

Transcript of Saint Paul Police Department Oral History interview with

Commander

Neil Nelson

Saint Paul Police Officer

1977 - 2010



1977



2010

Interviewed on

May 28, 2013

by

Kate Cavett of HAND in HAND Productions

HAND in HAND's Office in Saint Paul, Minnesota

© Hand in Hand Productions

2013

This project has been made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. Administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.

All pictures are from the Saint Paul Police Department collections and the personal files of the Nelson family.

ORAL HISTORY

Oral History is the spoken word in print.

Oral histories are personal memories shared from the perspective of the narrator. By means of recorded interviews, oral history documents collect spoken memories and personal commentaries of historical significance. These interviews are transcribed verbatim and minimally edited for accessibility. Greatest appreciation is gained when one can listen to an oral history aloud.

Oral histories don't follow the standard language usage of the written word. Transcribed interviews are not edited to meet traditional writing standards; they are edited only for clarity and understanding. The hope of oral history is to capture the flavor of the narrator's speech and convey the narrator's feelings through the timbre and tempo of speech patterns.

An oral history is more than a family tree with names of ancestors and their birth and death dates. Oral history is recorded personal memory, and that is its value. What it offers complements other forms of historical text, and does not always require historical corroboration. Oral history recognizes that memories often become polished as they sift through time, taking on new meanings and potentially reshaping the events they relate.

Memories shared in oral histories create a picture of the narrator's life – the culture, food, eccentricities, opinions, thoughts, idiosyncrasies, joys, sorrows, passions - the rich substance that gives color and texture to this individual life.

Kate Cavett

Oral Historian HAND in HAND Productions
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Neil Paul Nelson

was appointed police officer July 11, 1977;

promoted to sergeant June 15, 1986;

promoted to commander June 12, 2004;

and retired September 30, 2010.

NN: Neil Nelson

KC: Kate Cavett

NN: I am Neil Nelson, born and raised in the City of Saint Paul and a Saint Paul Police Officer for thirty-three years.

KC: Where did you grow up in Saint Paul?

NN: I started in McDonough Housing.¹ My mother and father lived there until I was five. But when I was five years old, we moved to the Midway area near Selby and Snelling, and I ended up going to Gordon² for the remainder of my kindergarten.

KK: Where did you graduate from?

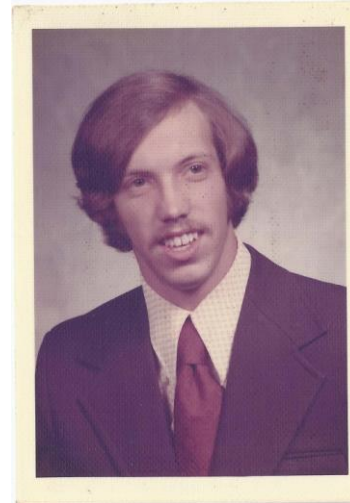
¹ **McDonough Housing Project** was built in 1950 – 1952 between Wheelock Parkway, Arlington Avenue, Jackson Street, and L'Orient Street. This public low-income family housing project is run by the Public Housing Agency of the City of Saint Paul.

² **Gordon School** was located between Dayton, Marshall, and Fry from 1911 to 1974, with additions added to the school in 1917 and 1923. The school closed in 1974, and the building was used as an adult education center until the building was sold in 1987 and is now an office complex.

NN: Saint Paul Central.³

KC: And what happened after high school?

NN: Actually, in high school I was shot in a hunting accident, and I had to wear a brace to pick my foot up that oftentimes cerebral palsy people wear to pick their limbs up and so on. I had to wear that for over three years to pick up my right foot. During that time, I was a salesman for a vending company in Minneapolis. So getting out of high school I had a decent job. I had the job in high school and after I got shot my senior year, I actually decided to kind of leave school early. I went on work study and worked fulltime. I took a couple of evening classes to finish my academic requirements, and I ended up working fulltime through my senior year, and then afterwards I worked fulltime for this vending company in Minneapolis.



1974

KC: What were you hunting?

NN: I was with a French exchange student, and I don't even remember how it happened that we were hunting, but we were out hunting small game – rabbits and squirrels – and we had one gun, he was carrying it, and he shot me.

KC: It just discharged accidentally?

³ **Central High School** began in 1866 and consisted of two rooms in the Franklin Building, downtown Saint Paul. By 1872 it was known as Saint Paul High School, and moved to Seventh and Jackson. In 1883, a 27-room building was completed and the school was named The Saint Paul Central High, and was located on Minnesota Street in downtown Saint Paul. Because of space needs, a new school was built at 275 Lexington Avenue in 1912. In 1977, the building was reduced to its structural form, expanded, and rebuilt to the current building.

NN: Who knows? I mean I'd like to think so [both laugh]. I didn't even know this kid. And it actually kind of translates to the police department—that's why I guess I'm telling the story about having the leg like that, because when I signed up for the test, maybe I had just gotten rid of the brace. So to this day, I have severe drop foot and when I passed high enough on the test to qualify for a physical to join the police department, the doctor noticed that I had drop foot and my right leg is atrophied because of the lack of the nerve and so on. So I remember sitting there in my underwear at the physical, and he says, "Well, let me see how bad your drop foot is." So he says, "Walk across the room," and I walk across the room and he goes, "Wow. That's severe drop foot." I said, "But Doc, I play tennis, I can run, and I had gotten rid of my brace, I can pick up my toes just enough—just about a half inch, maybe an inch—to keep it from catching on sidewalk cracks and things like that. He said, "Well, I won't take your job away from you, but they may wash you in the physical portion of your training." So I went into this fully expecting maybe not to be a cop. I actually came on the police department with enough disability to retire. I had enough percentage of disability that I could have left the police department the day I was hired.

KC: Well, and the culture then—this is 1977, they're in the middle of their second lawsuit. They had a lawsuit where they had to put ten Black officers on in '75. They had to put women on. White males – and you're a White male – was not something they were needing, so they must have seen a lot of potential there.

NN: Well not only White males, but White males without veteran's preference. My class in '77—I think there were only two or three of us—I think Bob Fletcher,⁴

⁴ **Robert Fletcher** was appointed police officer July 11, 1977; promoted to sergeant February 8, 1981; lieutenant February 23, 1987—rank title changed to commander January 4, 2003; leave of absence to be Ramsey County Sheriff 1995-2010; returned to commander January 2011.

maybe Jim Groh,⁵ and myself, I think there were only two or three White males that did not have vet's preference, that weren't Vietnam vets. We actually had several what we called ten point vets in that they got five extra points for being a vet in the test, but ten point vets were disabled vets. So if they came out of the service with a disability, although I think if you lost a fingertip or if you ended up with I think disability under the military standards is a little bit different than what—but it qualified you for a higher point. So there were only a few of us in that academy that did not have a veteran's preference, at least White males that did not have veteran's preference.

KC: Anything you remember about your academy that stood out for you?

NN: Well, I guess going into the academy I knew—they had told me up front that I was on the bubble to make it into the academy, because there were more people that qualified for those spots than my place would have been. So I went into this as an alternate and they called it a demonstration school. For a week every night before the academy started, we all got together and kind of went through demonstration and what the academy would be like. I had long hair and a beard.

KC: [Laughs] You looked like a hippie.

NN: I looked like a hippie. And I still remember my classmates saying years later, "We thought, 'Who the heck is this guy? He wants to be a cop?'" But I knew that I didn't have enough points or that somebody would have to drop out to make a spot for me. I remember going into my interview on the last day of demo school

⁵ James Stanley Groh (October 11, 1947) was appointed police officer July 11, 1977; and retired November 5, 1999.



1977 Academy Class

and the—I think it was Sergeant Jim Charmoli⁶ was there and Dr. Hobart⁷ and some other people, and they're like, "What the heck is up with you and this hair and this beard?"

Now keep in mind, I was twenty-one, so I probably even with a few more years under my belt, I probably would have made a better impression, but I'm a kid. So I remember telling them, "Well, I know I'm on the bubble. You tell me right now I've got the job, I'll go right to the barber the minute we get out of here." I ended up getting the job, and I remember going to my folks' lake place and cutting off my beard and long hair. Outside of that, I'm not sure the academy stood out for me so much. I had no law enforcement in my background. I never even had a desire to be a cop. None whatsoever.

KC: Why did you take the test?

NN: I had a roommate, and he and I shared this apartment over on Dayton Avenue. He worked at Como Zoo. He was an artist. We had gone to high school together, and he started looking around for a different job. He came home one day and said the highway department is offering a test to become a patrol officer and he goes, "Oh, and Saint Paul Police are offering a test as well." I'm just sitting there. At this point I'm twenty years old and I'm thinking, "Oh, that might be cool to try that." So I just went and signed up for a Civil Service test. That's all I did. It was so big that they had the test at the Civic Center. This is before the days of

⁶ **James Michael Charmoli** was appointed patrolman January 16, 1967; promoted to sergeant September 6, 1975; and retired August 31, 1999.

⁷ **Dr. Robert Hobart** was a paid contractor /consultant psychologist who worked with the training unit for several academies in the 1970s.

P.O.S.T and licensing,⁸ and you had to go to college. All you had to have was a high school education. So it was so big, I think they had 1500 people take the test in the morning and 1500 people take the test in the afternoon, and I was in the second half of the alphabet so I was in the afternoon. I thought, “Well, there’s no way I’m going to be a cop.” And they keep moving me along in the process until the day they said, “You’re hired if you want the job.”

I really kind of stumbled into this with no idea what this was going to be like, what kind of career it would be. Actually I might have taken a slight cut in pay. I think they hired us for \$1100 a month in 1977—something in there, and I think I was making just a little bit more than that at the time.

KC: What was the military attitude and kind of the rough attitude and always approaching you like they might kick you out the next day? They are teaching you to follow orders in a paramilitary model.

NN: No question the paramilitary part was there and again, at twenty-one, I was just a kid. I had no idea what I was getting into. I was not necessarily rebellious, so I kind of went with the flow. I knew I was a kid in that group. I mean, there were fifty-two or fifty-three of us. Because I was only a high school education. I think our average age in that academy was twenty-nine. We had, I think, a forty-year-old in there, we had an eighteen-year-old in the academy, and there were a

⁸ The Minnesota legislature created the **Minnesota Peace Officer Training Board (MPOTB)** in 1967 to regulate the practice of law enforcement. In 1977, several legislative amendments were added to create the Minnesota Board of **Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T. Board)** and the first law enforcement occupational licensing system in the USA. This system established law enforcement licensing and training requirements and set standards for law enforcement agencies and officers. Minnesota officers are required to have a two year degree and 48 continuing education credits every three years.

couple us that were right around twenty-one. I think John Harrington⁹ and I and maybe Mamie Lanford¹⁰ were the kids—other than the eighteen-year-old, John Estevez.¹¹ So all these Vietnam vets.

In fact, I think oftentimes about that academy after they created the P.O.S.T. Program and the licensing program, and I understand why they needed to set up standards and should try to make this from a job into professions that are measured by the ongoing education and things like that there. But in that class of fifty, or fifty-some, I think we had seventeen Bachelor's degrees. I think we had four or five Master's degrees. We had people that had this huge life experience, and I would have to think the citizens of Saint Paul benefits from these folks that came to law enforcement later in life and with all this background compared to what happens now is these two-year law enforcement degrees. I think we get suburban kids that go to college for law enforcement and they had no life experience and that's who our departments end up hiring. Again, I think the standards were necessary. I think it was good to say we're professionals; we're a profession other than just a civil service job.

So I guess this comes all the way back to your question, how I reacted to the paramilitary aspect to it. I guess I kind of kept my mouth shut and looked

⁹ **John Mark Harrington** was appointed police officer July 11, 1977; promoted to sergeant September 7, 1983; acting lieutenant January 4, 1997; lieutenant November 1, 1997; title changed to commander January 1, 2000; senior commander July 1, 2000 ; assistant chief May 8, 2004; chief July 1, 2004; and retired June 14, 2010. Elected to the Minnesota State Senate from Saint Paul 2010-2012. Appointed Chief of the Metro Transit Police September 4, 2012.

¹⁰ **Mamie Lanford Singleton** was appointed police officer July 11, 1977; promoted to sergeant July 3, 1999; and retired August 2, 2006.

¹¹ **John S. Estevez** was appointed provisional police trainee officer July 11, 1977; police officer July 8, 1979; discharged December 11, 1984.

around me and saw all these true adults that have been through the world and saw how they accepted what this academy was and the chewing out in line if your tie wasn't straight and if you had to produce a notebook every day with a dime taped to the back in case your radio didn't work so you could use a phone booth. I mean these were the accepted practices. We used to wear a whistle that had to be shined. I guess I knew my role, and my role was a kid among all these adults, and I guess I held my tongue.

KC: And who in particular stood out—who you thought, “Hmm, that person's going to be a successful officer or that person we're going to see in higher rank?”

NN: Well, I think without question, I think John Harrington. He's somebody my age, but coming from such a unique background. He grew up in Chicago and then went to Dartmouth. I mean, here's this Black guy, going to an Ivy League school. I'm like, “What the heck?”

I think some of the people impressed me and that didn't necessarily make rank, but impressed me throughout their career were Bruce Mead.¹² I think he had a Master's degree from William and Mary. Lynn Sorenson¹³ was a mother of four when she came on, and I think she was in her early thirties, and she always impressed me.

KC: The second part of that question then is did you recognize that you had the potential of a long, successful career and retiring as a commander when you looked at these other people?

¹² **Bruce Longley Mead** was appointed police officer July 1, 1977; promoted to sergeant December 16, 1984; and retired July 23, 2002.

¹³ **Lynne Shirley Sorensen** was appointed police officer police officer July 11, 1977; retired July 3, 1997.

NN: No way. Absolutely no way did I see that. I grew up on the police department and I learned the hard way. I learned very quickly what it meant to be a cop, and I didn't start out as a good cop. I did not start out knowing what my role was in this community.

KC: What were some of those life changing lessons for you?

NN: My partner and I, Greg Majors,¹⁴ who was one of the African-American officers that were hired under the court order in my class in 1977, him and I were working a squad car in the downtown area of Saint Paul and we were sent to the Dorothy Day Center,¹⁵ because I think there was a time at Dorothy Day where for their evening meals they handed out a ticket in the morning so they knew how many meals they could fix. If you didn't have a ticket, you didn't get a meal. We get called there because one of the people in there waiting for a meal didn't have a ticket and refused to leave. So I'm probably twenty-two, maybe twenty-three years old and we walk in and obviously we're now the show. There are all these people sitting to be fed and we're directed to this Hispanic gentleman, sitting. There was a cowboy hat on and his head down. He's at the table. And we, "Hey, come on, you've got to leave." He doesn't move. "It's time to leave." Now you have to understand Greg Majors was older and he had had previous law enforcement experience. He worked for Minneapolis Housing Police, so I'm the young person in this partnership and I'm not necessarily treating this—I'm "Let's go, get out of here. Come on!" And now the show is on us and they're all watching, so I decide that he's kind of showing us up by not moving, so I grab

¹⁴ **Gregory Andrew Majors** was appointed police officer July 11, 1977; and retired December 31, 2002.

¹⁵ The **Dorothy Day Center** at 183 Old 6th Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102 provides hot meals served by volunteers, mental health services, and medical care to people experiencing homelessness.

him up and kind of not gently usher him towards the door and we get to our suburban and I open up the back door and I'm again kind of—"Who the hell do you think you are? I told your ass out of here." Probably making a show for all the people watching, and as I'm putting him in the car I notice that he's wearing cowboy boots and they're polished—they're very polished. All right? And this guy is probably in his early thirties, that would be my guess. So I kind of push him in the car and not handcuffed or anything, but "What the hell are you thinking? I told you to get your butt out of here."

And we get in the car and we start driving him somewhere. I mean, we're not taking him to jail, but we're going to drop him off or whatever, and I notice that he's crying. So now, okay. Now the audience is gone and I said, "All right, so what's the scoop?" And he's not saying a word to us. So finally I said, "When's the last time you've eaten?" He says, "Four days." So now I'm feeling a little bit—but I'm telling you, at that age my badge talked before I did. My badge was as big as can be. It was huge. So now I'm feeling a little bit guilty and my partner and I, we looked at each other and each of us I think pull out \$10 and we hand it to him and we drop him off at McDonalds. And there's still a scolding going on. If a cop tells you to do something, you better do it. So I'm still—my badge is huge, right?

I always think like when you have a bad week before you go to church and then you put an extra offering in the collection plate, it bought you out of that week's sins, right? I mean if you're really bad, you put a little bit of—so I bought my sin by paying this guy off, all right? That's the way I felt. Here we were at Dorothy Day, I treated him poorly, and I bought my way out of whatever happened, now he's got a meal, and I didn't think twice about it.

About eight months later, I'm walking through the police department and the Chief Secretary, Carol Yoswa,¹⁶ calls me over and says "Neil, I've got something for you." She says, "A Mexican guy with a cowboy hat came in and said he's leaving town and that he owes cops \$20. He looked through all of the pictures and he pointed at your picture and he gave me this money." As I'm telling this story, I still get a shiver up my back. I truly spent the rest of my career trying to earn that guy's respect. I kid you not. Here is this man that had so much dignity and was willing to let me treat him that poorly and paid it back. I think that changed the way I looked at law enforcement forever on. I mean, my job instantly changed. That man didn't have to respect me. He didn't have to respect me and I had to respect him. So I think that shaped my career.

Then probably at about the four year mark, I moved from a squad car to walking the Beat Downtown. And Downtown was a different Downtown back then. It was full of joints where pimps and hookers hung out, and it wasn't the clean Downtown that it is right now. It was maybe 1982 through '86, because I got promoted in '86. So I spent those four years walking the Beat. And the Beat changed me as well, because you realize your role in law enforcement is to create positiveness in your community. And also, in a squad car, you get to drive away from things when you're done and maybe you don't revisit it for months or years or maybe never call back to that address. But on the Beat, you see the same people every day. You see the same bad people every day, you see the same good people every day. And what I realized is you can't show your face on the

¹⁶ **Carole J. Harren Yoswa** (4-12-1945) was hired as a clerk typist November 22, 1971 in the mayor's office; transferred to the Bureau of Police June 4, 1973; promoted to clerk steno 1974; secretary-stenographer 1986; coordinator of administration support; title change to executive assistant I July 2006; and retired March 30, 2007.

Beat unless you're having a positive impact. If a business owner asks me to deal with the panhandling or the hookers that are out in front their place or a parking problem, it's not like I can drive away from that and not come back for months. I've got to walk past there every day. So quickly I realized that if you're not going to have a positive influence on your community that you're serving, what are you doing there? I mean, anybody can answer a call. Anybody can write a report.

KC: I heard you recognized it's about relationship.

NN: It's about relationships, even with the bad people. I guess I learned as well that in the early days in the Beat, I happened to work with Fred

Leske¹⁷—not necessarily worked with him, but watched him work. Fred Leske and Wally Freiburger.¹⁸ And these were two old, grizzled guys. In fact, I think



¹⁷ Fred M. Leske was appointed patrolman March 4, 1957 and retired December 15, 1983.

