

## **BIO, PART IV: 1979 – 1981**

Graduation from the Tucson Police Academy was in January 1979 and I was assigned to Division East, also known as Team Four back then. It was considered less active than other parts of town and of course we were living on the opposite corner of the city. Rookies had to go through the Field Training program: 4 weeks with one Field Training Officer, 4 weeks with a second FTO, 4 weeks with a 3<sup>rd</sup> (each phase the rookie does more and more of the work on his/her own) and lastly, 2 weeks with supposedly the first FTO with him/her in plain clothes and not getting involved unless it couldn't be avoided.

My FTOs were Bob, Mike and Steve. Halfway through phase 2, I had to have leg surgery for a benign bone tumor and was on the desk on crutches for 2-3 months. I assume they could have just fired me, so I think I was lucky. While flying the Eastside desk 2 swing shifts, 2 midnights and 1 day shift each week taking reports over the phone or from walk-ins, I was there when the Lt had a heart attack, when an officer shot and killed a burglar and when an officer walked into an armed robbery and his gun was taken. He was certain the guy was going to shoot him at the time. His gun was recovered across the country on a later date.

When I started riding with Steve, I couldn't do anything right. To be honest, he didn't think women should be cops and showed it in his attitude. Lucky for me, the higher ups saw it as a personality conflict and reassigned me to Hank. I locked us out the patrol car in the rain one night and he gave me crap long enough to make a point before he pulled out a spare key from his pocket (same makes/years were keyed alike). I carried spares after that. He also cured me of talking to people and saying, "Okay?" (in place of "Do you understand") all the time.

My last 2 weeks were with Larry and I was finally on my own. It's like the first time driving the family car by yourself after getting your license. I could finally go where I wanted and write someone a warning if I didn't want to write a ticket. My sergeant Paul did ask once about my higher number of warnings and I told him that we were taught two things in the academy: 1) the spirit of the law vs the letter of the law and 2) traffic stops were intended to change the driver's poor habits. I told him that if I felt a driver was receptive to being corrected when I stopped them, I would write a warning. If the infraction was serious enough or the driver seemed defensive and not listening to my advice, I wrote a citation. He just said, "Okay".

In 1981 I was on midnights working 10 – 6 or 11 – 7 and had just gotten a motorcycle. Riding home one morning, I dozed off sitting at a red light. It was a

miracle I didn't fall over like the guy on the tricycle on the old TV show Laugh In. On April 1, Max was working out of town but drove home every night to be with the kids so I could go to work. I got home that morning and laid in bed a few minutes. He knew I had traffic court and got me up before he sent Linda to school and Carey to the sitter. I remember hugging him in the kitchen before he left, and I got ready again.

After court I went off trying to buy a motorcycle for him too as he really like the Kawasaki 440 we got for me. By the time I got home, I didn't get much sleep before the kids were home and it was time for softball practice that evening. I remember dinner was at a Burger King that night. We got home and because I hadn't slept and had a raging headache, I called in sick. At about 7:30 PM a guy that worked with Max called looking for him and I told him I hadn't heard from him which was weird because he would always call.

At 10 PM my doorbell rang. It was my sergeant and his wife which was strange. They'd never come over before. I invited them in, and I started picking up kids' toys that were still all over the floor. I noticed his hand was shaking as he reached for me and said, "There's been an accident. Max is Dead." I thought about this being April Fool's Day but decided that's not a joke they would play. I just asked, "Are you sure?" and he said, "Yes."

I immediately started crying and called my dad. I could hear him throw down the phone and start saying, "Oh my God! Oh my God!" and his wife asking him what happened. He never did pick the phone back up. The department had a co-worker they knew was on the softball team with me start over and I had them call my best friend Peggy who came over.

Linda woke up from the commotion of people coming and going and Paul and Peggy went into the kids' room to tell her about daddy. I followed them and I told her. The tears started but stopped the moment I said daddy was in heaven with the puppy that died. The next morning, Peggy and I had to tell Carey and I sat her on the couch with Linda leaning over the back of the couch next to her. Her eyes got big and she looked at Linda for affirmation. Linda just nodded and the same scene replayed with the tears. I had my moments, but the kids didn't seem to cry until the three of us were laying on my bed a couple weeks later.

My sister Linda, my mom and brother all came to Tucson for the funeral service. My squad was in uniform and acted as the Honor Guard and because Max had been in the Army, I was presented with an American flag by my sergeant. I took

about a week off and went back to work, but they had me Baker-up (ride in a two-man unit) for a couple nights.

Peggy and I had met playing softball in 1979 and her husband and Max both helped coach. Her daughter Robin kept the scorebook and her son Johnny was the bat boy. After the accident, Peggy and her family started helping more and more with the kids. By about July of 1981, we had bought a house together on the east side and I was finally only a five-minute drive from work. It was me with my two kids and Peggy with her two older kids, with 3 years separating each of them. We still stay in touch even though Peggy and Robin live in Tucson, Johnny is in Chicago and we are all in Southern Cal.