remember [the training instructors] saying, "Why don't you ever get mad? Or hit back or whatever? And that's just not...I was never a physical person anyway. So my only out... and it used to make

me upset that they'd say, "You have to be more physical." You don't necessarily have to be physical all the time in this job.

B- Let's take from that a question that I want to ask. Let's just start from the fact that you're a woman in a male-dominated profession. Tell me about any difficulties you've had.

#5- I've always said that when men came out [of the academy] they were accepted - just automatically accepted. And then if they screwed up...you know. But the women - no. You had to prove yourself first, and then you were accepted. I don't know if that's changed. It's been so long since I've [been on the street]. So that was part of it. I've been relatively lucky in the sense that the guys that I've worked with, [not] too many guys have [given me a hard time]. And I have an added... that's another thing that they had to deal with - my life style. I'm a woman and I'm gay. But I've been relatively lucky in that aspect.

I think a lot of it is just being honest, being direct, and letting them know exactly how you feel - what you're going to put up with and what you're not going to put up with. I think they respect that, and that helps in a sense. But it hasn't always been easy. There's been times where I thought, "Man, I should have said something [to an officer who made a comment.] He went over the line, damn it." And I wasn't one of the guys, so I walked away mad.

And as I get older that happens less and less because now I'll come back and say, " You know, that just really bothered me. I wish you ..." I sit down and talk more. If I have a problem I tend to go [and talk] to that person. When I first came out I thought, "I've got to be one of the guys. I can't show that it bothers me. And that's changed a little. And I'm learning that [a lot of times] the guys [will say], "Oh, okay. I didn't even realize that" or "I didn't even know what I was doing." Most of them are pretty...I've had pretty good experiences. There are always going to be those few that no matter what you do or what you say, you're just not going to do it right.

#2- When I was in the police academy (#1 and I were in the same [cadet] class), for the most part we were accepted fine. There was one person, though, that is no longer an officer here, and he just did not think women should be police officers.

#4- Officer X. [Laughter]

#2- No, Officer Y. Did you know him? Well anyway, he was talking s--- one day, and all this. Well, I happened to be in good shape then. And we went in the weight room and I out lifted him. And the guys gave him more trouble about that. That was a real good feeling, for everybody to rally around us. And we all [the members of the cadet class], on a daily basis, we did everything together.

But one thing that I have noticed throughout the years that I've been here [is] you'll hear an officer generalize females as worthless. And there may be one or two that shouldn't be down here. But if you looked at it percentage-wise, there's just as many male officers that shouldn't be down here as female, as far as percentage-wise. And it's like, "Don't group everybody together. If you have a problem with somebody or you think they shouldn't be down here, fine. But don't group everybody together. It's not right. There's a lot of good female officers down here." But overall, I'm sure there's some people that didn't think that women should be here, but pretty much now they know enough to keep their mouth shut. [Laughter].

#5- #4 and I worked for a supervisor that I don't think she recalls, [who] told me that he did not like...he did not think females ought to be cops.

#4- We worked for this guy?

#5- Yes, we did. He's still somebody that I respect quite a bit and he, after about six months said, "I think I feel more comfortable with females as officers now - working for me." So, I felt real good about that. It seems to me that there's some change. And, of course, there still are some old timers out there that think that women shouldn't be cops. But you're not going to change their minds and I don't try.

And, like [#3] was talking about, I wish if you have a problem with an officer, you go to the officer and talk to him. That's the way I like to do things. Or if I hear rumors I'll usually go to the officer if I know him well enough and ask him what's going on. Lately, we seem to have a lot of those officers [who] immediately go to their supervisor, and so [the complaint] goes up and down [the chain of command].

#4- Yeah, a bunch of little whiners. That happened when we started hiring all them college "gra-gee-ates". [Laughter].

B- Hey! Hey!

#4- When I came down I expected, like what she's talking about, that I would have to prove myself. And I was frankly amazed at...Now, if I wasn't accepted I must be as dumb as a door bell because I didn't know it. I got treated just like one of the guys. And I felt like that I did my job and I did it well. Well, of course it didn't hurt that the first shoplifter that bucked up against me, that [Officer X] stood back and watched me handle, he went and told everybody what a wonderful job I did, you know, with this guy.

#3- So he was watching you handle it. He wanted to see how you did.

#4- Uh huh.

#3- And if the guy had done something and busted away [the shoplifter] would have been all over you.

#4- That's true. But he was handcuffed too. So it probably wouldn't have been right for two of us to be pounding on him. [Laughter] But at any rate...

#3- I saw that though a lot when I first came out. A lot of [the male officers] would just kind of step back [to see if I could handle it].

#5- They called me over to [a known mentally ill person] after they'd told [him] I was going to arrest him. And they stood and watched. I don't know that they do [that kind of thing] any more, because I haven't seen it done.

#4- Everybody wants to get their licks in now because we're so tame these days. But, anyhow, I mean that [incident where I was seen to be competent] didn't hurt, but I never felt just like, "Oh man, I've got to prove myself." I mean, I had that in my mind. I expected that [pressure] when I came out. But I never felt that. I never...but as far as sexuality goes, I did experience a lot of... my name was written on the bathroom wall, "For a good time call..."

B- I was going to ask about rumors and their reputation-destroying potential.

#4- Oh man, you would not believe the people I've [allegedly] slept with down here.

#5- Well, that's okay. I was accused for the first six months of being gay because nobody knew who I was seeing. And it was none of their g----- business.

#4- [Scolding #5] Uh uh. We don't take the Lord's name in vain. But talking about speaking up, when people say things that you don't really...like when people use the "n" word or talk about people's sexuality, you know, all the crude comments that are made, I used to just do like you would do, just sit back and [inaudible]. I mean, I'm not going to change his opinion of women or minorities. I just would let it go. Well, now, if someone says something like "G.D." or the "f" word, or something I don't agree with, I tell them. Now when I go into [Sgt. X]'s showup [initial briefing] and I express my opinion about the cursing and all that goes on there they just get worse. [Laughter.]

#2- But it makes you feel better to say it.

#4- But I say what I feel, and I feel like I'm entitled to. And there was a time when my language was as bad as the rest of them, but I realized that, that was, number one not the way I wanted to live my life, and number two not very professional. So I got out of the habit. I think it's kind of a hazard of this job [the tendency to use profanity].

Who was it, [Officer X?] who told me, when I think he was still my Captain, and I was really bothered because I don't know how many times my name was written on the men's bathroom wall. And I never could understand why cops could be...vandalize bathrooms and not think anything about it - which was basically what it was. And he said, "Well, you know [#4], the problem is" (and I don't think there were very many women when I came down here) "anybody that propositioned you and didn't get lucky is going to say they did because they don't want to be the ones that didn't get in on it. And anybody that did is going to brag about it. So it really doesn't matter. You can't win for losing. Just forget it." But that kind of thing just ran rampant. I don't think it's as bad now, but it was.

#3- And the men always want to know who you're dating, who you're seeing. I mean, I got that third hand. "Well, somebody's asking me [inaudible]." It seems like they always want to know your personal life. To me that's personal. I don't owe you...it's my business. I see it even now. An attractive woman will come on somebody's shift and everybody goes "Oh [inaudible]" and start acting like...

#4 ...dogs in heat. [Laughter]

#3- But you still see that all the time.

#1- Okay. I hope I can remember everything I wanted to say. Talking about officers wanting to be in your personal business, and I guess the reason that didn't bother me is that there's not much I won't tell people. I mean, you ask me, I'll tell you - no problem. To me, my personal life...there are some things that are nobody's business, but there's a lot of things that I'm not ashamed of. And I'm sure I've got skeletons. If somebody asked me a certain question...I'm sure there are some out there that I wouldn't want to answer. But, anyway, that didn't bother me where I know it did bother a lot of people.

#3- But how many times did they actually come to you and ask you?

#1- Well, that's true.

#3- I mean, that's what irritated me. They wouldn't come to me. No, I'd have to hear about it from Joe Blow Shmow and I'm like, "Why didn't they just come ask me?"

#1- And, (I'm going to apologize to you [#4], because I know I talk like a sailor.) (Laughter). the strange part about that is that I've been that way [in the habit of using profanity] for a long time prior to getting this job. I mean, I think I'm worse now. And this is strange, and how I do it I do not know. But, when I deal with the public I do not curse. It's like... how come I can't carry on a conversation in this room without saying [curse words]? But subconsciously, when I'm talking to other people, I don't say those things. Because I say the "f" word and "G.D." in just about every other breath, but not in the public's eye.

Also, I think I was very lucky when we came out of the academy. Part of the

declining values, I think, at this department that I have problems with, is that new young officers aren't very respectful. It's like - it's [just] a job. When I came down here I was thankful out of how many hundreds or thousands of people, they picked forty and I was one. And we did things without being compensated for it and all this other stuff, and [we were] glad to do it. [I] volunteered as a cadet...worked evening shift and volunteered to work over [my regular time] four or five hours and never got paid for it. But I enjoyed the job and I was eager to learn. And we're missing that right now.

But anyway, when we came out I think we had six females in our class and I know [#2] had a few problems with somebody on her shift that had that attitude about female officers. I came out with another female in our class, and I didn't care for her too much. We didn't get along in the academy. But I didn't know her. I got...my supervisor talked to me about things when she would mess up. And that used to make me mad that he would generalize. He'd sit us two down and say, "Girls, keep your radios on the channel you work on."

#2- You and "brainless." [Laughter]

#1- Yes. And I'm going...I'd turn to her afterwards and I'd say, "What happened, because I don't know what he's talking about." [And she'd say], "Oh, I was in show-down... "[a room to write reports at the end of the shift]. And she'd tell me the instance why I'm getting talked to now. That went on.

And the only thing I know other than that, that supervisor did to me and her was that right before our six month probation was up he decided he was going to make us ride with our [Field Training Officers] to see what a good job we were doing. Well, the class before it (which was a male officer that was on our shift) didn't do it and the class behind us didn't do it either and he was a male officer too. And I said, "That's not right."

#5- A different set of standards.

#1- Oh, sure. But otherwise, the shift was accepting. I never had any problems because in our academy they told us, they said, "Y'all be careful, especially the females." They came to us and set us down separately and they said, "It's tough out there and a lot of people don't think y'all should be there. Just be ready." Well,

when we came back to the shift I rode with, which is what I ended up going to [after graduation] they did [give me a hard time]. There were some male officers who came in and said I couldn't even eat at the same table with them because I was a cadet.