Fred Leske was a professional wrestler in the Fifties. Huge guy, huge hands. But they treated everybody—they talked to them by their first name, they expected the bad guys—there was no Officer Leske and Officer Freiburger. The bad guys called them by Fred and Wally. You realize that when you're on a first name basis, you treat people so much more respectfully. I saw them get compliance without the badge. In other words, because they treated people like human beings, with respect, even if they were derelicts in the gutter, even if they were drug dealers. Not that they didn't hold them accountable, but it was that respectful treatment that was modeled for me and it truly—I mean, I'm sure I saw it when I worked in squad cars, but it wasn't the same then seeing these Beat cops work their Beat and manage and treat people so well. I'm not sure Wally and Fred would have said, "It's to have a positive impact on my community." I'm not sure that what they would have said, but I realized what that meant. It translated into a positive impact on your small geographic area that you're responsible for.

Later on, when I started training in the academy, I tried to tell young cops that this is not about answering calls. This is having some positive impact on your community. It doesn't mean you can't hold people accountable, it doesn't mean you can't arrest them, but you have to realize that just driving around in the squad car, picking up that call, that's a job. The profession is solving problems. Anybody can work a job, but if you're going to make it a profession, you have to figure out a way to use your influence to create a better environment in your small geographic area.

¹⁸ **Wally "Clown" Freiburger** was appointed patrolman October 13, 1947 and retired September 8, 1978. He died July 3, 1997.

KC: You're building relationships.

NN: Constantly.

KC: When you got promoted sergeant, [on the same day as Mike Drews¹⁹] how did you take these skills and apply them in your assignments as a sergeant?

NN: Well, I actually did not have all that many assignments as a sergeant. I started out as a Street Boss on—back then, I think it was B4. It was a Highland Park. We worked in a small schoolhouse, right on Hamline Avenue and I was only a Street Boss for nine months or so before I went into the Narcotics Unit. We also had like a Swing Boss. I don't even remember the title for it, but there were sergeants assigned to each of the three shifts, but my job was to cover whenever somebody was on a day off. So I really didn't have a crew of officers that I was responsible for their service ratings or necessarily anything else.



Sergeant Promotion celebration
Neil Nelson and Mike Drews
June 15, 1986

One thing that does stand out for me, that when I was made sergeant and was the short time—nine months, a year—that I was a Street Boss, is I was in charge of the Field Training Officers and the new recruits when they came to our area. John Harrington was in the Training Unit at the time and first brought out

¹⁹ **Michael Joseph Drews** appointed police officer February 23, 1980; promoted sergeant June 15, 1986; and retired July 30, 1999.

the new measurement process for—and I think it came out of San Jose Police Department, for measuring recruits, holding them to a standard.²⁰ Going back to my academy, I think our Field Training period was seventeen weeks or eleven weeks or something like that. We almost had a different Field Training Officer every single shift. Maybe I worked with one two or three nights, but the idea back then was if you’ve made it through the Academy, you’re a cop. The Field Training Officers wanted no part—they were not going to fire anybody. You’re a cop now. You get in, do your work, you’re part of this. This is all just kind of just a—I have to go through the motions to fill out this thing every day, but you’re a cop already.

I’ve thought of this oftentimes, being twenty-one with virtually no experience in law enforcement of anything else, I wonder if under the new

²⁰ **San Jose Field Training Officer Model:** Prior to the early 1970s, the San Jose Police Department utilized little formalized training before assigning a new police officer to solo patrol duty. In the summer of 1971, after a year of review and planning, a Recruit Training Management Program, developed by Lt. Robert Allen, was adopted. The program was loosely based on a military training model. Lt. Allen, who was then promoted to Captain, coordinated the formation of the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTO) with Chief Robert Murphy and Dr. Michael D. Roberts, the City’s Director of Psychological Services. The Program required that a new officer be paired with a veteran officer, who would provide training and mentorship in a structured fourteen-week program. The FTO Program was innovative and truly provided the framework for a new officer to build and develop his skills in a structured environment under the watch of an FTO. In June 1972, the first twelve Field Training Officers attended an FTO seminar conducted by the Oakland Police Department. By fall, the FTO Program was ready to be tested with its first thirteen recruit officers. The veteran officers had the responsibility of not only training the new officers, but ensuring objectivity to identify unacceptable recruit officers. In 1973, Officer Doug Zwemke, who held a Master’s Degree in psychology, worked with Dr. Roberts to identify specific behavior traits. Zwemke read over 3,500 Daily Observation Reports (DOR) of recruit officers and identified and categorized thirty-one traits that were deemed necessary for a police officer’s success. This led to the revision of the DOR rating criteria and the development of the standardized guidelines, the standard officers would use in their evaluation. In that same year, the San Jose FTO Program received national recognition from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for its contribution to police science and technology. A year later, the California Legislature, in an effort to set standards for police training, adopted the San Jose Model as a state standard. The FTO Program has been emulated across the country by many law enforcement agencies.

standards, when they finally started actually rating cops on what they can do, if I would have made it through Field Training. I don't know, because we really didn't have—I mean, we rode along and we were treated almost as equals.

Now I can remember some of the stories from the women in my class that they necessarily weren't always treated as equals. Now I never saw that, but certainly when you have that first real class of women come on the police department, I think up to then, only Debbie Montgomery²¹ had come up, and I think she was hired in 1975, so there was only one woman other than Carolen Bailey,²² and she hadn't started as a Patrol Officer. So my class was the first class of women. So I think about that, that there was no Field Training as far as I'm concerned, for my class.

All of the sudden, nine years later I am running this training and we are bringing in all these standards and you have to convince the field training officers that this is important and I think the San Jose model, they were—San Jose was so proud of the fact that they eliminated twenty-five percent of their candidates through Field Training. Well, that's a whole different idea for Saint Paul to start saying, "We're going to bring you in this department, but we're

²¹ **Deborah "Debbie" Louise Montgomery** was the first female to complete the same academy as male recruits. She was appointed police officer September 8, 1975; the first Black woman promoted to sergeant November 8, 1987; lieutenant May 29, 1998; title change to commander January 1, 2000; senior commander February 8, 2003; retired July 31, 2003. She became assistant commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety 1991-1998 and was the first Black woman to serve on the Saint Paul City Council 2004-2007.

²² **Carolyn Fay Bailey** was appointed policewoman July 17, 1961; resigned December 3, 1963; returned to the department September 16, 1964; promoted to sergeant December 25, 1971; lieutenant May 25, 1985; and retired January 31, 1991. President, International Association of Women Police 1980-1982; Minnesota Association Women Officer of the Year: 1980, Minnesota Assistant Commissioner of Public Safety: 1992-1997; IAWP's Dr. Lois Higgins-Grote Heritage Award: 2003.

going to hold you to such a high standard, we're going to get rid of you in this program." So I felt fortunate to be part of that in the early days of bringing on a different standard.

Nurturing Field Training Officers, because that's a hard job. There's not a whole lot of perks in it. You could go about your day and not have to worry about anybody else's performance, but now you have to document it, you have to be a mentor. I guess one of the things I realized is nurturing those Field Training Officers translated forever into quality police officers for years to come. I saw my role as kind of a recruiter for some of the better officers, and some of the better officers had no interest in doing it. You had to convince them that this is for the good of everybody. Plus, you can't treat these recruits as if they're cops yet. They're still in the training and this is our chance to weed out somebody that might be a problem for years to come. Or set the stage for what you—I am talking about you the Field Training Officer—might envision what a good officer is. This is where you mentor and set those skills now. So for my short time in there, I had one class that came through—I think three or four officers through and Jane Mead,²³ who I think was Jane Huber at the time, worked with Tom Dunaski,²⁴ was one of my recruits when I did that. So I'm very proud of the fact that she ended up doing so well with her career.

²³ **Jane Huber Mead** was appointed police officer June 30, 1986; promoted to sergeant June 26, 1994. International Homicide Investigators Association 2007 Cold Case of the Year Award; 2007 Minnesota Women Police Association Officer of the Year.

²⁴ **Thomas Francis Dunaski** was appointed patrolman October 26, 1971; promoted to sergeant October 10, 1979; retired September 30, 2008. Named officer of the year 1977; received the Chief Richard Rowan Award in 2006.

KC: I'm hearing some recurring themes. I'm hearing the salesman in you needing to sell the FTOs. I'm hearing a recurring theme about the importance of relationship in police work.

NN: No question. I think my sales background has served me well through this career. While I didn't necessarily know it in the beginning, I think in hindsight it served me very well. I think relationships are absolutely huge. I think about in Narcotics where you have to work with informants. I think about Homicides—especially in this day and age. Homicides are no longer—and I'm not going to say no longer primarily family members. There are tragic domestic murders obviously, but I think so many [homicides are now] gangs and drugs. The community oftentimes know who the killers are. The only one who doesn't know are the police. The only way you're going to solve those who-done-its that plague our inner cities, I mean just hold them hostage with these drive-by shootings and so on, is the relationships where community members are willing to come forward and give you information.

So I was fortunate, no question. I stumbled into law enforcement. I stumbled into a department that's my hometown, that has a reputation for quality. I stumbled into a community that for the most part loves its police department. I think without question Chief Finney, those twelve years—I certainly know there are people that feel he was good chief, bad chief, whatever, but from the community standpoint, oh, my goodness, this department—the love this department receives from our community is directly linked to him as a chief. I'm convinced.

So when you talk about relationships, that positive influence that law enforcement brings to a community can't be because *our badge speaks first*, that

you see this big sign of power that you're coming into your community and solving all woes with a show of force. If it's not done with relationships, if it's not done with a mutual understanding of what the goals are, a partnership. You have to have a partnership for a common goal. I think when I look around the country, and I train around the country, oftentimes that idea that your department is kind of an invasion force in these high crime inner cities, I think you will always have poor relationships with those communities if all you do is come in and having a show of force and not having the partnership, not having the relationship.



1999

KC: Tell me some stories about when you applied the partnership, when you applied relationships in your police work.

NN: Well, I think certainly Narcotics was the first point where relationships made a big deal. Jim Frank²⁵ was the supervisor in Narcotics and we did a search warrant on a guy that lived up off of Concordia. He only had a few pieces of crack in house, but when we went through his house, he had \$150,000 in cash or something like that. The way Narcotics works and ugly, not ugly, people like it, people don't like it, is you're always moving up the chain. You're always cutting a deal with this person to get a bigger drug dealer. The bad part of that—and this is a side note to your question. Sometimes you let go a killer that's a couple rock dealer, for a kilo dealer that cuts their grass and goes to church on Sunday.

²⁵ **James Joseph Frank** was appointed March 23, 1970; promoted to sergeant September 6, 1975; lieutenant November 17, 1985; commander January 8, 2005; and retired April 15, 2005.

You're not always getting rid of the worst person, but in Narcotics, obviously the goal is simple. You just move up the chain. You're getting bigger dealers. We take this guy off and he's got a fairly extensive criminal history. So even though he only has a little bit of crack in his possession, we threaten him that he could go away for an enormous amount of time, unless he does several large deals. The first large deal he does, he gets a call from a guy that he usually dealt a significant amount of drugs to. We set up a situation. And again, these are the kinds of things about narcotics that are kind of ugly. He knows he's going to be basically on Front Street when this whole thing happens. He's dealt with this guy for such a long time that when the guy gets arrested after he hands him the drugs or whatever, the guy's going to know he's been set up. It is no question it is an ugly part of narcotics, because these people now have to look out for retaliation and so on.

I remember he's going to deliver drugs to this guy in the Target parking lot, right here in the Midway, near Hamline Avenue and we have it surrounded with unmarked cars and a marked car and a K-9 and so on. I still remember that we give our informant, the guy that's working off the deal, we actually give him drugs, because there's no crime unless the guy we arrest has drugs. We can't give fake drugs. So he hands the guy drugs and he receives back from him \$17,000 - \$18,000. It's a significant amount, a big deal at the time. And we go to arrest the kid that he handed the drugs to and a chase ensues. We're running through Merriam Park²⁶ and all over and I'm thinking, "Oh, my gosh, we handed this guy thousands of dollars in drugs." And the K-9 chases him and

²⁶ **Merriam Park** is an attractive older neighborhood on the west side of Saint Paul. It is bounded by the Mississippi river to the west, University Avenue to the north, Lexington Parkway to the east, and Summit Avenue to the south.

the guy throws the drugs and we recover the drugs and we ultimately arrest him.

This is now forty minutes after this drug deal, and the guy that set this up for us, we drive back, he's still sitting in the Target parking lot waiting for me and he hands me \$17,000 [both laugh]. I'm thinking about the relationship you need to have for somebody to trust and follow through, even though they're a criminal. He ultimately sets up a deal with a guy from Rock Island, Illinois for three or four kilos. I'm sitting in his house in the middle of the night and we're telling stories and laughing or whatever and he gets the phone call that the drugs are here, so we follow him over to the spot in Minneapolis, we take this guy out from Rock Island. That guy ultimately gives us a gentleman in Las Vegas. We went to Las Vegas and seized his house. But I look at partnerships, whether it be an informant in Narcotics, an informant in Homicide. Those relationships are huge on the trust that goes into putting your neck out. And again, when you're talking about these inner city crimes, that willingness to put their neck out and testify in a case is absolutely huge.

KC: How do you build that rapport, where they choose to do the right thing for you, sincerely seeing the person, a form of relationship?

NN: It can't be phony. I think about Tom Dunaski. There's nothing phony about that guy and the relationships he forges with some of the most dastardly people and

their willingness to testify in the Jim Sackett²⁷ murder and the Davisha Gillum murder. And I think it's because the way he treats these individuals is truthful. I think it's just a mutual respect. You don't want to have to respect the lives they've led, but you still have to respect them as people and show them some respect.

I think for me to say there's a formula—I teach interrogation around the country. I teach a very simple investigation technique and it's called RIP. R stands for rapport. If you're not somebody somebody wants to talk to, if you can't have a civil conversation about the weather or sporting events or just in general, you're not going to get anything. You're not going to get people to cooperate. The I in RIP stands for investment. You have to invest in the future of that relationship. If you sound judgmental, you're never going to have a future. People don't want to hang around the judgmental people, so you're always investing something in the future of that relationship. The P is probably the key to it. The P is partnership. You create a common goal. I don't know necessarily what the common goal is, but there are times where I had gangsters that were willing to come in and testify in situations they wouldn't necessarily be willing to do that, because we've created—the common goal is your brother deserves justice, your mother deserves an end to this where she wants to see you step up.

²⁷ Police officer **James Sackett, Sr.** was shot by a sniper at 12:30 a.m. on the night of May 22, 1970, while responding to a fake police call to a home in the 800 block of Hague Avenue, near Selby Avenue and Victoria Street. An 18-year-old woman, Connie Trimble, was charged with making a fake call for help, telling authorities that her pregnant sister was ready to give birth. Trimble refused to reveal the names of others involved and served time in jail for contempt of court. In the spring of 2006, Ronald Reed and Larry Clark were convicted of first degree murder when Trimble testified that Ronald Reed persuaded her to make the fake phone call that brought Officer Sackett to the ambush. Both Clark and Reed received life sentences.

This may be nothing more than this group dissed your group and don't let them. You understand the only other way to deal with this is shooting back and forth. This way, you can hold them accountable because you're stepping up and testifying, so now the common goal, the partnership, is for both us to decide on what that common goal is. When you're sitting with a criminal in an interrogation, I think many interrogators go into it with they are not a partner with that individual. This is going to be confrontational and they lose the opportunity to invest and they lose the opportunity to come up with a common reason this person should change their story.

I don't say confess, because I truly don't believe most people tell the truth in its entirety, but they will change their story enough to get closer to the truth. You have to create a common reason for that individual to do that. So when you're saying how do I do this, I think without question the rapport building and the willingness to, for lack of a better term, just shoot the shit and not be talking about necessarily crime and punishment and police work and what happened yesterday, what's life like, just plain interest the same way you do with any conversation. I think that's a huge part about creating that.

KC: Did you create RIP or is this a technique that someone else had presented to you?

NN: Nope, I created RIP.

KC: You developed RIP, but did you go out and get other trainings? Have you pulled other stuff or is this pretty much intuitively how you know it works?

NN: In the early days, before I developed RIP—the hallmark training is called the Reid Technique²⁸ and Wicklander-Zulawski,²⁹ and there's a couple others that teach it. You start out with nine lie detector questions and they convince you you can tell whether somebody's being truthful or not. It is trained all over the country, maybe all over the world. But it's kind of interesting. When I teach around the country, I ask every class before I get into it, who's been to other interview schools? And almost everybody raises their hand. Then I ask who uses that technique, the way it was taught? Over the years, over the thousands and thousands and thousands of cops that I've trained, I've gotten a handful of hands up. So cops are getting training all over the country that they don't utilize.

I have gone to interview schools, and I have actually poked my head in. I've never gone to a complete class since I've started RIP, but I put my head in to see if they've changed – you know, at conferences – and they haven't. I find RIP is more productive to get information. And part of the thing is it's getting cops off the mindset that you can only solve a case with confessions. You've got to be receptive to truth and lies. It puts you on a whole different plane when you say “Go ahead and lie to me.” It makes you far less confrontational, right? And if you realize that lies can point to the truth, your goal is to not put up your finger and, “You're lying to me.” It's, “Bring it on.” Bring on the information and I will use to my advantage down the road. But if

²⁸ **Reid Technique** of interviewing and interrogation taught by the John E. Reid & Associates, Inc. since 1974 in Chicago. www.reid.com

²⁹ **Wicklander-Zulawski & Associates, Inc.**—WZ of Downers Grove, Illinois. WZ is licensed by John E. Reid and Associates, Inc. (Reid), originator and developer of the Reid Method. WZ was licensed by Reid in 1984. Since that time, the extensive updates for this seminar, including the WZ Method of Non-Confrontational Interview & Interrogation, have been developed by WZ using the latest information from legal, psychological, and interrogation research.

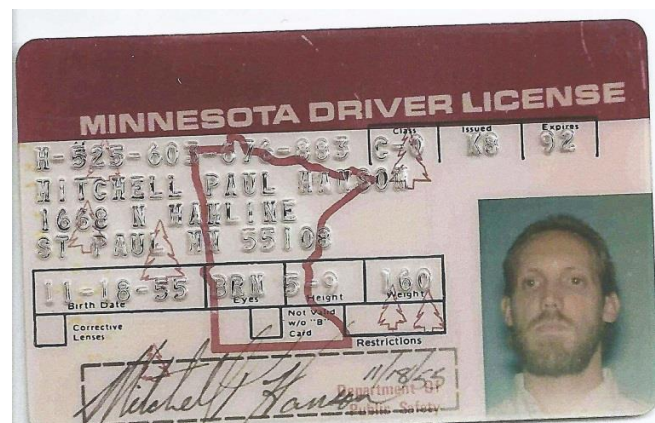
you're not receptive to truth and lies to start with, if you're not receptive to information, you're closing the door on the most information you get. Most criminals come in lying, so if you're going to close the door on the lies, you might as well say "I'm not going to get any information from them."

KC: If someone didn't teach it to you, how did the lessons come in where you got a real handle on this technique?

NN: This goes back to my describing Narcotics when crack cocaine came into the Twin Cities. This would have been 1987, '88.

KC: Gangs have started coming in. They've come in from Chicago, because the Department of Corrections brought in some high level gangsters to be housed in Minnesota.

