

12-2019

Women in Law Enforcement: The Impacts and Obstacles They Face in a Hispanic- and Male-Dominated Culture

Lisa M. Seiser
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/etd>



Part of the [Communication Commons](#), [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Seiser, Lisa M., "Women in Law Enforcement: The Impacts and Obstacles They Face in a Hispanic- and Male-Dominated Culture" (2019). *Theses and Dissertations*. 575.
<https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/etd/575>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact justin.white@utrgv.edu, william.flores01@utrgv.edu.

WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT: THE IMPACTS AND
OBSTACLES THEY FACE IN A HISPANIC- AND
MALE-DOMINATED CULTURE

A Thesis

by

LISA M. SEISER

Submitted to the Graduate College of
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

December 2019

Major Subject: Communication

WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT: THE IMPACTS AND
OBSTACLES THEY FACE IN A HISPANIC-
AND MALE-DOMINATED CULTURE

A Thesis
by
LISA M. SEISER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. William Strong
Chair of Committee

Dr. Nikkie Hodgson
Committee Member

Dr. Jennifer Lemanski
Committee Member

December 2019

Copyright 2019 Lisa M. Seiser
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Seiser, Lisa M., Women in Law Enforcement: The Impacts and Obstacles They Face in a Hispanic- and Male-Dominated Culture. Master of Arts (MA), December 2019, 130 pp., 1 table, references, 24 titles.

Despite a lack of female law enforcement representation in police departments across the country and especially in the Border Patrol, there have been minimal studies performed focusing on the obstacles women face in these professions. The purpose of this study was to attempt to understand the lived experiences of female law enforcement officers in this male-dominated profession, but also add the aspect of working in a Hispanic-dominated culture.

The findings revealed women in law enforcement face similar obstacles. However, not all obstacles mentioned could be linked with Hispanic culture or more specifically Machismo.

As women continue to integrate into various law enforcement agencies, the rate is slow moving. The findings in this study could be used to educate law enforcement leaders regarding obstacles women face in that field with hopes to make changes to the way women are viewed in the law enforcement profession and in a Machismo culture.

DEDICATION

The completion of my studies in communication would not have been possible without the support of my No. 1 fan Luise Richards. Her confidence in my talents, intelligence and abilities never wavered. Without her I would not be here, nor would I be the person I am today. Thank you for your love, patience and support through these two years as I worked toward a goal I never thought was possible until you. Also, this is for all the other friends and family who have been supportive during this time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee chair Dr. William Strong and members Dr. Nikkie Hodgson and Dr. Jennifer Lemanski for being part of this process and for all their support and positive feedback along the way.

Also, I will always be grateful to the 13 women in law enforcement who participated in the in-depth interview research and were so open to tell me their stories. Their openness, honesty and trust in me as a researcher and the process was amazing and they are the reason for the success of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Definition of Terms	3
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	4
Gender and Law Enforcement	6
Machismo Mentality	7
Research Questions	9
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY	10
Participants	12
Setting	14
Data Collection	14
Data Analysis	15
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND RESULTS	16
Obstacles	16

Overcoming Obstacles	33
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION	40
Impact on Pursuing Law Enforcement	41
Types of Obstacles	43
How Women Overcome Obstacles	44
Most Significant Obstacle	45
Reaction to Women in Law Enforcement	46
Limitations and Future Research	46
CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	49
REFERENCES	50
APPENDIX	53
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	130

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Participant Information	13

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement occupations historically have been male dominated, physical, action-oriented and require mental and emotional strength. Thus, they are considered masculine in nature. That leads to a police culture, which can sometimes be described in more detail as macho in orientation, sexist, crude and sophomoric (Kurtz & Upton, 2018). Although women have been involved in policing in the United States since the late 1800s, there now are more women employed in police agencies today than ever before (Archbold & Schulz, 2012). Arrest authority is one of the primary differences between female law enforcement officers of today and the early ones (Archbold & Schulz, 2012). Women continue to join the ranks in police work and other law enforcement offices, and they work with their male counterparts in the field and in leadership positions, ultimately performing much, if not all, of the same work with the same authority, power and abilities. Because men and women are engaged in the profession of law enforcement ultimately as they create a working culture and environment, women play “a critical role in the development of modern policing” (Lonsway, 2007).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017) women make up 47.7 percent of all working Americans. However, they make up only 22.5 percent of all protective services personnel. That percentage is even lower when looking at law enforcement officers with arresting authority. According to the 2016 Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Crime in the United States statistics, 12.1 percent of all agencies are made up of women officers. This number does

not include civilians, which 60 percent are females, elevating the percentage of women in law enforcement agencies overall to the 22.5 percent as cited by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Women officers are even more rare in smaller cities with populations of 10,000 to 24,999. There, less than 9 percent of the police officers are women (FBI, 2016). The larger the city, the more likely there are to be a higher percentage of female officers. Cities with a population of more than 1 million employed the highest percentage of female officers at 17.8 (FBI, 2016).

While the numbers are improving, over the past 30 years civil rights acts, lawsuits and affirmative action efforts have increased women's representation in law enforcement by only one half of one percent per year (Burlingame & Baro, 2005). The representation of women in policing has been "stuck on a plateau," around 11 percent to 12 percent for nearly two decades (Shjarback & Todak, 2018). Looking at Border Patrol percentages, the numbers are about half of that regarding women representation in the field and in supervisory roles.

In this thesis, all those numbers are significant and important. Because women are highly underrepresented in the ranks of law enforcement and the number of women entering the profession is relatively stagnant, it is imperative research looks at why this may be the case.

It is in essence the reason for the research.

By exploring the various factors and obstacles women face in this profession, law enforcement departments across the country may be able to use these findings to make changes in police culture, behavior and policy with the goal to increase the percentages of women who become law enforcement officers and border patrol agents. More specifically, this research attempts to determine whether there are additional or different obstacles and barriers caused by the pervading Hispanic machismo culture, and if that could potentially determine whether the future may be brighter for women as police officers or border patrol agents.

Definition of Terms

Machismo: While it has been studied and referenced in popular culture, there isn't necessarily a clear definition. According to Arciniega et. al (2008), in the majority of popular literature the term is associated with "negative characteristics of sexism, chauvinism, and hypermasculinity."

Sexual harassment: Described as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." In order for it to be illegal, "it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted)." (U.S. EEOC, 2019)

Police officer/border patrol agent: Police and border patrol personnel are uniformed and badged officers who regularly respond to calls for service.

Hispanic Culture: The term Hispanic was created by the U.S. Federal Government in the early 1970s in an attempt to "provide a common denominator to a large, but diverse population connected to the Spanish language" or coming from a Spanish speaking country (Clutter & Nieto). In this thesis, the Hispanic Culture references the family values, etiquette, rituals, celebrations, eating habits and teaching and learning implications. This thesis also references the Hispanic culture as requiring prominence as to the population. That means the Hispanic population in what is considered a Hispanic culture is the majority of all people.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have explored specific differences between men and women in law enforcement and the hurdles women face in this male-dominated profession. First, in some cases, women have encountered extreme resistance by fellow officers and by the organization (Franklin, 2005). The study by Franklin (2005) adds, “Their capacity to function as capable officers is questioned and their competence is under constant scrutiny.”