A lot of it depended on the shift you went to and the group of people. So, I was lucky as far as being a female and being accepted and never did anyone stand back [and not help me.] Because I know [#2] had an incident when she was getting in a fight in east Austin, and they stood back to see how she would do. And luckily I never had to do that.

But then, I also, because I was so thankful to have this job and I respected other officers, I took comments where maybe they thought I wasn't doing a good job because of the way I...I didn't put this guy in jail for [public intoxication]. And [they would say], "Rookie officer, you need to be retrained." Well, you pull me to the side and say that. But [he said that] in a crowded bar in front of thirty something people and I took it. And I was livid. I was furious. And I dealt with it. And then a couple of years later I said, "Okay, now have somebody make these comments to me." Because I've got that time under my belt that I think that I can go to that officer and say, "That was wrong."

And it was funny, because after I came out of Vice, I went to the shift where this [same] guy was working. And [#2] kept telling me, "He's really a nice guy. You'll like him." [Inaudible]. But I went in and gave him the opportunity and we sat down and had breakfast one morning and he goes, " You know, ha ha" (because he'd been here like twenty years) "I hear that we supposedly had some disagreement a few years ago and you probably don't even remember it." And I said, "Oh, yes, I do remember." But he didn't. It wasn't that big a deal to him. But we worked it out. And now I think he's a great guy. You know, I gave him that opportunity to come back and whatever.

And [Officer X (a former officer well known for being very traditional, judgmental and lazy)], I took several calls with [him] and he also told me, "Yep, there's not many females down here I'd work with, but you know, you're alright. You can be my back-up any day." And I was like, "Gee, thanks,[X]." [Laughter.]

#4- Right, like, "What time would you like me to be at Dunkin' Donuts?"

[Laughter.]

#1- Also, it was right before he retired and I think he was getting soft.

#4- Don't say that. He wouldn't want to be called soft.

#1- So I think in general I was very lucky at this department, because I have had good friends that did have to fight an uphill battle. And I never...I was never one that had a lot of rumors talked about me. My name, I think, ended up on a bathroom wall after about... [I'd been] about seven years down here, and I was like, "Gee, I finally made it." [Laughter.]

#4- I thought [the rumor was] you were gay.

#1- Yeah, maybe.

#4- If you're not screwing around, you're gay.

#1- No, it was particular things they'd like to do to me. Something having to do with a hair brush. [Laughter]. But the question I have on that is, "How come you never see this on the women's restroom at this department?"

#4- Because we [women] are civilized.

#2- Women can't spell. [Laughter.]

#1- See, I don't generalize, but I mean that is something, that you can go in and see all this graffiti in the men's restroom but you go in the women's and...

#2- What are you doing in the men's restroom? [Laughter]

B- But you [#2] did have a bad experience [early on.] Is that something you want to talk about?

#2- Sure. Apparently the shift that I went to already had preconceived notions. They did not want a female on the shift. And so the person that got stuck [riding] with me (literally, he did not want me) tried to make it as hard as he could on me.

And the shift, I heard later was going to tease him, and put, you know, underwear, panties in the [patrol] car. [And he'd tell them], "I'd better not find them." It really upset him because he didn't want me. And I came home probably every night almost and cried. And, I mean, toward the end...

#1- She was going to quit.

#2- Well, yeah, I was talking about it. He intimidated me so bad. And I did not...I could not read a map. I mean I was pretty worthless when I came out [of the academy]. I'm the type of person that needs a little coddling. I'm not the type that...I mean some people down here are [inaudible], but I need to be reassured some. My confidence level on certain things, new things, isn't as high as [some people.]

So, I got through that first month. I don't know how I did it, but I got through. I mean, the very last night I screwed up on a call really bad. The woman had a knife in her hand and she dropped it and I never saw it. So when this was over, we got back in the car and we drove back to the station and [this officer] screamed at me, "You could have got me killed!" I mean I was trying not to cry. It was awful. Anyway, we went back to the station and the supervisor was there and the officer told him everything and he sat there like...you know.

They put me with a new [Field Training Officer] the next month. Everything changed, because his personality was, "You're doing fine. We can get you through this." And I had some problems, but he said we'd work through [them]. I'd get in the car and he'd say, "Relax, this'll be fine." Well, we went through that month and I really started improving. Things were starting to kick in and everything. Well, at the end of that month the first F.T.O. says, "She's got to be sleeping with him. There's no way she could improve that much."

So then, almost everybody else out of my cadet class got off their riding period after eight weeks. Well, because of the...you know, [allegation that] there's no way I could improve that much, I was stuck with a third training officer, and he was very fair. We made it through that third month and I got cut loose, and the shift divided. It was like half didn't want me and half were like, "S---- them. They're treating you wrong."

So that was about the time that nobody wanted to be on walking beat. People had gotten in trouble or something, so they needed three new people in walking beat. So they came back and said, "We're going to take all the new officers, put their name in a hat, and three people are going to get drawn to go to walking beat." #1 and I were living together and I came home and I said, "I know they're going to pick me. I just know it." And sure enough they did. And I was so bitter about it. But it was the best thing that ever happened to me because I got out of that situation and into a new one. And the new officers on walking beat treated me good, and my career from there [on] I was accepted. But my first month was horrible.

B- That's interesting, because I was also not very good right out of the academy and I was treated really bad by the supervisor - this jerk. I had no confidence either and I almost quit, and he made me move off the shift. I was so angry that I had to move, but it was the best thing that happened to me, because I realized that not everybody's a jerk.

#3- After I graduated from the academy, my first supervisor was [Sgt. X.]

B- Yeah, I remember that.

#3- And it was the same thing.

B- He gave you a really hard time.

#3- I was really young. He saw this little baby walk in. And I had a reverse [situation.] They had just lost [Officer X, another female officer], and he said, "Well, we had another female before, and I expect you to fill her shoes." And I'll admit too, I was very green. I had never done anything like that [police work] and I was just ...He never gave me a chance. It was... he rode me. And [Officer X], I'll never be [her.] We have different styles. She's one of the best officers down here, I really believe that, but we're just two different styles.

What made me mad was [this supervisor] never gave me a chance. He just took one look at me and...[inaudible] the same thing - he didn't want me, and I almost quit. He told me that he had talked to [the trainers at the] academy and they had discussed it, and the best thing for [me] was to go ahead and resign. He actually tried to get me to sign the paper. He brought me in there and said, "Just

sign this." I said, "No." Something told me...and I said, "No, I don't want to." And I went back to the academy in tears and I saw [Sgt. Y, a training sergeant] and he said, "What's up?" And I was balling. And I said, "You know, you know, they talked to y'all around here." And he goes, "What are you talking about? No, they haven't. We have the utmost [confidence in you.]" And the only thing that saved me was the academy [personnel.] [Sgt. Z, the training supervisor] said, "#3, I have no problem with how you have acted out here at the academy. We're behind you. You've just got to [consider] the source, where it's coming from." But I came that close to quitting.

And then they moved me. [That shift] didn't want me. I went out to Frank [sector], under [Sgt. A] and she gave me a chance. And when they finally gave me a chance, I started to feel comfortable, confident. And it made a world of difference. But they [the first shift] just took me on appearances. And I admit, I was a baby. And I walked out there and they said, "Oh this girl is [inaudible.]

#5- I have to say, I got real lucky. I had problems in the academy during the last set of practical problems, because I can't pretend for nothing. I mean, if you put...and they had cameras on me, so it was the first time they had started doing the filming stuff. But if there's a camera in the room, my attention's on the camera. I can't play pretend. I don't play pretend real well.

And my [first] shift, (and thank God, [Sgt. B.] was my supervisor), the guys I went to work with, they all gave me a chance. And they told the academy, "We're going to keep her." And so after my first's month's riding period they said, "She's a good officer. Let her graduate." And I didn't graduate with my class. I had my own graduation ceremony with Chief [X] in his office one day.

B- Let me ask you about a couple of themes I hear. One is how challenging [the job] was. And that it was important to have some support coming from somewhere, whether it was you coming home and talking to each other, or the shift that you went to, that offered that - but some support that somewhere along the line kicks in and gets you over the hump. Also, let me ask you if this is accurate: I hear a feeling of satisfaction in being able to do the job - that it's a challenging job, but the fact that you're able to do it is a source of satisfaction to you. Are these things important to you?

#4- Well, I take a great deal of pride [in my work], and I know #5 does too, and #1 does. Y'all [the other participants] I've never worked with, but just from hearing you talk, I get the sense that y'all are the same kind of officers we are. I take a great deal of pride in everything I turn in, even if it's just a (and I got corrected on this today) a "potted" plant that's been stolen off the front porch (not a "pot" plant.) [Laughter.]

But I put the same amount of effort into that as I do the rape that I'm sent to St. David's [Hospital] to investigate. And I take the same amount of pride in investigative skills and techniques in the rape of the "nudey" modeling chick at [a local massage parlor] as I do at the one where someone broke in her home. Because the way I look at it is I investigate everything, you know, fully and completely to the best of my ability.

And the paper work is just as important, which no one else down here cares about. And then, if something's hinkey or wrong or whatever, then the investigator can unfound it. But if I put all the facts in there, and everybody's statements in there just the way I'm supposed to do, then somebody else can figure it out later. Of course, we have to try to solve a lot of stuff out here now because the detectives can't do it.

#5- And we have supervisors who don't want us to spend a lot of time on it.

#4- Right. The supervisors and the manpower problem [on patrol] has put a damper on that type of work. You hardly have time to do [thorough reports] any more and you get criticized for doing [them.] But ...

#2- Well, it makes a big difference, the officers on the street who do a good job, because we get some c----- reports that you can't make heads or tails of. But nothing's worse than the teleserve reports. But really, sometimes you get officers out there and I think, "Where'd they go to school? Golly."