NN: Also, the quality of life for the welfare moms in Illinois was far better here. So oftentimes—I don't care if it was Gary, Indiana or Chicago or Long Beach or Crips or whatever, oftentimes, they follow the women. And the women were followed here because they were trying to make a better life for their kids. If I was raising my child in Gary, Indiana or East Saint Louis or Chicago, what better place? What schools? Moms do right by their kids. The minute the women showed up here, the mothers, and they had places for these guys to deal dope out of, the guys followed. Also I think



Undercover photo ID - 1987

that because we didn't have a gang culture, and there's certainly people I'm sure you've interviewed that know far more about the gang culture. In Minneapolis and Saint Paul, the criminals and the drug dealers were not heavy handed. They did not protect their territory, so I think these outside criminals saw this as an easy pickings to come in here and take over. They were up against criminals that didn't hold their own compared to where they were coming from.

When the department assigned these officers and called them a Narcotics agent, they gave them premium pay and as I said, our federation fought it. We had patrol officer, sergeant, lieutenant, captain. Everything was a promotional opportunity. There were no premium jobs that were at the whim of the police department, at the whim of the chief. In the early days of drugs, the chief knew that all the sergeants – I mean, for the most part – were thirty-plus years old, all White males for the most part, all balding. They couldn't buy street drugs if their life depended on it. This was a young person's game. So they wanted to create this rank, this new position, where they could rotate people in and out, because when you'd burn-up-a-face,³⁰ that officer needed to rotate out of the unit. And you wanted young people, you wanted to be able to put in minorities, people that could buy drugs.



1987

³⁰ **Burn-Up-A-Face:** the officer became visually recognizable to the gangsters.

KC: And this late Eighties would have been Chief McCutcheon.³¹

NN: Yep, exactly. So the department says, "We're going to create this job." The federation, "No, you are not. It's going to be a promotion opportunity. Make six more sergeants." The department says, "No way." So Lieutenant Dick Dugan,³² my boss at the time, hands me this assignment. You're going to start kicking crack house doors.

You have to understand, Narcotics units wanted no part of street level drugs. The idea was to take off big drug dealers and seize neat cars and things like that. The motive was different. The idea was that if you took off a big drug dealer, there was a trickle-down effect. There were no drugs that made it to the street if you took off somebody with multiple kilos or whatever. So all of some street level drugs, the community is screaming, "Get these thugs out of our community." The Narcotics units want no part of it, because we're talking a rock³³ or a little tiny piece of crack. Our department said, "No, you're going to do it. Here's six new officers and start to do it."

Well, Dick Dugan told me, "You write up the job description, but whatever they do, they cannot do sergeant investigator work, because that would feed right into their, 'We should make six more sergeants.'" And I'm like, "What the heck? How am I supposed to have these people do these things

³¹ **William Wallace McCutcheon** served on the Saint Paul Park Police 1948 to 1954, appointed patrolman for the Saint Paul Police Department January 4, 1954; promoted to sergeant August 22, 1960; lieutenant December 12, 1965; captain June 20, 1969; deputy chief February 4, 1972; chief April 1, 1980; and retired July 15, 1992.

³² **Richard Francis Dugan** was appointed patrolman January 16, 1967; promoted to sergeant October 3, 1970; lieutenant April 22, 1983; and retired October 22, 1999.

³³ Crack cocaine is the freebase form of cocaine that can be smoked. It may also be termed **rock**, hard, iron, or just crack; it is said to be the most addictive form of cocaine.

without doing investigator work?" So as I drew up the job description, I said "All right, as a sergeant investigator, I can pay my informants any time I want. I don't have to ask my lieutenant for permission. My people have to ask me for permission. I build in a supervisory role. So while it might be just a paper curtain, I say they have to call me before they can pay an informant." Also at the time, if you were sergeant investigator you presented cases to the county attorney for charging. All right? That's what an investigator did. Not that I wanted to present all these cases, but I—"All right, I'll present all the cases to the County Attorney." And I figured there had to be a third thing. This ends up now going—to this day—how this has impacted my life and my career. Sergeant investigators did the custodial interviews. If somebody got put in jail—now when I was a patrol officer, I did interviews all the time. You arrest somebody, you read them Miranda, you interview them. Because it was custody, I said, "I'll do all the custodial interview." We start kicking crack house doors. That first year I ran the unit, we did 100 search warrants. 100 search warrants.

KC: Sergeant investigator didn't have to write all the search warrants down?

NN: No, no. The officers could do the search warrants.

KC: Who were some of the officers on your team?

NN: Rich Munoz³⁴ Joe Younghans,³⁵ Tim Quinn,³⁶ Janet Dunnom³⁷—although she was Burck then, not Dunnom at the time. Who else was part of that group? Larry Rogers,³⁸ who ultimately ran the bomb squad. No question, they gave me high quality officers. Driven, hardworking—

KC: They retired with strong reputations, as good cops.

NN: Yeah. It was a great crew. Like trying to run a team of wild horses. I mean each one, their egos were so big, it was hard to get them to pull in the same direction, because each one wanted to do their thing. But great results. We did 100 search warrants, but what happened quickly—I didn't realize this, but in the early days of crack houses, if the word went out that an eighth of an ounce of crack showed up at a house—because these places would not have crack all day long. It would show up there. The word would go out. All the people that were using would rush to that address to buy their crack, and that's when we tried to get it. So we'd have informants telling us when to do the search warrant and so on.

³⁴ **Richard Munoz** was appointed police officer July 11, 1977; promoted to sergeant July 13, 1991; and retired April 30, 2008.

³⁵ **Joseph Daniel Younghans** was appointed police officer March 13, 1978; promoted to sergeant March 1, 1990; and retired May 30, 2003.

³⁶ **Timothy Patrick Quinn** was appointed police officer March 13, 1978; and retired October 2, 1998.

³⁷ **Janet Lee Burck Dunnom** was appointed police officer June 15, 1987; leave of absence March 24, 1991; return police officer January 21, 1992; promoted to sergeant August 30, 1997; inspector August 31, 1997; return to sergeant January 30, 1999; retired July 31, 2009; temporary public information specialist October 26, 2009 – June 8, 2010.

³⁸ **Lawrence Richard Rogers** was appointed police officer March 27, 1983; promoted to sergeant April 20, 1989; and retired April 30, 2009.

Well, oftentimes we'd go in these buildings and there'd be fifteen adults. There'd be eighteen adults. The CERT team would kick the door, they'd be all on the floor in the living room with flex cuffs on, and my job was to interview all of them, now because they're all in custody, and decide who is going to jail for the two pieces of crack on the coffee table. Obviously I'm not going to take fifteen people to jail every search warrant. We're doing too many search warrants.

I start doing these interviews, and no matter how well I write notes, they have got to be quick. We've got to get them done while the search warrant's going on. I don't want to take hours. There are hardened criminals, there are welfare moms, there are users, there are all these things. So I was writing notes, trying to keep track of them, and I couldn't. I'd walk back to the living room, "Have I talked to you? Did you say the dope belonged to her?" I would—"Woman with pink slippers" and stuff like that. My reports were awful. Everything was terrible.

So out of necessity—out of true necessity, in the mid-Eighties, or late Eighties, I started carrying a tape recorder and I started recording all of my interviews from start to finish, because I was doing so many. I figured the first year that I did about 1200 recorded interrogations. Because this was well before the day of digital, and well before the day of micro-cassette recorders, and there was no funding for this, so I had to kind of steal the tapes out of our surveillance things and things like that. For me to write my reports, I would have to listen to the entire tape again. Because I did one interview after another after another after another, turn the tape over. It changed everything I thought I knew about persuading people to give me information. I had been to all these interview schools and all these confrontational techniques and what I realized is if I went in

and told a joke, I might get better results than went in and said, “Who’s the drug dealer in here?” Or an, “I know you’re lying.” I was doing so many interviews and could listen to them and hear how people reacted.

I made it kind of a petri dish. I would go in and talk about mothers. I would go in and tell jokes. And then I’d listen to the ways these hardened gangsters responded. Not necessarily looking for confessions, but looking for them to stay there and keep talking to me, not saying, “Screw you, Cop. Get out of here. I don’t want to talk.” The goal was to stay in that room and talk as long as I wanted to. And it changed. It developed into this RIP technique. I realized that you had to have rapport. These people are in flex cuffs and we would talk about all sorts of stuff before we’d start the interview. And then the investment in the future. Oftentimes, talking to mothers about their kids. I realized instantly, you’re going to get information from a mother? Show concern for their kids. Right? It didn’t matter what they had to lose if our common goal was their kids and investment in their kids’ future, these moms would give up information. And then partnership. Creating that where I’m going to stick with this. I’m going to be with you through this process. I realize you’re admitting to a crime, but you know what, I’ll stand up next to anybody and tell them what a good mom you are, that this is only because of a drug habit. And over the years, because I’ve said that to so many people, I’ve had defense attorneys call me up at sentencings for killers saying, “You said in that interview you’d stand up next to them and tell them what kind of person they are.” I’ve had to testify at sentencings on behalf of the defendant, because guess what? I mean it if I say it.

The prosecutors all understand the way I interview and so they shrug and say, “Go ahead. I mean, you said you’d do it, we expect you to do it.” So the RIP Technique and I guess this whole thing developed because I had this

unique opportunity. Long before recording was required anywhere in this country, I was doing so many recorded interviews and had to listen to them over and over and over and over, that it changed the way I approached individuals for interrogations, the way I approached witnesses, the way I approached victims in crimes. It changed everything, because again, I had this petri dish that not many cops have, that opportunity to listen back to such a volume of work.

KC: But you also took advantage of it and made it a petri dish instead of just made it a drudgery of going back and listening.

NN: [Hesitates] Yeah, yes I did. And whatever my motive was at the time, I guess my motive was putting people in jail. We had a goal that for every single search warrant we did—now you've got to understand, this was early in the war on drugs. There were all sorts of prosecutors being funded with federal dollars for the war on drugs and all this; obviously, six officers coming into Narcotics for the war on drugs. So we had a goal that every single search warrant would have at least one charge. Now that's pretty hard to pull off, but there was such an aggressive prosecution at the time.

There's a joke—and this would never happen today, no way, but we would charge residue in a crack pipe as possession of cocaine. So if you smoked in a crack pipe and there was cocaine residue inside, you were still possessing cocaine. Well, I get six people convicted for one crack pipe, because they all admitted smoking out of it, all admitted there had been cocaine in it. Again, it would never happen today, but this was so early in the war on drugs and there was such an aggressive stance that the willingness to charge people and to uphold what my unit was doing. I mean, we're trying to take back the

community for the citizens, so we wanted to aggressively hold these people accountable.

Kind of a side note as long as we're talking about it, probably my biggest regret in the war on drugs is how many pathetic users ended up in prison, in jail because of that focus. It's tragic that there aren't resources to bail those people out. And the only recourse—and again, a single-minded mission. We're going to hold these people accountable, we're going to take them out of our community. They get caught up in the whole entire focus. But there's no doubt, it's—

KC: You prosecuted and sent a lot of addicts to prison.

NN: Many.

KC: Which at a point, I understand that was what was needed to address it. Now I think we probably look a lot more at treatment.

NN: I agree.



1991

KC: You were seven years in narcotics. What changed in those seven years from when you started to when you left Narcotics, in the whole culture?

NN: Well, when I first went in there, there were all these old Narcs and they were guys that could never buy drugs in a heartbeat. I think they called it the Mann Act. The early days on drugs, all these Narcotics came in because of funding from the Mann Act, so they used to take off hippies at the beach for weed. So when I went in there, there were all these old Narcs that were leftover from the Mann days. All of the sudden I'm this young cop—I think I went in there when I was twenty-nine or thirty, which was by comparison fairly young. I think was one of the younger sergeants. Obviously John Harrington and Bob Fletcher were sergeants by that time, but one of the younger sergeants, so I went in there. It changed from hippies with weed to gangsters with crack. Drugs changed a great deal. When I went in there, and that first year I ran the unit where we were kicking crack house doors, up until then the CIRT Team,³⁹ our SWAT Team, maybe did one barricaded suspect a year and they trained all the time. That year they kicked fifty doors for us. All of the sudden, they went from a unit that did a ton of practicing and very little work to they worked all the time. We were calling them in constantly because of these gangsters with drugs.

While I don't recall the interrogation necessarily of individuals, we had a case where we had four or five guys from Long Beach that were up here dealing drugs in Saint Paul. We had done two search warrants on them at the Home of Welfare Mothers. We never found any drugs on them, but there

³⁹ **CIRT**—Critical Incident Response Team was a term used in Saint Paul for SWAT—[Special Weapons And Tactics Unit] is a commonly-used proper name for law enforcement units, which use military-style light weapons and specialized tactics in high-risk operations that fall outside of the capabilities of regular, uniformed police. "SWAT" is commonly-used internationally, as a colloquial, generic term for these units.

were always guns in the house, always drugs in the house, and they turned out to be poor cases.

KC: Were they gangsters?

NN: Yes. Crips. Long Beach Crips. I went to our crime lab and said “Is there a way to develop a test to see if anybody’s handled drugs, on their hands?” We had a chemist at the Saint Paul Police Department, Jim Gag,⁴⁰ who said, “Let’s work on this.” So I would handle cocaine and he would take these different solutions—hydrochloric acid or whatever and pour them over my hands into a bag and then he would test the contents for cocaine presence. We do another search warrant, kick a door, and here’s all these Long Beach guys again, for a third time. That’s not who we had heard were going to be in there. There are guns in there again, it’s like midnight, one o’clock in the morning, and I’m thinking we’ve done these guys twice and they haven’t been charged, so I called Jim Gag up. We hadn’t even finished this, and I said, “You know what, these guys don’t have any drugs on them. They’re claiming that they just stopped in, so can we do this?” So Jim Gag comes out in the middle of the night and washes all their hands. I do the interview with all of them and I record the interviews and so on. Well, as it turns out, all of their hands have cocaine residue on them, so with that Jeff Paulson, from the U.S. Attorney’s Office—the U.S. Attorney’s Office took this case, and when I testified to it—I mean, I don’t think at the time anybody was using recordings in court. I think five, six different defendants were all in the courtroom at once. I’m trying to remember who said what to me, who denied

⁴⁰ **James Albert Gag** (April 8, 1947) employed by Saint Paul Public Works August 27, 1969; Saint Paul Health Department December 29, 1969; Saint Paul Police certified criminalist October 3, 1970, Promoted certified criminalist II May 12, 1973; lay off due to budget restrictions December 29, 1995.

what, who did whatever. They all get wrung up in the federal court, including two of them with the first life sentences as career criminals for narcotics, based on their previous criminal history. They were the first out of Minnesota. So when I think about a case that stands out, our efforts, even though it was small time compared to what Narcotics units worked on, that small time turned into huge sentences. And again, what I'd like to think, and it's my comment I guess on this effort to why maybe crack cocaine was charged so much higher than powder cocaine, or at least sentences were different, I think the violence that was linked to crack cocaine was the motivation for making those sentences greater. While these Long Beach Crips had a lot of guns, you know there was violence surrounding them. Whether they had actually shot people or other things, my belief is we took violent individuals out of our community, not just drug dealers.

KC: Did you get so when you were going to court, the recordings were transcribed or did you play the interviews in court?

NN: Later on certainly when Minnesota went to requiring recording in 1994, many, many, many interviews that I've done have been played in court, including one with a murder where thirteen hours of interrogation were played in its entirety for the jury. For the most part, in the early days, I just testified to what they said, it was transcribed, and it was there for whether it was the defense attorney to say "That's not what I hear" or whatever. It was mostly just testified to in the early days.

KC: Do you want to talk about the thirteen hours of interrogation? Well,

NN: Larry Miller was under arrest for killing his mother, Lorraine Miller. And I probably only had one murder case I was involved in in my career that would have fit the formula maybe for a novel. It's got quirky twists and things like that.

Well, Lorraine Miller lived in Highland Park and she had been a hand model for *Vogue* back in the Forties. Now, in the Nineties, she was a drunken recluse. But her and her husband owned King Koil Mattress,⁴¹ so they were worth millions. She was found on the floor of the bathroom with a mark on her forehead. Everybody felt she had fallen down going to the bathroom, until they got her to the medical examiners and she had a bullet hole in the base of her head. Then they knew she was murdered. The house looked like it had been burglarized and the only reason she came to anybody's attention to even have somebody check on her was she only left the house one day a week, for a manicure. If you're a hand model from *Vogue*, from the Forties, what do you do? Still, you're going to get your nails done once a week. And all over the house I still remember the covers of those magazines with their hands painted. It wasn't even photographs in the day in the Forties. Her hands were painted on the cover of *Vogue* magazines. It really wasn't even my case to start with. I was just working the weekend and Bob Weston⁴² had Larry Miller and her son, and Larry was a little bit quirky. A little bit weird. And Bob asked me the next day—this was Friday when his mom was found dead. Bob asked me, "Neil, I think Larry's up to something. I think he knows something about this murder. Would you come in and join me for this interview?" My first interview with him was non-custodial that Saturday. But talk investment and partnership, I pitched to him that I thought maybe he was aware of how his mother had died and maybe he was

⁴¹ **King Koil** is a United States-based brand of mattresses and bedding with 60 factories in 40 countries operated by independent licensees. It was founded by Samuel Bronstein in 1898 in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The company is now based in Willowbrook, Illinois. In 2005 it adopted the name **Comfort Solutions**. King Koil mattresses are sold in various furniture/mattress stores around the country.

⁴² **Robert John Weston** was appointed patrolman October 26, 1971; promoted to sergeant August 25, 1989; and retired July 2, 1999.

blocking it out of his mind because it was so tragic. So I set all these seeds for him to—and he gave an elaborate alibi, because we figured she had been killed on the previous Wednesday. He had an elaborate alibi for Wednesday and so on. Well, I arrest him Monday at his workplace in Roseville. He was a manager of a Subway sandwich shop and he lawyers up; he asked for a lawyer. We have a terrible case. We have no witnesses, no physical evidence. It is not a good case, not at all.

KC: But there was something that you arrested him for other than he's quirky.

NN: Well, yes. At the end of that first interview he said, "Okay, I'm kind of getting the picture. Maybe, maybe, maybe I went to my mom's house. Oh, now I remember. I saw her dead and I ran out and panicked and I've blocked it out of my mind." So he does give us this [reason to be suspicious]. And we let him walk out that day, so it's not like he thought that wouldn't fly, I guess. So we bring him down and we've got his wife downtown, because now they're both heir to this fortune, and we were convinced he had used his wife in his alibi, that she might be part of this. Well, she convinces us that she isn't, but when I bring Larry in and I'm about to book him into jail, I say, "You're wife's here." And he says, "Do you mind if I talk to my wife before I go to jail?" I said, "No problem. You guys can have a smoke and have a can of pop. Make it brief, but go ahead and talk to her." So I put them in a room together and every five, ten minutes I check on them. Now, at the time, we have to record the police interaction, so I turn on the recorder to the room when I come in there and he starts asking me what's going to happen next, and I start basically talking to the court. This ends up in a big Supreme Court case. I start talking to the court. "Larry, do you want me to start answering your questions without your attorney here? You've asked for an attorney, so what do you want me to do?" "Yes, I'd like you to answer my questions." So I'm talking to him and then he asks something else and I basically

say, "Larry, you know what? You're putting me in a tough situation. You've asked for an attorney. I can tell you what we're doing, I can tell you why I think it's you, but not without your attorney here. Or if you want to talk without your attorney here, you have to tell me. You have to tell me that you want to, but otherwise I'm uncomfortable answering these questions."