Rabe-Hemp (2008) attempted to describe the resistance and obstacles women continue to face in policing as well as the coping mechanisms they used to overcome those obstacles. In that study, all female officers interviewed “identified personal instances of sexual harassment, discrimination, or disrespect that impeded their successes and acceptance in police work” (Rabe-Hemp C. , 2008).

Previous studies also have shown men and women bring different talents and skills to police work. That is based on the premise that women police differently than men because of biological and socialization differences (Rabe-Hemp C. E., 2008). This same study suggests women embody greater empathy and communication skills. Workforce demographic changes in law enforcement have led to a diversity that is at once the most dramatic transformation in policing (Sklansky, 2006). While they may be looked at as cosmetic or largely symbolic (Sklansky, 2006), the organizational structure and the job shapes the officer. Gender is a part of

that and studies that analyze the organizational effects in which the presence of female officers may change the internal dynamics of a police department (Sklansky, 2006) are important.

But there isn't research that focuses on whether the same, different, more or fewer obstacles and factors exist for women in law enforcement growing up, working and living in a Hispanic culture.

Slansky (2006) focused his study on changing demographics, including women minorities in law enforcement, even citing, it isn't your father's police department anymore. Morash and Haarr (2012) held in depth interviews with 21 women in metropolitan departments with varying race, ethnicity, rank and tenure, attempting to find possible variations in how women see themselves and their work. They found women valued the traits they associated with women and devalued those associated with "maleness" (Morash & Haarr, 2012).

In Cooper (2009), masculinities are studied in police work. However, the focus is on police stops and training. While it looks deeply at the machismo, masculine and male-dominated facets of law enforcement, it doesn't consider women in law enforcement or how the two may be different in their styles, behaviors and obstacles.

The closest study to this research appears to be Rabe-Hemp (2007) which explores the experiences of policewomen to determine the extent to which female officers face resistance and obstacles to police work. It also examines the coping mechanisms and common themes in success stories of acceptance and integration for these women. This Rabe-Hemp study is different from this study mainly because it was done in the Midwest with most of the respondents being white.

No studies were discovered that involved Hispanic women in law enforcement nor does anything focus on affecting factors of a Hispanic culture, which could reveal quite different

experiences and responses regarding the law enforcement community and especially perceptions of women as law enforcement officers.

This neglected niche, which is being studied here, may answer telling questions about women, including Hispanic women, in policing, and how they are affected by the challenges of working in male-dominated culture. Due to their Hispanic culture and upbringing in a machismo world, could Hispanic female law enforcement personnel be better equipped in some ways for coping with the inequalities they face in this career choice? Are they more capable of handling the male dominated police culture with its potential sexist injustices, rather than be rattled by it? These are just a few interesting facets of this study in what has seemingly been a relatively ignored area of research.

The Hispanic culture is the dominant variable and focus of this study. If this were a quantitative study, that research would focus on what extent the independent variable, the Hispanic culture, affects the dependent variable, female and Hispanic officers in policing. In this qualitative research, the Hispanic culture is the context with which the research looks at impacts on women and Hispanic women in their roles in law enforcement. Here, the focus is on content for analysis and interpretation.

However, the purpose of this study was not to gather surface data or attitudinal surveys. Rather, its intent was to collect rich, qualitative data digging deep into the understanding and experiences of these women through in-depth interviews.

Gender and Law Enforcement

The rationale for increasing police diversity “is rooted in the representative bureaucracy framework, which posits fair representation of citizen groups in government agencies will ensure

that the public's interests are reflected in agency decisions and behavior" (Shjarback & Todak, 2018). In a policing contest, this suggests "increased diversity may enhance public perceptions of police legitimacy and encourage cooperation with law enforcement" (Shjarback & Todak, 2018).

"Community policing creates a demand for more women because it emphasizes an organization's commitment to equality and access for all residents. Furthermore, one of the central tenets during the community policing era has been the pursuit of workforce diversity. Hiring more female and minority officers is a high priority because an increase in diversity is viewed as an important indicator of organizational change" (Shjarback & Todak, 2018).

That's not all, according to Shjarback and Todak (2018), "societal notions of gender roles classify certain professions as more suitable for men." That study continues to cite others that state, there's a "persisting belief that police work is inappropriate job for women and a tendency among both the police and the public to equate effective policing with the masculine qualities of aggression, risk taking, and bravery," (Shjarback & Todak, 2018).

Researchers have also cited, "the police environment may be inhospitable for women, with the biggest issues being negative workplace interactions with and harassment from coworkers." Researchers have examined female representation in law enforcement in general, but there has been less scholarly attention directed to female representation in supervisory and middle to top management positions (Shjarback & Todak, 2018).

Machismo Mentality

The Rio Grande Valley along with the southern U.S./Mexico border in Texas is comprised of a majority Hispanic people. As of 2010, about 90 percent of the population in the Lower Rio Grande Valley was made up of Hispanics (Greater Texas Foundation, 2011). The

Latin culture can be dictated by the belief in male superiority and dominance, popularized as machismo (Mayo & Resnick, 1996). Machismo is a term that describes behaviors culturally relevant to the Mexican male and can be viewed as a form of masculine ideology (Fragoso & Kashubeck, 2000).

This machismo culture is teamed with the masculine nature and male dominance in the law enforcement field. In this mentality, gender is analyzed through the beliefs men hold about the family and the subordinate status that women should occupy (Pena, 1991). Those opinions and actions impact communication and behavior between genders in a profession that favors masculinity. Gender among other dimensions of social difference serve as organizing features of work organizations and these organizations are sites of the social production of difference (Miller, Forest, & Jurik, 2003).

One question is how this machismo mentality, coupled with an already masculine profession, affects and creates obstacles for women who want to pursue law enforcement and for those already in the field.

According to Fragoso and Kashubeck (2000), who focused on machismo, males and their gender roles are socialized to “view the values and beliefs of this system as optimal, and when they adopt it as their masculine value system, they develop a fear of femininity.”

In a study about how masculinity affects policing, the question is do officers get “macho” with civilians and enact a command presence in situations when it serves to boost the officer’s masculine esteem (Cooper, 2009). Because policing is a male-dominated and masculine field, policemen are prone to two phenomena – the culture of home stance and hypermasculinity (Cooper, 2009).

However, there appear to be no studies that seek to answer the question of how the Machismo culture affects women law enforcement officers. This machismo includes the public and fellow male law enforcement reactions and behaviors toward the female officers and agents.

Research Questions

So, the questions to be answered look at how this affects women in law enforcement from their decision to enter the career through the time when they have achieved rank and responsibility.

RQ1: How does the Hispanic, machismo, male-dominated culture, impact women who want to pursue law enforcement as a career?

RQ2: What types of obstacles do women performing as police officers and border patrol agents face in this Hispanic, machismo, male-dominated law enforcement culture?

RQ3: How have women in law enforcement in a male-dominated and Hispanic culture overcome these obstacles?

RQ4: Which of these obstacles are more significant to overcome as it relates to determining women's law enforcement career success?

RQ5: How do men in law enforcement and the general public in a Hispanic culture react to women in law enforcement daily?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research concerns itself with the meanings and personal experiences of individuals, groups and subcultures. Reality in qualitative research is focused on the “negotiations of truths” through a series of subjective accounts (Winter, 2000).

The most common qualitative methods to consider using in order to find the meaning include observation, interviews, focus groups and document studies. Due to the advantages of information that can be gathered, the main method for this research was in-depth interviews. The method here was used to explore and use the female officer’s insight into years of service, asking each about the challenges they have faced as a woman in law enforcement specifically in a Hispanic culture.

