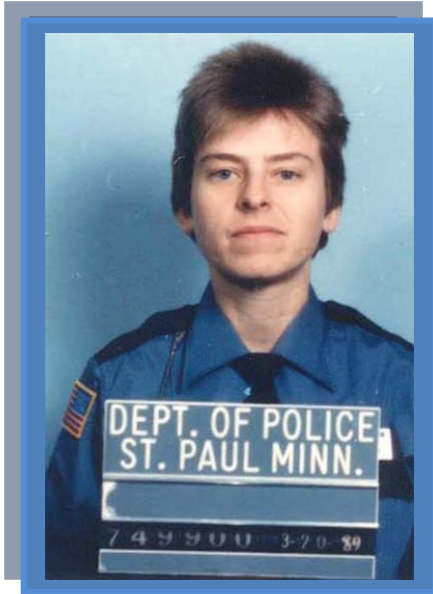


Transcription of Saint Paul Police Department Oral History interview with

**Officer
Lucia Theresa Wroblewski**



1989



2010

Interviewed on March 24, 2010

by
Kate Cavett of HAND in HAND Productions

HAND in HAND's Office in Saint Paul, Minnesota

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All photographs are from Lucia Wroblewski's personal photo collection or from the Saint Paul Police Department's personnel files.

 **Saint Paul Police Department
and
HAND in HAND Productions
2010**

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 do not 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 an 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

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KC: Kate Cavett

LW: Lucia Wroblewski

LW: I'm Lucia Wroblewski, police officer in Saint Paul.

KC: What year did you come on the Department?

LW: March 20th of 1989.

KC: Lucia, where were you raised?

LW: 947 East Jessamine, on the east side of Saint Paul.

KC: And what were your early experiences with the police?

LW: I was a good kid, and we were a good family, so, we didn't have anything. I think, one time



947 East Jessamine, Saint Paul
c. 1961



Mother Ala, sister Christine, brother Tony
Lucia, and father Bill Wroblewski
c. 1981

– one time, we kids, I don't know, we were home alone, and we called the police because there was a noise outside or something. And, I actually remember there were a male and a female cop, they responded to the scene and I do remember thinking that was pretty cool, but there was nothing going on, we were just scared kids, I think. So, that was about it for the police.

KC: What interested you in becoming an officer?

LW: I said this story numerous times, but when I was growing up it was Charlie's Angels and Starsky and Hutch on TV and those were two of my favorite shows

and the whole police thing. I was an athlete, so it was nice to be working not behind a desk and I thought that would be exciting, but I was always afraid of dying, so then I kind of put that off to the side, thinking it was so dangerous. Besides wanting to be an athlete, it was thinking about becoming a cop. I had a lot of teachers and people in my life that thought I could – I should teach or do something, but they thought I was smarter than that too. So, I didn't take up the thought of being a police officer until after I got out of college.

KC: Where did you get your degree?

LW: Technically, I have a two-year degree from Inver Hills Community College, but that was after I went to Macalester. I went to Macalester for four years, but I didn't get a degree there. My last year, I was really, really not motivated. I had a double major in psychology and PE. I wanted to be a teacher and you had to double major. Made it through the worst, the worst part of the psychology major, which is the psych pivot of the course program in Macalester, which they ran semesters and half of your course work was spent in this pivot program and it was statistics and research, like, mice research, it was awful. Made it through that and by the time I was done with that, I was so burned out and uninterested. I just started getting incompletes and I thought I gotta get out of here. Because it's a waste of a lot of money, if you know anything about Macalester College. And I was paying for it all on my own with a financial aid package. I left school my senior year. I never returned to get my four year [degree].

KC: How long until you went back to Inver Hills?

LW: I drove bus¹, part-timer, but by the time I was done driving, I was making the top pay, even with full-time pay, it was like fourteen bucks an hour, which was really good back then. So, I was doing that and then I thought, you know what, I think

¹ Saint Paul – Minneapolis Bus Transit System is governed by the Metropolitan Transit Commission

I want to do that police thing. I realized you could die crossing the street getting hit by a bus or something. The work still interested me. So, somebody told me I really have to go to Inver Hills to see Ed Juers. He was in charge of the program back then. I met up with him and he told me to take his introductory course and I took it, and within half of that class, by the time I took the first major exam, he's like, we gotta get you through this. So, in four months, I had completed everything I needed to complete, with all my course work at Macalester. I had taken the Red Book Exam and passed. So, I was ready to - ready to be licensed, I just had to get hired. So, that's the way that went, it was – it was really nice and it was really good.

KC: What was the hiring process for you?

LW: You have to be hired to get the police license. So, I applied at a few places and I remember my best interview was, probably – I got hired about six months into it by Minneapolis. My best interview, by far, was probably Plymouth. I was myself, and it was a fabulous interview in front of the big board, with the City and they did not want to hire a woman that wasn't married with kids, I mean, you could just tell that whole thing. And, Frankly, I'm glad they didn't hire me, cuz it wouldn't have been a good fit. I want nothing to do with people if they don't want me. I want nothing to do with them, so. Anyway, Minneapolis Park Police were the first people that hired me. So, I went through the Minneapolis Police Academy and then I got the nod to come to Saint Paul.

Saint Paul's hiring process was a lot more extensive. I mean, they did an entire background. Minneapolis did a paper check on me. Yeah, I don't think they even visited the MTC, where I worked. I think they called them, I know, they only talked to friends by phone. So, Saint Paul in the meantime, was like raking me over the coals. And, I got hired. It's interesting. Most of the women were at the

end of the class. Your seniority is based on how well you did in the interview, and nearly all the women were in the back of the class. We got a class of 19, and we were all 16, 17, 18. I think if you're a good bullshitter in an interview, and, obviously, they like what they see when they see a big guy. Back then it was still happening. It's probably still happening now. But I was happy to get on, so.

KC: How long were you with the Park Police in Minneapolis?

LW: I want to say, I was on the street for a month with the Park Police. If you get hired by the City [of Saint Paul], you go right away into the Academy. The [Minneapolis] Park Police, I was on the street for a month and then I got put into the Academy with the regular Minneapolis cops. We're all Minneapolis cops and seven weeks into the Academy, I had to give them the news that Saint Paul hired me.

KC: You wanted to go [to Saint Paul]?

LW: Yeah, and it was \$19,500 to start out in Minneapolis. I think, a family of four, with a spouse not working, raising two kids, you actually could qualify for food stamps, as I recall. You had to buy your own gun in Minneapolis. In Saint Paul it was \$28,300 compared to \$19,500, and Saint Paul was the top paid back then, now we're like seventeenth, and we've slipped a lot. We were top paid in the entire State back then and the Glock was issued to you, so, you had your gun issued, you had a really good uniform allowance, it was just – it's where I wanted to be. But, there was a huge difference between the two departments back then.

KC: Why did you want to be in Saint Paul?

LW: Because I grew up here and I think a lot of Saint Paul cops, feel the same way, there's some connection to the City. I've always loved Saint Paul. It's a really different city than Minneapolis. Yeah, huge roots, just like Tim Bradley², my partner. Yeah, there were huge roots on the eastside [for me].

² Timothy Robert Bradley was appointed police officer September 8, 1975; awarded the Metal of Valor July 7, 1996; Metal of Merit Class B on November 10, 1989 and November 6, 1997; and a Class C Metal of

KC: You grew up on the eastside, and have you spent most of your career on the eastside?

LW: I have now spent most of my career on the eastside, yeah. I worked every district in the City, my first four years, just because of my seniority. And, I was trying like heck to get off of midnights, my first year and a-half, two years was on midnights. It was the time, the nighttime just



Partner Tim Bradley

really, really, can kick your butt, working those hours. Some people just can't adjust real well, and I was one of them. We were also working a six and two, and every once in awhile, you had a three day weekend, six and three. And how do you have a normal life? Where is that time off when you kind of had a regular schedule with people. You're always tired. I just really had a hard time with it.

So, the minute anybody had an opening in day shift, I did it. And they were running four on two off on the day shift. It was like, almost a couple years. And, there was nobody volunteering for it, cuz I'd loose all of my holiday and a week of my vacation, because there's that much time off with that and I gave it all up to work days, so. And, I've worked the afternoon shift and stuff since then. I was on the eastside in '94. I've been on the eastside since 1994, sixteen years.

KC: You had said you were an athlete. Talk a little bit about that.

Commendation June 12, 1987 and July 8, 2004; Saint Paul Officer of the Year in 2001 and 1996 with partner Lucia Wroblewski.

LW: Since I was a kid. My dad³ was a fabulous athlete, he came from Poland and he was actually offered a semi-professional soccer contract to play in Chicago, they had a semi-professional league, but he stayed in Saint Paul with the family. And he didn't want to break up with his dad⁴, who was his only [family] survivor from the



Bill Wroblewski
with daughter Lucia
1961



war [WWII]. I remember going to his soccer games at Harriet Island. They played World War III all over again. All the nationalities would be kicking each other's butts on the field. But, he got me involved in sports and I played from the first time I could be competitive, so, in junior high, high school.



Dad on a bike



Lucia on a bike

We won the State Championship my senior year, I was the captain of the State Championship, Johnson's Class AA, so it was the big school Championship team.

³ Father: Boleslaw "Bill" Wroblewski. (Born 3-16-1932). The Germans' displaced the family in Poland and they spent much of the WWII years in the Russian Gulag, then in North Africa. His mother, Amelia, died during the war.

⁴ Grandfather: Jozef Wroblewski (09-17-1898 - 19??)

When I went to Mac (Macalester College) I was a three sport athlete. I was captain of every team by the time I left, and we went to National's twice with me as a setter on the volleyball team, we were seventh in the Nation one year. Division III, but we rocked, it was great. Those were some of the best—there's nothing like if you've ever been on a team like that, and I went from a team like that at Johnson, luckily, to a team like that at Mac. And, I'm not bragging, it takes the whole team, but being the setter, you're kind of the quarterback and I was always kind of a leader in that regard, and the whole team just meshed. We were all there for each other. It still, it's fabulous. Now, I'm just doing individual things like jogging, but that team thing when you're younger, it's a really neat thing. And, I thought that that's what it could be like.

KC: In the police department?

LW: Yeah. So, that was always – I was always graced with being with fabulous people, good coaches, you know what I mean.

I just had a really, I was really fortunate in my growing up, in my experiences. I ended up switching from volleyball to soccer. I had one bad coach, she was – um – she really didn't like me, because I was a three sport athlete, she just wanted me to stay, strictly, to volleyball. She ended up getting fired years later, when she actually started making improvements. I had nothing against her. But anyway I switched over to soccer and that was the sport that my dad played. I never played competitively, but even having kicked the ball with him and trapped the ball, it was amazing how fast you catch on, and I ended up being the captain on the soccer team the second year there. The second year we had soccer. It was just great, I can't talk enough about those days, I just, I miss that.

KC: And, your face is just shining.

LW: It was a high, it was a total high.

KC: Am I interpreting this right, that those experiences with great athletes, working together as great team, was what inspired you or one of the interests that you had, and hoping that you would find in the police department?

LW: Yeah, I think that's fair. I thought being an athlete would be really important, you know. I actually thought I was going to be—I guess I don't know what I was smoking. I guess cuz I had that microcosm, I thought that was the world kind of thing. I'd just been hanging around female athletes. I'd been hanging around people who were supportive of that. When I got to the MTC [Metropolitan Transit Commission] they had a softball team and right away you're well liked. I mean, I'm a decent human being, I'm actually somebody that's really, I mean, I make a really good friend and stuff. But, boy, they latched onto me, and that even happened here. You know, even on the Police Department in the early days, I'm not going to talk about that, but, when I went to the MTC they had me playing on the softball team, it was a great way to get to know people, people respected you. After college I played on teams and you just had that camaraderie.

I thought the world was kind of like that, and I thought, my god, any women coming onto a police department, where the focal point, really, in my opinion, is the officer in uniform that's out there saving lives, running after people, needing to be strong enough to take care of, not only themselves and their partners, to be able to really physically do the job as well as mentally. It was like, I thought for sure, I'd be with a group of, you know, athletes that are going to be better than me. And, I was shocked when I came to Saint Paul, meaning no disrespect to my female colleagues, but, boy—we had a softball team and, wow, I was the best player on the team, pretty much, along with a person who wasn't a Saint Paul cop, but a deputy's wife, who joined the team. I loved it, and it was great, and the camaraderie was there, but it was a shocker. Some people didn't know how to

really throw a ball or were afraid to catch it and I was stunned. That didn't mean anything, but it was like, wow. I was thinking I was gonna work with a group of women that I would be afraid to meet in a dark alley, you know what I'm saying, that they would really do some damage.

And, Minneapolis, they're a little bit more like that, but, yeah, here I was, I felt like I – they were a bunch of people who were wives and mothers. And, that's fine, but it was just really different for me.

KC: You were the most physically fit female officer in 2007.

LW: They have a – I don't know what Marcia [Panos']⁵ criterion is. I know at the run, she never has me at 99%, because oftentimes I ran past that and the computer [had a glitch and wouldn't register scores over 100%] – I'd always have to remind her to put my name on the list in gym, in case bosses cared. Because I was at 100 and it didn't reach into the computer. So, there's the criterion. There are a lot of really in-shape female cops that are in better shape than my 47-year-old body right now. In the Academy, I was by far - I was one of the top people, in terms of physical fitness, in my academy, including all the men, so. And, I'm not bragging about that, I think it's the truth.

KC: What did your parents think about you going into police work?

LW: You know, by the time I made the decision, and I was 26, and just turned 27 the next week when I got hired. They were just glad I had a job with health insurance. I didn't have health insurance for five years. So, I remember if I had something that I thought needed antibiotics, like, not strep but, like, the flu or something like

⁵ Marcia Panos is the Physical Fitness Coordinator for the Saint Paul Police Department

that, I'd go to that Westside Clinic⁶, Westside Health Clinic and they'd do a sliding fee scale.

Before the MTC, I was doing odd jobs. I even worked at Arby's out of college, and just shared an apartment with a total stranger, a one bedroom apartment on Grand Avenue. You know what you do when you're young, just to be on your own and independent. It's a little different nowadays, parents are giving their kids everything. But, yeah, for five years [that was where I went.] And what was nice is when [I joined the department and could contribute to] United Way, I was able to – I contributed specifically to the Westside Health Clinic for what they did for me. And, luckily, I was healthy.

KC: What was your academy like? How many women were in your academy?

LW: The Saint Paul Academy. You know what, I had a great experience at the Saint Paul Police Academy, just fabulous, I was excited to be there. I thought it was run professionally. And John Harrington⁷, who is now the Chief, was the lead sergeant of my academy. It was like going into a really good college course, intense college course.