Basically who I'm talking to is the court. I know that. I mean, I know I'm recorded. If he's says anything, this is going—and it did. It went all the way to the state Supreme Court. He says, "Well, I'd like to exercise my right to talk to you again." Off he goes and he takes all the different hypotheticals I had given him on Saturday and he wove them into a fabric of a story where he assisted his mother's suicide and she had attempted and then the gun went off accidentally while he was trying to stop her from committing suicide. So he took all my different things that I had invested, because I had planted those seeds, and he created this fabric of a story. Well, over the next two or three days, I get him to tell this story over and over and over again, because if it's an elaborate tale, you can't keep it straight. There's no way. And this is elaborate tale, elaborate tale. Well, all thirteen hours of that interview, every bit of it, every single moment of it, got played for the jury in that case. You can only imagine how many different versions they heard, how many times they heard my theory. I think it changed the way that I [interview]. With that, I think I talk to the jury in my interviews, because what an opportunity to tell the jury what you think

happened without being on the witness stand and having to testify to it. It changed the way I present the idea of using the recording to your own benefit. So when you talk about a case where the jury heard this, they heard all the way from the Saturday, me pitching all these ideas to him, on the next day, taking all these hypotheticals and weaving them into a fabric of a story that nobody could have ever believed.

KC: He never did admit to the crime.

NN: Well, he admitted to having the gun in his hand when it went off and killed his mom, but it was an accidental discharge and that his mother was attempting suicide and he was caring for his mother in the process. And again, this was a unique murder case, at Highland Park, so it was a big time thing.

There was a five-karat emerald cut diamond in the story; there was an aunt that lived in Iowa in a group home that was part of this whole story. I mean this is one of those things—truly, I’ve only had one case that I think really would qualify if somebody ever wrote a book as—it’d be like, you know, *The Cozy Comfort Murders*.

TRIAL OPENS FOR WEST ST. PAUL MAN ACCUSED IN MOM'S DEATH

Author: BYLINE: MOLLY GUTHREY, STAFF WRITER

Edition: Metro Final Section: Metro Page: 3B

Lorraine Miller of Highland Park was a rich, 72-year-old woman who lived much like an urban hermit. She spent most of her days inside, watching television. Some of her neighbors hadn't seen her in years. Miller usually ventured outside only on Fridays, for a weekly hairdresser's appointment.

She had long been separated from her husband, and her daughter lived in California. She depended on her son, Larry Miller, of West St. Paul, to shop for her groceries and work on maintenance projects around her house.

Authorities say that in May, her debt-ridden son betrayed that trust and fatally shot her to get her money.

But Larry Miller maintains the shooting was an accident that happened after he walked in on his mother's suicide attempt.

Testimony began Tuesday in the murder trial in Ramsey County District Judge Edward Wilson's courtroom. The prosecution and the defense described vastly different scenarios of Lorraine Miller's death. "Larry Miller was a dutiful son who was helping her all those years," said defense attorney Bruce Wenger. "The defendant had determined it was time to execute his plan to murder his mother," said Assistant Ramsey County Attorney John Freeman. Lorraine Miller was found dead in her home at 1621 Hillcrest Ave. on Friday, May 10, by her housekeeper. She had been shot twice.

The discovery of her body came three days after the slaying of 71-year-old antique dealer Jack Weiss of 1864 Rome Ave., Highland Park, in an apparent robbery attempt. Residents in the upscale neighborhood worried about a connection until Larry Miller was arrested.

One issue to be explored during the trial is whether Lorraine Miller knew she had breast cancer, a fact revealed during the autopsy. Her personal doctor, according to the prosecution, said she had not been diagnosed. But Larry Miller's attorney said she had visible lumps on her chest and that she knew she was dying. Freeman contended that Larry Miller was upset that his trust fund payments, money he depended on to pay his rent, had been cut off. So after Weiss was killed, Larry Miller decided to act, authorities said, believing that his mother's will would provide him a comfortable income and that Weiss' death might divert suspicion from him.

Lorraine Miller was in her bedroom May 8 when her son came in the room and shot her, Freeman said. The bullet only grazed her head. As she stumbled to the bathroom, her son fired again, Freeman contended, that bullet hitting his mother in the back of the head and killing her. But Wenger said that Lorraine Miller asked her son to help her kill herself and that he responded by buying her a gun. He accidentally walked in on his mother during the suicide attempt, Wenger said. Larry Miller saw his mother's head wound, saw her stumble to the bathroom, and was horrified when the gun discharged accidentally when he picked it up, Wenger said. He panicked and left the house, not contacting authorities. Wenger also pointed out that Lorraine Miller's estranged husband, not her son, was the main beneficiary in her will.

Copyright (c) 1996 St. Paul Pioneer Press

Record Number: 9608280506

You know, it's the only one where Ms. Marple⁴³ could come in and it'd be a good enough murder case for Ms. Marple [both laugh].

KC: You're seven years in Narcotics, and then you go into Homicide for ten years.

NN: That's correct.

KC: Who were your Homicide commanders?

NN: Joe Corcoran⁴⁴ was the first commander. He was then a lieutenant. I think they became commanders later on in the process.

KC: He retired as a lieutenant in 1998. [Lieutenants and captains became commanders January 1, 2000 in Saint Paul.]



Homicide Unit 1998

⁴³ Jane Marple, usually referred to as **Miss Marple**, is a fictional character appearing in twelve of Agatha Christie's crime novels and in 20 short stories. Miss Marple is an elderly spinster who lives in the village of St. Mary Mead and acts as an amateur detective. Alongside Hercule Poirot, she is one of the most loved and famous of Christie's characters and has been portrayed numerous times on screen. Her first appearance was in a short story published in *The Sketch* magazine in 1926, "The Tuesday Night Club", which later became the first chapter of *The Thirteen Problems* (1932).

⁴⁴ Joseph Kane Corcoran was appointed patrolman March 2, 1964; promoted to sergeant October 3, 1970; lieutenant March 24, 1990; and retired March 27, 1998.

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
William K. Finney, Chief of Police



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Norm Coleman, Mayor

100 East Eleventh Street Telephone: 651-291-1111
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 Facsimile: 651-292-3711

June 8, 1999

Sergeant Neil P. Nelson
Saint Paul Police Department
Saint Paul, MN 55101

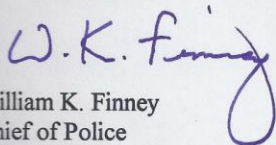
Dear Sergeant Nelson:

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize your exceptional performance as a member of the Saint Paul Police Homicide Unit. You were instrumental in the investigation of a number of homicides perpetrated in Saint Paul during 1998. The Homicide Unit examined evidence, performed exhaustive investigations and provided testimony on a number of homicides throughout the year. Your efforts contributed immeasurably in achieving a 100% clearance rate, solving all twenty four homicides. This represents only the second time in recent history that all homicides investigated in Saint Paul have been solved.

It is my pleasure to present you and your colleagues the Department's Unit Citation. As a member of this Unit, you can be proud of your accomplishments. A copy of the citation and this letter will be forwarded to your personnel file.

Again, my most sincere appreciation for your fine performance which reflects most creditably on this Department.

Very truly yours,



William K. Finney
Chief of Police

cc:

Personnel
Commendation Review Board (2-25-99)

Some of St. Paul's finest



PIONEER PRES

5 St. Paul officers honored for bravery

■ Medals bestowed for 1998 actions leading to arrests

ROBERT F. MOORE STAFF WRITER

Five St. Paul police officers were awarded the department's second highest honor Thursday — each for the courageous arrest of armed suspects.

Four of the officers — homicide detectives Sgt. Charles Anderson, Sgt. Neil Nelson and Sgt. Richard Munoz, and Officer Tim Lynaugh — received the Medal of Merit for their actions in the arrests of four suspects in the slaying of a Wisconsin man just over a year ago. One of the suspects killed Lynaugh's police dog, Callahan, during the pursuit.

"These officers clearly put themselves in harm's way to arrest these killers," said St. Paul Police Chief William Finney, who presented the plaques and ribbons. "I also want to recognize their courage and dedication and the sacrifice of Callahan."

According to court records,

Paul Emory Hawkins, of St. Paul, and Ernest Edward Halford, also known as Edward Rollins, of Woodbury, led a Wisconsin homeowner into a wooded area and tied him to a tree. Halford then shot Peter Barton twice in the back of the head execution-style. Barton had apparently interrupted a burglary.

Three days later, St. Paul police spotted Hawkins, 50, and Halford, 44, on the 900 block of Bush Avenue. Hawkins ran west toward Arcade Street and Halford was found hiding in the bushes in a nearby alley behind 945 Beech St.

Lynaugh sent Callahan into the bushes. Halford fired three times — killing the police dog, a 6-year-old German shepherd.

Lynaugh, a 10-year department veteran, fired 10 shots into the bushes, according to court records. Halford, who was not hit, dropped a .357 Magnum handgun and surrendered.

Hawkins was arrested without incident. He has since been sentenced to life imprisonment and will be eligible for parole in 29 years. Halford was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. Two other suspects were also arrested in St. Paul and convicted — one for burglary and the other for

murder.

The award ceremony was among the last on-duty tasks for Anderson, who is expected to retire today after 27 years on the force. And for Munoz, the award was his second Medal of Merit in his 22 years as a St. Paul officer. Finney recognized the officers not only for their pursuit of the suspects, but for their investigative work that led to the four convictions.

Munoz thanked Nelson, also a 22-year department veteran, for getting him into "another fine mess."

"It was a pretty overwhelming feeling," Munoz recalled. "The suspect was laying in wait to shoot at whomever wandered into the bushes."

Officer David Peterson, a five-year St. Paul police veteran who patrols the central district, was also presented a Medal of Merit for interrupting a drug deal last year and then subduing an armed suspect.

The department's highest award is the Medal of Valor.

Robert F. Moore, who covers crime and public safety, can be reached at rmoore@pioneerpress.com or (651) 228-5591.

High court refines state privacy law



OLYMPUS

Olympus
• 35-70mm
• Weatherproof
• Easy-to-use
• Lightweight

NN: Then John Vomastek⁴⁵ replaced Joe Corcoran, then Nancy DiPerna,⁴⁶ and then that might have been all. Nancy was the [last commander I worked for in Homicide].

KC: Well, and Nancy was in Homicide until 2004, when she was made Assistant Chief.

NN: Right, all right so she was my last commander in Homicide.



Homicide Unit
Citation for
Solved Crimes

Chief William
Finney making
presentation

2004

⁴⁵ **John Edward Vomastek** was appointed police officer March 13, 1978; promoted to sergeant June 1, 1988; acting lieutenant August 2, 1990; return to sergeant November 4, 1990; acting lieutenant August 14, 1994; return to sergeant September 29, 1994; title change to inspector sergeant January 8, 1995; return to sergeant July 13, 1995; lieutenant July 14, 1995; title change to commander January 1, 2000; title change to senior commander April 28, 2001; return to commander June 29, 2002; title change to senior commander June 12, 2004; and retired August 31, 2011.

⁴⁶ **Nancy Elizabeth DiPerna** was appointed police officer October 31, 1980; promoted to sergeant March 9, 1986; lieutenant May 1, 1990; commander October 4, 1997; senior commander January 1, 2000; assistant chief June 26, 2004; returned to senior commander July 3, 2010; and retired November 30, 2010.

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
William K. Finney, Chief of Police



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Randy Kelly, Mayor

367 Grove Street Telephone: 651-291-1111
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 Facsimile: 651-266-5711

March 13, 2004

Commander Neil P. Nelson
Saint Paul Police Department
Saint Paul, MN 55101

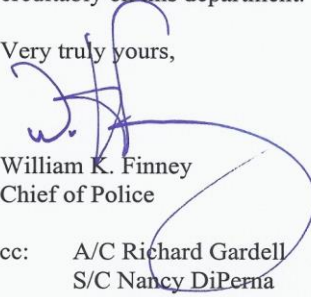
Dear Commander Nelson:

The Saint Paul Police Homicide Unit is being awarded the Unit Citation for exceptional performance. They were instrumental in the investigation of sixteen homicides perpetrated in Saint Paul, including three officer involved justifiable shootings, during 2002. The Homicide Unit examined evidence, performed exhaustive investigations and provided testimony on a number of homicides throughout the year. Their efforts contributed immeasurably in achieving a 100% clearance rate, solving all sixteen homicides. This is only the third time in recent history that all homicides investigated in Saint Paul have been solved.

It is my pleasure to present you and your colleagues the Department's Unit Citation. As a member of this unit, you can be proud of your accomplishments. A copy of the citation and this letter will be forwarded to your personnel file.

Again, my most sincere appreciation for your fine performance which reflects most creditably on this department.

Very truly yours,


William K. Finney
Chief of Police

cc: A/C Richard Gardell
S/C Nancy DiPerna
Personnel
Commendations Review Board (September 24, 2003)

KC: What's another case in Homicide that you remember? You're name has come up in several interviews where they have a difficult murder and they ask Neil Nelson to come in on his day off to look around and he sees things that nobody else sees. Is this intuition? Is this training? You have a special gift that is well-known in the department.

NN: Well, I wish I could say I could put a finger on how sometimes these things happen. I was involved in a case—it was in an interrogation that I was involved in. Susan Bauer was found murdered on the Eastside. Strangled and displayed in a way that maybe suggested she was sexually assaulted. Her kids were in the house at the time. They were young kids upstairs. Her estranged husband, I think they were separated, getting a divorce, finds the body. Comes over for a birthday in the morning and finds her body in there. Two or three days before she was murdered, she had gotten involved in a domestic between her girlfriend and her girlfriend's boyfriend. She had stuck her nose in there, and as a result of that, out in front of her house, the boyfriend had broken the windows out of the girlfriend's car. And then while the girlfriend and Susan Bauer sat in her kitchen, a brick comes through the window and there's a note on it, basically threatening her: "Stay out of our business you nosy whatever. I'm going kill you." She shows up dead, and naturally the husband has an alibi. He shows up distraught that morning with the key and so on. And the focus turns to this boyfriend of her girlfriend. Joe Corcoran would have these murder meetings and they would give out assignments, "[You] do this." There are so many tasks to be done. I'm not one of the lead investigators on this case. I'll just go and do a chore for these things.

So the husband, Vincent Bauer, had given an alibi and had talked about when he was at work and at work for the brick. So my job was to go to where he worked, Saint Paul Schools, and all I was to do was get a copy of his hours that he punched in, punched out. He worked for security for Saint Paul Schools. Well, the security at 360 Colborne is a little office right off the front door. I have an appointment with the head of security to get Vincent Bauer's time sheets, whatever, his punch in, punch out times. As I'm walking through the front door of Saint Paul School's administration building, right inside the front door is a magazine rack, two magazine racks that have *City Pages* or *Educator* or *Parent Today* or whatever. Because they're right inside the front door, to keep them from blowing into the building, what have they got up? Bricks. There's three complete bricks and one broken brick. I'm just walking through the front door and I see three complete bricks and one broken brick and I go, "No. No. This can't be. No way." So I'm thinking, I see the portion of the broken brick and

it's kind of short and I knew the piece that went through the window was short and I saw the length of the bricks. They were a big, long bricks. I'm thinking, "Well, if he broke this brick, it's got to be somewhere right around this building." So I go outside—now keep in mind security's right there, so I've got to be careful. And I'm kind of walking around, [whistle, whistle] looking at all the planters. Sure enough, I find the broken chunks of brick in a planter outside that office. So I have the school administrator, the head of security, pick up the brick from the magazine rack, pick up the chunks outside, take them back, and they matched the piece that came through her window. So here's a case that really I've got

nothing to do with that all of the sudden all the pieces came together, literally and figuratively.

St. Paul man denies he killed wife as he's sentenced to life in prison — story about Vincent Bauer

Date: 1998-02-03

Star Tribune: Newspaper of the Twin Cities

Author: Paul Gustafson; Staff Writer

For a brief moment Monday before his sentencing, Vincent S. Bauer appeared ready to admit what a Ramsey County jury had concluded: that he murdered his estranged wife, Susan Bauer.

After hearing his mother, Mary Lou Bauer, say she hoped he could one day "admit you did it," Vincent Bauer took the witness stand and told a courtroom audience that included his dead wife's family, "I am sorry I've been a disappointment.

"But, I have to tell you I am innocent of the crime," he quickly added.

"Susan's still here," he said, patting his hand on his heart. "You may not believe it, but she's still here."

A few minutes later, Judge M. Michael Monahan handed down a life sentence to Bauer, who was convicted Saturday of premeditated first-degree murder. Under state sentencing rules, the 35-year-old St. Paul man must serve at least 30 years in prison before he is eligible for release.

Bauer's emphatic denial of guilt was "typical Vinnie, right to his last words," said Ronald Kobilka, Susan Bauer's father. "Basically, he wanted everybody to feel sorry for him right to the last."

Susan Bauer's body was found strangled March 20, 1996, in her home on St. Paul's East Side. Vincent Bauer reported her death to police after finding her body while purportedly dropping off clothing for their children. The couple was going through a divorce and Vincent Bauer was under a court order not to have direct contact with his wife.

At first, police suspected another man. The man had recently broken up with a girlfriend, who was visiting Susan Bauer on March 17. He blamed Susan Bauer for the breakup, and she called police that day after receiving a threatening call from him. She called again when he came to her house and smashed the windows of his girlfriend's car.

Assistant Ramsey County Attorney Jean Schleh argued in the trial that Vincent Bauer, enraged by his wife's plan to divorce him, hatched a plot to frame the man. Among the evidence presented against Bauer was a blood stain on his underwear that DNA tests showed matched Susan Bauer's blood. Two medical examiners testified that a bruise on Susan Bauer's left leg was caused by the brace Vincent Bauer wore on his right leg.

At the sentencing, Susan Bauer's family told Monahan about the pain that Vincent Bauer has caused them and his three young children, who saw their mother's bruised and bloody body shortly after it was discovered.

Joan Kobilka said her daughter "is my last thought when I go to sleep and my first thought when I wake." She said the murder has had a devastating effect on her grandchildren. Susan Bauer's 3-year-old daughter, Ashley, once told a woman caring for her, "Someone is going to hit you until you are dead," her grandmother said.

Mary Lou Bauer told Monahan that her stepson, who contracted polio while an orphan in Vietnam, was a good son who struggled to overcome the stigma of his disability.

But she also said, "I wish he would come to terms with what happened."

Another case that I guess I ended up stumbling onto something that had been overlooked or whatever is Shirley Shepherd. Tragic case of an elderly woman who had had her car stolen a week previous. A woman was found in the car, and unfortunately, I don't remember the suspect's name in this case [Tekela L. Richardson], but the woman was found in the car and was charged with auto theft. She had stolen the keys off Shirley Shepherd's desk, where she worked over in the Midway area of Saint Paul, and stolen her car. So now Shirley Shepherd's missing and Mark Kempe⁴⁷ has the case, and I think Jane Lawrence was part of it. I'm coming back from training up in Northern Minnesota and I'm talking to Mark Kempe and he goes, "She's missing. Her car's missing. We've just found the car, the woman that had stolen it before is driving it, but we don't know where Shirley Shepherd is and the family's all upset." I said, "Well—"

⁴⁷ **Mark Christopher Kempe** was appointed police officer March 27, 1983; promoted to sergeant April 9, 1988; retired March 2, 2007.

