




# The of a police officer

Officer Wendi Shackelford  
Anchorage Police Department

- I have proudly served since 1994
- I am a fifth generation police officer





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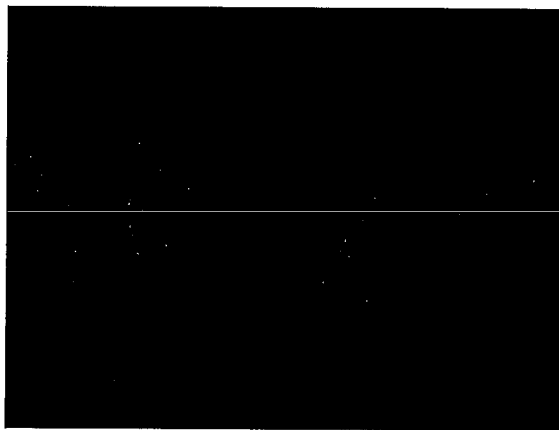


"The greatest tragedy in life is when that which lives inside a man has *died* while the rest of him **LIVES** on."


Albert Einstein




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## The Police: are we a subculture?





- Cultural values and behavioral patterns distinctive of a particular group in a society
- Group having social, economic, ethnic, or other traits distinctive enough to distinguish it from others within the same culture or society




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## Characteristics of my culture


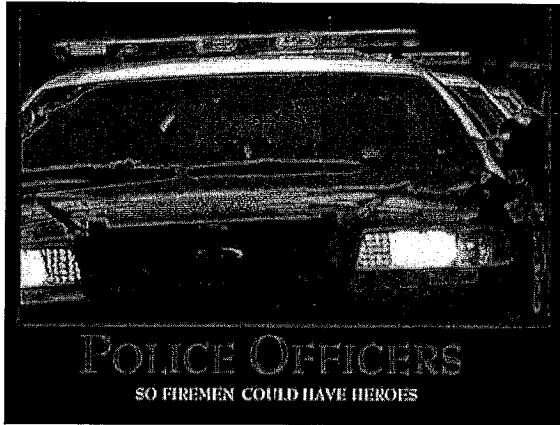
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- **CYNICAL**
  - Limited perspective
  - See people at their worst
  - Defense mechanism
- People call because something went wrong
- We see the whole realm of negative possibilities
  - Anticipating the worst case scenario so we can be prepared
- We lose our perspectives on the rewards that we get from doing our job
- "We're just here to pick up the pieces"




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► **CALLOUSED**

- Difficult for relationships with others
- Difficult to access help when needed
- Loss of innocence
- Loss of belief in the "System"
- Loss of my humanity
- Loss of vulnerability




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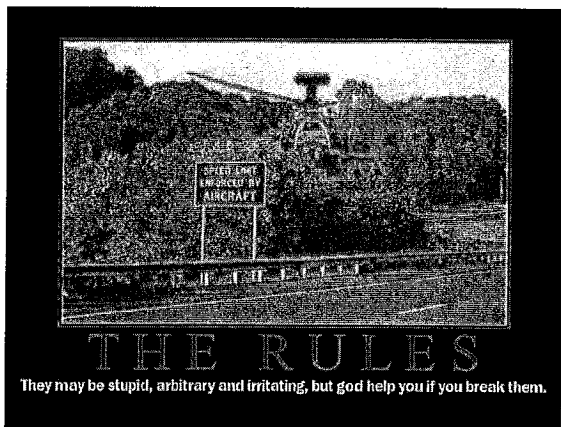
► **AUTHORITARIAN**

- Wield tremendous power and authority
- Have governmental permission to take your life, your stuff, and your freedom

We get so good at it we wear our badge on our pajamas at night.....