#4- I know, like [Officer X] is one of those who can't spell and "don't know good grammar." [Laughter.] They can't complete a sentence, and so forth. But I want to tell you too about my one...it's amazing really that I didn't have some of the struggles y'all had. But the time I thought about quitting, was at the very end of practical [problems in the academy.] And it was because I was harder on myself than other

people were. I totally screwed up a play/pretend problem and went home and cried my eyes out and called my [then] husband [also an officer] up and said, "I can't do this. I wasn't cut out for it. I might just as well leave." [And he told me], "Don't quit. That's what practical problems are supposed to do. You're supposed to learn from your mistakes. You can't work them all right." And I wanted to work them all right - every one of them. I was not going to learn from errors. And I was hard on myself.

But my first real incident of prejudice down here against women was a supervisor [inaudible.] I had a male supervisor who got called to a scene once, [and I recommended to him], "Why don't you use the cell phone in your car and call the apartment and see if you can talk the guy into coming out?" There was supposed to be a guy in there with a 9mm [pistol] and two kids. Almost a hostage situation, but not quite.

[He said], "I'd rather just get the master key and just go in (to the apartment complex)." And I said, "Well, that's fine. When we have to draw down and blast away at this guy and kill his two kids in the process, it's on you." So he went to his car and used the cell phone. He got no answer, of course, so he still had to use the key and go in. But later I heard him telling my female rookie that I was training, as I walked out of the door at the Howard Johnson's, "Well, I guess I just have a problem with a woman telling me what to do." [And I thought], "Gee, let's let that be the determining factor in what is good sense and what isn't. I'll call one of the guys over here next time to tell you to go use your cell phone." I thought, "This is 1994." You know? I couldn't believe that still...that mentality still existed down here.

B- Wait until you're a supervisor and your job is to tell guys what to do, and you will find out how much they do not like it, at all. In case any of you have to leave, let me ask a final question: Tell me about your experiences with other female cops.

#4- Oh, I was going to tell you that earlier. I had some of my worst criticisms from other women down here. I had...and there weren't very many down here when I came. I had a [female] training officer that told me...now she did tell me one thing that was real helpful. I had a tendency to talk very clinically. I'd say, "What year model is your vehicle?" And she'd say, "Why don't you just ask them, 'What year of car is it?'" And that kind of stuff. But she told me that I shouldn't speak to people

in the hallway down here. Like when [Lt. X] or someone would come by, then I'd go [inaudible] and say, "Hey [X], how's it going?" That was [according to her] not appropriate for me to do. And I'm like, "Okay..."

I've had some of the most critical comments of my work and what I do and how I do [it], made by other women down here. And I just can't get over that, because I'm a people person and I like men and I like women and I like the person because of who they are. And there are a lot (well, maybe not a lot), but there are a fair amount of women down here that automatically do not like other females, and I don't understand that. I mean we've all struggled to get to where we've gotten. We should band together like a gang of...

#2- I do think that women are more critical of each other. And I don't know what it really is.

#3- I know. I'm the same way [critical of other women]. I'd like to say that I'm not, but I know that I've watched rookie officers, females, come out and I want them to look good. And I think that's a part of it. I mean I hate to...

#1- We don't want another worthless female because everybody stereotypes and says, "Another female, there she goes [messing up]." Because I know I'm critical too.

#2- But when #1 and I came out [of the academy], we were sat down by somebody that... (of course you hear lots of things), but she had a really bad reputation. She's no longer here any more. But she was supposedly, and of course this is all rumor, she supposedly had lots of men in her closet, I guess you'd say. I don't know if it was true or not, but she sat down and basically [told us], "What you do down here reflects on every woman, and if you're out doing this or that..." And everybody sat back and they were thinking, "Man, the pot calling the kettle black here."

#1- But we never said anything. Of course we're not going to, but also on the same thing, yeah, we'd heard these rumors, but back then you didn't repeat rumors. And we sat there and shut our mouths, but among each other we'd go, "God, if any of that stuff that they said she did is true, who is she to...?" But the other [female who talked to us] was [Officer X], and we'd heard nothing but good things about

her. She would have been the one to be standing there and saying, "Y'all ought to watch it because females earn a reputation", and more of a soothing, coddling [tone] versus "Don't go do that."

#2- Well, a lot of it was the attitude I think. It was almost like "holier than thou." And [the first officer] had never done anything wrong. And we weren't to go out and screw up reputation for her.

#4- The path that she's forged! [Laughter.]

#2- But she doesn't work here any longer, so obviously this wasn't her forte.

B- I think that there's a tremendous amount of success associated with just sticking it out and still being here. And that's one of the reasons why I'm interested in that thing that keeps you...

#5- Can I say something?

B- Sure.

#5- I think that back when most of us came on down here, a lot of corporations were still very loyal to their people, but now things have changed, just like the police department has. And maybe that's why the lawsuits are being filed - because the police department doesn't seem to back us. Used to the police department backed you to the hilt, when we first came on. I think nowadays, a lot of that has changed. And the only reason we stick it out is for our own personal satisfaction.

#3- I think what makes the job so good is it is so challenging. And when you do something right or get that person, or get that case, you just feel so good. And I think that's maybe what keeps us all going.

#1- And I think something on that same type of thing that I wanted to add, a minute ago was, the type of officer that I always wanted to be. And when I came out as a young rookie officer I was green too. I was 23 years old and being an F.T.O. later, I would always...I'd try not to intimidate my [officers I trained.] I'd say, "That first week, you kick back, you watch. If you have any questions, [ask]." Because my F.T.O.'s did that to me, and that started building my self confidence -

that I knew that if I needed help that he was there, not just stranding me out by myself. So I liked that.

But I think one of the things that keeps me down here too is that I'm still striving, because I have not gotten where I want to be. And a prime example was [Officer X, #4 's husband.] I worked on his shift and he made me so mad because [police work] was natural [for him.] I don't know if it was because he was a hoodlum growing up, and he knew the in's and out's and [when] a guy's up to no good. But one night I got stuck ...(and I wish [Officer X] would have been one of my F.T.O.'s because I learned a lot on call with him), but it was the first Halloween I ever worked. And back then we didn't have enough cars and we had to double [up.] So I got to ride with [X].

Oh, it was great. I mean, we couldn't get out of the police station. [He's say], "There's a guy with a gun." [I'd say], "Where?" [Laughter.] [inaudible] We put him in jail. We leave the main [station]. We get to Edward [northeast Austin] sector. I mean, no sooner than we get to Edward sector, [he goes], "I think that guy's got nunchucks underneath his shirt." And people like that, officers like that, it was so natural. And that's what I want to strive for. And I'm having to be self reliant and teach myself, and that's one thing that...some things come natural to me. I can talk. I can talk my way out of a lot of stuff. I mean...

#3- I know what you mean. Some things come natural. I've always had to work at it. But as you go on, it seems that you get better. So [you make] a good point. I'm always striving to do better. If you're lucky, you start seeing improvement.

#4- And the one thing that I have learned is no matter how smart you think you are, you don't know it all. I probably learn something new almost daily. At least with every cadet class that comes out. I'm serious. You can never learn it all. You learn new...because the crooks learn new things, and if they learn new things you've got to learn new things to keep up with them. If you're always learning something new, even if you stay on patrol, you don't go to be the detective, the supervisor or whatever, you're always learning something new down here. So you don't get stifled.

#5- Considering the fact that we're almost dinosaurs.

#4- On the seventh platoon our average age is probably what? 38 1/2?

#5- And the average amount of years [on the job] is probably...

#4- Oh yeah, the amount of years...from nineteen to...Well, [Officer X] has only four years, but that's a rarity.

B- Let me throw out one last quick question: What do you think the department can do to make it more likely that women would stay? Is there anything that would have made it easier for you?

#5- Maternity Leave would be nice. I don't think that somebody just out of the academy ought to get, say, two months worth of maternity leave, but once you've got five to ten years down here, I think you deserve to be able to take some time that isn't accrued against your sick or vacation leave. Unfortunately, women get punished when they have children. I had two very recently. I have no [vacation or sick] time. And, of course, when when you want to transfer somewhere or they start looking at how much sick time and how much vacation [time] I have, I don't have much, because I have kids. And I think that's a big detriment.

#4- We're penalized, really, for having kids. The mentality is... (because I've heard them talk about #5.) I was real lucky. I had family all over up and down that could take care of [my son.] When [my ex-husband] and I split, and I was a single mother with a child working rotating shifts, if I hadn't had all the family I had, I would have had to quit. I would have either had to force the department to give me a Monday - Friday, eight to five, with weekends off, position somewhere (which would have never happened because they don't care if you have families down here. They never have and I doubt they ever will) or I'd have had to quit. There was no way.

And the mentality is, "Well, if you want to be a wife and a mother and have kids, then you don't need to be doing this job." Well, the guys can have wives and kids, you know? And I know #5's husband stays home as much as he can when her kids get sick, and takes care of the kids. But sometimes his job takes him out of town or out of state, and if her kids get sick she's got to stay home. People actually get mad about that. I don't understand that mentality.

#1- But I think what you need to do is you need to direct it two ways. And [one] would be the female that's coming down here that has a family (and a lot of females eventually do want to have families, whether they're married or not). So, you want [the department to provide] something on that side, but you also want [the job to be] career-challenging too. And I think we've got the career-challenging, I mean, because if this is the line of work you want, or if you respect your job when you first come down here, then that side of it's okay.

But like #2 and I have talked before, and I don't know what all it would take [to make it easier on officers with families.] If you had a 24 hour day care, people wouldn't be worried about rotating shifts. And one of the bitches I have sometimes is that because I don't have the family and I don't have the kids.

I see that point [about the department supporting officers who are parents], but when you hired down here you knew what this job entails, and that's rotating shifts. And why should this department make allowances for you because you have a kid and I don't, so you get the cush day job and I get screwed [and have to stay] on rotating shifts? But I would like to be...So you've got to have something that makes it fair and even for the family or the career-oriented female.

#2- That's where I think permanent [hours] comes in.

#4- That's what I was going to say, fixed shifts.

#2- If you have fixed shifts, then seniority plays a factor. And if you've been down here nine, ten years, you've done your time, you want to have a child, and you want to have some decent hours, then you've got the time down here [to get them.] Now, if you come into this job brand new, and you start your family, well, yeah, you knew what it entailed and everything.