I was in Minneapolis's academy, obviously, for seven weeks before that and that place was run a whole different way. I don't know how much I should say, but I was told people that had been in trouble before and were now maybe dry drunks,

⁶ Westside Community Health Services, 153 Cesar Chavez Street, Saint Paul, MN 55107 651-222-1816, www.westsideshs.org

⁷ 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.

that was a lot of what the leadership was, in terms of like mentor officers and stuff. I remember running around Fort Snelling and they'd be disrespecting Saint Paul. While we're running we're supposed to be singing those songs like they do in the military, and I was having a good [time], I was in fabulous shape and I didn't care what they said. You know, it's nice when you're in really great shape, cuz they just can't say criticize you. I enjoyed sprinting and running. But, it was really different in Minneapolis. They'd tell you what they were going to test you on and then they wouldn't test you on it, they'd quiz you on something else. It was like mind games and stupid stuff in Minneapolis. And then when I came to Saint Paul, it was like, ah, a breath of fresh air.

Back then, now, and I'm not so sure this is what's happening now, but back then, when you were tested on something, they prepared you, this is what you're going to be tested on tomorrow. If you studied, you did well. Then you knew what you were studying that was what you got tested on. The whole thing, the range, everything was just really professional. I can't say enough, I thought it was a fabulous academy. We had physical standards, you had to meet them.

How many women? Linda Wilson⁸, Sue Drutschmann⁹, me, Jane Lawrence¹⁰, those were the four that made it, we had one woman, who I think got hired somewhere else, eventually, that didn't make it for, basically physical standards reasons, and I think she left before halfway into the academy, I'm not exactly sure about that.

⁸ Linda Wilson was appointed police officer March 20, 1989; promoted sergeant May 30, 1998.

⁹ Sue Drutschmann was appointed police officer March 20, 1989.

¹⁰ Jane Laurence was appointed police officer March 20, 1989; promoted acting sergeant January 18, 1997; sergeant May 17, 1997; acting commander April 15, 2006; returned to sergeant December 2, 2006 and retired September 2010.

KC: Were women and men treated any differently?

LW: In the academy, honestly, from my perspective, no. It was professional. I wish we could go back to those days. I didn't have rose colored glasses on, but whatever they were presenting to us, whatever our little view of the Department [was] I have only good things to say about that. You know, Linda had a serious injury as a result of wrestling. She's a sergeant in juvenile now. But, there's no whining or anything and they took care of it, you know. Whether it could have been prevented or not, I'm not going to get into that. When you're doing physical stuff, people are going to get hurt. I don't remember anybody getting badmouthed, I don't remember any really. I don't remember swearing. I don't remember anybody swearing at anybody. Mark Johnston ran the use of force, I thought he was professional. It's fun to go back, it's like talking about my sports. Those are really good memories for me.

And, I thought John Harrington did a really good job. He was supposed to be the bad guy, and I remember we'd stand in line and Steve Koll, who was a military guy, he or his wife had burned the iron on his shirt and that was the only shirt he had, so here he is standing in line with this burn mark on his shirt. John comes up to me, and my uniform was immaculate. You can tell I'm not the cleanest person in the world. I'm not into the perfect, perfectly crisp uniform, but back then I was. You know, you do what you have to do. [He pointed to something on my tie.] I don't even think I had a lint on my tie, but that was his messing with you, big deal, he pointed to a spot on my - I'm, like, what? He goes to Steve Koll right next to me, Good Uniform, and he has this iron mark on his uniform. John just couldn't do the - he just couldn't play the bad guy. I mean, he did it, like, oh, that's unfair, big deal. Yeah, it was all [good]. That's the way things should be run, treating us

like adults and having us learn in an adult learning environment, and I think that's the way it was handled.

KC: What about FTOs—Field Training Officer, how did your FTO treat you?

LW: Well, I got lucky, again. I had a great FTO experience. John Fischer, Dan Slagle, who had an unfortunate tragedy after, but he was an FTO of mine, and Bruce Oliver. I had really nice guys as FTOs. I think I was fairly smart, I needed to learn police work and stuff, but they let me roll. And they didn't play games with me.



Probably the worst experience I had on FTO, and there's a little bit of hearsay. I rode with a female officer once, a very well respected, well regarded senior, a veteran, female officer. I was told by some of my colleagues when we worked the State Fair that there was a lot of talk about the dyke, me, that this person had spread rumors about me. And it was one of my classmates that, I think, was trying to really - just to give me a heads up. And, I thought, my god. That was my first lesson in the way things might be, and that it was a woman was really disappointing to me.

KC: The veteran woman that you rode with was spreading rumors?

LW: Yeah, I suppose if you have some 'gay-dar' or whatever, I had a little bit of a tail, I had shorter hair, I don't think it was in, like, a concentration camp cut. But I was enthusiastic and athletic and I suppose somebody could make [as assumption I was gay].

I wouldn't talk about my personal life or anything for a long, long time on the department. But, anyway, that's what I was told and I told the person—it was

really devastating to hear—and I told the person thanks for telling me. I just tucked it in the back of my head. And believe me it came up in my head every time I saw that person, but they're retired now. You just learn, that was the first negative little thing on the Department for me.

KC: From another woman?

LW: Yeah, while I was an FTO.

KC: It wasn't a gender thing, it was a heterosexism thing?

LW: I'm not a psychologist, but I would say there have been some women, I don't think there is that many, but there are some women who try to fit into the Good ol' Boy network. First, I don't think they ever do fit in. But if they're drinkers and, I guess, sometimes I see them as not very sophisticated. You know what I'm saying? They're surely not progressive type of people, at least, not progressive thinkers. They might be really good at cop work, which is knowing all the bad guys, maybe. But, drinking with your co-workers was a big plus. I think sometimes those females that try to fit into that Good ol' Boy thing—I do believe there may be a tendency sometimes to knock down other women and, especially, if they're good. You know what I'm saying? Like, you have to be better than all the other women or be seen as better.

I've seen that on a couple of occasions in my life and I think that's what I would attribute that to. And, it's unfortunate, I mean, I don't want to talk about people and I don't want to act like I'm the big psychologist or I'm better than them. But, it's kind of sad, cuz oftentimes I think their personal lives are a total mess.

KC: The four women in your academy, were you supportive of each other? Was there some camaraderie created with the women? Did the women have their own locker room by then, or was the academy a strong academy altogether?

LW: It was a strong academy together, there was no, like, women's coalition. But – we all got along. I'd say all of us got along. I like each and every one of them and respect them all.

KC: In these early years, as a rookie, were there any other women that started coming forward to be mentors, to be supporters, to say, if you ever need anything, I'm there for you.

LW: You know, I can't think of somebody. I can't think of somebody, like, approaching me. I don't have the greatest memory. There are things that if it's something that really impacted me, I'll remember it, even up 'til when I was a kid.

I do know, like, playing in the softball team. We got along, like, Bev Hall¹¹ played on the softball team. It was nice to have a connection with other women and short of being told about that other incident. It's best not to even know. So, it's not like I was asking for information about what other people were saying about me. I'd rather not even know, so, I don't know what was being said. But, there were women – I got along with some people who were, actually, like, even promoted, sergeants or commanders got to know me a little bit, which always helps.

There was even some co-ed teams. I played against Bob Fletcher. We had co-ed softball and I played with the guys. It was like one year, I think, my first year on the job, and then it all stopped. We used to have a league and there were a lot of people that played. He called me *Robo Cop*, you know, because *Robo Cop* had come out, and with my last name. Again, that's not why I did it, but it was an avenue

¹¹ Beverly Joy Hall was appointed police officer February 23, 1980; promoted to sergeant June 15, 1986; Lieutenant July 14, 1995; title changed to commander January 1, 2000; retired December 31, 2007.

where people could gain some respect for me. So, women were supported, but I didn't see anybody actively trying to be a mentor.

And, of course, you're working midnights after you get off FTO. And, you had a busy life, you're trying to learn a new job and the work schedule sucked. The six [days on] and twos [days off] and six [days on] and three [days off] was terrible and just trying to juggle your own personal life trying to keep those relationships going. You know, you come to work, you do that thing and then .

KC: What were some of the hard experiences you had in those first years?

LW: I had my first IA [Internal Affairs] complaint that was not sustained. You know, injustice just drives me nuts. I've experienced and seen quite a bit of it in my job. Sergeant Tom Walsh was my boss and we ended up fighting with a drunk. He made an IA complaint and, of course, the guy could hardly spell and, you know, that kind of thing, and it was a lie, the complaint was lie. You had a sergeant, my FTO was Jane Mead¹² at the time, Jane Huber. I can't even recall, I mean, I'm sure I wrote a decent report and all that stuff. But it turned into an IA complaint and they not sustained it. I don't know if you know anything about our dispositions, but non sustained means you don't know who to believe.

I found out later that in court – this is how upset I was, and I'm only one year on the job – when it came to go into court, in the records, he said he couldn't remember a thing about that night. And, I thought, why don't they subpoena those records, cuz if he can't remember, how can he write in such detail in an

¹² Jane 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.

Internal Affairs complaint. And, I felt always we should have been unfounded or exonerated. You have the word of three cops and IA made it non sustained. So, that was one thing.

I didn't have a negative experience, but it was only because I turned off on a police chase. I was involved in that Hudson chase, back in 1990. I was working midnights and a call came out – a canine, there was a guy with a shoplifting warrant or some kind of theft warrant. I want to say its like 01:00 in the morning and the chase is on, on the highway, starting from downtown. I hopped on the highway and we're heading east toward Hudson and when I got on the highway – and I thought I was close – there's just a sea of red lights. I couldn't believe the cops, as far on the horizon that I could see. I've got my pedal to the metal, and it's going 100 and the people behind me, they're not stupid enough to pass me, cuz even with four empty lanes, you just don't want to pass that person going 100 miles an hour. So, they're, like, edging me, and I'm in this line and I got up to 694 and I'm thinking, *You know, they have enough help. And there were calls pending downtown.* I know the minute I got off, they stopped the 10-2 or 10-1 to clear the air. There were so many calls waiting. I took an alarm call in Central [District] and I'm not even a Central squad.

So, I turned off on 694 and my hands were just shaking and it wasn't because there was fear. It was the first adrenaline dumb I've ever experienced like that on a police job. Because, all of a sudden there's nothing to do, all that excitement and I have to slow it down. And, I'm like, "What is going on with my hands?" Ten minutes of this involuntary shaking and I'm like, "come on".

I think that's why sometimes suspects got beat, in the old days. It kind of came clear to me in my head. I imagine you have to have that adrenaline release and you run out of the car and all of a sudden your muscles are like Superman. How do you control that. So, anyway, I turned off.

And it ended up being a civil rights trial down in Madison, Wisconsin on this thing. And, one of my academy people, ended up getting a 30 day suspension from Chief McCutcheon¹³ for not "seeing anything." And I'm using my quotations on my hands. He got all his time back, but there was a State Trooper that apparently, as I recall reading about, had admitted to hitting this guy in the head with a flashlight. So, that first big chase, I could have found myself in the middle of that. I don't know. If you don't see something and you say you don't see it, would you get in trouble because, maybe, they think you're lying. I don't know. I was just glad to not be a part of that, cuz I could hear squads going to Regions, like, maybe they had some blood on them or had been contaminated or something. I'm like, *Wow, something happened there – something happened there*. I had no really bad experiences, I'd say, in my first few years. I had some, just experiences like that, that kind of teach you something.

KC: What were some of the positive experiences you remember in the early years?

LW: I was excited about the job. It was a great salary. I think all my friends and family respected what I was doing. I don't know, life was just – life was good, I mean, like I said, I didn't have many negative experiences on the Police Department. I just tried to do a really, really good job, you know, learning the job.

¹³ William Wallace McCutcheon served the Saint Paul Park Police 1948 to 1954, appointed patrolman 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.

And, I remember also thinking I was not going to become a Field Training Officer until I was on five years. Some people can become FTOs at three years. It's amazing. You want to have every experience you possibly can. [But,] you can't, but you want to have experienced everything before [you become an FTO. That's the way I felt. Before you train people, because, what if this would have happened in here or I hadn't had that experience yet, or I haven't handled that kind of call, yet. And, even at five years you [haven't done everything], even at twenty-one years sometimes there's something different about a call that you've never had. So, I was just learning the job.

In 1993, my fourth year on the job I got involved with the first pilot project, the Bike Patrol, with Tim Bradley. Because I was an athlete and I was mountain biking. I think I was mountain biking to work, to Central Team, every day. And,



Bike Cop Lucia
2006

then I heard in Seattle had Police Department Bike Patrol, they had started the first one in the nation. Tim stopped me on traffic, actually, on the way home from work.

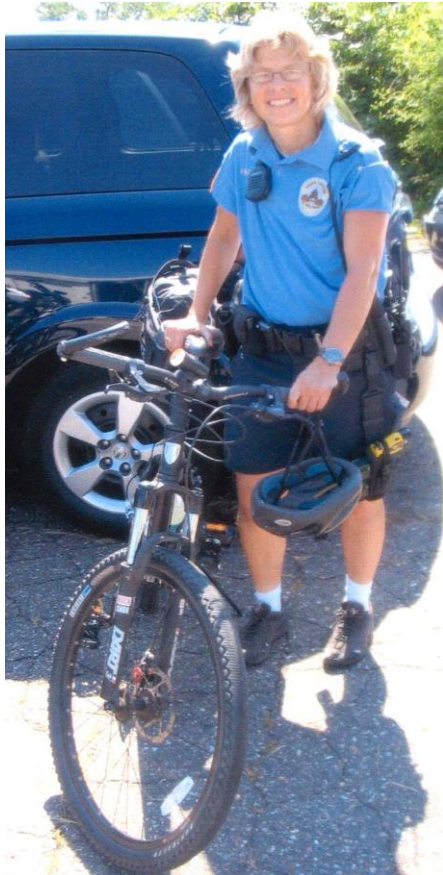
KC: He stopped you for speeding or something?

LW: Well, there was a three-way stop sign, there still is, at Phalen Boulevard and Wheelock or Johnson Parkway there. There is a bike lane, and there's no street on the right. You can't – it's not a thru street. And, I actually saw him, he was

the second car, I saw the squad car, and I'm heading back home from Central Team and I'm in the right bike lane and there's the stop sign, and it doesn't make any sense for me to stop, I'm in the bike lane, I can't get hit, unless somebody goes into the bike line.

KC: You're biking?

LW: I'm on the mountain bike going home. And, I hear on the PA, nice stop. So, being a cop, I slowed down and I stopped on the curb and waited for him. And, then I was like, "Hi, sorry about that." You know, I'm not stupid, and I just said – I didn't even make an excuse – but, I said, "You know, I'm biking home from work, I work Central Team with McKenna." I had a partner at the time. He didn't recognize



me, I'd never worked East Team and I was only three years on. So, we introduced ourselves.

Tim, had actually made a proposal, I think, to [Chief] McCutcheon (chief 1980-1992) even, but he said, "Do you want to work on this together?" So, we ended up working together on it and submitting it to Finney¹⁴ and I was the first bike patrol, the first year we had bike patrols in 1993, based on Tim and my – we had done research. We sent things to other Departments, we got all the research materials back. We had a fifty page – we wrote an entire proposal, met with the Chief, Tim proposed it.