KC: Did Janet Dunnom have part of this case, too?

NN: Yes. So I'm, "What's happening with Shirley Shepherd's house?" And Mark says, "Well, we've had the crime lab out and we've released it back to the family." And I said, "Mark, go get the family out of that house. Mark, that's our crime scene. You've got to get that family out of the house." So Mark goes and gets the family out of the house, so I go to the house when I get back to town the next day. They still haven't found Shirley Shepherd. I'm walking around and looking through the house and the house really does not look like anything violent happened. I go into the garage and the crime lab's been in the garage and the garage is just an empty garage. It's dark in there and no real lights and whatever. I start looking around and in the dust—and I kid you not, when I say dust, it was so fine you could barely see it. I see a shoe print in the dust and it's so fine that some of the pattern in a single pattern pebble lined up and I'm going, hmm. So I go back in and I look at all the shoes Shirley Shepherd has. None of them match that pattern. And I call the jail and I say, "Describe the shoes that the woman that was driving her car, what the pattern is in the bottom." Sure enough, it's that pattern that's in the dust in the garage that's already been searched, already been trampled, already been released, and it was just there. So obviously the violence happened in that garage. She was jumped by this woman when she came out to get in her car and was killed and ultimately taken to Woodbury and dumped down in a park.

So I've got to be honest, some of the most gratifying things I had to do on this job, I was never the point person in the case. My role as a team player lent itself to positive outcomes. I loved being part of that team. There's energy—this sounds odd, [but] Homicide, while there's tragic stories, there's an energy to Homicide that is addicting. The rush, the highs and lows of being on

the lead and having them fail and getting back up on another lead. Getting confessions, getting admissions.

We had a case where—oh shoot, I don't remember the poor woman's name. She was a convenient store clerk and she was shot in the face on the Eastside. They stopped a car that didn't really—it was bad description, bad video, bad everything. There were five people in the car and the whole crew had interviewed those people all weekend long and they called me in on Sunday. I think they were arrested Friday night, and late Sunday afternoon, I get the driver to confess to it. He leads us—one of the guys from the murder we didn't have—he brings us to the house, shows us the apartment, where we do the search warrant, we arrest the other one, get the gun upstairs in that apartment. I think about the hours and hours and hours that all those people had put into that and just coming in on a Sunday afternoon and able to—well, in many ways, I don't think that that case would have been charged without that driver's statement.

KC: So you're applying, building the rapport, getting an investment with them, and then building a partnership with that driver so that he confesses.

NN: Well, and I'll give you one other, but in that case there's video of me. He's exhausted. He has been interviewed since Friday. He was the driver of the car when they stopped it. He was exhausted and I was exhausted. I mean we had been talking to four or five hours. In the video, you see his head—he just bangs his head on the table. With that, I freaking bang my head on the table. I've got no clue what else to do.

I stand up and I look at a marking board that's there, and the first thing I put on there is—there's only three people involved in this, and I write victim, witness, suspect. I said, "There's only three people in this scenario.

You're not the victim, the victim's dead. You're either a suspect or you're a witness." Then I start drawing stick figures. Here's a person in the car, here are two people in the store. All the sudden, after hours he's mesmerized. Now, it takes me probably another—at one point, I quit drawing on the board and he shuts down again. I go back to the board and he's captivated with these stick figures, and I realize that some people are visual learners. I end up using that many times in the future. When I'm at a loss on how to pitch something to a suspect, I will pull out a piece of paper and start drawing. It really doesn't even matter if necessarily what I'm doing fits what I'm saying. It's a way for them to, I don't know, connect. It's a way for them to think differently. Later on, before he finally confesses, he's got me moving stick figures around. "Move that stick figure over to there, so one stick figures out here, and one guy's in there." "Okay, I'll do that." I'd erase one and put it over [there].

The realization that if you don't have an entire toolbox at your disposal—if you're not prepared to, when something isn't working, try something else, you are not going to win the higher percentage of the time. You have to have all these different tactics. If you had ever told me that drawing stick figures or writing on a big marking board would get a confession after three days with this guy, but it was [what made the difference]. It's truly what changed his entire demeanor. It changed him. The partnership was getting the stick figures right. The minute I got the stick figures right, he went ahead and told us what happened. I got to learn [all of this] on the fly [both laugh]. I wish I had gone to school for that stuff in the early days. I probably would have been far better.

KC: There's a very famous case that you were able to solve so that the family didn't have to go through a long trial. That would have been the murder of two police

officers, Jones⁴⁸ and Ryan.⁴⁹ You were the lead investigator on that, or the lead interrogator, in that case I believe.

NN: I can't go into that case without starting by saying I had just come to the Homicide unit in May [1994], and that happened in August. You come into that unit and you're all that. I mean all of the sudden, you're the man. You have reached this pinnacle. You're one of the suits, right? When you came in the police department, the Homicide unit ruled. I mean, those guys, you didn't talk to them unless they talked to you first and it was the pinnacle of success in that department. And the members of the Homicide unit used to weigh in on who got to come in. it was a big thing. When I came in there, I thought I was all that. I really did. Never in my wildest imagination did I believe I'd ever work the murder of somebody I knew. It's just so humbling.

And it probably changed the way I dealt with victims and families from then on, because our entire department was the victim's family. I had taken that day off work and I was on my way to the fair with my kids when we turned on the radio and we heard that a Saint Paul police officer had been shot. And so, "Oh, my God." I called the Homicide unit and Carol Schwartz,⁵⁰ who was our secretary there and had been a secretary through several of the previous Homicide bosses and she was a Homicide investigator herself, even though she was just the secretary. We called her Mom. She answers the phone

⁴⁸ **Timothy J. Jones** was appointed police officer October 31, 1978; fatally injured by gunfire while searching for the suspect of Officer Ron Ryan's murder August 26, 1994.

⁴⁹ **Ronald Michael Ryan, Jr.** was appointed police officer January 23, 1993; fatally injured by gunfire while responding to a "slumper" call August 26, 1994.

⁵⁰ **Carol Schwartz** was appointed temporary clerk typist I January 30, 1974; provisional clerk typist I September 28, 1974; promoted to clerk typist II May 21, 1977; and retired July 16, 1999; returned as temporary employee May 30, 2006 – June 23, 2006.

and she says, “Neil,” she tells me it’s Ron Ryan, Jr. She says, “I don’t think he’s going to survive, but he’s at the hospital.” She says, “Don’t bother coming in. You have no clue how many people are in this office.” She says, “All the old Homicide people are here.” She says, “It’s a madhouse. So just check back later. Go to the fair.” So I get back in the car and I start driving to the fair with my wife and kids and I just tell them, Heidi, I—my wife, “I’ve got to go into work. I mean there’s no way I’m going to go—I can’t go to the fair.”

So, here I’m the rookie in that office, so I’m in the office just sitting around, waiting for chores to be assigned, and it truly is a madhouse and then 10:00 or 10:30, Tim Jones is shot and killed. The feeling—it just— Ronnie was the first officer shot since Jim Sackett [in 1971] and that had been twenty-five years earlier. Nothing like this ever happened while I was on the job. I mean, there had been shootouts and things like that, but all of the sudden, now a second officer and they still don’t have the suspect? You’re helplessness and your anguish and so on.

So I’m still the rookie in here. All these seasoned officers and they make an arrest of a Guy Baker, I think about two-and-a-half hours after Tim Jones and Laser⁵¹ are killed. He sustains a gun butt blow to the head. I think when he gets arrested, somebody splits his head open with a shotgun butt. So he goes to the hospital and two of the most experienced Homicide cops, Dick Weisman⁵² and—I’m trying to think, it was somebody not in Homicide, but had

⁵¹ **Laser** was a highly trained K-9 police dog assigned to the Saint Paul Police award-winning canine unit. He and his dog handler and partner Officer Timothy James Jones were both killed August 26, 1994 while in pursuit of the killer of Officer Ron Ryan Jr. His ashes were buried with his partner, at Elmhurst Cemetery, Saint Paul.

⁵² **Richard Peter Weisman** was appointed police officer April 24, 1961; promoted to sergeant October 14, 1972; and retired July 31, 1997.

been Dick's partner for years in Homicide before – Denny Wilkes,⁵³ I believe, go to the hospital and Baker lawyers up. He immediately asked for a lawyer. So I'm just doing chores. Just doing chores, whatever, just trying to be helpful in any way I can.

About five o'clock that evening, Joe Corcoran asks me to do a search warrant on Baker's body to document a dog bite. Now, I shouldn't say a dog bite. We assumed it was a dog bite, but it wasn't a big K-9 bite. It was just a little—it looked almost like a human bite. It was small and barely made much of a mark, but Laser had received a gunshot wound through the hard pallet of his mouth, and we believed that maybe he was shot and stunned, and then when Baker was killing Tim Jones, Laser shook off enough of the cobwebs to try to defend Tim and bit Baker. So we had a forensic odontologist⁵⁴ and actually this became a bit of—there were people upset about this—we had a forensic odontologist remove Laser's jaw because Baker was not found with any of the guns that killed the officers. There were no witnesses to these things that could identify him.

He was supposed to be with another young man, Jay Barentes, that was supposed to be far more violent. In fact, when Baker was arrested, the search for Jay Barentes went on for nine or ten hours afterwards. They didn't believe Baker was the likely killer of Ryan and Jones. So my partner and I, Gerry

⁵³ **Dennis Paul Wilkes** was appointed patrolman June 26, 1968; promoted to sergeant June 22, 1979; retired June 26, 1998.

⁵⁴ **Forensic odontologists** are highly experienced, specially trained dentists who use their expertise to help identify unknown remains and trace bite marks to a specific individual.

Bohlig,⁵⁵ are going to execute a search warrant on Baker's body. We're going to use Anne Norlander, the forensic odontologist, to document the dog bite and compare it to the teeth of Laser. If that's all we could do to put him at the scene, that's what we were going to do.

Gerry and I—when you talk about big badge, small badge, we wore no badges. We didn't wear our guns. We didn't ask for an escort, because we couldn't trust any Saint Paul cops not to say something or do something. We took Baker to the hospital for the search warrant in the back of a Dodge Reliant. No cage, no anything. All we did, because he's asked for an attorney, you can't do or say anything, is we just treated him respectfully. "Watch your head. Don't let the handcuffs tighten up. If they get too tight, I'll loosen them." All we did was treat him respectfully. That's all we did.

I still remember this—when Gerry went to the door to bring out the deputies that ran the lock-up at the hospital to escort us in, Baker is in the backseat with me, and I'm back there guarding him in this unsecure car, other than him being in handcuffs and so on. I remember Guy asking me, "Do you ever watch CNN." And I'm thinking, here is a guy trying to establish rapport with me. Here's the guy that probably killed two cops and he was been surrounded by so much hatred and anger and shootings, and here he's trying to make small talk with me.

We go into the search warrant and Baker volunteers with all these witnesses, nurses, and deputies and so on. He says, "Did the dog die?" So he establishes obviously that Laser had been there; he knows that there was a K-9

⁵⁵ **Gerard J. Bohlig, Jr.** was appointed patrolman January 16, 1967; promoted to sergeant March 10, 1977; and retired July 30, 1999.

involved. We don't answer his question. We're looking him over, or Anne Norlander, the doctor's looking him over, and he says, "No. The dog only bit me once and then I shot him." So now he's volunteered two statements without any of our prompting. We're looking at his head wound and he says the K-9 handler's partner did that to me. Tim didn't have a partner, but I'm guessing somebody said, "You killed my friend" or whatever, and hit him in the head.

At that point—and I always talk about what investment is, where you take risks, that's what you do with money. You risk money for a bigger gain. Gerry and I, in front of all those witnesses said, "Guy, you've asked for an attorney. We suggest you don't say anything else about what happened there." And he says, "Those first two guys that talked to me were a couple of pricks. I'll talk to you guys." We took him back to headquarters, and we ended up interviewing him for four days.

That interview, in that first night (Friday August 26, 1994), Baker came up with post-traumatic stress—he had been in the first Gulf War and claimed he was suffering from Gulf War syndrome. We treated him openly well. I mean, he was smoking, we were giving him pop and things like that. I still remember, to this day, that first night Chief Finney—because our office was right up on the same floor as the chief's office, and we were in a conference room that we liked to use for an interview room, because it was a little bit softer and so on. I remember Finney walking around the corner into that office and there's Baker. There's the guy who killed two of his officers. He didn't know what to do. He didn't know what to say. I don't know if I've ever seen him at a loss, because he's such a confident guy. He stammered a little bit, he stuttered a little bit, and he just backed out of the room and he left us to do what we were going to do.

You know, I think about that interview on occasion, because the rest of the department's grieving and Gerry and I are on a mission, so our focus was not the loss of the two officers. It was holding Baker accountable. We went from that interview the first night and we went to the bar and we talked about how we can get around this Gulf War syndrome. We decided that Baker's ego was so big, so big, that we would ask him if he would make a recording for future training for officers of what the officers did wrong that got him killed. Our thought was, "It's going to be pretty tough to say you blacked out or all of the sudden you were back in the Gulf War, fighting some friggin' insurgent if you're saying, "If this officer had acted this way, I wouldn't have shot him and killed him." Right? That's our rationale.

Well, Saturday morning, Baker bites right away. He'll do this. He'll do this video. So we call in an officer with a video camera and we set it up, and for the next forty-five minutes to an hour, Baker holds class. He draws on a



Guy Baker

big board and he draws in three dimension and he draws Tim Jones on his hands and knees with blood coming out of his face. He draws Ron Ryan, Jr. on his face and then how he rolled him over to check his pulse. When he would want to add emphasis, he would change the colors of the markers. He was truly holding class [sighs].

A half hour after that interview, we get a call from the chief. Finney says, "I understand you made a tape for officer in training. We said, "No, Chief." I said, "That's the way we pitched it to Baker." I said, "But this is evidence. This shows that he was deliberate in what he did." And the Chief says, "That tape is never to be shown to anybody. I want it on my desk." I said, "Well, it's a piece of evidence Chief. I don't know what I'm willing to say I'm not going to show it to anybody, but it is what it is." What happened after that is the rumor

went around the department that Gerry and I made this tape. And certainly in the pitch at the beginning of the tape, we say the same introduction you kind of do—this is for this purpose and so on. The word went around the department that Gerry and I were going to make officers watch a tape that described Guy Baker killing the two officers as him boasting, “This is what this officer did wrong and that’s what that officer did wrong.” And you’ve got to understand, we’re bringing Baker McDonalds, we’re getting him out of jail, the jailers see us treating him well. We’re asking them to give him extra blankets. We’re letting him smoke in the building. The rapport and investment in our relationship is huge.

The rumor goes around that we were going to make officers watch this and we treated Baker very well, and we were somewhat ostracized for our treatment of Baker. To this day, I guess I understand it. When you see people that have gone through tragic losses and you treat our entire department like a family, you can’t reach out and show your anger to the cause of it, so you reach out and show your anger to something that you can. So I certainly understand the misplaced anger that was pointed at us. If people truly believed that that was our goal, to make them sit through that—and again, the rumor mill is what it is. So we do those four days and then Monday morning, before we were going to go to court, my partner Gerry Bohlig stayed home to be with his daughters. He was kind of a house husband during the day and would come in to work in the evening, and he had three young daughters at home. He hadn’t been in since Thursday.

So that morning, as I talked to Baker before he was going to go to court, we just talked about what was going to happen in court and a little bit of the pain the family would go through as the details came out, and Guy

promised to plead guilty without a trial. There are only two crimes in the State of Minnesota that you can go away for life with no opportunity for parole. One is killing a police officer, and the second is a murder during a sexual assault. So the fact that his defense team let him plead guilty without any—they made him make sure he was competent, because obviously he [knew what he was doing.]

And he ends up going down to St. Peter⁵⁶ and almost escaping the hospital at St. Peter. Gerry and I solved that case, too. His girlfriend Gretta Bradbury threw him all these things. He had cut a big chunk out of the fence. He almost escaped from Saint Peter, probably little known in this whole story.

And Gerry and I kind of lured Greta up here from Kansas City. Promised her a roundtrip ticket to come up and go back, but we only bought her a one-way ticket because we were convinced she had to be the one and she confessed to us that she was and so she ended up staying. We didn't have to eat the second half of the ticket. We were so confident. She got charged, and stayed [in Minnesota]. And she ultimately was sentenced. She could have done half of a life sentence, but I think they she did nine or ten months and had the rest probation or something like that.

KC: Did the defense team see the video or hear about all the confessions?

NN: Yes. They were all recorded. The only part that was video was the class for officer safety. The rest was all recorded.

KC: When he was doing the class, I imagine that was audio recorded as well as the video.

⁵⁶ **The Minnesota Security Hospital** is a maximum security psychiatric hospital located in St. Peter, Minnesota. It serves people who have been committed by the court as mentally ill and dangerous.

NN: Yes, but him drawing the whole display, him doing everything like that was the only part that was video. So it really wasn't an interrogation as such, it wasn't an interview, it was him holding class. I mean we would interject once in a while to ask questions, but he thought he was doing a presentation for officers to keep them from getting killed in the future.

KC: What ended up with that video?

NN: It ended up in the court file and it ended up in Finney's office, and when the court part was done, the prosecutor gave a copy to Gerry and I, and as far as I know, nobody's ever seen it. I have a copy at home. Gerry I'm guessing has a copy at home. We never got it from Finney. He kept the original. The prosecutor gave it to us out of the court case.

The ultimate end of it is the newspapers and the media took us to court trying to get copies of it, and it was fought. Because the way a court case works is everything is supposed to be public after it's resolved. The idea that this was never used in court, they fought it. And to this day I don't know if it actually went to a hearing or if the media just finally realized that this was Baker, over the top, just describing—again, not that we believed his version of this, but it's his bravado in talking about how the officers got killed. The media maybe just plain acquiesced and didn't try to pursue it any further. So now, almost twenty years later, which will be next summer, to my knowledge, no Saint Paul cop has ever seen it. Maybe Chief Finney has, but if he did he never told me he watched it.

KC: Well, and what Joe Corcoran, your Homicide commander, explained to me was the depth of service you provided to the families, that in building that rapport and getting him to confess so that there really wasn't any defense, the families

didn't have to live through a court trial. I know from Jerry Vick's ⁵⁷ mother, the court trial was very difficult [after Jerry was killed in the line of duty in 2005].

NN: These things are very painful on families and again, when we say Jerry Vick's mother, in a department like ours, the entire department's the family. So I mean the outcome, I would like to think Gerry and I influenced it. It was fortunate I think in that situation.

I think ultimately, and again, this is Joe Corcoran, his vision that surviving family members should have access to every bit of information that the investigator does. Obviously, I remember sitting down with Anne and Kelly, Ron Ryan, Jr.'s wife and mother, and going through every bit of the information. Answering whatever questions they want, showing them pictures, and I don't know that I would have done that if I didn't have Joe's vision that each family member is different in what they need for closure. What that translated into then, after it was all resolved—I think he pleads guilty in October, about two months after the murders. Then the following April, Gerry and I conducted eighteen debriefings for the entire department, where we went through every single fact, including, we didn't show the slideshow, but part of the slideshow are Baker's drawings that he did during the video. We presented these things, "Saying this is what Baker says happened. Now we're not saying—in fact there are parts of this we absolutely don't believe. But you as our family members get to hear the wrong information. There's no investigator that knows more than you know. If you want to sit here and listen, we're here to tell you everything we've heard in this case.