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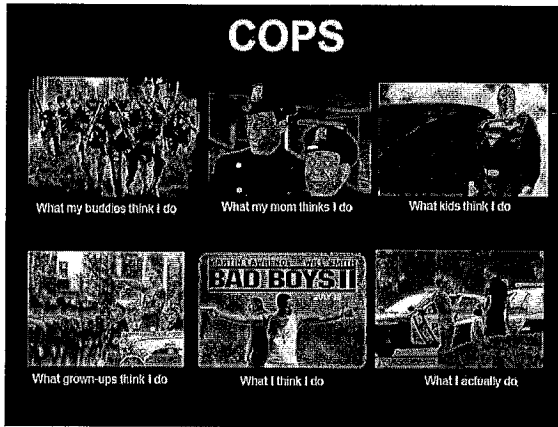



► **MISUNDERSTOOD**

- By their family
- By the public
- By the police administration




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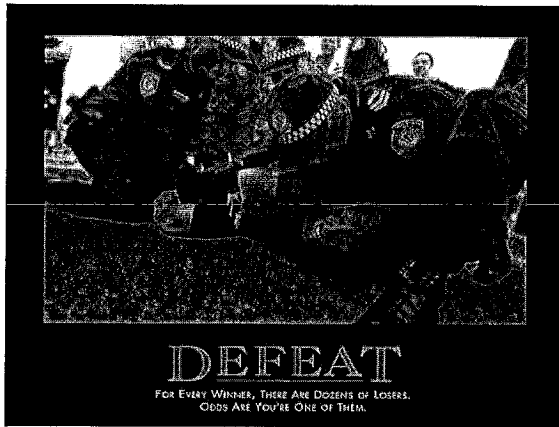




► REJECTED

- By society
- Represent a constant reminder that there are rules and you must follow them or face the consequences...




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► OBSESSIVE

- Lack of control = physical death
- Details, details, details
- "If we don't do a good job, dangerous criminals go free and victims continue to be victimized"




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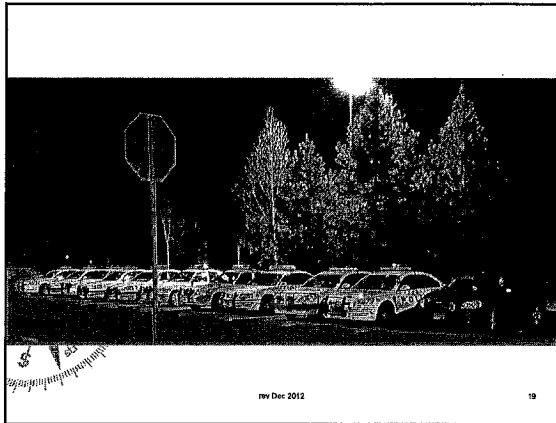



► CLOSED SOCIETY

- We don't accept other people into the group
- You have to *earn* access into our society



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## The long term results:



### ► Intimate knowledge of *EVIL*

- We see the world in varying shades of **grey evil**

► We experience a loss of basic belief in goodness

#### ► interpersonal conflicts:

- How can we believe in a loving God if we can't believe in basic goodness?
- This knowledge of evil changes us

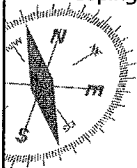


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### ► Effect on personal values

- Changing beliefs
- Self destructive behavior
- Coping mechanisms



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### ► Impact on relationships

- Isolating from others
- Distrust of others
  - We trust people NOT titles

► Fear of risking: 8 to 10 hours of not being emotionally involved or vulnerable

- Intimacy = trust & vulnerability
  - Trusting them not to hurt YOU

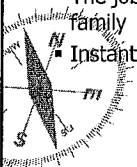


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### ► The Police "family"

- Excitement of the job
- Love of the job
- The job becomes more important than my family
- Instant understanding and rapport




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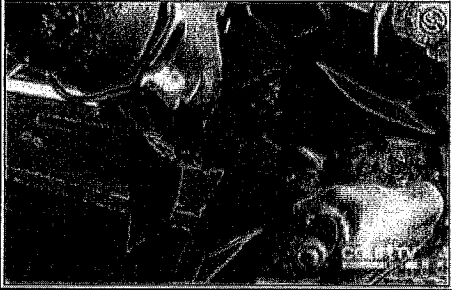
## TEAMWORK

It is the duty of a gentleman to provide covering fire while the lady reloads.




- ▶ Black humor to deal with what's *really* there (emotionally)
  - Laughter tends to distance us from the event so that it's not so significant
  - \* Universal rules - no jokes about...
    - ▶ Dead kids
    - ▶ Dead cops
    - ▶ Or anything else that crosses over a line and has become too personally relevant

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**COMPASSION**

When you jab your ASP in someone's mouth so they don't swallow crack rocks.