In the pilot project, I worked West District with Bob Winsor, and he worked East with Shannon Hutton¹⁵. And, that was the first bike patrol. [Pat]Scott and [Joe] Flaherty, the famous team, were in West with me. I don't know who else was on in East. That was the first time I got involved in a

¹⁴ William "Corky" Kelso Finney appointed January 4, 1971; promoted to sergeant April 1 1978; the first Black male promoted to lieutenant March 8, 1982; captain February 23, 1987; and Saint Paul's first Black chief July 17, 1992; and retired June 30, 2004.

¹⁵ Shannon Marie Hutton was appointed police officer September 19, 1988; promoted to acting-sergeant October 29, 2002; reinstated to police officer February 1, 2003; appointed sergeant October 26, 2002, and retired June 17, 2010.

project and I thought it was a real success. The pilot program was a success and then the next year they had full time bike patrols that expanded. I don't know when it started wavering, kind of, a little bit. It was a great program and I was real proud of that.

KC: And it continues and you're still on the bike patrol?

LW: It continues, Tim hasn't wanted to bike for—he had that injury. He's been my partner for sixteen years now and I don't know when he's going to retire, but I think he deserves to do whatever he wants and I'll be his supportive partner. He mentioned he might want to bike this summer.

KC: As long as we're talking about bikes. You were in the bike patrol for the RNC¹⁶? Can you talk about that?

LW: That was an interesting experience. Yeah, I was chosen as a team leader. So, I'm not a sergeant, I'm just a cop. But I was chosen as a team leader for a little squad. Tim got injured that's why he wasn't involved, he was chosen as a team leader on another team. Well, it was interesting. The pre-training, we had training all year and it was set up. I'm sure people were trying to do their best and this is the first time ever for this kind of thing. But, I tell you, we were told we had to go attend mobile field force training, even though we're on the bikes. But the bikes

¹⁶ 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.

were to never be in the position in the front, in the front! Cuz we don't have the equipment – but, we'll go through mobile force [training].

We were supposed to go through mobile field force and get all the equipment because just in case we have to change and they need us on the line. Needless to say, we never got the equipment, okay. But we attended all the training.

And, then there was scenario training, where they used us as the bike patrol, they were supposed to use us, and we were hardly used in the practicals. We pretty much just sat around, while the guys in those big suits and stuff did their training. And, honestly, I think we were, kind of looked at as, you know, I think we were laughed at, what are they gonna do?

KC: And the mobile field force have special uniforms, helmets and batons and they look like the Darth Vaders¹⁷ of the world. So, let's talk about the reality of Monday, September 1st, downtown Saint Paul all hell broke loose, and who were the first line in most of these situations?

LW: Well, I just have to tell you this, because one of the sergeants—I'm just going to tell you, is a friend of mine, but she was patrol sergeant, [to patrol the city outside of downtown]. She was told she'd never be involved in the RNC stuff. They were not given tear gas masks, until the very end. This is just regular patrol. They got overrun [by the protesters downtown]. I mean, the regular patrol units came in to try to save the day, and they got overrun by these protestors.

¹⁷ Darth Vader is a fictional character and the central antagonist in the six-film science fiction saga *Star Wars* by George Lucas.

Now, bikes, after that first day, all of a sudden the importance of the bike unit and the mounted unit were obvious. My own particular unit, everybody realized how fluid we are. The only way to get around downtown fast was on a bike. You know, cuz things are blocked off. To get on sidewalks, all these hooligans are on foot. You know, on foot or on bike, and they're going to go between buildings, they're going to be on sidewalks, they're going to go in between the parks. So, the mobility of the bikes became really obvious. When they needed us, we were there or would have been there.

Like, my particular bike unit, we were out with a bunch of anarchists on a corner before all hell broke loose. I understand there's probably organizational problems, but my bike unit had to stay with this group of anarchists. Whereas, there was a Ramsey County booking group that was waiting, had nothing to do, were twiddling their thumbs and here we were babysitting this group, while all hell was breaking loose. Our mobile unit of bike cops was not used. It ended up that this booking unit was available, but somehow things got crossed.

As soon as we got free, it was just – it was amazing what we could do. All of a sudden they needed us here – oh, they're breaking the line [on] our fellow colleagues, we ended up helping them with this line strung out across. You saw it in the paper, I think. There was a picture.

We were trained to grab our bikes and push the crowd back, you know, you actually grab the bike and use it as kind of a shield. That's what we were doing and then we'd move on, "Hey, we need the bikes here" or "Bikes respond over here." And, I'd say that in the research, I think other departments had shown that the bikes were really, really an important tool, one of the most important tools, but

I don't think we were quite seen like that until everything broke loose. And, frankly, I was concerned, because we didn't have a lot of equipment before this. I thought, "Well, we're not going to be on the frontline." But, I'll tell you what, all those bike cops, we were dying to be in the frontline by that time, because we were really making a difference, you know. We didn't have the equipment all these other people had, but we were like, *bring it on*. It was fun to, actually, do our jobs. I think we saw probably more action than – some of those poor mobile field force people who were just staying in their certain stations and guarding things for hours and hours at a time, not doing anything. But, yeah, we were proud of what we did.

KC: And, I know that the police department is paramilitary, [but I don't believe there were many ranking officers that had been trained as] bike cops. [Did they find trained bike commanders for the bike units?] You have been a bike cop since 1993, you have gone around the nation training at bike cop conventions, so you do a lot of training.

LW: The paramilitary structure – frankly, I love the military, but we're a civilian organization, I think we're paid to think. Sometimes this paramilitary stuff just gets to



Bike Cops

RNC—Republican National Convention--2008

me, and I know there are probably cops who just cringe talking about that. If you had a sergeant, we had to [follow their directives], unless it was something critical, where I'd overrule anybody in a critical matter. In this whole training we were told it was really important to really stick together as a team. So, you could have

a sergeant or say a commander of another unit, who if they told you to stand down, no matter how much you're needed. You're utilized based on who your unit leader is. So, that kind of determines how much you do.

I, as a team leader, had to defer to my sergeant. So, if you had a sergeant who was very aggressive – but, you know, some people are more cautious. I think the experience was a good one and we did our jobs, but we were a little more aggressive the last couple days, my particular unit. Not to say that we weren't aggressive before. But, it was a learning experience, too, cuz the sergeants didn't know what we were going to face either. My sergeant actually got hurt. He was really aggressively going after – we were with the Minneapolis unit – he was going after one of the anarchists that was running.

KC: Who was your sergeant?

LW: Jim Anderson. But, he got his shin cut pretty severely and he was out the rest of the time. I think he had stitches and stuff. He was hobbling around. He was still involved, he would help us with equipment and stuff. But, we ended up kind of having – [Sergeant] Julie Rudie was second in charge and stepped in to be our leader. And, I'll tell you this, Julie Rudie allowed Murray Prust and I, who were the bike team leaders, she pretty much said, "What do you guys think?" And by that time, with two days into it, there was the, "let's go there and let's go here, let's go this." So, she was one of them that kind of deferred to experience—to the experienced people.



And, I'll tell you, that fourth day was fabulously fun for our group, cuz we were involved in blocking off that Marion bridge they, [the protesters,] were trying to take over that day. And, I'll stand up to anybody. We had to bike right through the anarchists, we were holding off Cedar [Street]. Wow, there was a commander that was giving them the, I swear, the twentieth warning, the twentieth warning to leave, you know. They all should have been arrested well before that. But, there they go making a break for the Marion Street bridge [over I-94], which was, obviously, way off the course. They were already off the course. But we had to stop that, and we biked right through, single file, my unit, biked through them and beat them to the bridge and made a line across with just bikes, with all this equipment, the horses came through, galloping through, and we held that. They didn't break our line, until mobile field force came, and it took them a little bit of time to get there. I mean, it was really great!

So, that's the way it was working then. If anybody had a tape of that, you could hear the bike cops, you know. I think you could hear us, cuz we were at the Capitol and the whole thing kind of went to hell again. It was good. It was good. We were a little frustrated with the top command. Cuz, we're like, how many times are you gonna tell these people, I mean, really, it's like bad parenting, you know. That's just our opinion. I'm sure they had other things they were considering, but from the ground [it didn't make sense]. And, then that's the group that ended up getting arrested, took them a long – many, many hours. That was a long day, we had some long days, we were working 12 hour days and I think we pulled overtime a couple of those.

KC: Any other memories about the RNC?

LW: Before things went to hell, we were stationed right near the Capitol grounds and, of course, most of the – many of the protestors, most, the majority of the protestors,

were really fine, upstanding citizens who were just expressing their rights to free speech and to their opinion. And, I had a group of four Vietnam Vets for Peace, we're standing around, and there's nothing wrong with that, why not get along with people. People are having picnics before their march, picnic on the Capitol grounds. And these Vets for Peace had the coolest peace glasses and I went up to them, cuz we were just standing down. Talked to them. We started talking. They were going to send me a pair of these [glasses]. They got my address, I gave them my address. I never did get the peace glasses, they were from another state, but



we took pictures. Even some of my Republican friends on my bike unit had to take pictures with these guys – let me take a picture with them – cuz they had the big protest signs. You had to make it fun, you know, while you're standing there, and be approachable, cuz we're not there to stop any legal thing from happening.

And, then I also did security on the legalize marijuana group, as they're legally marching, it was great, we all got along. They understood that we were there to keep anybody from harming them. I mean, there were some good moments, we had nice weather. Those are some of my favorite memories and favorite pictures.

KC: Well, I know you a bit and I know your politics is not the conservative Republican side, so, marching against the war, probably, if you hadn't been in the Police Department, you might have been on the other side.

LW: If I hadn't been there, I definitely would have been there. And everybody knew it. But, it was all okay.

KC: Do [your more liberal or progressive views] ever create any conflicts for you within the Department?

LW: Oh, I think the majority of my co-workers, at least, in my immediate [assignment] – the majority of my co-workers on the Police Department are absolute political [conservatives]. I've been on 21 years. We pretty much express our opinions to each other. It's all good, it's all fine. I encourage people to actually think though and not just to listen to Rush Limbaugh¹⁸ and other such things, but to actually think for themselves on everything. And, now I sound really pompous and I apologize for that. But, I am a progressive.



Officer Lucia
2000

They are many of my colleagues who share the same political beliefs I do, but they keep quiet, so. Which is, absolutely [fine]. Maybe it shouldn't even be at work, but you know how you can't help it, you're talking about some kind of – something in the news right now, some current event or something, and they'll just let me talk, and they'll quietly sit by. And sometimes they'll pull me aside and say, you know, your right, but they're not about to spout off to the big mouths on the Department.

KC: Any memories of experiences with citizens, where because you were a woman, they didn't want a woman cop, they didn't want to take orders from a woman, any of that?

LW: You know, I think there was some of that early on. I'd have to be really grasping, I can't think of a specific incident. But, I think, generally, it was elderly women. But, just, not even a handful of experiences like that.

¹⁸ Rush Limbaugh (born 1/1951) is a conservative radio political commentator.

We did have an experience back in, like, '99/2000, we actually had a shift on the Department, East Team, on patrol, that had nine women officers and one male officer on one day. And Carl Schwartz was the only guy. We were sent to a domestic and I think women were teamed up with each other and it was all women at the call and this guy ended up having to leave. We were telling him he had to leave, and he's like, "I want a male cop." And, we said, honestly to him, "Sorry, we don't have any." And, he begrudgingly kind of walked out the door with his head hanging down. That was fun. Those were some fun times, too. We had some quality women officers all working together back then.

Yeah, but just the elderly, or people when they're drunk or high will say stupid things, you know, they'll yell. They'll just try to pick on what they think is going to make you mad. I can't tell you how many times people have called me dyke. You know, give me a break, sometimes I'll thank them for the compliment, takes the wind out of their sails. Tim, they'll call him the old man, they just try to pick on you, so, you can't let that get to you.

KC: Now, you talked about being an athlete. How did you learn to fight?

LW: Well, I can't tell you that I've ever really – well, until I got on this job – that I've ever really been in an outright brawl. But, having played some contact sports. I don't know if you consider basketball a contact sport, but even volleyball the way we played it, was a contact sport. Our big thing was, I would dive into chairs over people's legs completely scraped up. So, when you're physical and you're able to withstand injury, I think that's kind of a substitute for not boxing or having gotten in a fisticuffs fight, but I broke up fights in soccer. Soccer is very physical, too. I had my nose broken in college. Going up for a header and you have three people going up at the same time, hitting your nose so hard that it hairline fractures and blood all over my uniform. And I was always a physical player, so, I think that

gave me [an edge]. I'm not gonna be surprised when I get hit, that I can take a hit and not feel like "oh my god." Some people think, "oh, these people never been in a fight." Athletics is a good substitute for that, some kind of a contact sport. I've probably always been lucky when I've broken up things, I've never really gotten hit. People have hit my glasses, knocked them right off my head, but I've been lucky enough to have avoided the blow or whatever.

KC: Was there any mentally preparing yourself to fight, or mentally preparing yourself to be killed, or mentally preparing yourself to kill, that you experienced in those early years?

LW: You know, I think the Department trains you the correct way. You know, they say you're doing it to stop. I never saw myself as – and I don't think that's the way you meant it – but, you have to be able to confront the fact that you might have to kill somebody, but what you think of is, you're gonna stop the threat, or you're stopping that, or this person is not gonna take me down. You can think of it in terms, I think it's okay to think of it, like, this piece of shit, it's okay to depersonalize somebody who's trying to kill you. And, that's the way I was trained in the academy to [think]. It's like don't let this piece of shit take you down, you're worth more than that. If you get shot, you can survive a shooting, if you get hurt, it's not the end of the world, keep fighting, keep fighting, keep fighting. And, I've been in positions—I'm like, "Okay, if this person has a gun. . ." This has even been in my personal life, but you're like in a scary situation, you're like, "just remember if you get shot, keep moving, keep moving", and you think about moving in a zigzag pattern, move toward the threat, get rid of the threat, knock the arm, do whatever.

And, I think that's from sports, too, the winning, the competitiveness, and the not winning at all costs, but that ball is never gonna hit the floor, like in volleyball. I

know it sounds crazy, volleyball, some people consider a sissy sport. We would do anything to not let that ball hit the floor, I mean, you're sacrificing your body, you will dive ten feet to stop that from happening, do everything you can, and that's that same mentality. Yeah, the big thing is try not to make any mistakes and even if you do make a mistake, you want to work your way through it, but you're going home at the end of the night and you're gonna fight, fight, fight, until you're . . . I never even go to the last breath, I just don't visualize that all. I don't visualize myself losing that battle. I think that would be a bad thing.

KC: Was some of that ingrained in you, in athletics and then it was enhanced in the academy and furthered the training?