In order to study these experiences, in this thesis, the researcher interviewed 13 law enforcement personnel with varying experience within local police departments and border patrol. Two of the women interviewed were considered civilian law enforcement personnel, while 11 were police officers or border patrol agents. The purpose was to describe and understand the lived experiences of these women as they work in a Hispanic Culture. Thus, only women who work in an area that is predominantly Hispanic were asked to be part of this study.

They were interviewed solely by the researcher as part of this study taking place in the Rio Grande Valley and along the southern border. Two law enforcement department supervisors were contacted to provide female subjects from each law enforcement organization to be

interviewed. The supervisors sent out email or Facebook requests to several personnel with a brief explanation of this study. Additional law enforcement officers were located through snowballing. These law enforcement personnel individually, by their choice, contacted the researcher to set up interview times.

Those interviewed read and signed an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved informed consent form and/or verbally agreed following an explanation that their responses would be anonymous. All of this was key to obtaining the most honest answers possible.

Eight interviews were performed over the phone and five were completed in person, due to location and time constraints. All were audio recorded and later transcribed.

The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 95 minutes, with most being around 60 minutes long. That length of time and the questions posted, provided perspectives from the participants who are knowledgeable and directly involved in the topic of this thesis. They have lived it and experienced what was being asked about.

The interview protocol included open-ended interview questions, which led to an in-depth process with extensive probing. To standardize the approach as much as possible, questions were written in advance (Appendix D) the way they were asked in the interview. However, the researcher anticipated and performed many follow-up questions and probing to create a deeper understanding from the participant.

The detailed interview process provided rich and unique insights from the participants.

Other data gathered regarding the participants included age, years in law enforcement and whether the participant was or is a supervisor.

Using these participants, who live and have lived in this law enforcement world for years, “ensures efficient and effective research with optimal quality” (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002).

Qualitative researchers have come to embrace their involvement and role within the research. For quantitative researchers, this involvement greatly reduces the validity, yet for qualitative researchers, denying one’s role within research also threatens the validity of the research (Winter, 2000).

Participants

Interviews were set up and proceeded upon receiving approval from the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley Institutional Review Board. In August, the recruitment letter was sent out to supervisors within the Border Patrol and local law enforcement requesting potential participants meeting the requirements of being a current or former law enforcement personnel in a Hispanic culture.

Living in a Hispanic culture required the majority population be of Hispanic race. This study focused on the United States-Mexican border areas mainly from Brownsville to El Paso, including San Benito, McAllen, Falfurrias and El Paso. One participant worked in the Tucson Sector of the Border Patrol. Each one of these communities are made up of a majority Hispanic population, creating what this study referenced as a Hispanic culture.

Those interested who met the requirements contacted the researcher to select a time, date and location for the interview.

Some of the participants who agreed to interviews were located through snowballing. Upon the conclusion of most interviews, the participant was asked if she knew other female law

enforcement personnel who both met the requirements and would potentially agree to be interviewed.

All but two of the participants currently are or have been badged police officers or border patrol agents. Two of the participants work or worked in law enforcement, on a daily basis directly with law enforcement officers or border patrol agents. In an effort to ensure anonymity and simplicity, the researcher has listed these two under the type of agency in which they served as a civilian.

Prior to the interview starting, participants were sent the consent form. Also, before each interview, the researcher provided an introduction to the purpose of the study and then discussed the anonymity and audio recording procedures. At that time, the participants were asked if they accepted and understood the requirements.

In this study, we assume these female law enforcement personnel willingly and honestly provided responses regarding their upbringing, work experiences and more through the years.

Table 1 – Participant information

Law Enforcement	Age	Years in LE	Supervisor
Agent 1	42	18	No
Agent 2	45	20	No
Agent 3	45	23	Yes
Agent 4	54	27	Yes
Agent 5	37	8	No
Officer 1	45	1	No
Officer 2	41	15	Yes
Officer 3	33	10	No
Officer 4	37	3	No
Officer 5	38	18	Yes
Officer 6	51	26	Yes
Officer 7	27	1	No
Officer 8	37	19	No

Setting

In order to create the most convenience for the participants, each was given the choice of the setting and method of contact. They also were able to dictate the date and time of the interview in most cases. Several of the participants were interviewed over the phone due to residing in other parts of the state, making it impossible for an in-person interview. Telephone interviews are a viable option to established methods of qualitative data collection and the conversations naturally follow an agenda-driven format that is initiated by the caller, similar to semi-structured interviews (Cachia & Millward, 2011). “Also, the interview transcripts provide rich textual data that can be subsequently analysed using a range of qualitative data analysis methods” (Cachia & Millward, 2011).

Three were interviewed in a public location, such as a coffee shop or restaurant, with plenty of privacy to ensure comfort to discuss their opinions and experiences. One was interviewed at her workplace after hours and another was interviewed in her home on a weekend. In all circumstances, the researcher and participant were the only two people involved in the process. All interviews were audio recorded utilizing a cellular phone for transcribing purposes and the researcher used a list of prepared questions located on a laptop computer.

Data Collection

All 13 one-on-one interviews were completed in August and the first week of September. While the in-depth interviews varied in the amount of time, in general, the participants were eager to share their experiences. Most were very detailed regarding their experiences, concerns and feelings regarding the topic at hand. At times, the participants strayed off topic, but were guided back when necessary. Overall, there were no significant deviations from the topic being

discussed or questioned, and in some ways, their ability to speak about these issues was cathartic for them.

Upon completion of each interview and within a few days of the approximate 45-minute long to 95-minute long interviews, each was transcribed focusing on the responses from the participants, not as much on comments or the questions as asked by the researcher. When transcribing, an anonymous coding process was used to assign a number for each participant.

Data Analysis

Upon completing all interviews and transcriptions, the researcher reviewed the data seeking general meanings and categories. The interview responses were then categorized into colors depending on their relation to the research questions as a method of organizing and coding. Using both key words, questions and ideas, a majority of the participant's responses related to the research question themes. Those that did not directly relate to the research questions were not provided a color.

Each participant's main statements and themes were listed in order to locate repeating ideas and concepts among all the participants that could be analyzed and used to respond to the research questions. Those were collected as well to determine the overall obstacles and responses to obstacles as cited in the results section.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Obstacles

The participants in this study discussed many varying obstacles, specific to their own situations, life, experiences, upbringing and police culture they have lived and worked within. These varying obstacles can be placed into five different categories, creating the key obstacles, all of which were repeating responses each voiced by at least half of the participants.

Proving oneself on the job was the most notable and referenced specifically by 10 of the 13 women participants in this study. Based on responses, that was clearly the most significant hurdle or obstacle to success as a woman working in law enforcement. The second most obvious response came regarding family. Shift scheduling, being away from children and spouses, and having to be on duty, ready at all hours, makes family life difficult, according to the participants.

Not as clearly defined or spoken about by a majority of the female law enforcement officers, but certainly key issues discussed, included sexual harassment, the physical demands and other women hindering meaningful gains in this effort toward equal treatment.

Proving Yourself – Perceptions of Women in Law Enforcement

In order to succeed in law enforcement and be respected by both the public and fellow officers, the participants in this study were clear, they had to prove themselves. For most of the women, they had to prove their ability to perform the job to their male counterparts, their male

supervisors, members of the public, fellow female law enforcement and some even had to prove themselves to their own family members. None of this was an easy task, according to the participants.