- ▶ Physical isolation/withdrawal
  - "I can feel alone in a room full of people because I just feel like I don't have anything in common with them."
  - When anger would build up I would go out and dump on the criminals on the street."
  - "I feel like I am being singled out."
  - ▶ Shift work contributes to isolation from others

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- ▶ Loneliness
  - The emotion that accompanies isolation
    - ▶ Don't like building on disappointments in relationships
    - ▶ Don't like being involved emotionally
    - \* **Intercourse is NOT intimacy \***
    - ▶ "I don't want to share the stuff I experience at work with my family but it *impacts* my relationship with my family."


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- ▶ Suicide
  - Officers feel that if we let someone in the emotional door, we may never get that door closed again
  - So we will fight to the death to keep that door closed
    - ▶ The next time you have alone time with an officer ask them
      - "What price have you paid for being a cop?"

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- ▶ Constricted affect
  - Anger serves to distance us from other people



▶ "The only emotion that I can show effectively is anger. All other emotions are weakness, so you live on anger and you live on jokes, you adopt a gallows humor that keeps you going."

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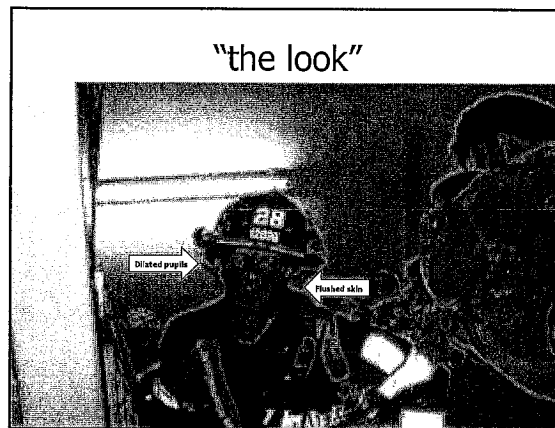


### Fight or flight mode

- ▶ Pupils enlarge
- ▶ Paling or flushing, or alternating between both
- ▶ Mouth stops salivating
- ▶ Windpipes expand
- ▶ Breathing rate increases
- ▶ Sweat glands are stimulated

- ▶ Circulatory changes
- ▶ Loss of coordination
- ▶ Erratic behavior
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Relaxation of bladder
- ▶ Shaking
- ▶ Tunnel vision
- ▶ Digestion slow or stops (SEE HANDOUT)

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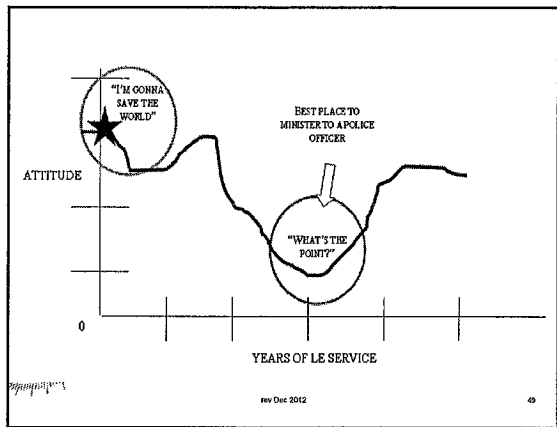
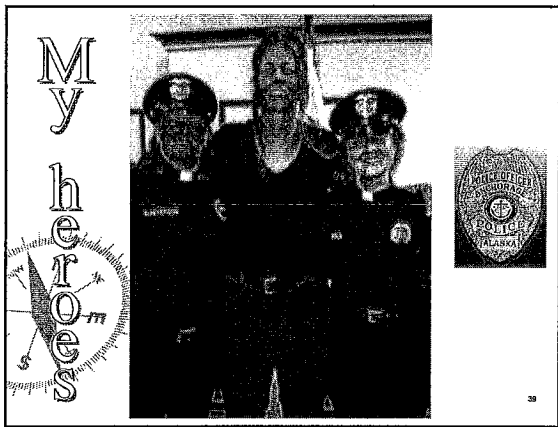
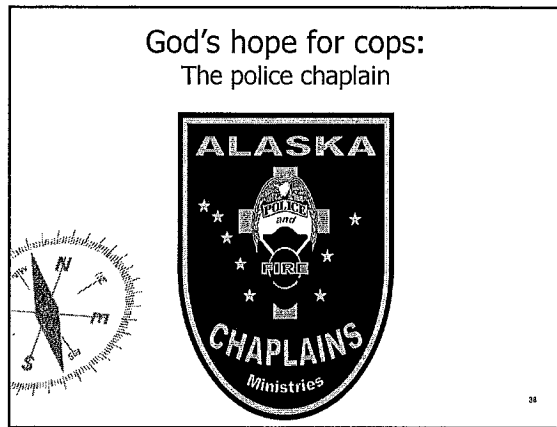
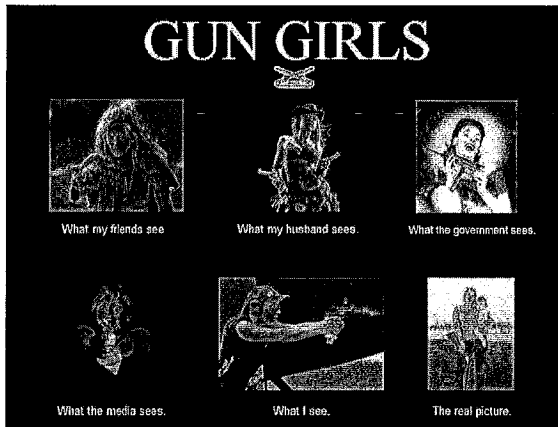
### A brief word about female police officers