⁵⁷ **Gerald Dennis Vick** appointed police officer September 18, 1989, promoted to sergeant July 31, 1999; fatally injured by gunfire May 6, 2005. Receive the Medal of Valor 1991, 1997, and 2005.

I think oftentimes when I watch the news and I see surviving family members react, whether it be the shooting in Connecticut—I think of Joe Corcoran all the time, because the crime scene is done. The future is those family members that have to live on with this. So that sharing of information, that telling them first, they don't hear things through the media. I mean Joe instilled that in me and I think it has transcended everything, including my time in Internet Crimes Against Children and the rest of my time in Homicide.

KC: Did that philosophy continue the whole time you were in Homicide?

NN: No question, and he brought on Margaret McAbee,⁵⁸ who was the Victim Intervention Program.⁵⁹

KC: [It was initially known as] VIP, now its Survivor Resources.

NN: And there's no doubt that when you're in the middle of a Homicide investigation, you're so focused on chasing the bad guy and you try to make time for the surviving victims, I think is the way Joe describes it. I mean family members are the victims. They're just desperate for information. Desperate for information. As much as you want to say you're aware of it, sometimes you just don't have time or sometimes you can't stop this to call them and say this is where we're at. By having actually a person, and Margaret, that was her role, to be that conduit between the investigator and the family members. I'm convinced we've solved murders because of it. I'm convinced family members went out and

⁵⁸ **Margaret McAbee**, founder and Executive Director since its founding of Victim Intervention Program—VIP / Survivor Resources in 1995.

⁵⁹ **The Victim Intervention Program / Survivor Resources** began in May 1995, offering services around immediate crisis support, continuing grief support, spiritual support, education, training and consultation, issues of traumatic death.

fought to get found in the community the information we needed and if it had been left to just simply the investigator to create that bond with that family member, I'm not sure it would have taken place.

KC: Tell me a story about that.

NN: Well, I think we had a case where there were two guys, middle of the afternoon, driving a car and it came to a stop sign on Milton and University, I think. It was somewhere on University. A bike rides up to the car and shoots into the car, kills the passenger and wounds the driver. The driver speeds away down to the police station that's then at Dale and University, and says my buddy's been shot. The police are right there, they call the paramedics, and this guy who's been shot, the driver, gives a description of the suspect. Within five minutes, the police grab the kid off the bike. He doesn't have the gun on him, and the guy says, "That's him. He's the guy who shot us." So this was another case with Gerry Bohlig and I, where we end up interviewing him. We catch him in some lies, but he says he wasn't the guy, he says he was never in gangs, never in drugs, never owned a gun. Then he asks for a lawyer. So we do a search warrant and we find that he is in gangs, we find that he has had a gun, and that he's involved in drugs. Well, Margaret deals with surviving family members, but sometimes she is the conduit for suspects as well.

So while we, Gerry and I, do nothing with these people, Margaret still is. Whether she necessarily believed that he was innocent, she certainly gave them that respectful ear. Two, three months later, the family comes to us, by way of their defense attorney and the judge, and says, "We're telling you, our son is not the killer in this. The true killer is in a juvenile facility in southern Minnesota." So this is one of those examples where I'm saying the

neighborhood knows who these bad guys are. It's just the police department that doesn't. If you don't have the relationship, if you don't have the rapport, so on. So Judge Gearin,⁶⁰ assigns Gerry and I to go down and check this story. Now we have an eye witness, identification, a victim. We have this kid, everything pointing to him being the bad guy. We actually go down on a Sunday morning in a snow storm to Lavern, Minnesota, and we get the true confession from Luke Williams.

I think about this—that again, how the community reaches out and solves these things. I also remember calling as we were driving back. This is in the days where you have the bag phone or the big cell phones or whatever, and we call Joe Corcoran and we say, “We’ve held this kid for three months. He’s not the killer.” And we called Judge Gearin, she had sent this down there, and we said, “It’s Sunday morning, but he needs to be gotten out jail.” So I think Joe quickly called Chief Finney, and I think Chief Finney contacted Khaliq, president of the Saint Paul NAACP.

KC: Nick Khaliq?

NN: Nick Khaliq. Nathaniel. And, arm and arm, they walked that young man out of jail and did a press conference that, “Yes, we had the wrong man.” But I think Nathaniel Khaliq actually said if he hadn’t been in a bad situation, he wouldn’t have been caught up in this.

I get to enjoy this, because of William Finney and his connection to this community and how much he was an advocate and held officers responsible and was so responsive to the community. Here we weathered an

⁶⁰ **Kathleen Gearin**, Ramsey County/Second Judicial District Judge 1987 - 2013

incident that for many departments would have been such a black eye. Not that we weren't willing to accept. It's unfortunate that we had the wrong guy in jail. We were basing this on solid information, but he took that lemon, no question, and made it lemonade. He took an opportunity to put our best foot forward and demonstrate what the Saint Paul Police Department is. And it gives me so much pride in those situations, even though I screwed up and made the mistake, you take pride when the public understands an honest mistake and gives you credit for correcting it.

KC: What mistake did you make until you had more information?

NN: Well, yes, but here's what I will say. He denied the entire time. He denied, he said, "It wasn't me." Now in the back of our mind, we knew that this did the rise and fall on this witness. That he had been shot and he picked him out five minutes later. We did the due diligence by doing the search warrant at his house and finding that he lied to us about many things, makes him into a bit of a liar.

I still believe that when you go around the country, many Homicide investigators buy into this idea that we work for God, that we are the last voice for the deceased, that we speak for the dead. And I have never bought into that. I'm a fact gatherer. I don't care where this leads. If it doesn't point in a certain direction, I'm not going to say I work for God. That makes it sound like if I make certain decisions, I'm doing something more noble than fact gathering. All I am is there on behalf of facts. If the facts speak for the victim, so be it. If the facts make the victim look like they deserve killing, so be it.

I told you that I like coming in sometimes and just being a part of a team. Bob Paskett⁶¹ had a case with a drug user that was shot. He was shot once in the stomach and dies. They had a kid in jail for it, and he was at juvenile in a detention center. And the kid wasn't giving any information. Nothing at all. And I don't even know how they came up with him as a suspect. Maybe he didn't have a gun, whatever. Bob and I went to interview him and sure enough, through RIP—and I don't remember the whole interview—but he says, "I shot him, but I kid you not, it was by accident. He said, "The guy was trying to rob me." He says, "I had this gun in my—there's a hole through my pants pocket." And he says, "I shot this guy by accident. It just went off." So I worked on that kid's behalf to prove that the gun could accidentally discharge. Now he might have lied, he might have shot this guy to kill him, but the location of the shot in the stomach, the lack of more than one shot being fired, the fact that I went and found the pair of pants that he said had a bullet hole through the pocket to show that it had gone off. I'm there on behalf of the truth, I guess, no matter where it leads. And that kid ended up getting consideration for that, because I guess I went to the wall for him, because I said, "This could be an accidental discharge. Granted he's dealing dope, granted he's got a gun, granted—" But it is what it is. I'm not vested in him being punished at a certain—

That's another thing I never, in my entire career, ever weighed in on. I never weigh in on punishments. Whatever the court decides is fine with me. Whatever a jury decides is fine with me. I always felt that if I was vested in the death penalty, or I was vested in life in prison, that it would taint my fact gathering—that I'd be saying, "But oh, if this fact comes out, maybe they won't

⁶¹ **Robert John Paskett** was appointed police officer March 23, 1970; promoted to sergeant January 14, 1978; retired July 2, 1999.

get life. So do I pursue that?" So I guess in Homicide, I never saw my role as some sort of noble mission on behalf of the victim. No question there's tragic stories. No question truly innocent victims. One of my cases was Khoua Her when she strangled her six children.

KC: Oh, that was a tough one.

NN: Incredibly tragic.

And being in that house with six dead kids, all choked off with a ligature around their neck. And what stands out with me on that story, in that situation, is there were two dead children on each level of the house—the two oldest upstairs, two middle on the main floor, and two youngest in the basement.

The girls in that house, the school age girls, had had head lice. So Khoua had shaved all their heads. I think about what mother would send her girls to school with shaved heads, and you realize that while it certainly doesn't justify her killing her kids, her true loss of control over her life.

6 Children Found Strangled After Mother Confesses to 911

By DIRK JOHNSON

Published: September 05, 1998

The New York Times

A mother of six, living in poverty and estranged from her husband, called 911 on Thursday night, the police said, and made a shocking statement: she had killed her children.

Police officers and paramedics rushed to her apartment and found the bodies of three girls and three boys, ages 5 to 11. The woman, Khoua Her, 24, was lying inside the doorway wearing a fancy red dress. The body of one of the children was behind her.

The woman was in custody at Region's Hospital here. The medical examiner's office said the children had been strangled.

In the call to 911, the woman had spoken about suicide. But it was unclear whether she had harmed herself.

As a 13-year-old girl, Khoua Her was paired with her husband in an arranged marriage in her native Laos, neighbors said. When her babies started to arrive, they came almost every year, six of them altogether.

Minnesota is a center for the Hmong, refugees from Laos who have long struggled economically. But the police and civic officials were careful to play down any notion that such a horrific event had any cultural underpinnings.

You know, she started having kids at twelve or thirteen years old in the camps in Thailand, and I'm convinced to this day that her maturity ended at twelve or thirteen. Six kids by nineteen, twenty years old. Her husband was estranged. She was being forced to try to find work or work, so oftentimes she would have to load six kids on the bus to take them to the daycare so that she could go to work. Living in poverty, living in not enough food. Also, she ended up having a boyfriend that I think was juvenile. So he was fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, somewhere in there and she's 22, 23, or 24. You can just see this

arrested development. And when you're in there, and again tragic—I often consider the outcome of that case. The County Attorney made a plea bargain with her and she got five years for each child. So she's going to serve thirty years in Shakopee. The County Attorney, Susan Gaetner,⁶² got such criticism, because the outrage of the community over six dead kids was so great. But I always saw that as a courageous verdict. Truly almost cutting the baby in half, not to use a baby thing in there, because Susan Gaetner looked at this troubled woman and granted she knew right from wrong, she knew she was killing her kids, but there were other things in there. So it's a long way to come back to: I've never weighed in on sentences. I've always felt I was there on behalf of facts and the truth and not a vested interest on the outcome of the case.

KC: Now your Homicide commander Joe Corcoran would say He rode with us. He always believed that God was a partner in the investigation. How does Joe's philosophy —

NN: I am not sure it necessarily was a match. And you've got to understand, I have the most respect for Joe. And I'm telling you, there are trainers around the country that hand out signs: "We work for God." And I've heard it all. It's a rare police show where the investigator doesn't say, "I was there for the victim." That "I was there to find truth. I was there to speak for that person." I mean you just have never heard that from me.

KC: What are your spiritual beliefs? Do you believe that there is help from an energy bigger than yourself when you are working for truth?

⁶² **Susan Gaetner** graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School. She joined the Ramsey County's attorney office in 1984. Ramsey County Attorney 1995 – 2011.

NN: Yes. Yes, I do. But I still think, as awful as this sounds, the chips fall where they may. I mean, you're not going to solve every case, so there's tragedy out there that's not going to be solved. There's not going to be justice in every case, just because there's just too many things happening, whether you go back to the O.J. case,⁶³ where the whole world is convinced O.J. killed his wife and Jeff Goldman. The bottom line is you can't be the justice. If you start thinking that you will be, I think it taints—I would like to think that when I stand or sit in front of a jury and I testify, no matter what that defense accuses me of, that jury believes every word out of my mouth, because I do not sound like I'm there on behalf of the truth. I have to believe it, I have to say it like I believe it, and it means I acknowledge when I've done wrong. It means I try not to be argumentative. I try to give the defense their points that they're making, if they fit the situation. I am truly there as an impartial fact gatherer.

So again, I appreciate Joe Corcoran's belief in the victim's voice when nobody else can say it. I mean, I certainly have been around this, my career. It's just not the way I approached it. And I believe that it has served me well to not be vested and to be able to testify on behalf of killers at their sentencing, to be able to tell a jury a story and admit that I made mistakes and not sound like I'm trying to hide information from them. I would like to think the juries find me credible. And you know, here's I guess the other part of the higher spiritual working for God sort of thing—

⁶³ The **O. J. Simpson murder case** (officially called the *People of the State of California vs. Orenthal James Simpson*) was a criminal trial held in Los Angeles County, California Superior Court that spanned from the primary jury being sworn in on November 2, 1994 to opening statements on January 24, 1995 to a verdict on October 3, 1995. Former American football star and actor O. J. Simpson was tried on two counts of murder following the June 1994 deaths of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Lyle Goldman. The case has been described as the most publicized criminal trial in American history. Simpson was acquitted after a lengthy trial that lasted over eight months.

KC: Well, and you've added something onto what I said, because my question is more is there a spiritual energy-like intuition or that might be called intuition that supports you, not the conclusion of working for God? But is there a spiritual belief, a spiritual energy that supports you when doing your work? I'm not adding that end piece to it.

NN: I see.

KC: I hadn't thought about that. My spirituality doesn't work with the conclusion piece.

NN: Right. I guess I never thought that intuition or something like that, that I saw things maybe that other people didn't see because of a spiritual connection. Now I guess after I'm all done, I'm going to have to think about that [both laugh]. I'm going to have to think, was I a good guy the day before that happened? I mean, did God give me one? Every once in a while you joke, right? I remember Gerry Bohlig used to say—and Gerry grew up digging graves at Resurrection Cemetery, so very much a part of his spiritual being was working in that setting. And I remember him—one time we had a baby death and he was writing his reports and he says, "You know, God said to that baby, 'I'm going to put you in the world's worst home. I'm going to give you the world's worst mom. You're going to be abused. I'm going to put you through hell on earth, but I'm not going to make you stay there very long and then I'll bring you to heaven.'" I remember Gerry—because you have to understand. Gerry's a bit of a curmudgeon, hard drinking, rough talking cop. And I would think that was his upbringing and his spiritualness saying that God made sure that baby would be in heaven very soon, where many people go through lifetimes of tragedy or lifetimes of hell. But

God said, "I'm only going to make you stay there a short time." I've thought about that often, when you ask about the influence of your faith in what you do.

So I don't know that I've necessarily prayed for answers or prayed for guidance, but now, like I said, you gave me something that I'm going to have to think. Darnit! Did God do this for me? [both laugh]

KC: [Chuckling] Well, then I've done my job today, because I have belief that in an oral history, one reviews their life, and that can give them whole different depth of understanding of their life experiences.

NN: Well, I always have joked, it's better to be lucky than good any time, right? And if you put yourself in a position to be lucky, and who puts you there? How do you end up in a position to be lucky?

KC: What is luck?

NN: What is luck?

KC: Is it mysterious? Is it spiritual?

NN: Yep. Exactly. And it is much easier to be lucky than good.

KC: And one of the things that I hear when I hear you describing all of it is that you were honest with the suspect. You were totally honest with the suspect and that's what created your rapport and your authenticity.

NN: Well, that would not be totally true. There is a bit of a formula for an interrogation that if I was totally honest and told the suspect, "We've got nothing. I mean, you're chances of getting off are great," odds are I probably wouldn't get them to change their story. There's a card game aspect to an interrogation. You have to bluff. And you have to bluff that there might be

evidence. There might be a witness. There might be something else that's going to unfold that's contrary to the story they have given you to date. You have to do it in such a way that is believable, because if they know that they're the only ones in the house and there's no living witness and they wore gloves. If you bluff at something—I mean criminals, hard criminals, they don't get that way without practicing their craft. Hardened criminals, especially these gangsters that are shooting people up in drive by shootings, they have weathered this storm many times before. If you're going to bluff—obviously, truly being honest, you can't!

KC: So tell me a story about a homicide or an interview where it was a seasoned criminal; it was someone who was used to being interrogated and not giving anything up.

NN: We had a double homicide.⁶⁴ I think it was 2004—one of the last cases I worked before I got promoted to Commander. Wayne Costilla and Donald Glasgow were murdered in a drug deal gone bad. Glasgow's girlfriend Andria [Andria Rai Crosby] had also been shot twice and was left for dead. As it turns out, because she survived, one of the main suspects in this case, James Green had come into the house to buy drugs from Glasgow and Costilla, and Andria recognized him. And Green recognized her, and they had a little conversation about a high school they may have gone to and they both went to Harding and they acknowledged that's where they knew each other from. Green leaves the apartment, comes back

⁶⁴ On January 12, 2004, a shooting incident occurred in Saint Paul, during which Ronald Edward Glasgow and Wayne Louis Costilla were shot to death. A third victim, Andria Rai Crosby, was severely injured. In December 2004, a Ramsey County jury found appellant Michael Medal-Mendoza guilty of six felony counts related to the shootings. Medal-Mendoza was then convicted and sentenced to two consecutive terms of life in prison for two first-degree murder convictions and to a consecutive term of 180 months in prison for an attempted first-degree murder conviction.

with Danny Valtierra and Michael Medal-Mendoza, and they go to rob Glasgow and Costilla. And Glasgow was six foot ten. Huge, big—the only thing he was missing was like a bolt in his neck or something. He was a big Lurch character. He basically said, “Screw you. Shoot me.” So they did. They killed him. Shot him in the head. They assassinated Costilla. They shot him through the head. And they shot Andria twice.

Because she recognized Green and the rest that she didn’t know, we quickly started chasing Green. We knew they were travelling around the country and trying to escape this thing. They had what they had stolen from the robbery. When we finally get them, they’re involved in a car crash in Wisconsin, where Michael Medal-Mendoza puts the car they were driving under the rear wheels of a semi on I-94. He gets arrested for DWI, and Green and Valtierra escape. Okay? So they’re taken to the hospital because they’re kind of hurt, but they are longtime Latin kings. Danny Valtierra had just gotten out of prison in Washington, in Seattle, for five years, for robbery. They are longtime criminals.

So when they finally get arrested in Saint Paul, we already have Michael Medal-Mendoza in Wisconsin, and he didn’t confess to anything there. I anticipate these hardened criminals—what I figure I need out of this—and I always go into an interview saying, “What can I accomplish?” Is there a chance they’re ever going to hang their head and say, “Okay, you caught me. We assassinated these two, robbed them, and we tried to kill the girl, but she survived.” I mean, that’s not a likely scenario for them to say. So you say, “What can I get? What is a chance that I can get?” Well, my best scenario is we went in there to do a drug deal and Michael Medal-Mendoza went ballistic and killed everybody, and we panicked and ran with them. That’s probably our goal. Because Green was identified by Andria, I figured that was a no brainer. But my

weakest case of all was against Danny Valtierra. Danny Valtierra, just getting out of prison, isn't going to want to say he went there on a drug deal, isn't going to want to say any part of anything. Plus, my only witness to put him there is Andria, who is a tweaked out meth-head, who was shot by strangers in a moment—I mean, she's not my best witness, right?

In fact, Janet Dunnom is very much a part of this case, because she has that uncanny ability to connect with these pathetic souls and keep them on board. And that's what she could do with Andria. She made those connections. So I need Danny Valtierra to at least come in and say, "I was part of a drug deal." Well, he wants no part of talking to me. So I go up and I interview James Green first and I'm willing to not challenge his version. "We went there on a drug deal and Michael Medal-Mendoza did all the shooting and we panicked and left." So I said to James Green, "Will Danny tell me the same story?" And Green is knowledgeable enough as a criminal to know his story is better if Danny Valtierra tells the same story, but Danny Valtierra wants no part of this. And I have an awful case against him.