But I think, like me, coming in single, 24 years old, what's ...all you want to do is be a cop. And then as things change, you're hoping that you've put in your time...You're almost hoping that maybe it's owed to you. I don't really want to say owed to you, but you've put your time in and you deserve a little bit of something. And, like you said, men don't have to worry about that because they don't get pregnant and have babies and everything. I hate to base all this on children and all that, because if you don't have kids, you can really look towards your career.

Because even if you're married, you can still go on with your career. But once you have that kid, everything changes. I would have never said...I hated day shift. I never wanted to work days. And now, if I was stuck on rotating shifts, I might leave. I would hate to, but it would depend on the situation. And luckily things have worked out for me. So I'm happy. But if I had to go back to rotating shifts, and if [my husband] went back to rotating shifts, and I never saw my child...she's more important than this job.

#4- But out of respect for #1's opinion, you have to understand that there are people that come down here and have no future plans of being married or having children. This [police work] is what they want to do, this is their career. And then as you grow older, your values and goals and desires sometimes change. And why should you have to give up a career that you've been at for eight or ten years, because getting married and having a family becomes important now, but that's not conducive to this job? And the department is still very negative.

I understand your resentment. People who come out of the academy, they're on the street for six months, and suddenly, "Oops, we're pregnant." I mean I can't fault them. Sometimes it's an accident and sometimes it's planned or whatever but I can understand why you say, "They didn't do their time down here. They don't deserve any special dispensation. They knew what they were signing on for and boom, here they are pregnant."

#1- You're right. I do see that side of it. But I mean when you come down and get this job, you know what it entails. I mean, granted, I don't know what my future is going to hold. I still love working nights. And I know if I had a kid, that would change, because your priorities change, and I understand that. But I think where we screwed up, is this department has made allowances for females.

#4- Well, wait now...

#1- And that's the point I'm trying to make. And that's where I get defensive and play the devil's advocate because someone that says, "You know what? I have a family. I have this cush job. My five year term limit's up and I can't go back to rotating shifts." So they slide into another eight to five, Monday through Friday day shift. I'll give you a prime example: [Officer X - a female officer, and Lt. Y, her husband.] They're always having to burn a little vacation to swap because the child

can't [inaudible.] So why isn't [Officer X] being taken care of? So that's why we start looking and saying, "Please try to accommodate me because of my family." Because it's happened for some people [having a family], but it hasn't happened for all. So let's be fair. That's what I mean.

#5- Well, in order to get on the seventh platoon, I had to basically threaten...

#4- She had to threaten a law suit.

#5- I had to threaten a law suit to stay on that [shift] because they weren't moving anybody else that had been injured that was on some platoon, but I was coming out [being forced to move] after not only having an injury but having a child. And they were going to move me back onto rotating shifts, and I said, "B-----". You haven't moved ...and I could point out all these people. And I said, "You do that and there's going to be a law suit."

#1- [Officer X] got s----- over too, because people that slid into those little positions and stuff, and she tried to put her name in [for consideration] and they said, "No, you haven't been back on patrol over a year" or whatever [the rule] was. And that's why [you have to think], "Well, how are [other officers] sliding in, under the system here, but yet she's being penalized."

#4- Another prime example: (and I love [Officer Y] but [Y] was in [a specialized assignment] with cushy hours, comes back out to the line and immediately she's [in another specialized assignment.] I've had people say, "Well, no one else wanted it." B-----". Post [the opening] down here. Someone will take that job in a heart beat. So why do some people get all the cush and some people don't.

#1- Let's be fair to everybody.

#4- I had to fight for seven months to get on the seventh platoon, and [Sgt. X] wouldn't let me go. And I felt like I had done my time. I worked just as hard as anybody else out here. The shift I was coming to wanted me and they wouldn't let me go. I had to wait to wait for the next [cadet] class to graduate.

#2- You're just too good, #4. [Laughter]

B- You're too much in demand.

#4- But it's just, there's some inconsistency and unfairness in the way things are done.

#2- [Looking at the door] Do they want [to use] the room [we're in]?

B- Yeah, they want the room.

#4- Well, they can't have the room.

B- [To the people waiting] Four more minutes.

Lt. [X] (who is waiting for the room)- Are you FemiNazis about done? [Laughter.]

#1- Thank you. That comment was tape recorded. [Laughter.]

#4- Just for the record, who was that?

#1- [Into the tape recorder: "Lt. X".]

B- I really appreciate you guys coming in. Thank you very much.

#2- It was fun.

#4- It was fun.

#2- We were dreading coming in, but it was fun.

End of Focus Group 2

Appendix Three

Focus Group #3

October 10, 1996

Conducted at the Austin Police Department East Sub-Station

B- Well, let's go. I'll just throw it out for whoever wants to start: You've all been here ten plus years. Why do you think that you've stayed? What's been the things that have made a difference in your staying with the department?

#3- "Number One", go ahead. [Laughter.]

#1- I think money is definitely a part of it. I don't have a college degree or even an associate's degree, so for me...I'll just give you some basic background. Coming down here was not a particular goal of mine, to be an officer. For me what happened was, I was in the private sector and I had pretty much reached my top level without being a degreed person and so I (being a single parent with two kids, struggling) was looking for a better job. And, of course by then [my brother was an officer], but he really had no influence on my decision to apply.

I was just applying for a job. And they called me. So I just went through the process and this [job] is what I was lucky enough to get. And so for me I didn't have this life-long dream to become a cop or anything. It just was a matter of economics. And then I liked it. I enjoyed it. I was born and raised [in Austin.] I don't think I'd want to be a cop any place else. This is where I...this is my home and where I wanted to work and...so it's worked out perfectly.

B- So, it's not just police work [that appeals to you.] It's police work at A.P.D.

#1- Right. And, of course I've had my battles with other people in the department - men. Very few women. But it wasn't enough to discourage me or make me want to leave. I worked with, in my job before, I worked with all women, and that was by far worse than working with mostly men. So it was nothing to put up with the men.

#2- I am like #1. I did not come down here as a life-long dream of helping other people. There's no law enforcement in our family whatsoever. There were a number of reasons that brought me here. One was on a dare. A bunch of us girls were out drinking [laughter], and...

#3- Table dancing? [Laughter]

#2- We'll hear your story in a minute. And it was that one of [the girls I was out with] was dating an officer and we both, all three of us in the group knew who he was and stuff. And the more we got to talking about the type of officer he was and the way he conducted himself, we were not impressed with him. And the word was, if he can do it, we can do it. So it became a dare.

At that time I was working on the Commission for Law Enforcement anyway. And so everybody out there was very macho about men being in law enforcement and women had no place in this. And my goal when I applied was to become a motor[cycle] officer at that time. And I had ridden motorcycles for years and actually had my license for my bike before I had my car license.

And so, I already knew what I wanted to do and told them that when I applied. But it was on a dare. I never really thought I'd make it as far as I did. Before long, it became a challenge to make it. I've accomplished what I set out to do, even though we were laughed at in the interview board [to go to the motorcycle unit] like, "No, women are not on [motorcycles.] And there will never be any women on bikes."

I accomplished that goal, which is hard to do in the sense that once you accomplish a goal, then you have to get another goal to strive for. And, you [indicates moderator] and I have had some talks in the past when there's been some really rough, rocky times down here. And it's really hard to refocus yourself when you've done what you wanted to do.

Being one of the first down here, we were able to do a lot of firsts, that some others have never gotten to do. And I've had so many firsts, things I'm satisfied with...being what I'd call a good cop. Not a great cop, not an excellent, outstanding cop. But I'm satisfied [enough] with what I've accomplished that now [I plan to] stay and finish my career.

The other thing that kept me here was the fact that I married an officer. Now he and I knew each other before I ever came in this department. And it was really hard going through cadet class and [the rule was] and still is, that you don't fraternize. Well, like a number of people [my future husband and I] violated that policy and tried to keep it as quiet as we could.

#5- The statute of limitations is way past. [Laughter]

#2- And we dated and we both had been married and divorced before, and we were very, very leery of getting involved again and making a permanent relationship. We dated for eight years and finally got married. And we've been married for eleven years. And that is what has kept me here, is he is here.

He came from a family where his mother and dad worked together in their business. My mother and dad worked together in their business. [So we both felt] it was very natural for a husband and wife to be in the same business, working together, discussing the job during the day and at night at home. It's very natural. There's no conflict there for us. He was a big supporter as far as me going for whatever I wanted to go for.

The only difference is he is not like some of the husbands [of female officers], and I think there are some of us here who have seen it from the other side, where we've had husbands get into fights over their wives or fights standing up for them and interfering. He never did that. And I think some of us in here have had spouses that have let us stand on our own whether we made it or not. And that's the way he was. And I'm sure there were times when I thought, "Gosh, why couldn't he have at least spoken up for me?" But he didn't. And I had to do it all on my own.

There's been a lot of good memories. There's been a lot of bad memories. And I think some of the older [female officers] who have been here [a long time] have some scars that'll never go away. They're wounds that may be healed, but the scars are there. A lot of the younger ones have a much better, maybe, outlook on the department. And they're going to bring it on to the next century.

I'm happy that I've got almost twenty years [with the department.] I'm looking forward to getting my twenty five [years] and getting out. I did other things before I came on here. I was a legal secretary. I've done a lot of other types of jobs. I have

other skills that I know if I want to quit and do something else, I can. Some other people don't have that benefit. I've got my college degree. I started [it] up before I came and finished it up here. I am secure enough in myself to know that I have done some accomplishments that no one else can do, as far as it's been done now, and yet there are others who can come and do a better job, and improve what women have done down here.

B- You know, five of the six of us [here] are married to cops.

#5- "Number 3!" [Laughter. (#3 is not.)]

#1- I would like, before you start, [#3,] to comment on what [#2] said, and that is that I'm married to a cop too. I think for me that has a lot to do with my stability here. We both come here and both work hard. He's looking to retire in a couple of years and so after he retires I still have ten years left to do, before I'm eligible to retire. And so, I guess I'm about to get to the point where maybe you are [#2 (whose husband recently retired)], in that it's going to feel so different when he's not here. And I'm not quite sure how I'm going to handle that.

#2- It's an adjustment and when they talk about retiring down here, they encourage you to go five years before you retire to start picking out your plan and how you're going to do it. And they actually do encourage people that do retire, the husband and wife, one of you to retire six months prior to the other, if not even a year, to get accustomed to being retired. And that's for the one who's retired. Because all of a sudden you're not getting up in the morning. You're not in demand. No one wants you - that feeling that "I'm nobody. What do I do with my life?" And you've got to have something else.