LW: Yeah, I would say that's true, also, you know, my folks, my mom was in the, in Dachau¹⁹ concentration camp and my dad was in the Russian Gulag²⁰, so I'm first generation, and what they suffered through. There's a sense of justice in me that just, it's almost—it's really intense. They're survivors and, I think that it runs in courses through your veins and runs through your blood. Anyway, I'm very protective of my family and my friends, too. But that survivor mentality, I think, is like threaded through your genes. But, then in the sports, absolutely, I mean, that whole, really charmed existence I lived. Everything I ever worked really hard for, I got it. There was a huge lesson there. The harder lesson was when I turned 36 and in my personal life I had a horrible tragedy that was unfair happen. Then, things that happened on the Department kind of hit me harder because it didn't

¹⁹ Dachau was the first Nazi concentration camp in southern Germany erected in 1933. It was used primarily to incarcerate German political prisoners until late 1938, whereupon large numbers of Jews, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and other supposed enemies of the state and anti-social elements were sent. Dachau was liberated by American troops in April 1945.

²⁰ Russian Gulag served as the Soviet Unions main penal system for political prisoners accused of any behavior seen as a challenge to the government; and for robbers, rapists, murderers and thieves. Prisoners worked up to 14 hour days, toiling in extreme climates and were barely fed enough to sustain such difficult labor in these concentration camps.

happen to me for a long, long time. But that charmed existence I had. We worked so hard and we always achieved our goals. We said, “We’re gonna win the State Championship” and, by golly, we did it, and it’s because of that never give up, survivor mentality, too. And then, you got in the Department, when they talked about that use of force, are you kidding me, it was totally meshed with the way I felt. It made complete sense to me. It didn’t have to be ingrained in me. It just, like you said, reinforced what I’d already known, in fact, empowered me probably more, because it’s life and death, now. And, it’s, like, I’ve gotta stay alive for whoever I’m trying to protect and myself.

It’s a really honorable profession.

I’ve also been in an all and all and out fight, with a guy high on crack, and there was another female officer. Nothing was working on him and I was hitting him as hard as I could with the ASP baton²¹, but he was going down only because I hit his motor nerve, but he’d get right back up. You know, I can’t say that I never let myself get afraid, I was just so intensely focused on that.

I can tell you about our chase when I was in the car with Tim. We got the medal of valor during this thing. It was frightening. An officer that was just on a year that had just gotten off FTO said, “This guy has a gun”, so we’re racing over there, Tim was driving. And, part of the reason about the fear I’m sure, is because I felt not in control because I wasn’t driving and I was trapped in the squad car during a lot

²¹ ASP Baton was founded in 1976 by Kevin Parsons, Ph.D, and was manufactured by Armament Systems and Procedures, Inc. (ASP, Inc.). ASP's collapsible tactical baton is used internationally.

of this incident. We get there and the car's turning, going north on Greenbrier, and here we are and we're head-to-head with this car. Tim pulls a u-turn and now we're the first in this chase with a guy with a gun. And the guy's driving nuts. We get to Hope [Street] and Seventh [Street], the guy comes along my side, and I'm on the passenger side, and I truly was trapped. I've got my window up, I'm trapped, and he is right next to me. He points what looked like an orange gun — it wasn't computing in my head — it ended up being a flare gun, right at head. I'm in the squad car, you kind of have to make a decision about whether to have your gun out or not, you don't want to lose your gun either. I ducked down and we were able to separate from him, but you want to talk about not having [control]. I just wanted to get out of the line of fire. Anyway, we peeled off of that, shots were fired. Tim was able to shoot, he got out of his side of the car, was able to shoot. The guy kept going down, so he got back in the car. And, we were in the car, but he just went outside and shot. And, then we got in front of the Swede Hollow Café and Tim rammed him. He tried to turn and there were other squads behind him - and Tim did the absolute right thing, preventing him from turning on these squads, and we were stuck with the guy now, the cars are completely stuck together and I'm telling Tim -



Partners Tim Bradley and Lucia Wroblewski
c. 2006

KC: The front of your car is?

LW: Is in the middle of his, stuck, and the tires are spinning and stuff. He ends up shooting the flare gun at an officer that had a shotgun out, who also received the medal of valor. He got burned on his elbow. If it has been his face that would have been a real disaster, I mean, serious, serious injury. He didn't shoot the shotgun, because we were in the line of fire behind the suspect in our car. And then off we go again, left on Mound and we end up right at the Metro State²², and I was telling Tim, "Stay back from this guy." So, Tim does the right thing, stops at the curb line, the guy looks at us, and right at that hill at Sixth [Street] and Mounds [Boulevard] there's a brick wall up the hill, he guns it and slams right into our car. And then it was like shots, we were shooting, people next to us were shooting, and then his car kind of slowly meanders across the street. And I told everybody "I'm holstering" because there were so many guns out, I'm holstering. He had a bullet wound. I saw a wound to his head, but it ended up just being a skin wound, and he had one through his arm and I cuffed him up and we got medics for him. I mean, you want to talk about training. But that was, I mean, that was a scary situation. It just felt a little like you didn't have any control over certain things. You know what I'm saying?

KC: And you got the Medal of Valor for that?

LW: Yeah, Tim and I and Vince Martin. And there were a number of people that got Medal of Merits for backing us up and trying to stop the guy as well. There were a lot of shots, it was like a wild west scene. The guy was totally mentally ill, he had Noxzema all over his face, dreamed of killing cops, like, that he was like a clown killing cops, when he was young. You know, they get all this information,

²² Metropolitan State University — 700 East Seventh Street, Saint Paul 55106

the investigators go out there and try to figure out some of the motivation. I think within a half-a-year, he was in a halfway house in Minneapolis. We have a great system. But, that's as far as I remember, but, yeah.

KC: Well, the rest of that shift is probably about writing reports.

LW: Yeah.

KC: What happens when you get off work?

LW: Like, in that scenario?

KC: Where is the head? How do you debrief? How do you sleep?

LW: I can't remember much about it, but I know I had a partner at the time. My life away from the Department, I have friends and family outside of this place and I always shared what happened. I think that's important to do. I don't know that I had a hard time sleeping. I think there's, obviously, an adrenaline thing going for a little bit. I remember thinking – I actually aimed for the guys head. That was what was showing – I didn't care if he got killed or not. I mean, I was aiming to stop, just like our training, and if it killed him, so be it. There was no hesitation there. But, like I said, the minute he was incapacitated, you know, holster, cuff and first aid. I don't know, I mean, the whole thing turned out pretty well. I think a squad got in an accident trying to help us with the signal 13, but nobody was really hurt, besides the suspect, so, there's really nothing to lose sleep over. I think this happened back in 1995 or '96. And I had been an officer since 1989, so, I was a big veteran officer by then. But, I'd have enough experiences, I mean I'd been hurt on the job before that, in tussles and stuff.

KC: How do you come down from the adrenaline dump of that?

LW: Frankly it's great to get outside, walk the dogs, you know. That's what I do now, I'll go home, the first thing I'll want to do, is walk the dogs, debrief with my partner, and take a nice long walk or a jog, have a nice dinner. That's what happens now, with stress in the Department. I think I pretty much operated that

way back then, too. Really supportive family and friends, too. They don't care even, I mean, honestly, I don't think they'd care if it was a bad shoot. I mean, technically bad, they care about you and they would all say and do the right things to support you.

KC: Its 21 years, so your parents aren't worried about you having a job with health insurance.

LW: No. [Laughs] They're totally used to it. I think my mom²³ worried, she's a worrywart, but, yeah, they're used to it. I mean, they do trust me that I know what I'm doing, and you never know. But, they've lived, you know, they lived through wars and they know what lifes about, I mean, you just never know, and it can be unfair. They've just gotten lots better at not worrying. It took them a long time.

KC: Do you have friends on the Department, as well as, off the Department?

LW: Yeah, yeah. My partner, Tim, is one of my best friends. A woman I admire a tremendous amount, Lynn Wild²⁴ is a very, very good friend of mine. And some of my colleagues are my friends. I could name them to you. But, they all tend to be—they're not in the good-old-boy-network. You know what it's like, you end up moving toward the people that are more, I don't know if like you, but more like minded. I think integrity is important to all of them. They're not screw-ups, they see the value of family and friends, in the Department, outside the Department. But, the whole integrity thing and a work ethic is shared by all of us. I admire a ton of people on the Department. Some of the people, I would consider friends on a, kind of, a further away level, just because I don't see them. You know, you end up working with the same people 10 hours a day. There are people in,

²³ Mother: Alicja (Ala or Alice in English) Rowinski Wroblewski (Born 07-28-1939)

²⁴ Lynn Wild was appointed police officer January 30, 1984, promoted to sergeant December 15, 2001, budget cut reduction March 14, 2003, advanced to sergeant August 30, 2003, voluntary reduction to return to being a street cop December 3, 2005.

investigative units that I was closer to before they went to investigations, that I would consider friends.

KC: What do you do outside of the Department to keep balance in our life?

LW: Oh, god, I've got acres of land where I planted seedlings that are now 30-foot white pines. There's a lot of land management. I'm into ecology and the environment, so I do it with the least amount of intrusiveness to disturbing nature. Gotten into gardening. I have a partner, Jen Moore, who's just an exceptional human being, totally devoted to me. I

don't know why sometimes, but we have a great relationship. My two dogs are just, I know. people are going to think I'm crazy, but they are two loves of my life, as well. I love my black labs, they're my running partners. I mean, I believe they have souls. At least as worthy of, you know, being soul companions as human beings. I think their hearts are sometimes bigger. And, of course, family and friends. Yeah, I love music, I still love working out in this old body of mine. Camping, hiking are huge loves of mine. I have a little Scamp trailer and we're going to go to Banff and Jasper [Canada] this summer. Yeah, just for the dogs, I mean, people think we're crazy. But, drive out there, hike 'til we're tired and eat really great food, I love to cook. I love reading books, I'm in a book club.

KC: Do you want to talk about the sweat lodge?

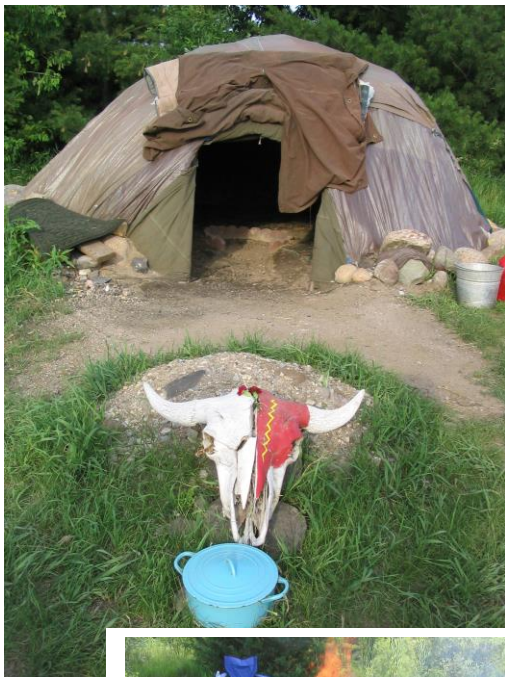
LW: Sure. There's a sweat lodge on my property. I get together monthly with a group of women friends. A friend of mine, who is actually an attorney, works in civil commitments. She and I have been getting together. She was very Catholic, but she's not into the patriarchy of the Catholic Church, and I'm an agnostic, at the very most. I'm into nature, and she's into Celtic things, so, we just decided full



Officer Lynn Wild
with Gabbie and Ghillie
2000

moon and new moon, maybe we'd get together and I'd read poetry, which I love, and she has a really great kind of prayer that she does. We eat, really great food, we cook really great food and have gatherings and we're still doing that. We incorporated the sweat lodge, now it's going to be five years I have a sweat lodge at my place. And, we incorporated the sweat lodge into the ritual. She, as a used to be Catholic, loves the ritual and it's really been great. So, we get together, and just because we've had this tradition, we do it on a new moon, the day of or that week. It's like a meditative sauna to me.

KC: Now, the sweat lodge, as I've experienced, is a Native American ritual to Great Spirit and I believe, from talking with Tim, that you have a Native American medicine man, who comes in and does sweats too, with you.



LW: I always had a vision of having an outdoor sauna, without any electricity and didn't know how to heat the rocks and not to have it hooked up to anything. So, that's always been interesting, that now I have a sweat lodge, cuz that's kind of the way its run. But, a Native American medicine man had befriended me, a Dakota guy, they needed a sweat lodge place, that's the way it all started, I said, why don't you do it here, and he said sure. And, something had happened and it was on his end, I mean, it wasn't anything to do with he and I, but he just moved on and, I think, has a sweat lodge at his own

place. I can't say the way he did it – it was, kind of, disheartening a little bit, because we were friends and, really, there was no discussion about what was going on. But, the one thing that we at least were told by him and that I do believe is Mitakya Oyasin--*All our relations*, that everybody is related and this is not just strictly a Native American thing. So, I convinced, you know, being not religious, not really deferring to religious leaders, I convinced the group, "You know, this is okay that we do this." I read *Black Elk*, but I still want to respect the Native American ritual about it and I read the Black Elk Ritual. For what we learned from this Native American medicine man the way we did things. Everybody does it different. I incorporated [what I learned from him]. I wrote it all out so people would have it. But, there are no rules. Part of the deal with rules – rules are okay, structure is okay, but you don't want it to be a fascist thing or to have it be that regimented. Anyway, it's been great, we run a regular sweat, with that regular group, minus the medicine man, and we do our women's thing. Yeah, it's worked out really well, everybody, I think, everybody would say it's better than ever, but we incorporate the same songs, we remember the Dakota songs. So, we want to respect that part of it, we do the four direction song to start out with. We have a drum, a Native American drum. I think we're doing right by the entire ritual.

KC: You said you were agnostic.

LW: Yeah, at one point, I would have called myself an atheist, cuz I didn't want to not be courageous, you know. But, I don't know what I believe in, I mean, I think, there may be an energy or a power or a spirit, but, I term it as love.

KC: Do you ever call on love to help you in the work that you're doing?

LW: No. I have a huge belief that people should credit their own – I wish people would give themselves more credit. I also – I think fate has its place. I think things happen – I think if there is a god, this is my – cuz you see young kids getting hurt, killed, you know about the Holocaust, all these horrible tragedies in your life. If

there is a god, why would that god ever allow, this all powerful, almighty god, ever allow this stuff to happen. Everyday, you know, I deal with some type of tragedy on some level, it's horrible what we see, you don't want the public to see this stuff. But I believe, if there is a god, god has made us, made the world and has allowed us to make it as good or screw it up as bad as we human beings, with all the gifts we've been given, are gonna do. And that god sits up there and I think she or he cries when we cry, that she or he thinks it is just tragic, what we're doing to the earth or what we're doing to each other, I think they're in pain all the time. So, that's my own personal thing, if there is a god or whatever. I'm very thankful though, to trees, to the sun, the moon, to great people. I will thank the person for their generosity and what they're doing, and they can thank God or whoever, but I think they deserve the credit for being so great and for doing such wonderful things. That's the way I think.

KC: You've referred to your partner several times. You've had a different partner, and now you have a different partner, I believe. Has this job affected your relationship in the ability or the type of relationship that you can have with a partner, because of the stress on the job, because of the hours of the job?