So I bring Danny Valtierra into the room with Green. And I said, "Danny, James here says there's only one truth to tell." Danny Valtierra says, "There's nothing truthful in life." I said, "Well, do you want to tell me your side of the story?" He says, "Do you want to tell me your side?" And I said, "Man, I don't care." When I talk about the poker hand, I have to play this. I said, "I don't care. Don't say a thing. Go ahead. Go back. I don't care." Now Green starts saying, "Man, we got caught up in this stuff. We had nothing to do. We just went there to buy some dope." Valtierra is just staring death daggers at Green, because he wants no part in this. He knows he's jammed up the minute he touches any part of this. But Green is going on and on, and finally I say to James, I said, "It's

his call. He doesn't want to talk." I said, "I don't care. Go back to your cell. Go back to your cell." And Valtierra stands there and doesn't move. He says, "Well, what would happen if I stay?" I said, "No. Go back. I don't even want you stay." I said, "Here's what's going to happen. If you stay, I'm going to read you your Miranda warning, you're going to tell me what happened, start to finish. If you're not going to do that start to finish, go the hell back. I'm done." I said, "Take him back."

And Danny says, "I'll stay." So he goes from absolutely nothing to do with this, about four minutes later, he stays. He sits next to Green. His body language—he wants no part of Green. He's just pissed that Green put him in this. He goes down the story. They just went there for a drug deal. But then at the end, and this is the benefit of recording, he says, "You know what, if I had been with some real people here, I shouldn't even be here right now." He says, "For that woman in there, I was just a Mexican with a hat on. If I had been with some real people, they should have never talked about this." He says, "When you do a murder, you're supposed to never talk about it. That's street code." He says, "I shouldn't even be here right now." So the jury gets to hear him saying, "If you're involved in a murder, you're never supposed to talk about it."

And I knew darn well that having two of them in the room, I'm not going to be able to say "You guys went there to rob them and kills them." I sacrificed certain parts of that interview to get what I needed from them. All I needed them to say was, "I went there for the drug deal and everything went bad." And then the extra insight into what a murder should sound like. It's like educating the jury, right? So all three of those guys were rung up for the two murders and the attempted murder. But without question, Danny Valtierra could have skated on that, because the way the criminal system works, you

cannot base a charge simply on the statements of a co-conspirator. So evidence against Danny, without James Green, was nothing, was zero. Danny Valtierra had to put himself there, had to put himself part of it, and then he had to give that little bit to the jury. So when you look at these things and you talk about having the experience to know where this interview has to go and what your goal is, there's no question. I sacrificed the chance for a legitimate interrogation—"You're not telling me the truth—" There was no way I was going to win out over the two of them. But I got out of it what I needed with two experienced criminals and held them accountable.

KC: Are you in the interview room alone with them? Or is there a corrections officer there with you?

NN: Nope. In alone. And in fact, I think it'd be interesting to know what the rest of the state does. I think most interviews in Saint Paul, since we've gone to recording, have gone to a single investigator doing the interview. If you're going to confide something shameful, it's easier to do it to one person. And in the old days before recording, you had a second person to witness, so that two people could swear to what happened. Now the recording is the witness.

KC: The room is just set up for recording or you have a recorder?

NN: For the most part, the rooms that the Homicide interrogations happen in and interviews happen in are set up for recording. Audio and video. But there are oftentimes you end up doing it in rooms that you just set out a recorder like you have here and that's going to document it.

KC: You take the test, you get promoted Commander and you move on to Internet Crimes Against Children. Did you have much experience with the internet before you moved there?



Commander Promotion Celebration

Neil in foreground

Background: Chief John Harrington, Assistant Chief Dennis Jenson, Retired Chief Bill Finney

June 2004

Family at
promotion celebration

June 2004

Lars, Neil, Heide,
Blythe, Calla



NN: No, what happened is there was a federal grant offered in the United States for police departments to get into internet crimes against children. I think the original founding nine members of the task force came on, I want to say, in 1998. And in 2000 or 2001, Saint Paul wrote a grant to become the Minnesota Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Coordinator. In other words, they'd handle the money for the entire state. Part of your responsibility with these federal funding is you had to handle cyber tips. Cyber tips come from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. That was started after Adam Walsh was kidnapped and the Reagan administration and it's all dealing with child exploitation.



Commander Nelson

2004

In the early days of the internet, they made a law that all the internet service providers had to monitor their systems for child exploitation, whether it's people soliciting kids online, whether it's the exchange of child pornography. And they would generate cyber tips out of the national center. So Saint Paul had to be the receiver of all the cyber tips for the state. The first commander of that unit, Rick

Anderson,⁶⁵ was technically savvy. That was part of his reason to be the commander of that unit. He was all about computers and he ran that unit for five years and there were thirteen affiliate agencies in the task force. When I took it over and I told the Chief, I said, "I know very little about computers."

KC: Harrington is chief now?

NN: Chief Harrington. I said "In fact, I can barely right click." I said, "But I do know how to do an investigation. And if you are willing to let me," I said, "I will surround myself with the geek cops that know what the heck they are doing, but I will steer this task force as an investigative agency instead of a technical agency." I said, "I don't believe we should be concentrating on the technology while it's changing constantly. We should be concentrating on investigations."

KC: Which, as intuitive as I know Harrington to be, he put you there for a reason.

NN: Well, he put me there for a reason. After five years when I left, we had 115 agencies that were affiliates, from thirteen. At one point, I also had South Dakota and North Dakota in the task force. I wrote one investigator up from Minneapolis that had in one year saved I think thirteen children in the state that were being sexually assaulted and nobody knew about, through our efforts. I was very proud of what that task force did. And being a member of the task force, my salary was paid by the federal government, and at the end, there were fifty-eight task force commanders. Some states have more than one, because they're bigger. I think Texas and California each had three task forces, where

⁶⁵ **Richard Autrey Anderson** was appointed police officer November 1, 1980; promoted to sergeant January 8, 1995; acting lieutenant December 11, 1999; title change to commander January 1, 2000; returned to sergeant February 5, 2000; promoted to commander July 22, 2000; retired November 30, 2005.

Minnesota only had one. At the end, finally North Dakota and South Dakota had their own funding, but for several years I handled their funding and disseminated those funds for child exploitation via technology in their states.

KC: Tell me a story about one of the cases.

NN: Well, because I was the commander and left this very much to the investigators, I don't have as many firsthand investigative stories, but one of the stories that I do have is the sergeant that worked for me, Bill Haider,⁶⁶ who is now in the Homicide Unit. He had worked in this unit for a very very long time. Outstanding investigator, outstanding cop, dedicated to making sure these kids weren't exploited via technology.

He had gotten this call from Celia Blay, this woman in Coventry, England, who said that there is a nurse in Minnesota talking young people into killing themselves. She says, "As proof of this, I have a case of a friend of mine. Her son Mark Drybrough⁶⁷ is here in England and hung himself at the encouragement of this nurse from Minnesota." She says, "I've called Scotland Yard, I've called Interpol,⁶⁸ I've called everybody. I've called the FBI. Nobody's willing to touch this case." So Bill Haider goes like, "What the heck am I supposed to do with this? So this woman—and truly, she's like Ms. Marple.

⁶⁶ **William Francis Haider** was appointed police officer January 30, 1984; promoted to sergeant October 6, 2001.

⁶⁷ **Mark Drybrough**, a 32-year-old IT technician who, in the wake of suffering a nervous breakdown and being depressed, hanged himself in his Coventry, England home in July 2005, after allegedly chatting for two months with someone allegedly using the aliases Falcongirl and Li Dao.

⁶⁸ **Interpol** is the world's largest international police organization, with 190 member countries. Their role is to enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place. Their high-tech infrastructure of technical and operational support helps meet the growing challenges of fighting crime in the 21st century.

She's just a woman that makes antique buggy whips in England. She's kind of a historian. Knew nothing about the internet until this friend of hers says, "My son died and the information on his computer suggests he's talking to this person—falconGirl@yahoo.com. This Celia Blay starts to learn how to navigate the internet and tracks back to a nurse in Faribault.

So Bill Haider tries to pursue this from every which way. He tries to make this stuff truly evidentiary quality and can't do it. I mean, we can't prove where it came from. Everything's in England. So finally he's at wit's end and he's talked to the county attorneys; none of them think it's to the point that it justifies a search warrant. So one winter evening, him and I drive down there to Faribault and knock on the guy's door. What ends up happening—and here's the trouble in this situation, is he's got a nurse for a wife as well and he's got two teenage daughters. So even though we're thinking the interactions, the chats, all this stuff's coming from this house and is likely coming from him—his name is William Melchert-Dinkel⁶⁹—we don't know.

So we sit down in his living room and start to talk to him and he admits or starts down the road of admitting one of the most horrendous things I've ever been part of. He would go into suicide chat rooms or depression site chat rooms, pretending to be a female nurse, an ER nurse that was also suffering

⁶⁹ **William Francis Melchert-Dinkel** (born July 20, 1962, from Faribault, Minnesota, United States) is a former LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) and convicted online predator. He was found guilty of encouraging people to commit suicide while he watched voyeuristically on a webcam. He allegedly told those contemplating suicide what methods worked best, that it was a decent choice to commit suicide, that they would be better in heaven, and/or falsely entered into suicide pacts with them, which he then abandoned. He is a married father of two. Melchert-Dinkel was convicted of two counts of assisting suicide, for encouraging the suicides of a person in Britain in 2005, and another person in Canada in 2008. Last known worked was as a truck driver.—Wikipedia

from depression. He would encourage these people not to take poison or shoot themselves, but to hang themselves. He would enter into suicide pacts with them. He had these discussions, he'd have relationships with people for months before they finally just didn't show up, no longer called him, which he assumed they had died. Through his interview, we identify a young lady out of Ottawa that was a freshman in college up there, I think at Carleton College, who he entered into a suicide pact with.

NN: They were both supposed to die the same time and she kills herself. She's found dead up there. So because I'm part of this interview and I'm coming at it from a Homicide stand point all of the sudden, not a crimes against persons —

KC: And you're recording the interview?

NN: We're recording the interview. And I'm sitting there thinking, William Melchert-Dinkle, and we have kind of a joke between us because his initials and WMD, he's *Weapons of Mass Destruction*, right?

He has done this so long, he can't admit to specifics. He kind of admits to overall doing this, having this pattern, but he can't identify—it's hard to talk to him about any single solitary one person involved, so that he can admit to an act concerning that particular case, because he's been doing this for so long, he has untold numbers of victims.

KC: And he thinks there's nothing wrong with this?

NN: Well, he at first tried to justify this – that he was doing these people a service, that they were depressed anyway and he was just guiding them down the path to the least painful way to kill themselves.

KC: What does he get out of it?

NN: Well, you have to believe he gets some sort of power trip. Whether he claims nobody ever did hang themselves on webcam for him, whether it's sexual, whether it's whatever, it's troubling. And this case has got covered worldwide. There are already novels that have been written about it, because it is just so, so bizarre. And being part of this case and part of the interview, right now where it's at, is he allowed to be argued as a court trial, which means no jury. Because the defense attorney knew right away, a jury would hate this guy in a heartbeat, right? I mean, what he's doing is so despicable.

I've been part of violent deaths. I've been part of children dying. But to prey on the weakest individuals over and over and over again and talk them into suicide, it's just unimaginable to me. I mean, it's one of the few times in my career that I could have seen myself be violent. I just—"Really? That's what you're doing? You're on there—" And we found a juvenile out of the State of New York that had attempted to hang herself, we found her screen name in his computer and we called the dad and the dad goes, "Oh, my God. She's been in therapy ever since. I can't tell her that the person that befriended her and talked her into this was a guy preying on her." He says, "I can't—" because that young lady would have been a great witness in our case, but you don't go there, because she's trying to survive this.

So presently, the judge in Faribault rang him up for—we have a law in Minnesota where you cannot advise or assist in a suicide. The judge found him guilty of two counts of aiding suicide. It's presently been appealed to the Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals has upheld the conviction. It's now being appealed to the State Supreme Court. The defense is arguing this is free speech. He is saying that these people were predisposed to committing suicide, that all Dinkle did is to comment on it and that is protected by free speech.

So one of my last interviews, one of my last everything, could ultimately end up in the U.S. Supreme Court as a free speech case, and it's certainly in the State Supreme Court right now as a free speech case. Again, I think back to the start of my career, working with cops from the Thirties, three day academy, no radios, no handcuffs, ending my career, working a case that dealt with an Ottawa victim, a Coventry, England victim, over the internet. I mean, international and what a bizarre road I've been on this career.

KC: How long did that interview take?

NN: We were there maybe an hour-and-a-half, two hours before he and his wife consented to his taking his computer. It was interesting, because I took his wife aside and explained to her what had happened. Before I took his wife aside, I made him explain to his wife [what he had been doing.]

In fact, this is a common thing I would use when I'd get confessions from people. I'd make them tell the same thing to a loved one. If I was in the interview room with someone and they confessed or would give me an admission, we would call a loved one and have them—because if they get to spin this story later on, they're going to tell it a different way and the support of the loved one is going to make them fight these charges because of whatever. If you make them admit it to the loved one right after they've admitted it to you, there's a chink in the armor. They've lost an ally, right?

So here's this ER nurse that's his wife, and I remember after we walked down the steps and I talked to her a little bit and she collapses. I mean, she's just like what the heck? He's been doing this for years and so on. In fact, he was going to—we had told him up front we weren't going to arrest him and these crimes were already years old by the time we talked to him. His wife talked

him out of going to work that night, because she said, “Obviously you can’t go.” He’s a nurse and he works at a nursing home. So he doesn’t go to work.

By the next afternoon, she is back, his ally. She’s back calling us, “Give me that computer. Do not look in that computer.” But she went from appalled at what he did to back supporting him. It was kind of fascinating to see that turnaround that quickly. One of the things I talked to her about, and this truly was not phony in anyway, I said, “You’ve got two teenage daughters. I’ve got two daughters. The focus this is going to bring on this family is going to be unbelievable. If this was me, the health of your daughters is paramount now. What he did is beyond belief,” and I said, “So I don’t know how you’re going to deal with this, but you’ve got to look out for those young ladies.” Well, she came back and is supporting him, so I wonder what the—

KC: The fall out for those kids has to be horrendous since then.

NN: So that’s my interview, probably one of my only interviews in Internet Crimes Against Children. I certainly did some phone things and some other stuff, but because I was the commander, it was more selling this program around the state and convincing these agencies that they should be part of it. And it’s kind of funny now, because when I look at crimes that have happened, whether they’re Craigslist crimes or they are some sort of internet related something or other and they’re agencies that were part of the task force, their expertise came from Internet Crimes Against Children—ICAD. But now because the internet is so much a part of all our crimes, all our whatever, they are out there looking for digital evidence when somebody commits a crime, whether it’s phone evidence on their smartphones. I think much of my pitch was, “You know what? This is coming like a freight train. The digital evidence that’s going to be out there and

why not piggyback on the dollars that I have to give you for training for ICAD, because sooner or later you're all going to have a case that is something else." So I used my sales pitch to kick this up to a hundred and some agencies, and it's fun looking at newspaper accounts now when I see these agencies that were never—I mean a computer related crime it was hands up, "We want no part of it." And now they sound like experts when they testify and the media covers it. It's amazing.

Craigslist Crimes

Here are real-life horror stories that might leave you thinking twice about responding to a suspicious online ad.

On Oct. 9, 2007, Carlton "Privilege" Simons, 25, and Shernett "Divine" Reevey, 24, were convicted of forcing college student Tamla Hutchins to prostitute herself through ads on Craigslist. The two promised Hutchins they would introduce her to hip-hop stars P. Diddy and Lil John if she came to New York and said they would give her money to care for her young son. Simons was sentenced to two to six years in prison; Reevey now faces a sentence of up to seven years.

On October 11, 2011, police in Roswell, N.M., arrested 29-year-old Anamicka Dave (pictured top right) after reading an ad she posted on Craigslist. In the ad, Dave allegedly wrote that she was "new to town" and "looking for Mary Jane." According to a police spokesman, the officer who stumbled across the ad while browsing the web off-duty was so stunned, he first thought it may have been another department conducting a sting operation. The officer, posing as a seller, exchanged information with Dave via text message and met her in a parking lot, where she was arrested. She was charged with one felony count of criminal solicitation of marijuana and released on a \$5,000 bond.

When Shawn and Kitty Sonnenschein of Portland, Ore., were planning their 2007 wedding, they requested Home Depot gift cards instead of gifts. But when they found only three cards after the ceremony, they knew something was wrong. They accused the Rev. Shey-Rima Silveira, who they found through a Craigslist ad, of stealing the cards. Silveira denied stealing the gifts, but police investigated and charged her with second-degree theft.

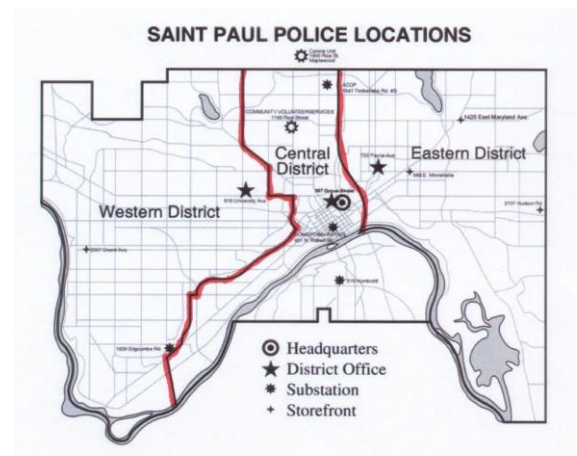
Michael John Anderson, 19, is facing a second-degree murder charge for allegedly killing a 24-year-old Minneapolis woman who answered a Craigslist ad for a baby sitter. Police allege he shot Katherine Ann Olson [pictured] in the back after she came to his home to inquire about the job. Olson's body was found in the trunk of her car Oct. 26, 2007. Anderson told police he was present during Olson's slaying, but said the killing was committed by a friend who "thought it would be funny."

Police are still searching for Donna Jou, a 19-year-old San Diego State University student who went missing in June 2007 after she left her home with a man she met on Craigslist. Jou was last seen as she left her home on the back of John Steven Burgess' motorcycle. Police eventually found Burgess, a convicted sex offender, in Florida, and he was sentenced to three years in prison for failing to register as a sex offender. He refused to speak to authorities about Jou's disappearance. On March 17, 2009 Superior Court of the State of California for the county of Los Angeles charged John Steven Burgess (a three times convicted sex offender) for the disappearance of Donna Jou.

Including one recent one, I think it's Anoka County dealing with the police officer from Minneapolis that has been soliciting all the young girls. Again, I think about if they didn't have the—obviously that is ICAD related—Internet Crimes Against Children related. But their expertise came from years of getting the training and being part of this program, so I'm very proud of that ICAD.

KC: How did you like going from being a hands on Homicide investigator to a commander supervising, marketing?