For us it was hard because we both knew [my husband] had other activities and we had a ranch to run, and we're very busy in other organizations. The difficulty came from me, more for me than for him. Like #1 was talking about, I am still here. We do not share a business together like we used to. And I still ask him what's going on, but it's so different now that he has a separate life than I've got and it's hard to adjust. It's taken us a good six months to get adjusted to him laying in bed in the morning, every morning, knowing he does not have to get up. If he doesn't want to do anything that day, he doesn't have to.

#3- Make him get up anyway. [Laughter]

#5- [To #3] That's why you're not married. [Laughter]

#2- So things now are different. And it's hard now to get refocused on [the fact] that I've got six and a half years left here, that I've got to finish so I can retire knowing that he's already completed his time. He's out of here and deserves it.

B- You know, that's never come up [with me and my husband] before.

#4- That's going to come up with us too. And that really worries me. Because he gets to count his [time he worked for the department as an]aide time. He has twenty two years here, I think.

B- He does? Wow.

#4- And I just don't want him to go. I don't want to be here by myself.

#2- Isn't that strange? We're acting like little bitty kids like, "I don't want to be left", but it's like you feel like you've been left because they're not here to share with you day in and day out. Even if I just picked up the phone and said "Hey, [X], how's it going on motors today?" [And he'd say,] "Oh, we're going to go run the route for this escort" or something. I mean it's just that communication. [Pointing to other participants] You've got it. You've got it. You've got it with [Y.] It's like, it's there. We've got a different life than what you're talking about these other [female officers] who are still single, not dating cops. It's totally different.

#4- Did you interview people who were married to people that didn't work here at all?

B- We didn't really talk about that a lot. It's funny because we just didn't talk about it. We did talk about sources of support. It sounds like [to y'all]... (of course a spouse is going to be a big source of support), but it sounds like somebody who is in law enforcement is going to provide some additional support.

#3- Law enforcement or emergency services because [Officer X] is married to [Ms. Y], who's [with] EMS and they hear everything we hear. I think a lot of that

goes on [in terms of] shared experiences.

B- There was one person [in the focus group] who had been married to a cop, and now she's married to a non-cop. And, of course, she preferred the non-cop, because that was her current marriage. But we really didn't talk about that too much. The ones who were married to cops felt very strongly that it was a strong source of support. I did get that. So #3, tell us about yourself.

#3- Well, "number three" has wanted to be a police officer since she was about ten years old. As a matter of fact, when Starskey and Hutch came on T.V., I was into it. And basically, I went through my whole educational career just trying to attain that goal. I went to Sam Houston State University and got a degree in law enforcement and police science. Actually, turned down a scholarship in physics, even though I had already completed half of that particular field, so that I could graduate with my class at the same time as everyone else. And I graduated in three years, as opposed to four, came out of there and I think I started with Park Police and went over to APD whenever they had the classes starting, which was the first time I could get in.

One of the reasons I stay, even though I have probably had more than my fair share of discriminatory acts, and basically assaults and things like that, not only upon my character, but also upon my person, is because I'm not going to let anyone run me off from what I want to do. This is my job. This is my dream. This is my life. It's not a matter of economics for me. I could work anywhere. I have worked all over the place.

My jobs prior to becoming a police officer were in the restaurant field, managerial services, things like that. I have always been in a position where I provide services to the public, whether in retail or in food service, something like that. I've been a photographer's model, things like that. Real boring to me, real mundane. I take it, I attain the highest level I can and there's nothing else. I stay here because this is what interests me. I haven't had a boring day yet. Every day I get up and I want to go to work. I don't care if I've just had seven autopsies that day. I get up that morning and I want to come. This is what I want to do.

The other thing is that we have in my personal experiences, a lot of jealousy. I never thought being a police officer was a guy or a girl thing. And basically my

whole life has been that way. I was always real active in sports and things like that. So when I'm growing up, because none of the girls could keep up with me, I'd play with the boys. And that's track and basketball and everything, and even into college. When I was running track in college, I trained with the guys. It never...I'm used to doing that. That's who I'm used to competing with.

I never thought anything about being a girl, and as a police officer or as a Sergeant or as a Lieutenant or anything else, it just never crossed my mind. Just like, why would I have any problems being in the medical field, being a woman? Or an astronaut, or anything else? So, imagine my surprise when I come in, I get a lot of hostility from the guys. Number one, because I don't look a typical police officer - female officer, or a typical anything else, except maybe a table dancer. I've had that asked of me a lot.

#2- We were only kidding.[Laughter]

#3- I know I told "number one" over here about my high school reunion. And the thing is we had a little book, a little pamphlet that said what everybody was doing. I put in there that I'm a police officer with the Austin Police Department and at the time I think I was patrolling David or Charlie [sectors (southwest and east Austin respectively)], and doing the undercover work for Vice. So I put it all in there, no big deal.

And I get there (and these are people I graduated from high school with) and we're talking and they go, "So, what are you doing now?" And I said, "I'm a police officer." And they said, "No, really, what are you doing now?" So I said, "Well, you know the [two topless dance clubs in Austin]? I work for them. As a matter of fact, I was Miss May on their calendar." They believed that. They would rather believe that than believe I was a police officer. And they actually had to go get the book and show them. And my friends were like, "Show them your badge [#3] because they don't believe you."

And the funny part of that was that I had just been on T.V. and in the newspaper three days prior to that, [in an article about] a big collision on I.H. 35, where a car came off of the interstate and flipped over in front of the police station. And they had my name, everything. And they still would rather believe that I was a t---- dancer than be a police officer. So, we have a lot of that.

And also, guys are real aggressive. The number one person...and when you have a female, and especially somebody like me... because it looks to them like I'm not even trying. As a matter of fact I had a lot of that, not just to guys but to girls too. It looks like it just comes so easily, so naturally, and in reality I have actually physically trained to run this race, to do this particular tactic, or for this particular test. It's not like I went home and sat on my butt, and watched T.V. all day. I actually worked for this. But they're very upset [about that], so I get a lot of hostility.

I've never had anyone criticize my work. It's always the way I talk, the way I dress, the way I wear my hair. My hair was usually like [the moderator's] or like [#4]'s, and [I'd hear comments like], "Don't you think your butt's too big to be wearing those pants?" Things like that. Or, "Why won't you date me? What's wrong with me?" Well, I'm not here to date anyone. I'm not here to find a mate. I'm here because this is what I want to do. So that's been my biggest thing, that guys don't understand that when you say, "No, I don't think so." And then it just progresses from there.

#1- I bet though, since we all have ten plus years [with the department]...I bet the female officers who have five years are experiencing something much different now than what we did. And I had...I don't come close to anywhere [near] those kinds of experiences [that you had], #3. I had a few, but...I don't know why. That was just my experience. I had a couple, and handled it and it wasn't a problem any more. I bet that now it's very different.

#3- I'm sure some of mine was because of the undercover work I was doing [posing as a prostitute.] Guys have a real problem with reality and fantasy and it kind of...I would hate to tell you how many guys have come up to me and said they dream about me. And I'm like, "Huh?"

But one of the other reasons I stay is I know I can make a difference, and I know I do. And everyday...and whether you guys know it or not, [you do too.] Because they may not come up and tell you, but they tell other people. And I keep my ear to the ground, and I hear what people say. And when I go into a [work] detail and things start changing and suddenly people want to come [and work in that] detail. Or they come to that detail for advice [and say things like], "Where is [#4] working? She was a good supervisor and I'd like to work for her." Or "[#5] is

doing a good job out on the street. Is she working north, because I'm going to live north and I [want to work for her.]" Or, "[#1], I heard that she was promoted, and where is she working?" Really good things, nice things, not like, " Oh God, steer clear of [her.]"

People are actually wanting to put in for these positions [working for female supervisors.] And it's guys and girls alike, because, like [#1] said, the experiences are changing and I think we're becoming a little more androgynous, and I think it's a good thing. They're seeing that having a female supervisor, a female sergeant or detective, isn't such a bad thing. It really opens up new doors. It allows different people to try different approaches. And you get a lot more information, and also a lot more work done.

B- I gave a speech at D.P.S. when I was in Juvenile over the Family Code - just covered the Family Code. And on the feedback sheet one of them said, "You need to wear more makeup." I thought, "That is such helpful feedback. Thank you so much."

#3- Would they tell a guy he needs another sock in his pants? [Laughter.] But it's true. #1 and I went out to federal prison and we gave a talk out there. Then we went to [a high school in Austin] and gave a little talk for, I think, career day for them. At the federal prison it was a women's group. And they just couldn't believe [that we were cops.] They'd ask, "Don't you ever get hurt? Do you ever been shot at? Have you ever been stabbed? And what happened?" And they were just amazed.

And what amazes me is that we see this every day, and we don't even have to be police officers. Everyday something happens and you take care of it, but because it's not under the code "police officer", you don't really think that it's dangerous or it's exciting or anything like that, but it happens. And I think maybe it's just... sometimes it's just the word ["police officer"] and it's the way people perceive things.

I guess now because things are becoming a lot more violent and what kids are experiencing in high school and college and even in the work force are so totally different from what we [experienced], they're a little more receptive to police officers. And you don't see a whole lot of people going, "Oh my God, you're a

cop!" or "Aren't you scared?" Yeah, when I don't have any tampons I get real scared.

#4- Well, I didn't come here...I mean I didn't grow up wanting to be a police officer. I was very far removed from it. But I started working [at A.P.D.] in 1980 as a clerk in Central Records. When you [the moderator] were on support [shift] and you'd get off at two in the morning. I used to see you. I needed a night job and it was a good night job.

I sat with [X (a civilian employee who later became a police officer and quit the department a few years ago)] and we sat, front and back, and we'd compete to see who could type the most reports before we had computers. And X was going to apply. And I said, "Uh, you're a girl." [Laughter] And she said, "Well, we've had women here for four years. And I really thought y'all had just started - that we were just getting women. It was amazing to me [that women had been here that long.] Not only that, it was amazing to me that you got paid to go the [training] academy. And you got paid pretty well. I don't remember what it was but it was \$7.00 an hour or something like that. So that was great.