LW: I do think this job changes you. I don't think it has to change the exact core of who you are, but I think it does give you an edge. I mean, you can't fight that. You see a different reality. You see a whole other part of the world and life than most other people. I mean, it's a known fact that cops have a hard time with relationships.

I had a fifteen-year relationship that went all to hell. I tend to blame the infidelity, the extraordinary – oh, what's the word – it's a big trust. It is unbelievable what you go through with that, when somebody does that to you and then all of a sudden just leaves. It's devastating and it's hard when it's somebody that is supposed to love you. So, how much of that – I'm sure she would say the job had

a lot to do it with my job. I think it had a lot to do with the choices she made and her own weaknesses and lack of character.

KC: So, she could use your job as an excuse for her behavior?

LW: Well, I think she would, just because I know more about the way she is. And, you don't really want to get into that, it was a soap opera farm novel, I lived for that time. It was totally like getting hit by a semi truck, I had no idea what was going on. So, I think she would say that. I would say it's not the easiest thing to be with a cop, but if you have trust and love, and the police officer has some sense of balance, it should work out. And, you have communication.

KC: In this in between time of dating, were there people that weren't interested in dating you because you were a cop?

LW: I don't think I run in those kind of circles and, maybe, it's different for guys or straight women or something. But, I hated even the thought of dating. But, I was older, I was 37 to 42 – and you're gay. I mean there's not a lot of sane people, I don't think. People are taken, it's different, it's really different and hard. I was really, really fine with my life the way it was. I was totally cool with not being the most ecstatically happy, cuz some people are happier being partnered up. I mean, it's just a happier lifestyle, it's a better lifestyle for them, and that would be me. But, I was totally cool. I had reached the point where I was I have a great life. A lot of friends and great family, I don't need anything more. If nothing else happens, I'm really good with it. And, I was one of the lucky ones, where that's the time where you accidentally meet somebody, but you don't meet people like Jen very often. I am, really, really lucky. I think it would be hard to be with a



Jen Moore and Lucia
Police Ball October 2006

cop, I'd never want to be with a cop. I mean, I always warn cops – *they're not cops are they?*

KC: Did you ever date a cop?

LW: No, I never dated a cop. I don't think I'd ever want to.

KC: At what point did you openly come out in the Department?

LW: I never made a statement about it. I think some people knew from the beginning. Like I said, they videotaped our presentation when we first got on, say – why do you want to be a Saint Paul cop or something – they had some crazy thing that you were supposed to say. I got out there all excited with my tail [hair in a small tail in back of head]. I mean, really enthusiastic, I mean, I was an idiot. I was just totally myself in front, and they spread that to all the teams back then. I don't think it's a very proper thing to do, but. So, some of my friends who are more tuned in, I'm like, they're gonna know right away. If somebody asked my opinion, I guess, I would always tell the truth.

And then the big thing was Bob Fletcher, who was a lieutenant, I think, at the time, was running for mayor. I think it was back in 1992. I did not agree with his stance. As running as a politician, of course, you get asked questions about how you feel about same sex stuff, and he, I believe, he's a Conservative Republican, as I recall. I wrote a letter to the editor. That was my first big move, not intending it to be a move. I wrote a letter to the editor in the paper and I think I said I'm a police officer, but it wasn't about that for me because he was a cop, too. Apparently, that was posted, it was posted in the men's locker room at Central Team. I don't know what was said about it, in this conservative environment of ours. But, I basically said, I think, I said I couldn't support somebody who doesn't understand that same sex couples have the same rights. So that, I think, set the stage for me at the Department. I was never shy about expressing my opinion as a citizen. I still think we're citizens of the United States of America, despite what some people think about police officers and their rights. I'm like, *We are still in the United States, right people?* Sometimes we're told, don't say anything or don't do this.

KC: Has there been any retaliation because you're an openly gay officer?

LW: I think there has probably been a ton of things said about me, but, like I said, I'm not in the in-circle. I don't even have a circle, and I thank God for that, because there is a lot of this, people telling you what other people said. Which, you don't even know if it's true. There's a ton of that on the Department, on any department, I'm sure. So, I'm sure there have been things said, and I'm glad I don't know about them. I told you about my first year I had an experience.

The latest and, again, this is for an oral history, I won't say any names. I'm a use-of-force-instructor on the Department. I think I still am, even though, apparently, the use-of-force-list is in the head of one officer, not listed on a training list

anywhere. And, he forgot about me at the last training session. Anyway, I'm a use of force instructor, I was teaching at the Academy. And this is through a third party, but I think it is fairly accurate information. A recruit, a female recruit, we were doing either testing, where you work individually with people, they have to test out on use of force, some type of physical use of force countermeasure, act of countermeasure or something. There was one use of force instructor, who is now a sergeant, who has been promoted since, who said, *Here, I'll take you, why don't you work with me, then she won't hit on you.* This is a use of force instructor, talking about another use of force instructor. You know how I hear this, I hear this from another academy recruit. Now, I want you to think about what kind of position these academy recruits are in. They got the good ol' boys, these certain cadre of people that they have to model themselves after or they want them to really respect them. This person says, *what's going on here?* And this person comes up to me and says, *you cannot say anything about this, I want you to know what's going on though.* And, obviously, you can't say anything, because we don't want to get in trouble. You know, we don't want a reputation, we don't want people to come down on us, we want to make it through the Academy.

KC: The person that said it was male or female?

LW: The instructor is male. In my head, of course, you have to make jokes about it. I mean, I've got this sarcastic picture of a banjo playing deliverance person ["Deliverance" as in the movie] in my head, cuz it's just so much that way. He is since promoted. I have alluded to this, of course, I'm not gonna say anything, you know, how can I say anything. Time has lapsed though, it's coming to the point where, maybe, there has been enough time, people have had time to develop their own reputations. I don't think anything will be done about it. But the training unit should know about that. The training commander should, whether they do anything about it anyway. But, this person is still in the use of force cadre.

Probably, more in tune with things than I am, I seem to be kind of on the outs there, too.

KC: It shows their –

LW: Lack of professionalism, minimally.

KC: Minimally –

LW: I mean total.

KC: Lack of understanding.

LW: But, I'm not looking for anybody to give me cheers and all this other stuff. In front of recruits, for pete's sake. What does that say about the organization? That person that had that experience – *these are the trainers at your new department, this place is F'ed-up*. That's what I would be thinking. I'd be wondering if I made the right decision to come to this place where I thought it was professional. That's what I mean by people who can't think, aren't thinkers. You don't even have to agree, you can hate gay people. Suck it up and be a professional. And, in your own life, go wrap your baby in Nazi propaganda or whatever you have to do. Have your own personal weird experiences at home, but don't bring it to the job.

KC: You've had a partner for sixteen years.

LW: Yeah, my work partner, yup.

KC: Which is incredible.

LW: I think, we might be – not that there's an award for it, but I think we might be working on the longest running partnership.

KC: You even were Co-Officers of the Year [in 1995].

LW: When it was Ranking Officers Association. When they gave it to street cops. They don't seem to be doing it that much anymore, either. We want Officer of the Year to be a street cop.

Officer of the Year ceremony--1995





Partner's Tim and Lucia

KC: You and Tim, are both, strong personalities and you both love the department. But with your strong personalities, were there challenges in being partners, until you learn each other?

LW: Well, somebody has to defer to the other person and somebody has to be, kind of, the squad captain. We have a driver, we switch off everyday, one drives and one writes. Tim always thinks I'm in charge.

I know he's in charge. He's been on how

many years now. [35 years.] Whenever he decides to pull the plug, he can and will. I think, he's gonna stay through this year, I don't know how much longer he's gonna stay. With that, I want him to have a good last year. I feel like I defer to him quite a bit. We have a good partnership. We're equal partners, no doubt. But, you know, the strong personalities, we don't always agree on calls. And we've had our out and out, loud disagreements, sometimes, unfortunately. I mean, sometimes at the Department, where people have, at least, been in the same

building and heard the door slam or something. He chased me into the – not chased me – actually. This was to apologize, pretty much, I believe, in one argument. I will admit—I didn't lose it, but I was angry and I was slamming doors and I went into the women's locker room, cuz I had to just collect myself. And I put myself on a chair. And, actually, it's never about him. There's an incident that – something happened on the job, some guy was an idiot or something happened and we disagreed and then we'd get in a little tiff about it. That's usually the way it happens.

But, I'm in the shower room on a chair, just teed off. He came in the women's locker room, saying, "What are you doing in here, you?" I said, "I'm gonna report you to the Sergeant for being in the women's locker room." Just angry as all hell. There are some great stories, he'll remember a lot more than I will, and he'll exaggerate them. It works, you know, he's a Harding grad. Historically, there was a Johnson Harding rivalry, so, we like to play on that, too.

KC: Were there some challenging early years, or did it always just seem to mesh?

LW: Well, we had to get to a point where we know what each other person's going to do on a call. I think it happened pretty quick. I think our officer safety [is outstanding]. We don't have to talk a lot about, like you do when you first partner up. *Okay, what are you gonna do, when there's an in progress call or something.* We pretty much know what we're gonna do when we get out. He'll cover this or I'll cover that, or we're both gonna do this. Its gotten better. Yeah, you have to get used to each other. It's worse than a marriage, I think. You know, in terms of, we spend, I think, more time than most people are spending with their life partners—ten hours a day.

KC: Did you go through any divorces with partners on the job?

LW: I partnered up with Winsor for the Bike Patrol and he and I are really different personalities. He was a hard worker and we got along well enough to be work colleagues and stuff that was back in 1993.

That was a heavy-duty time in West, I think, all over the City. We had the Rolling '60s Crips, they took out those five kids in that house that burned. I ended up going to Federal Court seven years later on that. They were throwing rocks at our squads, Bob and I, were pulled off the bikes for a two week period of time because they found cop killer bullets on a person who said they were gonna take me out, in that area of Grotto and that street south of Dale, that neighborhood there, near Dale and University. So, we worked as partners and then I went over to East. Nobody had to make a decision or anything about dissolving our partnership.

And then I worked with Charlie McKenna in 1992 in Central. They needed somebody to team up with him, apparently, he had injuries to his elbows that precluded him from driving, so, I drove with him. We became very, very, good friends.

KC: You're working with partners, they're heterosexual, they have female spouses. Do they have issues? How do they handle it, so that there aren't issues?

LW: I think there was never an issue, probably, because people knew I'm not interested in their husbands.

KC: Was Tim partnered when you started working together?

LW: Boy, that's a good question, I don't think so.

KC: So, when Tim partnered, how did he handle that? Tim is absolutely infatuated with you, he thinks you're absolutely the Queen Goddess

LW: He's crazy. He really should be looked at.

I never had an issue, he's always been a gentleman and I think he loves me, I love him. I don't know what the extent of his feelings are, we have a deep love for each other, but it's not romantic. We never had that kind of relationship. I'd like to say it's deeper than that one aspect. And, I have a huge amount of respect and admiration for him. He's always been great with my partners. Always! He's always been there for me. So, if there's been any kind of adjustment on his part, he'd have to tell you about it. But, he's dated people and we talk about each other's lives.

KC: And, he was partnered for a number of years, so, when he partnered, was this new partner jealous of this work partner.

LW: I don't think so, again, because, you know, I was partnered up with a long term relationship. It was like we were married, my partner and I, we just couldn't get married. I don't think that's ever been an issue, if it has been, I never knew about it. In fact, I'm friends with his girlfriend. While he was dating, I've never had an issue with any of his girl friends and, they've never had an issue with me that I know of. It would be hard to have an issue, if you had an issue, I wouldn't understand why that would be. I'm just not attracted to guys.

KC: But some women don't understand that.

LW: Yeah, maybe. And, I could see being jealous at the time, that might have happened, sometimes, which is normal. I think any partner of a cop, the wife or spouse of a cop, might be jealous of the times, if they love the person, of the time that's spent. But, that's just work.

KC: Is there a sense with some people that it's a woman officer, she's not part of the old boys club and, so, we don't have to deal with her, with integrity?

LW: If you want my opinion, I don't know if it's so much female, I think it's just like an epidemic - it's just an epidemic, generally.

KC: Are male officers of different ages – do they treat you differently? Do older officers or younger officers?

LW: You know what, when some of the old timers left, let's go back to, like, 1992. I remember sitting at roll call and women would get clicked on this department, there is no doubt about it. Anybody who would tell you that they didn't get click because they're a woman. And, what I mean by clicking, we have radio mics and if somebody wants to express displeasure, disrespect, to make fun of somebody, they would after you transmit. They will click. they'll constantly key the mic in rapid succession a number of times. So, you'll hear this bonk, bonk, bonk, bonk, bonk on the air, and it will go through every radio in the Department that's on. And it's really irritating, and I'll tell you what, it's an officer safety issue. And, these jerks never cared about that, so, if they think they're really cool cops, they're actually lacking in officer safety consciousness. And they're just plain rude.

KC: And you never could know which officer was doing it?

LW: We could never know, until the 800 megahertz radios that just came out a couple years ago. Now they can be traced, and, guess what, we don't have clicking anymore. And when we do, and if we have a good boss, they call the Com Center and find out exactly who transmitted that and there's no doubt about who it is. So, it's amazing how that helps, it's like dealing with 2-year-olds.

In the early years, I don't think I'm exaggerating, I think every woman, probably, got clicked on the Department. And, then it would be – I remember people – *You know, when you're chasing somebody, your voice is so high.* What do they want us to do, we have a higher pitched voice, it's not like we're trying to have a high pitch, it's just the way it is. Oh, my god.

But, those old timers, I'm not sure that they really cared for women on the job. But, I'll tell you what, when you did the job and they saw it, they respected you for it. That was my general analysis of those people, and I worked with them, okay.

I was on the CIRT team²⁵, now SWAT²⁶. I was there when CIRT changed to SWAT, for ten years. And you know the people that I respected the most on the SWAT team and the CIRT team, were the older guys. Some of the guys I was replacing and some of the guys that were there for a long time that were, you know, the older guys. Because if you did the job and you worked hard, you got their respect and it didn't matter. And, it's their behavior and it's what they did toward you, and it's what they did or didn't say.

But, I'm telling you, some of these people that are now been on – now I've been on 21 years, so I've got to remember I used to say "some of the 7 to 10 year people, what a bunch of sexist jerks", but now maybe they're up to 15 year people, I don't know. But, the new people – the new, new people now, I think they come with a less sexist attitude, to be honest with you. Now, they're being trained in by Senior FTOs that are women. But, there was a group there, about the 10 year to 15 year age range, they were – I would much rather work with the old timers than with these people. I don't know what happened and I don't know if they got in the good old boy clique or if they just came that way from the suburb – their little enlightened suburb and conservative – I don't know, I can't say what it is. But with where I've been on the Department, that's been my experience. Darryl Schmidt, I'll say his name, I don't care, he was a big SWAT guy. He's got a kid on the Department. Big SWAT guy and he's from down south somewhere. I'm sure he's

²⁵ CIRT—Critical Incident Response Team

²⁶ SWAT—Special Weapons and Tactics Unit

as conservative as they come, and he was a lead SWAT guy. He told me, right when he left, he retired, and he pulled me aside and he said – and this is the thing I can say the most for people of his generation and caliber. He pulled me aside and he said, “you know what, I really didn’t care for you coming on the SWAT team.” I think his description, if I have it right, “you were like a Cocker Spaniel, just running around all over the place.” And, he said, “But, I’ll tell you what, as you developed and what I saw and observed, I admire you and I’m glad you’re on the team, I think you’re an asset to the team.” And, that meant more to me and that’s that attitude that these old timers have.