NN: Well, I can tell you my first assignment when I became a commander is I was a Patrol commander and it was short lived. I think only about a year-and-a-half, but it was amazing because I would ask the sergeants, "Why do we do things like this?" And they'd say, "Because we always have." And I'd be, "No we always haven't." I was like Rip Van Winkle. I had been out of Patrol for almost twenty years, and all the sudden I'm back in Patrol and the whole culture had changed. I felt like an old man in a young man's game, there's no question, because the culture and the way I saw the job wasn't necessarily what was embraced in the department by then. And I had some opportunities to change that. I worked



Police Districts in Saint Paul
1994 – present

East District is Saint Paul East of I-94

with Bill Martinez,⁷⁰ [then senior commander of the Eastern District]. He was my senior commander when I was in Patrol.

KC: East team.

NN: East team. And I was able to convince him. For example, we had all these—they're called queues, that when a call comes in and it's a priority five or priority four or priority three, it had to be dispatched in a certain length of time. Well what was happening is we'd have a Beat officer that let's say worked Payne Avenue, that would be sent over to the Far East Side to handle a theft call that was a priority five because it was timing out. I thought, "Well, if there's no Beat integrity, if you don't stay in your area for your Beat, how do you become aware of crime and how do you work on your area?"

KC: What's the purpose of a Beat cop?

NN: Right. And the sergeants were, "That's the way we support each other." And I said, "Well, I understand supporting each other, but if you're running hither and yon to take report calls, what good is the public, what good is the service?" So because of my old school ways, they changed the queue to add more time and tried to talk to the dispatchers about keeping cars in their Beat. I mean, there were things that had evolved that weren't a match.

So to answer your question, how did I like being a commander, at first, not very much. I preferred just working and being an investigator and

⁷⁰ **William Martinez** was a Minnetonka Police Officer 1984 – 1987. He was hired to work undercover through a lateral transfer to the Saint Paul Police Department October 5, 1987. Transferred to police officer November 5, 1988; promoted to sergeant June 19, 1994; lieutenant July 3, 1999; title changed to commander January 1, 2000; senior commander June 12, 2004; assistant chief May 29, 2012.

being in the trenches. I enjoyed working with the young cops on the East Side. I enjoyed the community involvement. One of the things I used to do at community meetings is I'd get up at a community meeting and tell everybody, "This is my desk phone. I am now your personal cop. You have a problem in your neighborhood and if it's not a 911, not a call, you call me and we'll try to figure it out." And I diffused many neighborhood meetings by saying, "Call me. We'll figure this out."

KC: Your chief liked that?

NN: Well, I have to assume—I think Bill Martinez liked it. He let me go to most of the neighborhood meetings, but it went back to old Beat days, where in the early days, it was before cell phones so we had pagers or whatever, and the Beat people could page me and I would answer their calls. So when it came to the Eastside, even though I was a commander and wasn't going to show up there to answer their calls, they could know they had a person they could call by their first name and say, "This is my problem in my community." And we'd talk about strategies to deal with it. So that part of being a Patrol commander I loved. I loved the community involvement.

Dealing with the change in the department didn't come as easily. So when I went to Internet Crimes Against Children, I actually only had one person that I was accountable for, for their service rating, Bill Haider, and then the rest of my agencies, all I did was report their activity and try to keep them responsive, try to keep them giving community service announcements or doing whatever it was to keep kids safe on the internet.

KC: The last job I don't think as much, but Narcotics, Homicide, you can get called out at any time. How did all of that affect your family? I'm sure there were

birthday parties and holidays that you were supposed to be there and you weren't.

NN: My wife's terrific. We had young kids when I went there and Narcotics obviously I worked evenings. For the most part, that worked out for the good because I would stay home with the kids during the day and work in the afternoons.

When it came to Homicide, there's no question starting with the first ones, starting with the fair. There were times I think where I worked over forty days straight. We were there in the peak of the Homicide years, 1986, '97, '98. We had over thirty murders a year. We had a crew of ten I think. We also handled all the Gross Misdemeanor and Felony Domestics, so our case load was huge besides all those murders.

When I would get a call, my wife would just pick up the slack. Never once did she ask me, "Why are you getting called in again?" Never once did she complain that I wasn't there; she just plain figured it out. I don't think I could have done it without her. I think both of us being public servants, I think she understands what that meant, so she was there to support me doing this job, and my kids I think are very much now cut from that same cloth. That Public Service means weekends aren't anything, nights aren't anything. You are committed to when you need to be there, whether it's holidays or whatever. So yes, I've walked out in the middle of Thanksgiving dinner and haven't come home for three days, and I could not have done it without her.

I heard other investigators in the Homicide Unit fielding those phone calls late at night. "I don't know when I'm getting home. I don't know why they called me out again." In the early days of Homicide, Gerry [Bohlig] and

I were the only two with young kids and everybody else had a lake place. Joe Corcoran did not believe in keeping people on a call out list. In other words, he kept a running list of who was up for a Homicide, but nobody had to stand by the phone at night. So on weekends in the summer time, Gerry and I were the only ones home, weekend after weekend after weekend, because everybody else had lake places. So it seemed like Gerry and I, those Homicide books for those years, our name is in there a great portion of that time. We caught a lot of cases, so thank goodness we worked well together and thank goodness my wife—no question, my wife and family were very supportive.

I would think my wife would say Homicide changed me. As much as I'd like think that I still had the same empathy for tragic situations, I suppose in some ways I became numb to it, and she would say she saw that. I think one of the things to go through jobs like that. Even though you said not so much the internet crimes against children, those investigators I feel so, so bad for them. They are immersed in child pornography every day. Looking at a rape taking place of a child does something to your brain and they have to do it as part their job. They have to write the script of reports of these videos they're watching.

So as much as I want to say that being around murder and traumatic deaths and accidents affected me, which I'm sure it did, those investigators that have to watch that on a daily basis, my heart just goes out to them, because I know that changes their family life. I know that changes how they view the world.

One of the things I guess I tried to do is to tell myself that I didn't see the true world—that my friends did. That my friends that were

teachers and ministers and worked for NSP, they saw the world. I saw such a skewed portion of it that I refuse to accept that that's what people were and that's what we were made of. I preferred to be surrounded by the people that sought good and almost everybody, because it kept me healthier. I don't socialize with many cops and I'm not sure I even did on the job. To stay sane, I need to say I saw the ugly part and that's not the true part.

KC: Were you married after you were an officer?

NN: Not long afterwards. I came on of July of 1977 and I got married in March of '78.

KC: So you already knew your wife and were engaged when you came.

NN: Yep.

KC: Your children?

NN: Two daughters And a son.

KC: And they were all born to a police officer.

NN: That's correct, yes.

KC: How has your being an officer and the harshest work that you've done affected them? You said they've gotten into public service, but—

NN: My son is now a federal attorney. I guess a couple of stories that include him. My kids went to a small Catholic grade school and I was in Narcotics when Jacob Wetterling was kidnapped. So my son is thirty now, I think Jacob would be thirty-one or thirty-two.

The school approached me and said, "Would you come in and do a presentation on stranger danger?" And I said, "Sure. I've never done this, but I'll figure it out. I'll find out." So I went into the school and started in kindergarten all the way through eighth grade. So you can

Jacob Wetterling, his brother, and a friend were cycling home from a convenience store on **October 22, 1989**, when a masked gunman came out of a driveway and ordered the boys to throw their bikes into a ditch and lie down on the ground. He then asked each boy his age. Jacob's brother and friend were told to run toward a nearby wooded area and not look back or else he would shoot them. After a short run, both boys did look back and saw the gunman grab Jacob by the elbow and walk him away. The whereabouts of Jacob and the identity of the gunman remain unknown.

Four months after Jacob's abduction, his parents, Jerry and Patty Wetterling, formed the Jacob Wetterling Foundation, an advocacy group for children's safety. In 1994, the Jacob Wetterling Act was passed in his honor. It was the first law to institute a state sex-offender registry.^[5] The law has been amended a few times, most famously by Megan's Law in 1996.

imagine how you have to change the presentation. I remember, because I was in Narcotics, I had a beard and long hair and a ponytail and my son said, "Dad," he's probably second grade or whatever, "Dad, don't wear your ponytail to school. Please, I don't want all the kids to see you have a ponytail." So I remember that as part of my kids' awareness of what I did.

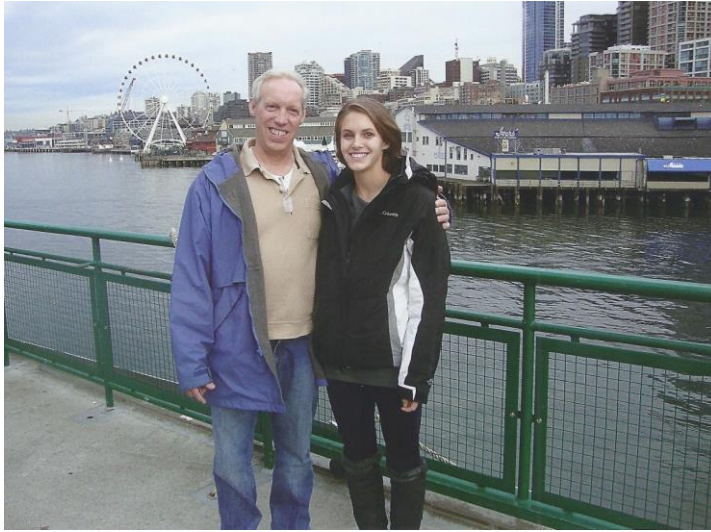
Now here's a [story] [chuckles]. I had a murder case with Jane Laurence⁷¹ when I was in the Homicide unit where Steven Bailey—he referred to himself as the True Master. He was into bondage and torture and he would advertise himself to the people that wanted to be tortured. Through one of his torture schemes with a guy from California, he kills the guy and is caught as he's

⁷¹ **Jane Laurence** was appointed police officer March 20, 1989; promoted to acting sergeant January 18, 1997; sergeant May 17, 1997; acting commander April 15, 2006; returned to sergeant December 2, 2006; and retired September 30, 2010. Received a Medal of Merit in 1996.

dragging the decomposing body out of his apartment and this case takes place. Well, at the time, I've been presenting for a Sex Crimes Investigators conference that is held annually in Grand View Lodge in Northern Minnesota. So they wanted to hear a presentation on the True Master Case. I didn't really [want to], but Jane agreed, so we started putting this together. Well, the True Master, Steven Bailey, had all these videos that became part of the case with self-mutilation. And then he had many emails from people around the country that were talking about what torture they'd want to have done to them and actually they got into cannibalism—that they wanted to be tortured, abused, sexually and otherwise, and then ultimately eaten. All right?

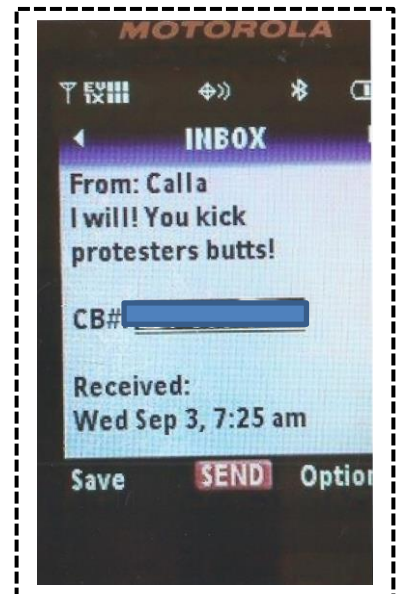
Well I am not technically savvy, so I asked my eighteen-year-old son to put together the presentation with all this weird stuff in it and so my son, who is very creative, narrates these—and now he's got a mature voice at eighteen and probably has my same cadence and everything, like family members do. So I think the audience all thinks that this is me reading this. Well, Jane announces to the audience after that that's my eighteen-year-old son. And these cops are, "You made your son do this stuff?" So anyway, when you talk about my kids' exposure to law enforcement, my son to this day—the music he used as the background for some of the mutilation video, he can't listen to it on the radio [both laugh], because all these bizarre images pop back into his mind.

My one daughter has gone into social work. My other daughter is currently a court clerk in Hennepin County, but does a lot of coaching and so on. I think they love to tell their boyfriends and so on the household they grew up in, with the murders and the sad kids stories from my wife, who does Early Childhood evaluations for Saint Paul schools. I don't know that they necessarily have commented on my job so much.



A funny story with my youngest daughter though. I was the watch commander during the Republican National Convention.⁷² And that happened over the Labor Day weekend 2008. And my daughter was going to be a senior at the U that year and classes had started. She

texted me while I was in the office. She's in the Journalism school at the U, twenty-two years old. You picture this liberal college student, right. So she text me, "Yikes. Senior year, here we go." Or something like that. And I text back, "I'm counting on you. Kick some senior year butt." She texts back to me—and I've got a picture of it on my phone to this day. She texts back, "I will. You kick protester butt." And I always think, only a cop's daughter would do that. Right? You've got to figure the rest



⁷² **Republican National Convention**—RNC took place at the Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul, Minnesota, from September 1, through September 4, 2008. The first day of the Republican Party's convention fell on Labor Day, the last day of the popular Minnesota State Fair. The week included approximately 10,000 largely peaceful protesters marched against the war in Iraq and 2,000 people marched to end homelessness and poverty, as well as other peaceful, permitted marches. On the first day of the convention, anarchist groups engaged in property damage and violence in downtown requiring unusually strong police response. Hundreds of arrests resulted in mostly dropped charges. All 600 SPPD officers spent much of the previous year preparing for the convention and hosting 850 officers from around Minnesota and the US.

of the U campus probably thought that we were an invasion force, that those protesters, but what does my cop daughter tell me to do?

KC: Kick butt [laughs].

NN: Kick butt. Kick protester butt. And I've always kind of cherished that, because again I think when you wonder what impact you have over your kids when you're in a certain profession, I think she saw what those protesters were doing, she knew what police do, and what did she say? Kick protester butt.

KC: I love it. Neil, what do you think your legacy is as a Saint Paul officer?

NN: I would like to think—and again, because I came into this profession not expecting this to be my career, or not expecting to even end up in police work. I feel so fortunate that so many agencies around the state and around the country acknowledge that what I teach for interview and interrogation is unique. It's so much less confrontational than what the other techniques are. The other technique says you're calling people liars or you're going to this with the mindset that you are a human lie detector and you can sense this deceit. My technique I think is more user friendly and I think cops, whether they have a day on the job or twenty years, can come out there and create rapport and invest and create partnership for more information, for a better result. I think that the thousands of cops I've taught is hopefully going to be my legacy.

I don't like to think that my body of work, that investigative stuff—because you never know what you're going to be called on. So some people get called to the case of the century and some people go their whole careers just doing journeyman work and are so dedicated and they'll never have a case that is on the front page of the paper. And that's not fair to base—I never

want my legacy to be because it's on the front page of the paper, because I just happened to be there when that case came in. So for me, the pride I feel is the fact that I have been asked to influence so many officers in their careers. And I was part of the academy for many, many, many years.

One of the things I tell people is, there's a difference between a job and a profession. In a job, you're just expected to come to work and do what you do and leave at the end of the day, but professionals solve problems. That's the difference. In a job, if you're screwing on antennas on a conveyor belt at Ford motor and the antenna comes out bent, you get to go and have a break until they figure out how to have the antennas come out straight. Professionals solve problems.

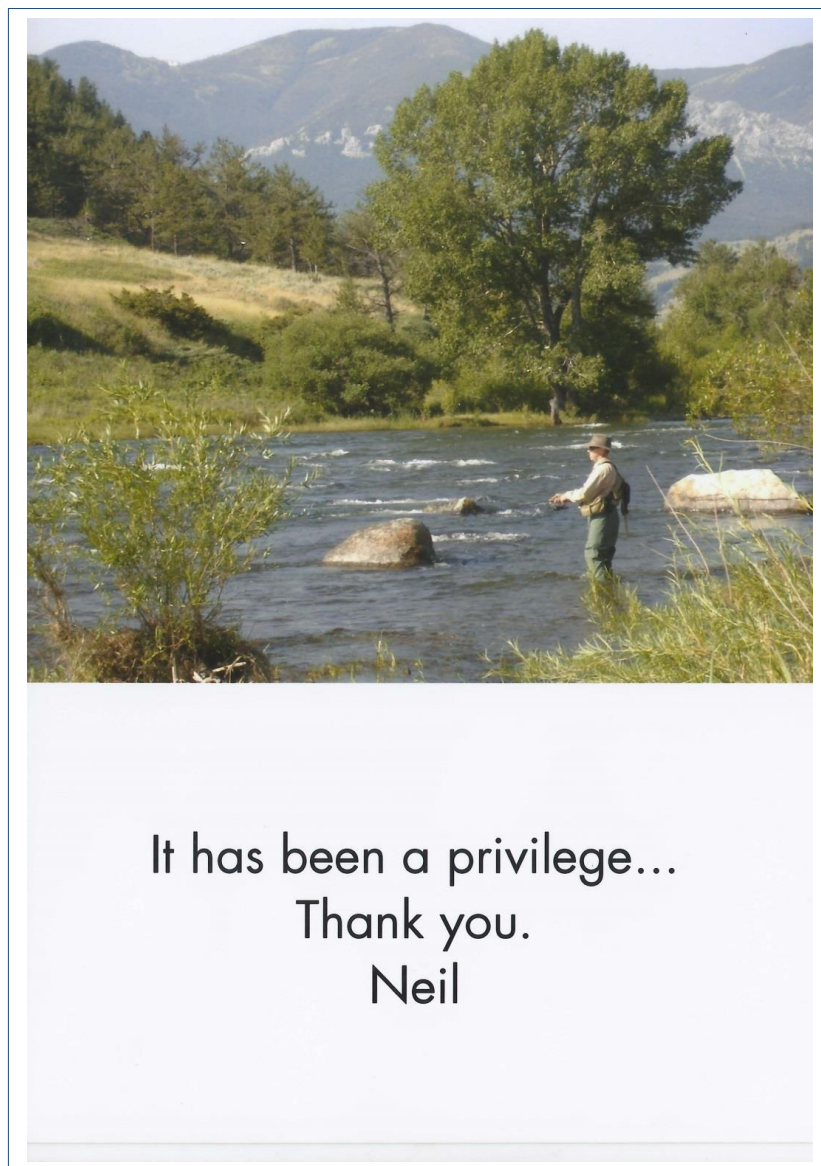
Police work is an awful job. You deal with the worst people, you're away from your family, you work odd hours, you see the worst of people at the worst circumstances. If you approach it as just a job, it eats you. It's awful. But if you go into it trying to solve problems and realizing you have an impact on the community you serve for good, there's no greater profession. It's an awful job, but a great profession. And I look around at the people that the job ate them up for twenty years and they leave bitter, because they never saw the job as anything other than driving around in a squad car and answering calls and I think, what a shame, because you took up the spot for somebody that would have embraced this as a profession, somebody that would have had that impact on the community we serve.

I was just so fortunate to end up in the city I grew up in, in the department I ended up in. I mean what a gift, with no plan to do it. It just fell into my lap. So hopefully, my legacy is that influence over the people that are

willing to let me share what I think is a little bit different way to do police work than maybe some of the other techniques and advocates do. My badge has shrunk over the years. It used to be huge and now it's very small. And I try to be very, very human.

KC: I hear that. Thank you. Thank you for all that you've done for my city.

NN: Thank you so much. What an honor and privilege to be asked to be part of this oral history.



The Card Neil sent out his last day at SPPD