Agent 4: I want to say when I put the uniform on, I want to be treated no different, no better or worse because I am a female. But, at the same time, I have to recognize there are differences as we do function differently. (p. 83)

Officer 5: A lot of it is more about proving ourselves. We have to prove we are strong enough physically, mentally and emotionally. One thing, as women, I say I am just as strong as a man is. But in reality, we all know I am not going to be as strong as a guy. I will not be able to do everything he does. I will always try my best and hold my own. That is something that is one of the hardest things to prove. I can't prove it by telling you, you actually have to do it. (p. 111)

But, most of those interviewed agreed, they believed they had accomplished their goal of gaining respect from their male counterparts and members of the public. In some cases, the women suggested they had just as much respect as their fellow male officers among peers as well as the general public.

Officer 8: I can walk into a room and I am not looked at like she isn't going to do anything. When I get calls or looked for, it is because I have the respect. I have men who come and ask me questions or advice. I have the respect. I had to build that. You can't come and say – you have to use different skills. It is not to impress guys; it is about doing the job. When you talk, you have to know what you are talking about. (p. 128)

However, gaining this respect as a woman in law enforcement has been neither quick nor an easy process.

Officer 3: *Not to toot my horn, but they respect me because of past experience and a lot of years of experience. The way I carry myself at calls, they sometimes say, 'wow, I would have never thought to say this or that.' We (women) have that motherly instinct. They do respect me.* (p. 102)

Officer 1: *I got along well once they saw I wasn't going to allow myself to be treated with disrespect and once they found out I was smart. You just have to prove yourself and do your job ten (10) times better than a male. So, you have to work even harder. It is just a lot of tests they give you.* (p. 93)

For some women law enforcement officials, there is more to this obstacle than just proving yourself.

Agent 3: *I think that there are so many (obstacles). I think they come as you go through different chapters. When you are a young agent, it is proving yourself and able to do the job. There are a lot of gentlemen in this organization. But you have to recognize how you want to be perceived and hold your own. That is kind of difficult to do – that you are perfectly capable on your own.* (p. 77)

Officer 6: *Society still sees women as the minority – weaker. And I think that in society, they would prefer someone stronger (be an officer).* (p. 118)

Agent 2: *I enjoy it (the job) because I know how hard I have had to work to be accepted. And I know nothing in this profession is handed to you. It is such a unique law enforcement experience. If you are respected, you know you have earned it. Everyone knows who the workers are. Women have to work harder, but that is across society, I think. We do have to work a little harder to be seen as equals.* (p. 72)

One female officer reported a different experience and it involved her own family.

Officer 7: *I think the hardest obstacle was proving to family that I could do law enforcement – that I could be a mom and do law enforcement. My grandma said, ‘why can’t you be a teacher or a nurse?’ I want to be a good example for my daughter. (pp. 122-123)*

Sometimes proving themselves affected their own thinking and relationships regarding fellow female law enforcement personnel.

Agent 1: *I observed the three females prior to me. Just based on experience at the academy and the little in the field, I saw these girls aren’t going to cut it. Their officer presence wasn’t really there. A couple of them were like worried about their makeup. Training officers would tell me, you better prove yourself. I knew who I was and what I brought to the table. And I saw them working and didn’t want to be grouped or compared to them. I know it is wrong, women have to stick together, but I thought, no, agents have to stick together. I saw one of them (women officer) in action and was like what are you doing? The hardest was not to fall into that stereotype of a female not being able to do it. I felt like I had to prove myself. (p. 68)*

At least two of the women said they weren’t looked at as a woman officer, but an officer. In that situation, this officer had to prove herself, but not more because of being a woman.

Officer 4: *In my department, they don’t see you as a female. You don’t get judged. You don’t want to be the officer that nobody wants to be assigned with. Your work ethic defines your personality around here. They don’t see us as male or female. (p. 106)*

The Machismo Impact

Every female law enforcement officer interviewed agreed, Machismo exists in the areas in which they live and work. While only about half admitted to growing up in a Machismo household, all 13 said it has been and continues to be observed in the male dominated law

enforcement profession as well as the Hispanic culture that is so prevalent along the Border region of Texas and Arizona. For some, they believe it has impacted their promotion capabilities as well as their authority ability out in the public in certain circumstances.

In order to understand the impacts of Machismo on these female law enforcement personnel, we must understand their own definition of Machismo. Overall, each female law enforcement participant interviewed described the concept of Machismo in relatively the same manner.

Officer 5: Your traditional (Machismo), I would see as always being male dominant. The male is in control, always make the decisions, rules. Tell women what we have to do. Women being dependent on a man physically, emotionally, financially. That is how I would describe your typical Machismo. (p. 110)

However, there were differences in the levels of perceived Machismo. Some suggested it was the same as it has been for years, a majority said they believed it is on the decline and not as evident in the younger generations coming up in law enforcement.

Agent 2: I just think people are more careful about what they say and who they say it to. The percentage of women in this career has not changed at all over 20 years. Maybe because I have been in so long, I ignore it. In the beginning, it is tough. (pp. 71-72)

Officer 5: Does it (Machismo) exist today? Sadly, yes. And because I have seen it in my line of work ... I am married and I believe my husband is the man of the house and he has the say so to make the final decision. I am fortunate my husband allows me to do things. I have seen where households with a lot of Machismo, women aren't even allowed to give their opinion unless she is given permission. (p. 110)

For some, their family's Machismo culture could have derailed career aspirations in law enforcement.

Officer 7: Grandma didn't want me to be in law enforcement because she said it wasn't the female thing to do. But you have already done everything a male can do and it didn't stop you. My aunt was telling you – family of 18 and the wives stayed at home and cooked, husband goes to work. That is the way it is supposed to be. (p. 121)

Officer 2: Even my brother, when first working and going through the academy, he would say, "Why are you doing that, that is so stupid. That is a man's job. You should let men do it." That was years ago, but that changed now. (p. 97)

For others, some specific situations have reminded the women the Machismo mentality makes a difference in how they are perceived and thus their ability to perform their jobs in the same way men do.

Agent 4: A few years ago, a boss was in the lobby of my station and said to someone, 'you know when I can tell when there is a female patrol agent in charge at a station – because they always decorate.' I looked at him and said, 'chief, the staff decorates and there have been men here.' But there are those subtleties. (p. 84)

Machismo isn't only about female law enforcement and their male counterparts. Some simply referenced the Machismo they see when they are out in the public, responding to calls. It had an impact on how these female officers see things.

Officer 6: It does exist, but I think we are not where we are supposed to be. We could be in a better situation where the Latino culture – it doesn't matter, but it is still on the backburner. You still go to calls and get the types; it depends on the individual. Every household is different

with different beliefs, so nowadays, I feel it is controlled. It is still there, but not as bad as it used to be 15 or 17 years ago. (p. 116)

Officer 1: In public, they tend to try to challenge you, and in this community where women aren't always valued as much, it is even worse as a female officer or agent. There weren't a tremendous amount that were disrespectful, but there were quite a few and when they were, it was blatant.' (p. 92)

Agent 1: I think it is very minimal. I see it a lot in the older agents – 25-plus years in the service. But those are the same guys who offer to help or say good job. I think we are proving to them that we can do it. But, there are also women who are showing we are difficult to work with because we are complaining and crying about everything. It is more noticeable when it is a female. I think the younger agents – the guys senior to me are very respectful, willing to work with everybody. (p. 70)

It also has had an impact on female law enforcement and their efforts for promotions and some stated they believed it was among the reasons for the low numbers of female Border Patrol personnel.