Where they respect you for what you do. I don’t need an award from these people. I don’t need them to say, “Oh, women are great on the job,” or “You are A #1,” but they just sit down, look you in the eye directly and tell you the truth and respect you if you deserve it. They’re just honest, they’re not mean, and you have to earn their respect, but when you do, they give it to you. I feel like I’m talking about [Tom Brokaw’s term] Greatest Generation. It’s not them, but some of them are Vietnam Vets, the Vietnam Vet, there’s a lot to admire there, anyway.

KC: So, you’re saying the people that came on about 1995 to 2000 are the ones that haven’t -

LW: The guys, some of the guys, and it’s not everybody, it’s not everybody, but, the problems people that, the people with an attitude. It’s amazing, because you can even train them in as their FTO and you wonder, *this was a person I trained in, what happened to them?* I don’t know where they got their influences. It’s who they get their influences from on the Department. Where they get molded, cuz you only have them for a month on FTO, maybe, two months. You might work with them, what if they go to midnights what if they get involved in this group. But something had molded them to, all of a sudden [you just want to say to them,] “I

was on this SWAT team a lot longer than you kiddo.” They’ll respect you, until they get on for a year or two, then they start to connive their way into other people that are cool, and then, maybe, those people have preconceived notions of you or think of you in a certain way and, all of a sudden, it all starts. Or, maybe, you don’t agree quite with the training stuff, saying use of force. And, it’s not the curriculum, but I’m just saying, they’re not your kind of people. All of a sudden, they start distancing themselves from you and, maybe, even talking about you. That’s the kind of petty, unprofessional stuff. And, you’ll have to talk to them. But, does it sometimes appear to be sexist? You bet. Sometimes does it appear to be, maybe, homophobic? Yeah. I can’t say, you’d have to talk to them. They would actually have to be honest with you, which is like never gonna happen.

KC: What was it like on the SWAT team? Were you the only woman?

LW: I was the only woman for a short period of time. I was only one of two women for a period of time.

KC: Who was the other woman?

LW: Lynn Wild, a sniper, she was incredible.

KC: What was it like being only one or two women? The locker room is very quiet, compared to the men’s locker room on the SWAT team.

LW: Well, it’s actually connected. We had a small closet area, kind of off the men’s.



Lynn Wild and Lucia Wroblewski
c.2000

I'll be honest with you, well, this is not policy, these guys did not do this – I remember not bothering to close the dang door. It's ridiculous, if you gotta get ready in a hurry, who cares, so they see my underpants. Neither of us is interested in each other, you know what I'm saying. It was never an issue with us, that kind of thing, like changing or sharing lockers. We are definitely isolated from the main core of the group. We go to Ripley and we would have an entire barracks floor to ourselves. We couldn't sleep in the same barracks as these guys. I was in a way happy, because some of them are, if you know men in this capacity, they can be kind of pigs, or stay up all night and do their weird men things. So, we didn't mind that, but we had an entire barracks to ourselves. There were times – and this just happens – where they forget to tell us about something in a schedule or come up and make sure we know about something. So, I mean, that's one aspect of it. Is it harder being a woman? God yeah, we're not the good old boys, and that's a pretty big kind of a good old boy club or, at least, an elite group of guys network,

who think themselves more in a military capacity or an elite capacity. There's a lot of testosterone.

KC: How long were you on the SWAT team?

LW: Ten years.

KC: That's a long time.

LW: Yeah, and I could have stayed longer. It was in 2006, so, 44. I still performed the obstacle course. You have to do physical standards, every year we get tested and it's with equipment on, you have to do this entire obstacle course. It's not like some little PT test at the academy. You have to meet the qualification standards, and I left totally on top of all that stuff. I didn't want to leave when I was like hurting or not meeting the standards. But, it's not easy for somebody 44. I don't think it's different between a woman or a man, but, you know, it is kind of a young person's gig. You carry a lot of equipment, you end up having injuries from your athletics and stuff. And, ten years was enough. I told them way ahead of time, so they could prepare. They always have new additions coming on, but ten years was plenty. I had a pro and con list the entire ten years. What are the pros of staying, what are the cons, there were plenty on both sides.



Sgt. John Pyka Lucia, Sgt. Jeff Winger
c 2004_

KC: Tell me a story, one of your memories of being on the SWAT team.

LW: There is always Ripley, nearly every year.

KC: Being in a situation.

LW: I'll be honest with you. They didn't use—I'm sure Lynn kind of had the same experience, maybe she was used more. We'd have callouts. If I was busy in my personal life or social life if that certain code came out—a lot of guys wanted the overtime, I didn't try to run to the phone to make the overtime, if I had an engagement. But, Lynn would really make a point of it, so she probably made more entry teams. There weren't a lot of times I was the first one in the door, within that ten years. But, there were times when I was. And there were some serious gun warrants and we found some serious guns. We're looking at some seriously violent people. If you pay attention to any of the stuff, there has been some SWAT team members killed in entries or going after suspects wanting to kill cops or that have killed cops. I'm proud of the work I did. I'm proud that I had the courage and, I think, the skill, thanks to the training, to do that kind of thing. So, there were warrants. There were all-nighters. My team found the suspect with a canine. We did a perimeter search after an all-night affair in Highland. We had a barricaded suspect. We caught him a yard from the outer perimeter and we were doing a yard-to-yard search, he had the guns right underneath him in the shed and he ended up getting really bit by a dog. But, I was at point, I think it was Sergeant Pyka, who was always great. Always great to all the women that ever came on the SWAT team, Sergeant John Pyka. Again, a veteran sergeant who really gave a shit about the whole team concept. But, that was exciting, finding that guy. But, you want to talk about a long night, those are experiences you don't forget.

I was doing the search for Jerry Vick's²⁷ killer. It's kind of fun thinking – not that the incidents were fun—thinking about what I have done. I don't usually think about what I've been involved in.

KC: Were you called in the middle of the night?

LW: Yeah, after 2:00 in the morning. All the SWAT teams got together and we went. We were right next to each other with our ARs and every single speck of ground, all the way across from Seventh Street to Minnehaha. We were looking for this guy with a gun that killed a cop, every single – all the way, strung across for two three blocks is it, four blocks, SWAT team personnel. You're out in the open and you're looking for everything, you know, through cars, underneath porches. My team found the gun on a sidewalk. The SWAT team flushed the guy out to a perimeter squad and he was caught. But, he had abandoned the gun, my team found the gun. Those are memories that I'll always have tucked in my brain.

KC: Another special unit that you worked with is the Honor Guard. How long have you done that?

LW: I have done that since, I believe, after Ronnie Ryan²⁸ and Tim Jones²⁹ got killed, I got on the Honor Guard team, so, since the end of 1994. I might be right now the longest running Honor Guard member on the team.

KC: What made you want to do that?

LW: The honor part of that, to be honest with you. Like I said, I'm not a military person, I'm not sure I look particularly great in a uniform. To pay respect to the people

²⁷ Gerald Dennis Vick appointed police officer September 18, 1989, promoted to sergeant July 31, 1999; fatally injured by gunfire May 6, 2005. Receive the Metal of Valor 1991, 1997, and 2005.

²⁸ Ronald Michael Ryan, Jr. was appointed police officer January 23, 1993; fatally injured by gunfire while responding to a "slumper" call August 26, 1994.

²⁹ 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.

that have fallen in the line of duty is huge to me, that whole tradition and honor. We're involved in academy graduations. We attend other events. But, it's all that police department related stuff.



I was just telling Jen last night, cuz we have new Honor Guard patches, and I'm going through a really hard time on the Department right now, where I've been really screwed over, figuring out what I'm gonna do. But, I saw the patch and I



showed her the patch, I gave her a pin, cuz she deserves it. It's a spectacular patch. It's got the flag in a black background with Honor Guard, Saint Paul Honor Guard on it. And, I said, you know what, this is why I do my job. This is the one thing that they can't take from me. It's kind of symbolic for me to be on the Honor Guard, cuz I

think it's what I'm about. I think it's important to have that kind of thing flowing through you. I do care – if you really care. That's why I'm staying on that team. And they're a good group of people. Tim and I have stood guard at the wake of Mike Garvey, who was our boss, who died tragically of cancer not very long after he retired. There was no Honor Guard, Tim and I, stood for four straight hours, at his casket at the wake.

Officers Bradley and
Wroblewski

State Memorial
Service
c. 2009



KC: No one else showed up?

LW: Well, because he was retired. I don't think it's – sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes, I don't think it's because people don't care. Now, maybe they're a little bit better organized cuz I actually see it, where people are asking to have the honor guard. But we lacked a little bit of organization in that regard for some time, that's our personal opinion. I don't mind, and it's a killer standing like that. And, I've done it. I think that's part of the job and that's part of the sacrifice you make to honor somebody. It's just really, really important, and that's what I'd like to contribute, the pain is totally worth it. I try to do the best I can on that unit.

KC: Any other special assignments, special units that you've been on that I'm not aware of?

LW: The big thing is, I've been a Use of Force instructor since 1993, Honor Guard since the end of 1994. I've been a full-time FTO when we had a full-time master patrol training officer, for a short time, which is like senior officer that's a training officer, it's almost like a corporal position. Finney took away from us, due to budget cuts, allegedly. I take pride in the field training.

KC: Tell me about being a field training officer for a male and a female.

LW: I don't see it as working any differently and I've done both. I used to get assigned females. I think sometimes they want a female assigned to a female at least once in their four-month period. I've been really lucky, they've assigned me some really quality cops. I've been only impressed by the people that I have had, whether it's been, I've been a primary FTO or one of the other phases. I just field trained Chad Malmberg, who received the Silver Star, the only Minnesotan to receive it since World War II. And, unfortunately, he's got so much military duties right now, that he's gonna have to be extended only because of that, in the field training, so he can learn all the street stuff. I can name you names right now and they're at the top of the list in terms of the kind of cops we need here, and I'm sure what they're going to become, I'm sure a lot of them will be [commanders]. Although, some of them are saying they want to stay an officer, that's great, but they are high caliber people.

KC: Now, you have made conscious decisions through all this 21 years, not to take promotion tests. Talk about that please.

LW: I almost took a promotional under Chief Finney. It was when my personal life fell apart in 1999. And, I thought, *oh, god, maybe I need a change in everything*. Two days before the exam – I had even bought books at Barnes & Noble, outside of this place, try to bone up on it. Then I'm realizing this pile of stuff I bought, I am not reading, I am not reviewing, why am I not doing that. And, people said, well, you can just say no. Two days before, Tim drove me over to City Hall and I pulled my name

off the list. So, I did it the right way. Chief Finney didn't realize that, saw my name, and he thought I didn't show up. [Tim Bradley had to point out to him] she pulled her name off the list, she went over there and did the professional thing. I don't want to be beholden to any chief, have my schedule. The Chief decides where a sergeant works and that depends on the shift, too. Your shift can be changed, your assignment can be changed. You're at the whim of the commanders, chiefs, it's just not my cup of tea. Investigations, people have said, I'd be a fabulous investigator. I'm really thorough. Being thorough doesn't work in this, with the way things are now. There's so much of a – they have so many cases coming in every day. Say you're an East Team investigator, there are more and more cases being piled every day onto your case load. What more can they do, but use the phone and try and call people and dismiss cases where people aren't calling you back or pending cases. I can't do that, that's not in my personality. Where I'm at, I can take a call and I will try to take care of that call. I'll take the time I need and I want, at 21 years, to take care of the matter and do the best I can. I have more control that way, and we're working one-on-one with the people in this crisis stuff, which is still exciting to me. Where you can feel like you can make a difference, and I just don't see that in any other positions above me.

You know, if I was really into narcotics or vice. I've never been into that, it's never been [part of my life]. I've always been a straight A student, good girl, good student, it's a different kind of cop that goes into that stuff, I've never used drugs, I'm not a drinker. Just not familiar with that world. I admire that street cops who have a ton of informants and understand that more seedy lifestyle, that's not my cup of tea. But, I'm a great report writer. I'm very thorough in my investigations. I think I've got great officer safety skills. I still at – I'm going to be 48 this week - I

still want to chase people, which is stupid. I'll still chase a juvenile - really dumb, embarrassing - that runs from me. I don't want anybody to get away from me.

I've been to court a lot in the last few years on some really violent domestic assault cases. I would say Tim and I are fabulous at domestic assaults and emotionally disturbed people. I think we really have a knack for that. Yeah, we can go into those units, if they let us, or if we qualified, or got promoted, or maybe put in for an investigative position, but I think we make a difference where we are. I just, I love those calls, even with the stuff that you see.

And, I have made a difference. I actually got a letter from a woman, and I never would have expected it. You know, there are a lot of victims of domestic assault that go back to the guy, that hate the cops that come and arrest their guy. This woman wrote me, it was the nicest letter I've ever received. It beats anything, any award I've ever gotten, it was just this letter, and I never would have expected it of her. I thought that she was one of those people that would never change. Through her letter, she said that I totally changed her life and you didn't even know it, and she took the time to write about it.

My boss, to his credit, read it in roll calls, when I wasn't there, to officers, to tell them you never know when you make a difference. That kind of thing, that's what makes me go on, even through frustrating moments of the Department, like I have now and through all the crap that you go through. I've had a situation since 2004. It's been a nightmare on this Department. That kind of letter and having a life outside of this place really makes a difference.

KC: What are you most proud of in your 21 years serving Saint Paul?

LW: Probably the victims I've helped. There's this 7-year-old girl that, I think, we kept alive, Tim and I, in a slashing. Her mother had been killed, she'd been slashed

over a hundred times. That was a call to an accident with injuries. And, here there was a murder. Another officer was either in shock or I don't know, just was not able to deal with a 7-year-old slashed forty times from her shoulders up. Medics were slow in coming because they were busy and we kept her alive and got her to the hospital. We attended the woman's funeral. I'll never forget, it's that kind of moment. It's like the moments with the domestic assaults.

I had another slashing of a lady. It was last summer or the summer before, I handled a really serious, serious domestic assault, with two or three kids present, and I was the first squad on scene. I was working solo and I handled her getting into the ambulance and handled the initial scene and getting the suspect information out, all by myself. And, it's to be expected, there's no awards to be given for that. But, doing your job in that manner and I ended up testifying in court on that guy. On the day that my dad was having bladder surgery and I was supposed to be up there. I wasn't really happy with being in court that day, I should have been up north, 165 miles north for my elderly dad, whose bladder was perforated and in surgery, and who had a sponge left in him. But, I was in court and the guy got 21 years. The woman did not die, he got 21 years. I wrote a good report. Which, I think, I'm fairly known for, included the three kids, and he got additional time for each of the three kids that were present at that assault. So, that's really gratifying, I'm telling you.