I thought I was a pretty good secretary. I could type really fast and I was organized. I had worked at the Parole Board for five years, and the parole officers, a lot of them had prior police experience. And the seed was kind of planted. And I applied, and I got in. Oh, before I applied, my best friend...well I grew up all over Texas, but I went to high school in Big Spring, Texas. And I was sitting there talking one night, and my best friend from high school in Big Spring, Texas is standing there. And she was a cop. And she's long gone now, but her name as [Y] and she was [later] married to [Z, (a former Austin officer).]

So, I rode [on patrol] with [Y] and I saw I could do this. I knew I could do it. So I applied and I got in, and I went to the shift that had never had a woman. There were a lot of shifts like that then. This shift was like, "No, we are not going to have a woman." And I went to that one.

#2- I think several of us did. We were not welcomed with open arms.

#4- No...Well, this one did. They were ready...it may have helped that I had worked [in the department] a year and a half. They had seen me and I wasn't just a

stranger coming to the shift. A [female] cadet had come in and rode with them and they'd never seen her before, and she didn't do very well. I mean, they just dogged her on their rating system. But [my experience] wasn't bad. I mean at times it was. So, I'm [Officer X] trained.

#5- You're admitting this? [Laughter.]

#4- Yeah. We had [Sgt. Y] and that's the only person he would let me ride with, because [X] was married and so he had nothing to worry about. Anyway, I loved [the job.] It was everything that I wanted it to be. And I think if I made a mistake, it was in promoting, and I didn't get tired [of the street.] I moved up too fast. And I happened to take the test the year they [promoted] thirty something people, so I scored pretty well. I didn't have too many [seniority] points to add to it. I think I came out number seventeen and they promoted thirty something people. So I got promoted probably a little before I should have.

I really don't have those bad experiences to share from the past, you know, like I've heard some horror stories about things that happened to you guys, and some of the other women that were here around that time. Those things didn't happen [to me.] I think they were there, not the physical things, being put in your locker and things like that. I don't remember anything like that happening, but I think there was always a sense of me being treated different. But I just blew it off.

B- Were you married to an officer at the time?

#4- No. Well, another one. [Laughter.] A different one. Do we have to explain that?

B- No. [Laughter]

#4- I know there were things happening and things being said that I probably just blew off and didn't tune into them, because they hurt too much. And I wouldn't concentrate on those.

#1- You know, it's funny, when I first came out [of the academy], commissioned, I was assigned to Edward 1, which was your [#4's] district. And you promoted not too long after I came out. But I was thinking, "Oh, there's [#4]." And we never

really met or talked even though we shared the district, but our shifts were not that overlapping. I would kind of see you whiz by.

#4- I hope not too fast. [Laughter.]

#1- It was really..in my cadet class we had thirteen females. And it was a lot, and so we had...[Officer X (a female officer)] and I went to the same sector. So I didn't feel that isolated. But it was nice to see the other women on patrol. I just felt a comfort there for some reason.

#4- Yeah. I think when [Officer Y (a female officer)] came out, I think there was maybe a year and a half break, or maybe a year, before the next class came out. We only had three [women in our cadet class.] [Officer Z] and I are left. The other one moved on and went to Colorado. But maybe your's [#1's] was the next class.

#1- I was after [Officer Y.]

#4- Okay, well when [Officer Y]'s class came out there were a few women. So we were starting to build up. And she came out to Edward [northeast Austin]...well she didn't originally, but eventually she came to Edward, and that was really nice. It was nice having another woman around. She didn't come to my shift, but we overlapped. And then...

I think I feel it more now. Because I watch you at meetings (I'm talking about the moderator). [Laughter.] And [#2], I watch you. When we have the [patrol staff] meetings, you just seem so relaxed with being a woman. And I feel so uncomfortable...I don't want to be noticed as a woman. I mean I don't want the natural woman things to...I don't want to do something, and they'll say, "Oh, she's just a woman." I mean, you do things that are feminine and I go, "Well, she doesn't even worry about it." And I don't mean feminine, but you don't seem to [have to] do it the manly way. You seem to go about it...does that make sense?

#3- I think what we're looking at is that we all in this room are people-persons and we are used to working in, not necessarily a military field. So when we say Sergeant, Lieutenant and Captain, we're thinking "supervisor." When guys say Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain, they're thinking military. And that's why a lot of their actions...and [Lt. X.] is a good [example], because he is very, very military.

"Yes, sir. No, sir." We don't see it in the same little box that they do, unless you've had military experience.

I think that's the big difference, because [the women] are going, "Well, we're just supervisors. I'm relaying information; I'm sharing information; I'm receiving information." Whereas the guys might think that they're [in a deep voice], "the Captain of the ship, and whatever I say goes, and how dare you go against me."

#4- I think I'm feeling that because I took over for [Lt. X.] and I'm trying to fill his shoes, and they're really big.

#2- And that's one of those situations where you have to look at "He was there. He's gone." And not worry about filling his shoes.

#3- He's dead. [Laughter. (He's not dead. He transferred to another Unit.)]

#4- He's still here. His ghost is still here.

#2- It's so important because some of us when we came down here, there were no women to pattern our behavior on. It got easier as it went along. And as far as being nice and sweet and...sure I was rowdy and verbal, but I was still sweet and nice. I am not sweet and nice any more. I'll never be able to go back to [being that way.] And I do remember [inaudible.] And there is an armor, there is a shield [around me.] There is a coldness, a hardness, that some people can penetrate. Others can't.

#5- I think there's just a point where you realize that if you don't stand up for yourself, nobody's going to do it.

#2- And you don't really care what they think about you because you've gone through so much.

#3- With me, I've had a lot of sexual assaults. And I say a lot because [#1 and #2] and I have talked about this and it seems to be a lot, but you have to look at the number of people I've worked with - a lot. As a matter of fact, it's only been within the last two years that I don't know the name and face of every person down here. But, that's just because we've had like two or three [cadet] classes come out and I

wasn't there [to assist] with the practical [training]. And I wasn't in a position to be working with them.

But on the sexual assaults, it was was mainly because they found me attractive, they wanted to date me, I said, "No." and they were like, "By God, you're not telling me no." And they just never heard it. If I talked to them, if I was nice to them, then I must like them, and I must want to go to bed with them. Each time I was assaulted, I got out of it by assaulting them right back, and putting them on the floor - in several cases knocking them out. This is a true story. This has happened more than once and it began in Park Police where [this officer] grabbed my hand and forced it on his "manly bulge." And I took off running because nobody had ever done that before. [Laughter.]

Nobody had ever done that before, so I run and I tell [Officer X], who was the only female that was working with me at the time. I have no idea... I don't know what to do. And she goes and tells the supervisor, and now I'm thinking, "Oh my gosh, I'm not even a month or two into this job, and now I'm already in trouble," because now the Sergeant wants to talk to me and the Lieutenant wants to talk to me.

And then, when the second assault came up, I was already with A.P.D. and I did, I told the ranking female that I could find and I said, "Please help me. I don't know what to do." This was right at the time that Internal Affairs moved out of our building, out of the main building. So it's not like you could go in there and talk. Well, there wasn't anyone in there for me to talk to anyway. I didn't know anyone. So I went to the highest ranking female I could find, and she was a Lieutenant at the time, and I told her.

And she flat out told me that if I reported this as a crime, (and indeed it was a crime - this was going to be an aggravated sexual assault. No doubt about it.) [She said] that I had a good case, but I would go through a lot of trauma and be black balled. And [she said]she wasn't trying to scare me, she was just telling me that's the way it was and be prepared because I would probably end up either quitting or getting fired, because they would start drumming things up on me.

As a result of that particular incident, I received verbal harassment until I moved out of that sector. I begged to be moved. I had to go to my Lieutenant...I told my Sergeant about it within days. My Sergeant laughed. He thought that was

real funny. Real funny. I said, "I don't see what's so amusing" because this time I'm in tears. Not because...it's because I'm so angry, because noone will do anything. I'm being vocal. I'm telling them what happened. I've got proof people were down in the parking lot waiting for [the assault] to happen.

They had bets on it. My own shift had bets on whether this guy was going to lay me or not. And I [assaulted him in defense] and he's rolling around like, "Oh, help me." I hurt him pretty bad. The Sergeant is laughing at me, because he cannot believe this fellow ever in a million years thought he had a chance with me. So I said, "That's it. I will go to the Lieutenant." And, as a result, I was moved off the shift. This fellow had nothing ever done to him.

The second incidence was when I moved down, and I was on a completely different sector, and the fellow was having a going away party. I had worked [overtime] later, and I got to the party real late. I wasn't drinking. As a matter I was still in my uniform, because I just wanted to say 'Hi' and 'Congratulations' and all that other stuff. And he had been drinking and he basically told me that the only reason I was let on the shift was so I could be the 'party girl' and be their little slut. And I said, "No, I don't think so." And he attacked me.

I knocked him to the ground. He crawled up my leg, grabbed my breasts again and this time I knocked him out. I told his friends if he followed me I was going to put him in jail. So, after that, that was pretty bad. And I did tell my supervisor again on this. And this time my supervisor documented it, but this fellow had already left [the department.] And nothing was done.

The other big incident occurred with my supervisor, who wanted me to change my memo [report], to falsify my memo, so that he would look good on it. And when I refused to do it, he told me he was going to "bend me over and shove it up my a--." He wanted me to take it in the a--. So obviously, I was quite upset. As a matter of fact, when he told me this he had locked me in the room and I could not get out. He had the key to the room and I could not get out. And I picked up the table and I threw it at him, and I told him if he didn't let me out something really bad was going to happen.

He got one of my district-mates to try and settle me down, and I was demanding to go and see the Lieutenant right then and there. And he told me I

couldn't and then he told me I had to go home. I said, "You can't order me [to go] home. I'm still on duty." He goes, "Well, I'm going to fire you." He threatened to fire me, which I told him he couldn't do. He's not the Chief. He can't do that. [I told him that] he couldn't tell me to go home. I'm still on duty until I [go] off duty. And he forbade me to go see the Lieutenant. So I drove out to the Lieutenant and I told the Lieutenant everything that happened. And I was removed from the shift. And nothing ever happened to him. Nothing. That's the three very, very bitter memories. They're horrible memories.