Agent 3: Oh, it is very alive in our culture. When they say Machismo, I think Hispanic predominantly. I feel like at the highest levels, we are underrepresented as it comes to Hispanics. I feel there is a cultural difference between men and women in the Border Patrol. (p. 76)

For some of the female agents, they see Machismo in a different way.

Agent 1: Some women may have grown up with some Machismo and they come to the agency already with that mentality that the men are going to be the exact same way. They come thinking whatever is said, done, they automatically have the mentality that it is

'because I am a girl' when in fact it is not that way. They were just raised and brought up that way. Unfortunately, it becomes an EEOC thing. Gets all messy. (p. 69)

Gender roles play a part in this too and could be considered part of the Machismo mentality that exists, especially in the Hispanic culture and for those older, such as parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

Agent: 4: I think so, it was to find a good man, get married. I think it was to them, just the natural thing. They were emulating what happened to the family. Grandmother didn't work outside the home. She was the caregiver. She was the disciplinarian. She was always there for the family, while my grandfather did his trade. I think they were just emulating that. (p. 81)

Convincing Others Female Officers Add Value to Law Enforcement Departments

Based on statistics, females make up 50.8 percent of the overall population in America according to the U.S Census Bureau 2018 estimated. But that percentage is far less when it comes to women who work in law enforcement. Some would suggest the people who work in public services, such as law enforcement, should reflect the demographics within society as a key factor in representation.

That's not the only reason it is important women are in law enforcement. These women participants were consistent in explaining the reasons why it is imperative, through their experiences, that women serve in the roles as law enforcement officers. At least 10 of the participants mentioned the positive traits of women that make them different than their male counterparts and what skills and mentality they bring that could be better than some of the males.

One of the participants stated she believed the most difficult obstacle for women in law enforcement has been – “people realizing that we add value.”

Agent 3: We bring something different to the table to add value and a different element to our approach. Maybe it is our fault that we don't explain ourselves better. (p. 78)

Women agreed there are significant differences between how men and women deal with their jobs, the people and the situations in which they respond to.

Agent 3: When we get upset, a lot of times we have tears because we are upset, but not because we are weak. It's the automatic response that comes to us. When it comes to ego, we have a better ability than men to keep that in check. We can communicate better – men assert themselves – 'because I said so.' We both kind of come at problems completely differently. Sometimes I felt like I was out on an island because I would be in a meeting with all men and I thought of the problem completely different than they did. We have to remember we are naturally different and have different qualities that are complementary and valuable. You just have to know when to add that value. (pp. 77-78)

Others interviewed described more differences between men and women in law enforcement.

Agent 4: We have a tendency to be more brain than brute and brawn. I haven't had to shoot anybody. There have been very few times I have had to get physical with anybody. I have been able to talk them into doing something. (p. 87)

Officer 3: One of the benefits is we have that mothering and ability to nurture. Sometimes men just don't want to talk to another guy, the Machismo type of thing. They are not there to fight with them, but they are agitated. The majority of times, they say they want to talk to your partner, 'I want to talk to her.' (p. 103)

Agent 3: *We are good communicators. Have far less ego than men. We have a different approach and perspective to a problem. Diversity when dealing with the complex issues we deal with every day. We have to be more representative of the society we live and work in. We are very far from that, three to five percent women.* (p. 79)

Officer 6: *I bring like the nurturing and understanding, compassion. I think I can talk to people at a better level. When they see women in law enforcement, they think about their mom. Sometimes, now in this day and age, they prefer to talk to women. Especially with battered women, I seem to relate to them. They tell me things. That is where compassion and understanding and being a survivor. I tell them I was in their situation years ago. I was submissive, mad, scared, everything. You don't have to be that way. There's a better way of living than this type of household where you don't have a voice. I feel like I bring that. They understand so they open up. I think I have an advantage, 90 percent of the time the perpetrators are men beating on women.* (p. 116)

Agent 1: *I think sometimes the men can overreact. They let their egos take over sometimes. Whether it is with the public or detention, they let their ego talk versus the females being a little calmer and defuse the situation. Females prefer female agents.* (p. 69)

Not all were clear about how they are different than the men, in some ways because the women spend their time trying to fit in with the men in their departments or agencies.

Agent 2: *It is hard to say what we bring to the table because we have spent our career doing what the men do. Everything you have done has been to reach the same accomplishments. Everyone is an individual. Some men are softer than the women. You have to have that mix.*" (p. 74)

Family

When involved in a career, choices must be made regarding where time and efforts are spent. In at least three interviews, participants in this study admitted they did not pursue promotions and advancements because of family. Among the main issues discussed, included how these law enforcement women were reacted to when they became pregnant and especially dealing with shifts and scheduling while having children and being away from them and more.

Officer 1: For me, it (the most difficult obstacle) was the guilt of knowing that I chose this career field even after my husband was killed and to see the toll it has taken on my family ... To see and know all that and still go in as my kids were still suffering from the trauma of my husband's death. The first time they saw me in uniform, they were proud, but then they were afraid I wasn't coming back. If I am gone, they don't have anyone. I attained the goal, and did it and it wasn't worth it. (p. 94)

Reactions to pregnancy. Two of the participants described reactions they received when they became pregnant while working in law enforcement.

Agent 3: I have had two children. Both times I went to the end, had babies and was out three months. So, six months in 23 years. The second child, people said, she got pregnant just to get out of her duties. Yeah, you don't make a decision like that. Oh, my gosh, she's pregnant again. Well, that was five years ago. So, those are the little things that I heard. One time I got into it, there was another middle manager, comment – these trainees are getting pregnant. They should have the respect to wait until they are done to get pregnant. What about all your male trainees? We have a different role at home, and it is

different in every home. But a career and family, the lifestyle that this is, is different.

(p. 78)

Agent 2: You hear rumors ... (you are going to) quit (your) job to stay home. I hadn't even thought of that. Rumors of you start a family and not going to do this anymore. It was a lot of, 'how are you going to do it?' I just said, 'well how do you do it?' We were a two-income family, husband a Border Patrol agent as well, I saw the difference the most when I went back to work. Talking to agents who had young kids complaining that their wives want them to help with the baby when they get home. (p. 72)

Schedules and Shift work. More than pregnancy, scheduling and shift work were the among the most significant family sacrifices and obstacles in attempting to attain promotions as well as just overall job performance. Eight of the 13 participants discussed giving up family time and missing out on kids growing up due to the amount of time spent in law enforcement.

Officer 2: Throughout my years, I have missed a lot of his life. My son knew and I made time as much as I could. Sometimes it would get me in trouble because they would need me to come in, but I didn't have a sitter. So, yeah, I had a lot of obstacles especially when they were smaller. When they were younger, I regret it. (p. 98)

Agent 5: I just never see myself working shift work. Everything else seems so great. The research, etc. reports, there are intel positions. Shift, I just feel part of it – every six weeks they are changing shifts. Your body adjusts. Don't really have a choice on that unless you are on the higher end and have ... if lower you have to ride it out for four or five years until you get seniority. (p. 89)

Agent 2: *The schedules are hard when you have a family. That was a huge reason why I never promoted. (You) lose seniority for shift and days off. With two kids and a husband with a more erratic schedule than mine, I couldn't do that. It wasn't important enough to me. Stability at home. That was my compromise and my sacrifice.* (p. 73)

Officer 7: *You kind of have to choose between family and career.* (p. 124)

Sexual Harassment

In this research five of the participants cited sexual harassment as a significant obstacle to success in their law enforcement careers. Some reported they attempted to let their supervisors know about it. In some cases, their supervisors were part of the problem as well, according to those interviewed.