KC: I have the illusion you have a long list of differences that you've made in people's lives.

LW: Ah, you don't know about it, I doubt it's long. There's probably a list and you don't know. Early, early in my career, there was a 10-year-old kid, it was really disturbing to me, it really bothered me. I found his mother was a prostitute and his father was a crack user and there was a spoon, the kid showed me, he's 10 and

he's a kid, so he showed me what his dad was using, and I sat the dad down. I knew this whole kid's life was a disaster. I'm like, man. I didn't arrest the dad at the time – *you got to get it together, blah, blah, blah*. Anyway, I wrote a report, I collected the evidence, I did the best I could. I think, I wrote a good report. I actually, arrested him for minor warrants, later. But when I saw the kid, I saw him at the Rec Center when he was about 18-years-old and he remembered me. He came up to me and he said, "You remember me? I remember you. I just want to thank you." That was my first taste of that kind of thing, where you had no idea, you have no idea the impact you have. And, sometimes they'll hate you I'm sure. Sometimes, you do your best and the people will swear at you when they see you, but I think oftentimes if you do it with the right intention and you do the best you can. Oftentimes we'll make a difference and we don't know it, we really don't know it. I hope it's a huge list of people, but I doubt it. *I remember you*. People flag you down. *God, was it a good contact, was it for a good reason*, and I am happy to report, I have never had somebody say, *you were a jerk*. And sometimes you gotta be a jerk.

KC: Part of the job, sometimes.

LW: I've been lucky.

KC: Thank you, very much.



This collection of writings contains graphic, violent images and references that are unsuitable for young readers and that may be offensive to others.

Reader discretion and parental review is strongly advised.

The prose that follows is an expression of the author's own individual thoughts, reflections, and feelings.

These views do no represent those of the Saint Paul Police Department.

L.w.

HANDS

**As cops we know that hands can kill us
we must always watch the hands**

**but hands also comfort, carry, and bring us to safety
they hold us, caress us, and lift us up**

**it is the hands that give life
and the hands that take life**

**it is the hands that make love
and the hands that make war**

**the touch of a hand can be healing
or it can bring immeasurable pain**

**hands are the extensions of emotion
passion and conscience
or lack thereof**

**hands can make beautiful music
and art that can bring one to tears**

**hands pull the trigger and wield the sword
they throw the switch and light the fire**

**they command and give clear direction
they always steer our course**

**they are compassion, they are power
they protect and they destroy**

**they are the instruments and tools
of our minds and hearts**

**they are the servants of our wishes
and our deepest and darkest desires**

**they are critical for us cops
as we live by them
and die by them**

**it is our hands that defend us from harm
sending a bullet through the barrel
a baton toward its target
a pen or key onto paper or laptop**

**and it is our partners'
our friends'
and our families'
hands that hold us up.**



-Lucia Wroblewski
2-8-00

A WARRIOR'S POEM

Each day I wake up in the simple, peaceful countryside
to run the quiet roads and trails with my animal companion
We are at one with nature and with all her moods
as we move through dense fog, in heavy rains, against brisk winds,
on the soft snow, beneath the hot sun, or through the cool, crisp morning air

We share the sunrise with a different audience each day
jogging past calling pheasants, browsing deer, below gliding hawks
past Hmong gardeners working their plots before the sun is high
and past neighbors in cars and trucks, commuting into work

We run for my dog's pleasure – to stretch her legs, her chest
to arouse her senses and free her spirit
as the tall grasses and the wind caress her soft coat

And we run to give my dear canine friend a satisfied exhaustion
to turn her lonely hours of our compulsory separation
into pleasurable rest until my inevitable return

It makes us both feel alive, as we yearn each morning to fly like birds
to feel the air on our skin beneath her fur and my hair
hoping for the currents to lift us up and carry us along
just as they do beneath our feathered friends' wings

I also run to awaken my senses, to harden my muscles,
to strengthen my spirit, to discipline my conscience
And to prepare this warrior for the urban battlefield once again
as I ritually don a breastplate upon my cleansed chest
and secure my sword in its well-worn scabbard

I vigilantly prepare my mind to face its daily inner struggle for balance
to control this dark, visceral blood thirst for vengeance inside of me
ensuring that my deeply ingrained belief in justice and integrity
will rule my judgment and my actions always

And with my restored soul I am ready once again to begin the battle anew
this battle of right against wrong
of good versus evil
protecting the innocent and guarding the truth
from monsters and corruption

Few in this world understand the inner-workings of a warrior
the intuitive connection to other's intimacies, vulnerabilities, and their pain
and the intense desire to protect those we love and those in real need

Our unquenchable thirst for action and physical release

the thrill of risk, the potential for injury and death
our willingness to sacrifice our lives for honor and love

And the intensity and depth of that love that is a warrior's Achilles' heel
and the only inducement to which we will surrender all control
sacrificing our hearts to feel its rapture, its passion, its fire
exposing our very souls to the emotional perils of betrayal and loss
survivors bearing permanent scars, branded forever by the intense heat

Few understand a warrior's inspiration, struggles, and pain
our hunger for righteousness, for truth, for honor, and for love
our intense attraction to and admiration of
the strong, the passionate, the wounded, and the beautiful
our obsessive desire - as strong as a religious calling - to help others
and our eternal quest to make things right and to live a principled life

We have an instinctive appreciation of and connection to nature
sharing a very special bond with our animal partners
drawn to those places to which we are all spiritually connected

Grounded to the earth and relying on our instinct and our senses
we acknowledge the obvious – that our one true ruler and god is nature

And we worship and respectfully defer to her – to her awesome power and her incredible beauty
knowing our humble place and that we can never tame her
Warriors willingly accept our mortality and that we are always at her whim
and that is as it is
as it always has been
and as it always will be...

LW

June 18-19
completed August 20, 2001

(Xena would understand...)

WARRIOR'S POEM

(an addition)

Only a true warrior bears
the sympathetic wounds and scars
that are a part of getting so close to
the pain and suffering of those
we try with all our might to save

Only a warrior can know the constant
inner struggle to keep hope and
goodness alive – to beat down
the cynicism and apathy that lurk
for any vulnerability
in the wounds deep enough
to make healing difficult
seeking any opening to seep into...
and infect with their deadly poison.

Who but a warrior can survive
and withstand
the horror, the anger
the torture and the grief
that soaks through our pores
and settles in our souls
as we wade through the river
of the blood of the innocents...

as we push through the thick mire
of ignorance and apathy...

as we move courageously albeit blindly
through the dangerous darkness of hatred...

we warriors push on regardless of it all...
the horror, the fear, the risk to body and soul
maintaining our focus to strengthen the odds
of surviving and coming home each day
with limbs and heart and spirit intact.

LW

EXECUTIONER

She turned her strong, muscular neck toward me
 following my movements to the front of her
And as I raised my handgun's sights
 in line with her head
 she opened those gentle, innocent eyes
 and looked right at me
In those eyes I read peace and tenderness
 and a desire to be helped
 and I couldn't believe what I was about to do
Trying to rationalize my decision
 believing a quick end to this terrible circumstance
 would be best for her
 as she laid there on her underside
 unable to move with her broken legs
Faced with no other position to safely shoot
 there was no looking away
 and I was the last being she saw
 the one she plead for mercy from
I shot at the lowest part of her head I could
 without striking her beautiful face
 and those incredible, soulful eyes
 and her head hit the street
 as she convulsed violently
Shaking so strongly that her large body
 moved south on the shoulder
 along the ground
And I shot again
 to put her out of her misery
 sick to think that she was suffering
 wanting her to die quickly
But she was still breathing
 with those eyes still open
Another report echoed in the valley
 as I shot again
But those eyes were still clear
 as I chastised myself for my ineptitude
 wondering what I was doing wrong
 seeing the blood flowing from beneath
 her majestic head

So I shot once more
 fighting the disbelief and anger and sickness
 and was grateful to see her eyes cloud over
 grateful the pain for her was finally over
 hoping she knew how much I cared
 and that my intentions for her were honorable
 that it was a difficult thing for me to do
 and I was doing what I thought was best
It isn't right that fate was so unkind to her
 to this beautiful animal
 that wouldn't harm anyone or anything
And I am left feeling
 like the killer on Manning Ave...

Wishing this gentle creature I loved and killed
 a peaceful rest
As I did the coyote I struck
 and then had to shoot
 late this summer on the same road

And I wonder why this -

Why three people's fates collided on Arcade St.
 along with a dumpster truck
Why one woman had to burn alive
 pleading for someone to put her out
Why this faultless, gentle animal
 was fated with such poor timing
And why I was chosen by the same fate
 to carry the burden of her death

LW

November 22, 2000

EXECUTIONER – reprise

I think of the beautiful deer I killed
and lost sleep over
a few nights later
When I see another
just like her
standing at the side of the same road
on the incline of the ditch
facing traffic and watching me pass
She was impossible to miss
and I needed to verify
with my friend driving behind me
that she too saw the doe
and that I wasn't seeing her ghost
And a week later
she was on my mind once more
as I contemplated the stark truth
that I could shoot and kill some people
without losing a minute's sleep
This week he was a Crip monster
who paid \$500.00 to a 15 year old thug
to blow his young wife's head off
point-blank with a shotgun
in the presence of their two year old child
in Mounds Park
while she expected only to be shot with a camera
for a family photograph
It's a vivid family portrait
her blood and brain matter
splattered on the monument
that he hid cowardly behind for cover
holding their young child
and the walkie-talkie he ordered the hit with
while his greedy, soulless cohort
shot the baby's mother in the face
But neither monster
unlike the innocent animal I shot
will be killed in this state
for the evil they planned together
for who they are
I only hope that if there is an afterlife
I will be spending it in the company
of my dear companion Trudy
a female coyote
and a beautiful deer
in a place where such monsters
and motor vehicles
randomness and injustice
do not exist.

LW
November 26th and 27th, 2000

BLUE KNIGHTS

The first snow of the season fell gently
as one by one they gathered
On the steps at the foot of the castle
the symbol of the kingdom they serve

These protectors of the people and all that is good
knights and warriors dressed in blue
Wear battle-worn armor like their peers of old
shields of honor gleaming on their chests

Wreathed hats instead of helmets adorn their heads
guns in leather holsters are their battle swords
Bagpipe music drifts down upon the group gathered
snow and wind blowing the notes over them

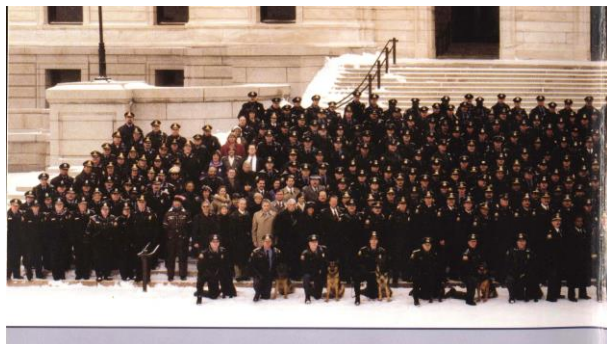
The eerie sound pierces even those hardest of hearts
a poignant reminder of the brave ones who died
Making the ultimate sacrifice, in the line of duty
their presence this day unseen but strongly felt

Knights of St. Paul are from different clans and tribes
as varied as those in the kingdom they serve
But today they are one, sharing a profound sameness
born of common purpose, bonded by honor and duty.

Quiet descends on this ethereal scene
directions and cues are called out
Saint Paul's blue knights stand shoulder to shoulder united
solemn and proud, as the moment is captured in time.

12-19-99 Lucia Wroblewski

Reflections on the morning of the Saint Paul Police Department Millennium Photo Shoot at the
MN State Capitol on its front steps located in the heart of the City of Saint Paul.



Like 10 year old Karol Jozef Woytyla
and my mother's older sister, Irena
and no doubt countless other poles
I write to release all of this emotion
that builds and builds within my heart
and my soul—all of it inescapable
but by giving it shape and form in words
in poems, in phrases
the ache of longing , of pain, of suffering
the intensity of passion, of love
the losses and disappointments
needs, desires, loneliness
the pressure of it all, the weight of it
they all become bearable
as they synthesize and become
as a result of their expression
just another part of me.

We are people of strong emotions
We poles
as I watch Pope John Paul kneel
And see the palpable pain in his face
and in the way he folds his hands together
and rests his head between them
and beneath them
trying to find some way for his empathy
to not destroy his spirit
for the pain to find a vent, a way out
so that his brain doesn't explode
so it isn't crushed by outside forces
so that his heart can withstand all of it
and in that moment I realize
I completely understand this

I escaped yesterday . . .
from an early morning call from work
on my day off, demanding more of me
after a week of long, busy work days
and before that work preparations
on my other days off
then changes in plan and a shift of protection
late into the night on my last day off
the day before the start of a draining work week
training in someone brand new
during this time of horror and depression
in the midst of this national tragedy
that ended in my giving mouth to mouth
to a dead 23 year old Mexican woman
that unbeknownst to me at the time
there was no wan in hell
I ever had a chance to save

BIKE PATROL

As my sweat-filled bullet-proof vest
lies flat, inside-up on my front porch
airing out in the currents of the strong south wind
I gulp down the third of nine quarts
of blue Powerade I bought at work
on sale for one dollar apiece
at the SA at Payne and Geranium

Then I strip off my thin, wet undershirt
and toss it down the laundry chute
along with my balled-up, dark uniform top
permeated with the smells of sweat and dirt

But I feel grateful for and satisfied by this ritual
even as I walk the dog more slowly tonight
on visibly larger legs and a sore left foot
from the first three days of the season patrolling on bike

Both thighs are swollen from climbing east-side hills
my foot aches from its use as a human kick-stand
bearing the brunt of the weight of me and my bike
as I stopped regularly to stand and talk with people
straddling my blue Moab police mountain bike
with my right foot up and snug in the toe-clip
in the power-pedal position, waiting and ready for action

It was a warm and windy spring day
the sand and dirt from Payne Avenue
kicking up and sand-blasting us
stinging bare legs, arms, and faces
as we biked headlong into 20 mph gusts

Today was chasing 4-wheelers and speeding cars
quality of life issues and two proactive arrests
It was traffic stops and loud car stereos
our shrill whistles and blaring pac-sets
It was the "biohazard" sticker on my bike helmet
and the crazy-face design on my bike gloves
It was my dirty, wet, and scraped-up bare legs
and the odoriferous mix of suntan lotion and perspiration



It was the red-tinted spring tan on both of my arms
and the white skin beneath the watch on my left wrist
It was my increased appetite and unquenchable thirst
32 oz. of sports drink slammed down in 30 seconds
It was our friends in squads rolling by to assist
transporting our suspects so we can bike to HQ
It was the Payne Ave., Case Ave., and 7th St. hills
and my reliable old partner biking hard beside me.