B- They're absolutely awful. I'm wondering...

#3- But the thing is, each time I fought back. I was not going to let them do this. They might have gotten away with it, professionally speaking. But you don't think every day that I look at them and I remember? Because every single one of those people, I'm at their grade [rank] or above them. I hope their legs tremble in fear that they're ever assigned to me because what goes around comes around. You know I would probably never [try to get back at them.] But it's enough for them to think that I would. And maybe because of what I did, they stopped doing it to other people. Because each one of these three guys is notorious, and I mean notorious for abusing women one way or another.

B- What kept you...what got you through it?

#3- I just wasn't going to let them do it to me. And if they did it to me, just who else have they been preying on? They're no better than the criminals. But they were counting on the code of silence, not only for women, but because you're a police officer. "How could you do that to a fellow officer [report him]? Don't you understand that they'll get fired? They've got families and stuff like that."

So I'm like, "Oh, okay, so once again, I put what has happened to me on the back burner and I have to think about someone else. When it's a guy in my seat, then the guy is supposed to be forceful and you're supposed to action and blah, blah blah. But because I'm a girl I'm expected to be a victim, or I'm expected to take the back seat? Oh, I don't think so. And even though you won't take my complaint seriously..."

And in each case...part of this my fault - my ignorance of Internal Affairs [the

internal unit that investigates misconduct on the part of officers.] And that's something that's not ingrained in any of us. Our Internal Affairs experiences [were] what, two hours when they came out and talked to us in the academy. I had no idea that I didn't have to tell my Lieutenant. I had no idea I could go straight to Internal Affairs. Nobody ever told me. Nobody ever said, "Come on. Let's go." because they don't know either. It's like this big secret. And [the word was], "You'll get into a lot of trouble [if you go to Internal Affairs.] And it was the last one, where I was actually called in by the F.B.I. and I told them. But that fellow is still here. And I gave them quite a story, I might add.

#2- With most of us, nothing's happened to the guys. With my [incident of harrassment] nothing happened [to him.] Finally, because of peer pressure he quit the department. I didn't know it until later. It was because of me - because of all the pressure that came down on him once everybody found out the true story.

B- #3, did you have a support system at home? Did you have family or...

#3- No, even though the squeeze [boyfriend] is in the business. The last [incident] that happened, I actually called him from the room because I was locked in and I could not get out. [This guy had] locked me in the room and I could not get out, okay? False imprisonment. I mean, I was even counting what [charges] I am going to file on him because I am enraged, just enraged.

But the Lieutenant didn't seem to think that there was anything wrong with that. And I'm screaming and crying [on the phone to my boyfriend] and I'm saying, "Come here. Let me tell you where I am. Come and rescue me. I cannot get out of this building." And he was like, "Just calm down." And I'm like, "Just calm down? H---, kiss my a---, you're in there with them too."

And I'm pissed because it was, "Maybe it's something that you did." or "Apparently it's the way you dress." Hey, I'm wearing the same uniform he is. I've got more clothes on than he does because I wear a bra. The way I dress? Or "Maybe it's because you're too friendly. If you weren't so friendly..." What do I do, go up to them and say, "Dive on in. The water is fine?" I don't think so.

It's just the ways guys think about it is not [like] us [women.] If I ever want to tell a girl something about men, it's that don't think because you share the same

experiences, that they think about those experiences the same way you do. You have to think like them to figure out what they're thinking about. And then you're going to be a dirty old man, just like them. They're extremely visual. They create fantasies in their head and it's usually people that they know, females, that are in those fantasies. And sometimes it's a real hazy line [for them.] And what they dreamed about last night is what they want to create in reality today.

B- So, you didn't really have people to talk to about it?

#3- No.

#2- Whether you did or not, you didn't feel like you did. Because I know I didn't.

#3- Right. Some of the females [I worked with], like during the first instance, I had two females on my shift, well actually three. And they all supported the male and they thought I shouldn't be a p---- teaser and I should go ahead and do it. This included some of the men on my shift who told me, "Why don't you just do it in the back of the truck?" and "It's nothing to you. It's just a p---- of a--. Why don't you go ahead and give it to him?" (Basically.) And I was told that I would not receive back-ups until I l---- him.

And the last [incident], as a matter of fact, I actually talked to [Sgt. X.] He took me onto his shift, apparently he heard the ruckus in the room, and he went straight to [Lt. Y.] and said, "I want her." even before I even talked to [that Lieutenant.] And [Sgt. X.] told me he was real sorry [that had happened to me.] And as a matter of fact, that supervisor [who threatened me] didn't last on the street very long. He went into a specialized detail instead.

But there really weren't any females at that time to speak with. I knew [#2] was working in Traffic at the time and she was working days and we working nights. And [#5] was still in Baker sector [west central Austin.] and #4, I think she was in Sex Crimes. Yeah, as a matter of fact, she was in Sex Crimes, and I didn't really know her that well. So there wasn't really any strong females that I had access to.

And basically I handled it, when people asked me what happened...[Officer X], came up to me, and she happened to be like the girlfriend of the fellow that did

the last thing to me, and she finally came up to me one day, and said, "I don't want to name any names, but..."

#4- I think I know who it is now. [Laughter]

#3- And she said, "I think I believe you, [#3] because he's telling the story all different each time he tells it. And I looked at her and said, "Well, thank you for believing me because I can't believe anyone would even think I would make up this story in a million years." Girls, in my experience, female officers don't that. They don't talk about their sexual conquests, except for [Officer Y] who's not here any more. And [Officer Z]. But other than that, they really don't talk about their sexual experiences - not like it's a trophy, not like the guys [do.]

And other than just those sexual assaults, and one other by [Officer X] who is no longer with [the department] (when he exposed himself to me and touched me, and I ran off screaming down the hall)...I think I scared him because I think I shut the door on it, I'm not sure. Anyway, the other deals have been, they look at me deep into my eyes, and they start licking their lips and start rubbing their "manly bulge."

And of course I start laughing, because by this time, just like [#2] has a shield, she has a hard core, my [defense] has become my verbiage. I can put them down before they touch me. I make them afraid of me because nothing is sacred to me. After what has happened to me, nothing is sacred. You want to play? You can't play on my level and I'll show you.

B- So you take the offensive?

#3- Oh, every time.

B- Well, [#4], can you top that?

#4- No. I'm sorry. I can't. [Laughter] It's just so sad.

B- Yeah, those are really horrible experiences. I'm interested, even if it's not gender-related, in any difficulties you [#4] might have had, for example relating to motherhood. [#4 has four children.]

#4- Well, that was... I already had two children when I came here. When [my husband] and I got married, we had two [more] boys. So I was pregnant twice in Sex Crimes. That wasn't so bad because I was a detective and wasn't on the street where they had to do something special with you [if you were pregnant.] But the detectives, a couple of them were real red necks and they'd give me a hard time, about how I was being treated different or something like that. I hope I wasn't. Maybe I was.

#3- But, see, I think that is very, very amusing because if those same redneck detectives had been injured and they were on light duty, they would have been treated very special because that's what we do with injured people or people with debilitating diseases or something that is going to take a lot of...like an oozing ulcer or something like that, that you want to be [assigned] inside. Nobody ever says anything about that. But when you have a tradition that everybody knows it's going to be over in nine months, one way or another, [they say] you're being treated special. It doesn't make any sense. There's no uniformity in their beliefs.

#4- Well, I don't remember a lot of things being said to me, but you hear things people say about you and those hurt so much. One of the guys, I won't mention his name, but he told one of our neighbors, the neighbor said something complimentary about me, and this guy said, "Oh, she's so stupid. She doesn't know what she's doing. Everybody thinks she's so great. But you know she's stupid because she married a Mexican." And I mean, that stuff just haunts me. Every time I see this guy I just want to punch his lights out. But you have to take that with a grain of salt.

#3- I'll punch him out for you. [Laughter.]

B- [#3] is our designated hitter.

#4- I'm hoping someday he'll have to work for me. Just give me that opportunity. There are people working for me now, because now when you get seventy people, that I've had some bad dealings with in the past and they've got to suck it up and at least show respect. But then you think, "What are they saying?" Oh well, let them say whatever they want. I think I've grown out of that. And [the moderator] helped me with that. [She used to say], "You can't be thin skinned." You've got to put that turtle shell around you. I'm not there yet, but I do. I work real hard at it.

#1- There's a tiny bit of...something that drives me in a way, but I know that I'll never have enough time [with the department] to [achieve a higher rank than] this person [who gave me a hard time.]

#4- Well, things happen. How far up are they?

#1- I don't want to say. [Laughter.]

#4- That could really narrow it down.

B- You know it's funny, but we're so d--- forgiving huh?

#4- Uh huh.

#3- We're raised that way.

B- And as soon as the guy comes to work for you, it's like, "Well, I know he treated me like a dog, but I'm above that. (I wish I weren't but I am.)"

#3- When this happens to guys [they achieve power over someone who has mistreated them], the first thing they do is get rid of [the other guy.]

#2- They don't forget or forgive. I know I have been mistreated and transferred and everything and it's all because who I am.

#3- And not because of the work that she does because her work is above board.

B- One thing I have done [in response to past abuse], and I have not felt guilty a bit is not take people [into my unit who have done that to me.]

#4- Uh huh. That's right. Because you may have a [position] they want.

B- Yeah. And I'll just say, "Hmm. I don't think so." And part of it is pettiness, it really is, but part of it is saying, "Wait a minute. This guy is a jerk. Why the h--- should I have him come and work for me?" And I admit, there's a little guilty pleasure in saying that. [Laughter.]

#2- But I've had a few people tell me, "But I really want that [person in the unit.]" And I tell them, "You ain't getting him." [Laughter] And he'll say, "I'm the sergeant. I should be able to pick my people." And I tell him, "I don't care."

#4- Not only that, but you can undermine them going other places too. [Lots of laughter]

B- Hey, you just tell them the stories. The stories are true.

#4- That's right.

#3- I have a little secret that I use and it works very, very well with guys, because they think they can say anything and they don't have to pay the price for saying it. They will suffer no repercussions. They're just "talking." What I do is, I call them in and talk to them. I'll ask them, "Okay, do you want to tell me why you think that way?" "Well, because of this and this..." And I'll say, "Well, okay, what if she was your wife? That would have been okay [to say] if she was your wife? What if that was you? How would you have felt?"