Officer 8: *I could tell law enforcement I was not aware – women are like prey to anyone who walks in. They look and are interested in anybody. From what I see, any woman. I used to have officers tell me things and I would say, 'I am married.' He didn't care. Other officers would say, 'this guy couldn't wait to finish a call so he could sit with me in dispatch.' There are females who don't care, and they go along with it.* (p. 124)

Officer 1: *(I) sat with the captain, told him what goes on. (I) knew he was aware of it. He had someone on the side in the department. He told me I just needed to get a thicker skin. I said, no, sexual harassment, unwanted contact in a sexual nature is sexual assault. That stuff happens. He dismissed it. People asked me how I could tolerate it and I just got to a point where I didn't have to. I think it is all of it. It is a problem. It was a problem in the military, and it is a problem pretty much in the world. A lot of females don't talk about it because, unfortunately, you could spend all day complaining about it.* (p. 92)

Agent 1: *You walk by a cell and you will hear whistles from the men, or they call you 'mamacita.' 'No, I am in uniform. I am on duty. I have a gun and you are in custody.' It happened a couple months ago. We are holding a lot of unaccompanied juveniles and I was walking – they are in tents and I could hear them whistling at me. Then you have the machismo men who feel women belong in the home. They don't respect us. They don't listen to us. That is detainees and the general public. (p. 67)*

Officer 5: *As ugly as it sounds, it (interaction with fellow male officers) is a relationship you really can't explain. You are in a male dominated career and facility and a lot of it is guys joking around. My husband calls it sexual harassment. (p. 111)*

Officer 6: *Time went by and I had to deal with a lot of sexual harassment. 'If you go out with me, you will become a detective.' I said I wanted to be in the streets. Constant flowers and I am glad I never ... they are idiots how they approach women. (p. 115)*

More often than not, the women interviewed stated they didn't have a problem with sexual harassment or never mentioned it as an obstacle in their careers. Others said they responded before it became a problem.

Agent 4: *When I was still an agent, there was one guy who was crude. He tried talking sexual to one girl and to me. We put him in place, and he stopped. I don't think this is across the board. For the most part, I have not had any problems. (p. 84)*

Officer 1: *Once I made it clear I wasn't going to accept their bad behavior, it made my life a little harder, but they didn't mess with me.*

(p. 94)

Sleeping around for promotions. While some of the women didn't specifically mention sexual harassment, regarding advancements or physical attempts made by males, they discussed responses from their male peers following promotions or other benefits the women officers received.

Agent 3: The personal aspect played a big role. People alleged you had affairs with the boss to get the positions they have. Having those discussions with (my) daughter and knowing you live in a small community. Having those conversations with coworkers, not realizing how this affects everybody. Most women I knew of had at least one allegation like this in nature. (p. 79)

Agent 2: If a woman gets promoted, the thought immediately is that she was promoted because she was a woman. It's not hard work and did well in the interview, you could use that as an option." (pp. 72-73)

Officer 2: Both a female and male had made comments about me not being here as long (before being promoted). I have even had someone tell me that someone else was saying that I am only where I am it is because I slept my way to the top. (p. 97)

EEOC matters. Three of the female law enforcement personnel discussed during their interviews filing Equal Employment Opportunity Commission claims following incidents with their male supervisors or peer agents/officers. These incidents were related to sexual harassment and being treated differently because the personnel said they were women agents or officers.

Officer 2: One incident led to an EEOC complaint and that officer being fired. This was the last straw. I wrote the grievance. Sent it. Not putting up with it anymore. I didn't realize it was sexual harassment. (p. 98)

Agent 3: This last year, being targeted and I had never filed an EEOC claim. Have had plenty of circumstances that warranted it, but never did. This time I had to make that decision to. I knew if I filed, my career would be essentially over. Labeled as someone who does that. Would be a long, drawn out process and a lot of opinions of me regarding it ... If I care about the women left, I have to do this regardless. (p. 78)

Agent 4: I did file an EEO. I don't expect anything to happen. It may be three or four years. There is nothing to gain. I just don't want it to happen again. (p. 85)

Physical Demands and Danger

Law enforcement is dangerous work. Based on the interviews, some of the women mentioned family members being concerned about the dangers that exist for men and specifically women working in law enforcement. Those dangers spoken of were even more evident with border patrol agents due to the fact that they are often alone, out in the elements and don't know what may be coming. There is no time to prepare. Street patrol officers typically have some time to prepare and they have an idea of what may be going on as they head to the scene of an incident.

Agent 4: Here, you are going to be out in the brush, on foot where there are snakes and all kinds of wildlife. You name it and the bad guys are in the brush. You don't know what you are facing. It is very physical and demanding. ... You have the elements to contend with and sometimes your backup is not there. Anything can happen. You're out and the radio doesn't work because I am out in the boonies. It is crazy. It is very different."

(pp. 82-83)

Officer 1: *Before you go out on the streets, we would get reports there were bounties on the law enforcement along the river. We know there is a bounty on law enforcement, especially females. They were talking about capturing and holding them. I was used to it because my dad and husband told me stories. Any spouse of law enforcement, that is something we know happens. The general public doesn't know. It is important to get it out there. With the bad rap people give the Border Patrol, they have no idea.* (p. 94)

Agent 4: *Right now, with so much going on politically, it is going to be difficult with the generations now to have them (women) come into law enforcement period, let alone anything to do with immigration. It is overall and even less the females. The numbers aren't there. There are professions more suited (to women), more investigative, FBI, Inspector general, analysts. It doesn't involve the physicality, the danger and the stigma of law enforcement.* (p. 83)

Physical and emotional dangers are all over and the work that occurs can take its toll. For a couple of the women, it had been, and it was still considered a significant obstacle to continuing success in their careers.

Officer 3: *My back injury was a big obstacle for me. Did have surgery. Right now, have other problems, but going strong.* (p. 102)

Agent 1: *I am a little more cautious. My alert is higher than when I was single. Was more daring, not that (I) take risks, but there was nobody there at home waiting. Now, you have to come home. So, now it is mama instinct, but I take more precautions than I did when I was younger.* (p. 69)

Officer 6: *I have seen a lot of things – suffered anxiety, PTSD, but you have to keep your mind straight.*” (p. 116)

Other Women

At least three of the female law enforcement officers mentioned the impact other women have had, specifically that women often do not support each other, rather they fight against each other, making it a competition.

Agent 3: Because of those perspectives, we limit other people, especially women, of moving up in the ranks. And sometimes other women are our biggest enemies because we hold ourselves and each other to even higher standards. I was very proud of the 11 members within our supervisory staff at my station. (p. 77)

Agent 1: I know some, (I) hear stories from different stations, the sexual harassment ... Others are female on female spreading rumors because one wants to be the queen of the station. A lot of our downfall comes from each other. That is unfortunate. We are a small percentage of the border patrol. Having to deal with men already not giving a crap or giving us too much attention, you would expect female agents to have your back. (p. 68)

Agent 4: I think we need to stop being one another's enemy. We tend to see each other as competition – tear each other down rather than lift each other up. Facebook group that is intended to be very positive. A place where we can freely discuss with trust. We lift each other up, not mock each other. (p. 85)

Overcoming Obstacles

While the women interviewed were open to discuss how they saw themselves, their roles and obstacles as women in law enforcement, their ability to overcome showed more in the stories they told about their upbringing, choice of career and how they handled adversity on a daily basis. Most of these women never boasted about being strong, or having excessive pride, it

simply was evident during the data gathering through their life experiences and their ability to communicate, their body language, voice, inflection and speech patterns.