It was stripping my soaked shirt off before EOT
and the satisfied exhaustion at the end of the day
It was the annual first week's baptism by fire
for this Payne/Arcade Bike Patrol Beat Officer.

April 29, 2001
Officer Lucia Wroblewski

ADMIRATION

I see incredible LIFE in women's eyes
like I see war in the eyes of a combat veteran
And I love that about women.

It is womanly to courageously experience life
to intimately and fully feel the joy, the pain
And I love that about women.

Uniformed, I see so much strength and beauty
as they stand in respect, honoring another
And I love that about women.

Their hands and arms so willingly embrace
comfort and tears come naturally
And I love that about women.

They want to know the condition of your heart
not the score of last night's game
And I love that about women.

They understand softness and strength are compatible
and aren't afraid of that truth
And I love that about women.

In women, teamwork, protectiveness, and support
are instinctive and primary
And I love that about women.

1-24-00

LW

FAREWELL

I left her
strapping the holster around one thigh
and the gas mask around the other
cinching the vest around my chest
and snapping the chinstrap
on the XS helmet she passed on to me

like a torch
passed from one athlete to another
or a sword
passed from one amazon to another
or an amulet
passed along to a respected comrade
meant to protect a loved one from harm

I accept these things
given to me so generously
and wear them with pride
and with the intention
of proving myself worthy
of her respect and loyalty
dedication, friendship, and love

As I entered the fatal funnel
the entryway of the bank
bunker in one hand
simunition gun in the other
preparing to face an armed gunman
in this scenario that changed
in a quick instant from slow search
to active shooter with hostages

I felt her presence there with me
her confidence in me empowering
her calm intensity focusing me
her strength and bravery energizing
her true friendship and love
enveloping and protecting me
and my team and I kicked ass



returning to the range
after that near-perfect exercise
I found my groove
shooting those bowling pins
beating out my opponents
four times with my partner
my dear friend
my mentor
my teammate
my admired colleague
my fellow warrior
and strong amazon
keeping watch behind me

and as the last shots
are fired on range one
and I remove her knife
from the CIRT utility belt
that this amazing woman
handed down to me
I realize I already miss her
and the team will suffer
in her promotional absence

but I will grieve her loss
most profoundly
as we were the two women
two I's, two 40 year olds
two athletic dykes
so often regarded as one
the Freudian slip
always making me smile
feeling like a compliment
to be even accidentally
mistaken for her

and I will continue her legacy
as a member of this group that
she was such an integral part of
for over ten years as a sniper

as I carry her spirit
her presence
her power and love
her example
every time I don the armor
and strap on her CIRT belt
on every warrant
and each call-out
when I bring a part of her
imbedded in some spiritual way
in the items she passed along to me

and as I continue to carry her
so effortlessly and reassuringly
deep within my heart.

LW

May 22, 2002
on Sgt. Lynn Wild's last CIRT training day
at the outdoor range in Maplewood



What makes you think you have the right –
they ask
How much can a person take –
I say

There was the 19 year old in her 9th month
pregnant for the fifth time
calling because she didn't want to be around her two
quiet, meek children – one and two
both born in the year 2000
they weren't twins

her mother, bruised from getting struck by a car
while crossing drunk or high on University Avenue
free-loading off her teenage daughter
saying this whole thing was depressing her
I asked how she thought the 19 year old felt

I just had to know if she ever thought of birth control
and she mumbled she was getting her tubes tied
after the impending birth of another daughter
who doesn't have a chance in hell I think

and last month we tracked down a young woman
for felony contempt for refusing to show for court
in the trial of her boyfriend – the father of her kid
who was accused in a drive-by shooting

she too was pregnant
having female problems her other boyfriend said
at the hospital
it took awhile but we found her
in the abortion waiting room
we could have taken her away from there
and been saviors in the eyes of some
but we were more responsible
better protectors – more compassionate
albeit complicit in waiting intentionally
purposefully, considerately
for the medical procedure to be done

saving the fetus from a worse fate
saving society from a worse fate
and creating the opening in which
the shooter decided to plead guilty
rather than have his girl testify

my guess is that he knew nothing of the aborted fetus
and that it had nothing to do with him
and he wouldn't have given a damn anyway

or how about the 7 year old slashed 40 times
about the head, upper torso and arms
having witnessed her mother stabbed 150 times

killed brutally in front of her

playing dead she saved herself
left for dead I found her
later he came to the hospital
to also find her
and to then finish her off
for she was the only witness
he had thought she was dead too

or the woman first strangled to death
then sexually assaulted
and thrown out like trash in the front yard
one winter morning
on busy Maryland Ave.
by a man patriotically named
American Morris

or the old woman crying out
for someone to open the car door
as she burned to death
in a four vehicle wreck
the fire and smoke from the collision
visible from two miles away
as we drove to try to save her

and there was little Nora
who we tried desperately
to breathe life back into
her young mother trying to raise her
this beautiful little baby
the product of a violent rape
this little girl that passed away
from SIDS at a relative's home
while mom was returning from school
trying to make a better future for them

and the 23 year old nameless Mexican woman
tongue swollen and bleeding
downs syndrome and dead
as maskless, I tried to revive her
surrounded by hysterical relatives
none of whom spoke a lick of English

and the young Asian woman
a shotgun blast to her head
the execution by a 15 year old
hired by her brutal
gang-banging husband
who witnessed the slaying
from just footsteps away
where he took cover
behind a park monument
holding their young child
as mom's brain matter
splattered the granite

there was the young boy we found
leg-less, having been run over
by an unforgiving train
his father found drunk
at a near-by apartment
no one knew where mom was

and the pretty woman found hanging
by a belt from the attic-closet door
just four feet off the ground
having merely dropped to her knees
wearing a lovely black dress
made up perfectly with a note left
regarding the care of her young children

there was the evisceration
and the meat cleaver assault
the murderous bashing in of a skull
with a large fire extinguisher
and the stabbed man whose spirit
left him as I arrived on scene
at the corner of Edmund and Grotto

the call to a firebomb in my first year
that was a burning human instead
the victim bundled in gas-soaked paper
his thighs splitting like hot dogs
as the old man in the alley
watered him down using a
trickling green garden hose
it took days for the smell
of burning flesh to clear out
from my nostrils because
he was still steaming as I
photographed his body
on overtime that last night
before I went on vacation

and last month the incomprehensible
discovery we made of a pervert
a monster in father's clothes
convicted of molesting
two neighbor girls – five and six years
this 29 year old pervert
released to his mother
after just a couple years
for all intents and purposes
left unsupervised

allowed to rape his own daughters
ages six and nine
the frail six year old now mute
because no one
not the worthless probation officer
or his now complicit supervisor
or the woman who bore them
no one gave a damn

and I am left
once again
utterly alone
in my disgust and revulsion
for all of these people

I am left
utterly alone
in my grief and sympathy
for these victims
I am left
completely alone
in my dedication
compassion and concern

abandoned am I
in my search for a fix
in my pledge to protect
in my quest for
even a glimmer
of hope and optimism
that I can create change

with no help in sight
I continue to search for
even a glint of hope
that justice hasn't died
in this dark world
filled with evil complacency

I stand utterly alone
as hatred and contempt
indifference and apathy
slap me across the face
beat me and torture me
and mock me openly

And there's so much more...

I've lived through the murders
of two of my colleagues
gunned down senselessly
within hours of each other
the killing of one of the most
beautiful, gallant, loyal
dogs I've ever known

as he saved his partner's life

the suicides of a colleague
who trained me my first year
and that of a dear friend
in whose memory my prairie thrives

the tragic death of my dear Trudy
her fur sticking to my sweaty arms
and my tear-soaked face
as I held her lifeless body
just hours after the murder
of my 15 year relationship

the bodies have piled up
their souls have vacated
and I continue working
living, existing
in this moral vacuum
where love and truth
and justice are lost

and who dares judge me or my perspective
only those who know the brutal reality
of what I witness day-to-day
have earned the right to even attempt to do so...

police sirens scream
and yelp
wail and moan
for good reason...

"I've Earned the Right"
February 22, 2002
LW

chocolate-covered cherry

a hard shell - tough and intimidating

yet such a soft, sweet center

when cracked - the scarlet spills

out

of

con

t

rol

LW
2-14-02

RONNIN

the hyenas are cackling
the piranhas are pooling
the jackals are moving in
for the kill...

with their voracious appetites
they gather in a hellish frenzy
hungry for the most tender
delicacy of them all
ravenously eager to devour
a pure and good heart
poised to gorge themselves
on the flesh of an honorable warrior
preparing to quench
their insatiable thirst
with the blood of the true and righteous
evil consuming its antithesis

but as the jackal grinned at me
his mouth filled with rotting teeth
as the monster leered at me
with his jaundiced, blood-shot eyes
his malevolent, pompous smile faded
into disbelief and weakness
as I bared my own strong teeth
and refused to surrender
or even to back down or away
wounded but plenty strong
I would not roll over
to expose my soft belly
I would not turn my head
to expose my jugular
I would not face away from him
to be shot in the back
Though vulnerable I was still
my enemy's clear superior
in strength, will, integrity, and truth
and we both knew it
despite his position of power
his wealth and his arrogance
he was no match for this female ronin
for this masterless samurai
who refuses to bow to false gods
or serve wicked superiors

I was not about to die
and we both knew it
and though it would mean
much pain and suffering
I would be victorious in battle
and we both knew that as well
so the jackal retreated reluctantly
hoping for my death another day

12-16-02 LW

SCARLET SERGE

Red is the color of love, patriotism, passion, pain.

Red were the poppies blooming at Monte Cassino
consecrated by the blood of thousands of Polish soldiers
comrades of my grandfather's 2nd Polish Corps
cut down in the brutal climb to victory over the German army.

Scarlet was the blood of my grandfather
and the ground beneath him as he fell
shot in the lung on the Russian front
marking his passage into manhood
defending Poland in the War of 1920.

Bright red is the color of the maple leaf
that proudly adorns Canada's flag
flanked on both sides by more red.

Fiery red is the color of the glorious setting sun
just before it disappears below the western horizon
of Canada's expanse of wide open prairie
and it's spectacular land of living skies.

Scarlet is the color of the Royal Canadian Mounties
their magnificent serge blouse coats
their brave and loyal hearts
and the blood coursing through their arteries and veins.

And sadly red is the color of the earth on an Alberta farm
where four young RCMP constables were slain
their blood consecrating their beloved Canadian soil.

Indeed scarlet is the color of Canada –
of the flag, the maple leaf, the uniform
of it's sky, it's soil, and of the blood coursing through it's very soul.

Red is the color of the sacred heart and the undying spirit
of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

- Lucia Wroblewski
3-10-05

- written in memory of 4 RCMP constables killed in Alberta on 3-3-05 –

In the State our peace officers wear blue.
We take pride and feel solidarity in saying that our cops bleed blue.

But in reality this critical fluid that circulates life
through our beings is both red and blue.

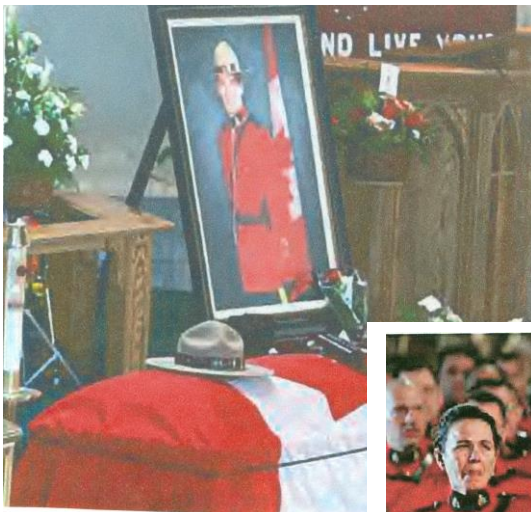
In point of fact as peace officers and protectors
our blood is both red and blue.

The red of oxygenated blood representing our vitality
our courage, our strength, and our love.

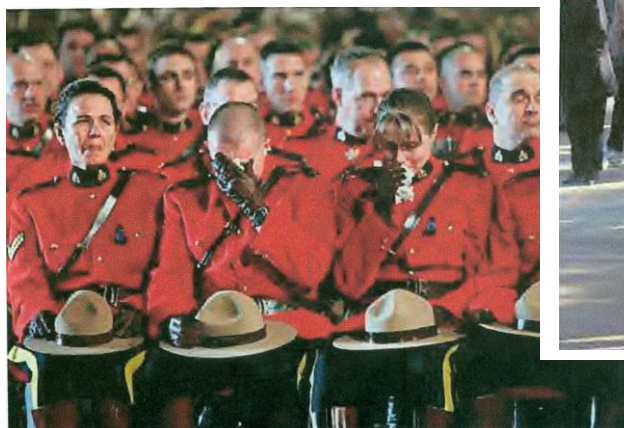
The spent blue representing our sacrifice
our grief, our pathos, our mortality.

It is fitting that both colors of our profession – our calling –
are worn by brothers and sisters – north and south –
in the blue and red dress tunics of police officers and constables
of our two great countries – Canada and the USA.

For in reality we are one large family dedicated to protection and service.



- Lucia Wroblewski
Officer – Saint Paul Police
Saint Paul, MN USA



2004 August 26th

there must be some meaning in all of this –

significance in the bright white star
with its magnificently long fiery tail
falling straight down out of the sky
at four in this morning's blackness

symbolic consolation in the faint rainbow
arching up to disappear into the heavens
at seven this same cloudy, somber evening
a subtle glimmer of hope in the eastern sky

deliverance in the warm glow of the setting sun
bursting gloriously out of the daylong grayness
rich yellow shining through the lingering clouds
as I drove west toward the candlelight vigil

so much contrast on this day of visceral pain
as out of the persistent drip of rain and tears
and out of the dreary, gray monotony of grief
the color and radiance of nature shone through

offering us signs of comfort, hope, and promise
in the dying comet's spectacular fall to earth
in the rainbow's advent and ascension into the clouds
and in the magnificent golden finale of the setting sun

there just has to be some meaning in all of it
in the sacrifice, in the struggle and surrender
in the pain, in the resignation and acceptance
of fate, of suffering, of loss, of unwavering love

in what began as a searing, senseless tragedy
with evil, external forces breaking our spirits
into what evolved on this ten-year anniversary
all of us drawn close together to sacred places
of our own volition - out of our own strength
and through our own faith, need, and longing

to find solace in a comforting touch
in poignantly beautiful, misty eyes
in a tender smile, a telling glance
and in a shared communion of hearts

there must indeed be deep meaning
in what began with that falling star
in what was signified by the rainbow
and in what ended with a gold sunset
whose dappled sunbeams sanctified
the many gathered in special tribute
hope burning delicately -
in the candlelit twilight

on the 10th anniversary of the murders of Officers Ronnie Ryan, Tim Jones, and Laser

LW