And this is really funny, and I actually did this: to put them in that person's shoes, the same person that they were dogging...An incident happened where a female walked by in workout clothes and the guys [started whistling] and saying, "Look at that b---- hanging out of those shorts." The female turns around and say, "Were you talking to me? Are you the fashion police? What is your problem? You're going to apologize to me. You don't talk that way to me."

Okay, nobody can understand why she does this. The male officers are like, "God, you're really...Why would [women react that way?]" I said, "Okay, you wouldn't feel threatened?" [They'd say], "No, I wouldn't feel threatened. I'd take it as a compliment. I say, "Mm hmm. Okay, lets say you're in shorts. You just got through working out. You walk by another guy and he [whistles] and says, "Look at that b---- hanging out of them shorts." They say, "I'm going to turn around and slug him." I say, "So, you do feel threatened. It's a lot different when you're walking in their shoes, isn't it?"

If you make them aware that they're not so far removed from the issue. It's really nice to play armchair quarterback, but when it hits home, it's a whole different

story. The roles suddenly change. And believe it or not, [those conversations] have made a difference, especially with a lot of the guys I work with, because I work out in the field with the "macho" men or whatever you want to call it.

#1- And you know what I think is going to be interesting in the years to come is that, just think about how many women are in the ranks now, and getting up there, like this last [series of promotions], there were how many, seven, nine female sergeants promoted this year? And we have female Lieutenants, and the next two, three, four, five years it's going to be really interesting, I think.

#3- I think there'll be a greater amount of accountability for what you say and how you say it.

#4- Well, when [Chief] Watson came, that was such a shock to me. And [the guys] still don't know what to do about it.

#1- They don't know how to act. But you know, what's interesting is when I was in the sergeant's, [#3] and I were in the same Sergeant's school.

#3- [#5] was there too.

#1- The guys are just silent around [the Chief.]

#5- With the exception of one.

#1- They really don't know how or what to say, because I think they're afraid of her. They really are.

#4- A woman with a huge amount of power is pretty scary.

#3- Yeah, and how is that different from anything else they [have] had in their lives? We have a matriarchal society. The mother is the one, or at least when I was growing up, the father goes off and makes the money, but the mother is the one that makes the rules. She provides for you, she feeds you. The laundry is done because of Mom, and Mom does all this other stuff. So you're depending on Mom for a lot of guidance and a lot of support, and just everyday nurturing and functioning. How is it any different now?

#2- Because Dad usually came home and laid the law down. In other words, in my family, of course we were raised in a very traditional Greek society. The man ruled the roost. The wife may be in charge at home, but when the father comes home he is totally in charge. And I don't care...you knew it didn't matter what mother said, he was in charge. He overruled everything. Mother agreed with what he did and it was okay.

So for [the male officers], I think for some of them right now, we're used to our Dad being the ruler, and here we've got a woman ruling, and there's no man to come in and say, "Yeah, you can still do what you want." Because you've always had male chiefs of police. Nobody has veto power over her and they're seeing it, and they're not getting away with some of this stuff.

#4- It's her female approach to things too - that throws them. It's completely different.

#3- They don't know how to classify her.

#4- We don't either.

B- Yeah, and people want to compartmentalize. The literature talks about how male officers see their female co-workers, and they want to put them in categories. If it's negative it's a slut or a lesbian. If it's positive it's kid sister or...

#4- Or mom.

B- Or mom, that's right. Because peer doesn't fit [for them.] Well, [#5], we want to hear your story.

#5- Why does #3 want me to talk about the lesbian aspect of the job?

#3- You need to talk about how many times you've been asked [if you're a lesbian.]

#5- Well, I've been accused of being a d---- before and things like that. But it wasn't by people down here, because I've been married practically since I've been down here. But [I've been called that] by people I arrest and stuff. I just take it

with a grain of salt. But obviously, every female officer is a d---.

B- Do you want to talk about any experiences or situations?

#5- I think probably there's only...I haven't had anything approaching #3's experience. I did have some "shadows" when I was in cadet class, that drove by my house a couple of times. But that kind of went by the wayside. One was...well, I won't name any names. He's not here any more. I think probably the only time I got really discouraged down here was when I got beat up in the park, and it was really a self-doubt kind of thing. Because I had felt like I could take care of myself, and I did a really good job of doing it, and then one time I'm unable to do that. And I really had a lot of doubt in myself, as to whether I could back out here and function.

Aside from having a spouse at home who tried to be supportive, I had a lot of people on my shift call or come by and bring flowers. And I'm talking about males. And I always got this stuff, "Well, you should have shot him." That's a typical male thing. They what if things to death. I felt like I did the right thing, I just got my a--kicked. That's basically what happened.

#3- Well, he was an extremely violent 10-96 [mentally ill] guy.

#5- I feel like I'm a stronger person because it happened. And probably also because we had to box in cadet class. I remember that. I got my butt kicked. But I tell you what, I took a lot of punches from that maniac in the park. I feel like [the boxing] is an advantage, even though a lot of people complain about it.

#1- I remember, [#5], there was a Polaroid picture of you as you're walking out of the main building. There used to be a little bulletin board stuck up there. I remember coming to work that morning, and going, "Oh my God, what happened?" And then, I sort of think...I mean I've never been hit really hard on the street. I mean, I've been shoved and knocked down and stuff, but I've never really been hit hard. And I've often wondered, you know...I've been in defensive tactics, and I think I've been hit pretty hard before, but I really don't know.

#5- I didn't realize I could...the Lieutenant went back and timed it and I fought the guy for seven minutes.

#3- By yourself.

#5- Eventually, he was beating me...I was laying down flat on my back and he was beating me in the face. I feel good that I survived, and when he got up, I got up and went after him. I was not going to let that son of a gun get away. I didn't care. I think it hurt a little bit because of the self-doubt. My co-workers made me feel better about it, most of them. And I don't think there was any...I'm sure there probably was a lot of, "Well, if she'd have been a man... da da da." I'm sure that probably ran through a lot of people's minds. It didn't run through my mind.

#2- And I don't think it ran through your shift's mind really because I was in a similar situation where I showed up to change batteries, buy batteries at a Safeway store - 1109 [East Seventh Street] and I wasn't even on duty. And all you had in those days was your handi-talkie, and you didn't go in-service unless you were ready to take a call.

So no one knew I was out [there], right after show-up [I] went to buy the batteries. They wanted me to arrest this shoplifter. I wasn't even in service. I was like, "Just let me get my batteries." And they were like, "What's the matter? You won't take him?" He was 6' 4" and weighed 235 pounds. His name was [X] - a huge big guy.

#5- I had a dealing later with him in Hospital Police.

#2- Well, I had to arrest him for a 59 cent bag of candy. He freaked out that night and the fight was on. And he beat me and he beat me and I was fighting him in the Safeway, and everybody just stood back and watched me get whipped. I wouldn't give up. I couldn't even get on the radio to call for help. Nobody knew what was going on with me.

It continued on and on and on. And I finally took the nightstick and it was not phasing him at all. I was hitting him on the shins, on the bones, as hard as I could hit double-fisted. And he looked down at me and said, "Little lady, you better stop that s---." And then you knew it was over with. I took the night stick and I threw it as far as I could, because I knew he'd take it away and if he beat me with it, he'd kill me.

I threw it as far as I could and I did what you [#5]did. I latched onto him and I wouldn't let go. I kept getting beat. I kept trying. I got him down, and I got one handcuff on him and we were fighting. And my mind is like, "How am I going to do this?" And I was trying to wedge him into the check out counter where he couldn't move as much and I had something to shove him up against. And a security guard jumped in to help me. He's now one of our cops down here. And it's so nice to know...one day I went and talked to a cadet class and he talked about what I went through. He was impressed. I wasn't impressed - I was humiliated because I was getting my a-- kicked.

(Some conversation lost while changing tape.)

#4- When we fight people, there's usually two of us, at least. And then to judge that [and not consider] that you're going one on one with the guy [is not fair.] I mean we have guys that are 5'6" or 5'8".

#3- Basically, I've learned to fight dirty. There is nothing that says I can't hit him anywhere I want to.

#4- I've learned to use my mouth. [Laughter.]

#3- Yes. This is the best defense that we have, and one of the big thing is [to tell them], "What are you going to do? Are you going to beat me up? You're a foot taller than me and you outweigh me by 100 pounds. Aren't you the big man?" And like #5 and #2, I've been in a lot of fights. I've been shot at. I've had to actually provide emergency assistance to the person that shot at me and was ultimately killed as a result of that. And I was the only one who did that.

I've been in lots of fights, I've had my face split open. I've had my cheekbone broken, I've had fingers broken, bruises from here to there. I've had bones I know that I broke that I never went to the doctor for - what for? But it's like everybody said, you survive. He's not getting away. He's not going to do this. I'm not a victim. I'm the person in charge. He's the person that's trying to get out of this.

#5- I feel like you're harder and more critical on yourself than anybody is on you. And I didn't have anybody to talk to except for my spouse. And in critical incidents, (I don't know whether they consider [what happened to me when I was

beat up] a critical incident any more. I consider it a critical incident.) It's very traumatic. I mean I had dreams about it.

#2- I wouldn't go back to [the store where it happened.] I never bought another battery. [Laughter.] And I was so embarrassed to go back, because I didn't know who [had been] there and witnessed it.

#1- You know too, we rarely suffer tragedies in our department, thank God, but this is really the only one, [#5]'s ordeal, (and I wasn't around for your's, [#2]. I hadn't heard the story before.) But it was really kind of a shock to see what can and what had happened, what may happen, even if you're a woman.

B- Do you remember the [Travis County Sheriff's Office] deputy who was raped [on-duty]?

#4- I do. I was going home that morning.

B- That made an incredible impression on me. I mean, you always know that can happen to you, but it actually did.

#2- That's your ultimate fear.

B- That's right.

#3- Or the [female] officer whose gun was taken [away from her by a suspect several years ago].

#2- And he pointed the gun at her and she begged him not to kill her because she had a child at home. And she managed to talk him out of killing her. And that changed [that officer.]

#4- Within a year or two she had quit.

B- Thank all of you so much for being willing to talk to me.

End of Focus Group 3

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