The following elements, behaviors and activities were direct responses to how they overcame obstacles, but also came through during other responses to questions, without being asked directly how they overcame the obstacles cited above.

Confidence, Attitude and Pride

Clearly, each of the respondents discussed at least one of these characteristics and this mentality was confirmed during the interviews based on how the women spoke, their tone, inflection, voice, and other nonverbal communication. They also explained some of these attributes to answer questions specifically about how they overcome the obstacles they have face and continue to face in this police culture. A majority of the women interviewed spoke about their confidence and strength much more than their physical strength as the ways in which they have overcome the obstacles working in a Hispanic and male-dominated culture.

Agent 4: Not necessarily the stereotypical gentle (female). Because I am not. I am authoritative, assertive, strong, commanding, command presence. Sometimes when I am not, some men and women think, oh, whereas I think I am being assertive, they think I am being aggressive. Where I am being authoritative, I am being bossy. I am not the sweet and nice and gentle, motherly. I can be nurturing. I can be guiding. (p. 83)

Agent 1: If they confront Machismo with confidence and strength, like I did with my dad. As I grew up and became responsible, my dad thought about it and changed his ways. It helped me deal with people saying it. I realized if he wasn't being 100 percent Machismo, once he realized I wasn't a helpless little girl, that is when I saw he was teaching me

things. I think it just depends on how each woman sees it and looks at it. Some have it in their heads that the males are against and in most cases, that is not true. I see a lot of males; they are willing to help us. (p. 69-70)

Agent 3: You have to be able to see the goal to achieve it. At the highest levels, it is hard to see ourselves reach that when they don't see others up there. I can't tell you how many people have come to me and talked to me about – you are showing everybody else that job as a female and one day maybe we can hold that position. (p. 80)

Physical and Emotional Strength

Some of the women interviewed voiced their knowledge that they were well aware they weren't as physically strong as their male counterparts. But it was important to be as physically strong as possible and focus on being emotionally strong, too.

Officer 4: I tell my daughter and other female partners, if you really take care of yourself on a personal level, mentally healthy, physically healthy, you will go a long way in any career. Being a mom and a working mom, men have no idea how much resilience a woman has, or her body has. Without any words, take care of yourself and family. That has helped me in the long run in any career aspect. Physical fitness started at age 30. I used to be skinny and weak. That goes a long way in the aspect of the career. (p. 108)

Officer 4: I keep standards high for myself like physical fitness. My appearance, demeanor – I work hard at them. I think when those things are on point, your employer doesn't see male or female. They see this person is squared away. (p. 105)

Agent 1: *That strength came from my dad. ... Whatever you do, give 100 percent and never give up. If someone tells you, you can't. Nothing will be handed to you for free. Work hard. Have pride in yourself. That was the one thing. Always have pride in yourself. Him telling me, you're a girl, you're a girl, I got a lot of my kick ass from him.*
(p. 68)

In some instances, it was the emotional strength that pushed the women through the tough times, and they talked about it openly.

Agent 4: *Everywhere I go, was facing a panel of competitors, all white and all males. I remind myself, there is nothing they can do to take away my value, my capabilities, the things I have learned and the accomplishments. Nobody can take that away.* (p. 85)

Agent 2: *I had a tough time at the academy and tough time at K-9. My reaction was I can't give up on this, because I can't fail. I can't fail because I am a woman. I don't want to be that one that quits or fails. Made me persevere even more. Good or bad, who knows. I didn't want to quit so bad because I didn't want to be that girl. A lot of us have that. Some don't.* (p. 74)

Officer 5: *I am that type of person – very driven. Don't tell me that I can't do this. I will surpass the limits. That is what has gotten me where I am at. I will show that I can and will. Especially coming in, I was 23.* (p. 113)

Agent 2: *Definitely, not showing weakness. That was a big lesson to learn. Even if you are insecure about something, don't let them see it because they will seize on that even if it is good natured ribbing.* (p. 72)

Some of the law enforcement women interviewed also talked about their past as reasoning for having their strength and ability to overcome the obstacles placed in their way regarding success in law enforcement.

Officer 1: *On my mother's side, my maternal grandfather, his behavior was very stereotypical (Machismo) and that made me decide I was never going to be that stay-at-home wife or mother. I rebelled from a very young age, that I was going to work. How he raised my aunts and uncles, the difference in how he treated the women, he expected them to do all the household stuff and cooking and cleaning. And my grandma always had to look beautiful, cook dinner and take care of the kids. I hated that.* (p. 91)

Some women discussed their other responses to the obstacles in different ways, focusing on their responses to their fellow male and female officers and their overall beliefs in their duties as officers and agents.

Officer 7: *It's not about the badge. It's not about a pretty uniform. It is about making sure the person to the left and right of you gets home safe. ... If you don't carry yourself as a strong, Alpha female, you are going to get walked on, especially in a Machismo central area where men are raised that they are better than females.* (p. 122)

Officer 6: *I feel like as a woman police officer, strong, independent beliefs knowing that women can accomplish anything because I have lived it. So many obstacles, so many things. I overcame it all.* (p. 115)

Agent 5: *(I am) Not easily offended. There was always inappropriate stuff being said. I don't get offended, just becomes background noise. There were some people saying we should not accept the locker room talk - it is everywhere. It doesn't matter who is running the country, the state, etc., it's always going to be there.* (p. 90)

Choices – Family and Relationships

At least one (1) participant reported leaving law enforcement because of time away from family, specifically children. Another participant suggested she chose not to have children because she put her career in law enforcement first and knew it would be a hindrance to success. A third, suggested that if not for her family and choices to keep her kids in the same community during high school, she could have been at the top of the Customs and Border Patrol hierarchy.

That same agent talked about driving 3-1/2 hours a day to work for nearly four (4) years to ensure her kids were able to stay in the same school and same home, while she pursued her career, but at a lower level than she could have moved on to.

Agent 4: I waited until the youngest was out of high school to go to DC. So, even then I put my career on hold for family, choosing family over career. I could have been Carla Provost. I could have been the chief, but I waited. So, every time making those choices, it is the priorities.
(p. 87)

Others talked about relationships with their friends, family and being different because of their law enforcement careers. For some, they actually admitted they have two personalities and they try to do all they can to not take the stress and stories home to their families. When they are home, at least four (4) law enforcement women talked about focusing on family and keeping work talk at a minimum as a way to overcome the stress and pressure that comes with being an officer or agent.