- ▶ Women do much better in **cop** groups than in women's groups
- ▶ Women have a
  - Need for approval
  - Need to feel connected
  - Can't stand to be 'left out'
- ▶ For women to feel accepted in police culture they often:
  - Drink more and swear louder
  - Sleep around
  - Work just as hard or harder as men

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- ▶ Women officers tend to be more adept at:
  - Multi-tasking
  - Spinal flexibility
  - Fine motor skills
  - Sensory superiority (except in vision)
  - Slower to anger & more tolerant
  - Wired to gain consensus in high-stress situations
  - Less PTSD as a result from deadly force situations
  - Store more random information
  - Use 2-3x more words than men
  - Focused on feelings and meanings
  - "big picture" oriented
  - Reading faces, expressions, and emotions

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► Understand the LE officer's career progression:

- Beginning: "I'm gonna save the world" ★
- Halfway mark: "what's the point? The Court is throwing my cases out" or "they keep letting the criminals out of jail"
- End: "I've survived this long – I'm just gonna serve my time and get out of here"
  - this is the best place to minister to LE needs!!

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## Law enforcement ministry

► Based on Colossians 3 & 4

- SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE (1-4)
- PUT OFF THE OLD MAN (5-9)
- PUT ON THE NEW MAN (10-17)
- FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (18-4:1)
- EXHORTATIONS TO PRAYER AND PROPER CONDUCT (4:2-6)
  - DEVOTE YOURSELVES TO PRAYER (2-4)
  - CONDUCT YOURSELVES PROPERLY (5-6)

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## Submit to legitimate authority

Colossians 3:22



- ▶ Not just with actions
- ▶ Also with sincerity of heart



Main point: being under authority empowers you

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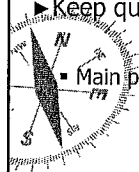
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## Pursue excellence

Colossians 3:23



- ▶ Earn their respect
- ▶ Prepare people to be receptive
- ▶ Followers of Jesus are watched
- ▶ Keep quiet until exemplary



Main point: earn the right to speak

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## Pray

Colossians 4:2-4



- ▶ For opportunities
- ▶ God will open a "door for the Word"
- ▶ To know "the way you ought to speak"



Main point: prepare for opportunities...they will come

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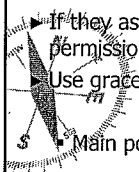
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## Use wisdom

Colossians 4:5-6



- ▶ Opportunities will come
- ▶ Don't judge non-believers
- ▶ That's like talking to a dead man and commanding him to do something as if he was alive
- ▶ If they ask your opinion...they are giving you permission...
- ▶ Use grace in your speech

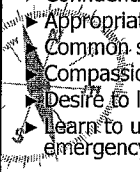


Main point: don't force the Gospel!

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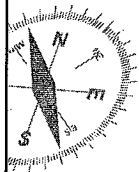
- ▶ Ministry of presence
- ▶ Ministry of proclamation
- ▶ Go through screening and approval
- ▶ Go on ride-alongs
- ▶ Learn by listening and observing
- ▶ Learn the police culture
- ▶ Their turf and under their rules and authority
- ▶ Confidentiality and discretion
- ▶ Appropriateness
- ▶ Common sense
- ▶ Compassion
- ▶ Desire to listen and learn BEFORE speaking
- ▶ Learn to use the officer's weapons in case of emergency



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## 10 characteristics of a competent Christian chaplain



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- ▶ Compassion
  - Caring about others where they are at
- ▶ Character
  - Model faith, virtues, and hope they champion
- ▶ Common sense
  - "street smarts"; basic intelligence, appropriately applied

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- ▶ Communication
  - Situational awareness; active listeners; know when to speak and when to be silent; seasoned with wisdom and grace
- ▶ Courage
  - Physical; spiritual; moral courage
- ▶ Conviction
  - Spiritual command presence to be taken seriously and to properly present the gospel

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- ▶ Commitment
  - Allow time for relationship building
- ▶ Congeniality
  - Good sense of humor, w/o compromising integrity; the doorway to friendship
- ▶ Confidentiality
  - Discretion; courage to articulate and practice this
- ▶ Cross of Christ
  - Ultimate hope for law enforcement; Jesus came to protect and serve us all; we all need a Savior

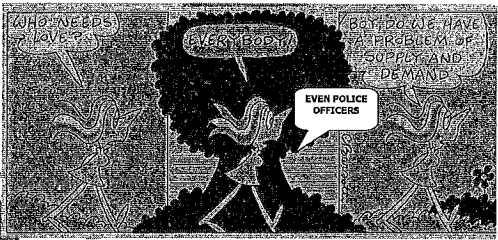
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**10 Gospel based officer spiritual survival strategies**  
Source: Chaplain Steve Lee, Peace Officer Ministries

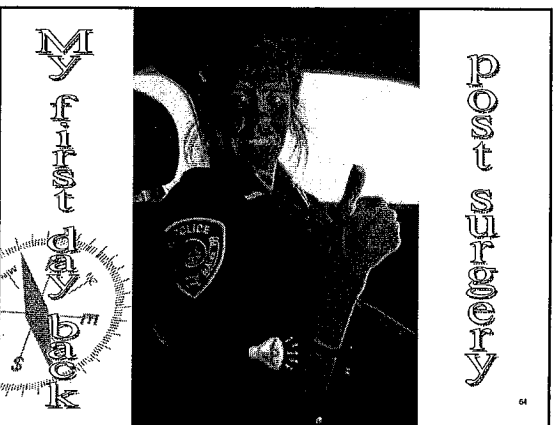
- ▶ Fear of loss of control
  - God is ultimately in control! Trust him with those things that are HIS responsibility
- ▶ Spiritual John Wayne syndrome
  - I will trust God and use all backup in my life to maintain physical, emotional, relational, spiritual, mental health
- ▶ "Why does a loving God who is all powerful allow the evil I see?"
  - I trust God's "who" answers to my "why" questions
- ▶ Stress
  - Sustaining presence of God through prayer, fellowship, church
- ▶ Isolation and alienation
  - I commit to God's created order: institutions of church, society, marriage, and family trusting his created order
- ▶ Game face
  - When I am home, I will relax and allow my family to 'be home'
- ▶ Do the crime, do the time
  - I forgive you, as God has forgiven me
- ▶ Liability
  - I trust God's pardon and direction
- ▶ Loss of innocence
  - I trust Gods word of law
  - I trust God

(SEE HANDOUT)

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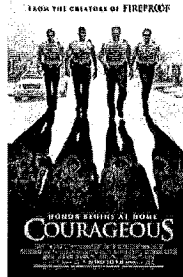
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## BE COURAGEOUS FOR OUR SOULS!

- ▶ Contact information:
- ▶ Officer Wendi Shackelford
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  - Email: [wshackelford@muni.org](mailto:wshackelford@muni.org)



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