Officer 4: I do my shift and then leave. The most I talk about work, after work, is if my partner is calling me about a case. (p. 108)

Agent 1: I have made my sons my priority. When it was just me and my husband, it was easier with the shift work. Now, since my oldest was born, I have made sure if I could have

holidays and weekends and stay on days. Details and training out of town, going to take it as my priority is my sons. (p. 68)

Agent 2: You protect yourself. (You) can be too familiar with each other. We are all in this remote location and relationships can become incestuous because family circle and friends circle is all wrapped up in each other. Finding that balance to back off when you have to. (p. 72)

Officer 3: When you work in law enforcement, some friends may not want to hang out with you anymore. It is different. Hours, shift changes, scheduling – you can't really go out as much. Stay home more because of everything going on. You start hanging out with your law enforcement families and their wives and husbands. It is very different. It is a culture within itself. (p. 104)

Officer 6: I tell my daughter I have two personalities. I have GI Jane and I feel I have to, initially, I have to show that authority. When off duty, I will see a commercial and I will cry. Once off the clock, I am a mother and grandma. (p. 116)

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine in depth and through personal stories and experiences the obstacles women in law enforcement face and provide some potential answers as to how the same women deal with and ultimately work to thrive in this male-dominated and Machismo culture. The findings were based on the analysis of 13 in-depth interviews with female police officers and border patrol agents working in Hispanic demographic border areas in both Texas and Arizona. All but one of the female law enforcement personnel are Hispanic.

In the literature review, the researcher has already provided information citing the importance of women in law enforcement, but this study also has noticed a significant hole in the literature when it comes to the law enforcement experience women have, especially in a Hispanic culture.

The women in this study clearly explained the obstacles and barriers encountered in their law enforcement careers as cited in the findings. The research findings also demonstrate equally the characteristics and decisions the women make to overcome those same obstacles. As the responses were analyzed, more interesting facets of the depth of these women came to the surface, specifically about their upbringing and background that could explain who these women are and why they have the strength, confidence and pride they exhibit on a daily basis as they overcome the obstacles.

All of the stories, narratives, responses and observations that emerged during the data analysis process come together in this interpretation section, which is split into responses of the five (5) research questions. The significances focused on the gaps in previous research and theories surrounding women in law enforcement and the obstacles they face and how they overcome those obstacles.

Through exploring the various factors and obstacles women face in this profession, law enforcement departments across the country could use these findings to make changes in police culture, behavior and policy all with the goal to increase the numbers of women joining the ranks and hierarchy of law enforcement and as border patrol personnel.

More importantly, this research attempted to seek additional or different obstacles and barriers caused by the pervading Hispanic Machismo culture or upbringing and if that could determine what needs to be changed or addressed to make the future brighter for women as police officers or border patrol agents.

Impact on Pursuing Law Enforcement

If you consider Machismo inherently negative, then it can be perceived as an obstacle to the mere existence and eventual growth for women in law enforcement in a Hispanic culture. However, because of the various definitions and levels of Machismo that exist and were cited by the interview participants, it remains unclear which obstacles were the effect solely of Machismo or were these factors also exacerbated by the law enforcement field being male dominated in general. This study specifically interviewed 13 women working in law enforcement in a Hispanic culture and while it can answer what obstacles, it cannot answer the question of whether those obstacles are created by Machismo or Hegemonic masculinity, which according to Donaldson

(1993), is the “question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance.”

“For the rest of your life, men are going to be this way,” Officer 6 said. “Regardless, you are going to have to deal with it. Learn when and when not to choose your battles. What is going to make the difference, I feel like I have made a difference.”

Based on that statement about men and others made by the participants, the researcher can’t conclude whether women believed the negative impact on their careers is the typical male Hegemonic masculinity behavior as described or if it is Machismo.

However, culture didn’t stop these women from following their desire to go into law enforcement. For some of them, their family was supportive and there was no Machismo when it came to women’s roles or careers.

Agent 4 admitted her parents always told her she and her brother and sister could do anything they wanted, but the careers mentioned were doctors, lawyers, teachers, bankers and even the President of the United States. But, she said, they never talked about being a firefighter or police officer, astronaut or federal agent. They never thought of the non-traditional type of career, she said. That had nothing to do with gender.

Surprisingly, it was Agent 4’s father who eventually told her, she was doing what he had always wanted to do. He said when he was younger and wanted to pursue that career, they weren’t hiring Hispanics.

Types of Obstacles

It is clear, women in law enforcement face significant obstacles in this male dominated world. And the women were clear in describing those obstacles and they had numerous ones and were each shared among more than a third of the respondents.

Not all of these obstacles mentioned had much to do with Hispanic culture. Their obstacles were similar to those mentioned in other research that focused on women in law enforcement, including sexual harassment, family commitments, schedules, dangers of careers and physical fitness. What showed through were mentions by multiple participants of reactions to their pregnancies that changed their relationships with their fellow officers and their supervisors.

Based on the answers, it was a situation that bothered the women as they believed they were treated differently when having a child versus if one of the male personnel's wives was having a child. Some of the women were almost offended by the mention of pregnancy and whether they would stay on as law enforcement after having their baby.

One of the more interesting findings during the participant interviews that hadn't been mentioned in other research to any significance involved the women's desire to discuss and focus on their need to prove why women should be valued as law enforcement officers. This was mentioned by majority of the women as an obstacle woman believe they face.

It was an interesting response as each who answered the question discussed how they individually felt it was their duty to make sure fellow male officers, law enforcement leaders and members of the public understand why women are imperative to successful policing.

How Women Overcome Obstacles

While it may not necessarily be linked to a Hispanic culture or Machismo, one compelling finding came forward that can't be overlooked. This research didn't necessarily come from the opinions of the law enforcement women interviewed and it doesn't directly respond to the questions of obstacles women face in law enforcement or how women overcome those obstacles. Rather, it was the similarities of their upbringing that may be as telling as anything and potentially provides us with the answers to why these women not only chose law enforcement as a career, but why most of them are able to overcome obstacles, and are actually thriving in the profession and have a deep passion for it.

Out of the 13 participants in this research, 10 of the women stated during their interviews that they grew up without a male role model. Six (6) of those were due to divorce or a father in trouble with the law or who had addictions. The other four (4) were related to the father being in the military or working a lot and not around as often as needed. One of the participants had parents who were both members of Mexican drug cartels, which is how they met. Her father was in and out of prison for years.

These experiences growing up could explain why these women seem to have a strength that allows them to overcome the obstacles their peers and sometimes families place in front of them as they pursue their law enforcement careers. While they didn't specifically cite that as the reason for their strength to overcome because they likely didn't realize it, research shows, according to Biller and Weiss (1970) "A healthy father identification for a daughter seems to us to consist of understanding and empathizing with the father rather than acting masculine or wanting to be masculine like him (as might be the case for the boy)." The study states, "Feminine behavior in the girl seems to be much related to how the father defines his role as a

male to his daughter and how he differentiates his masculine role from her feminine role,” (Billler & Weiss, 1970). This could explain the more masculine character traits a majority of these women showed through the tone and attitude with which they spoke, how they carried themselves with confidence and strength. Those traits were imperative to the success these women accomplished from graduating from the police academy or from the border patrol training to their current level in their careers.

The other obvious ways the women overcame their obstacles was through choices. Two admitted they sacrificed having families, two others talked about not having a lot of friends just because of the nature of the job and how people treat law enforcement even when they are off duty. But, for a majority of the women, they talked about a conscious decision to be strong mentally and physically.

The women talked about different coping abilities, specifically trying not to bring the stress and situation that occur at work home to family and friends.

“Nowadays, women are smart, and they prefer to go into a safer field with better pay and they have better benefits and programs for school,” Officer 6 said. “If you don’t love this type of field it is not of interest versus getting beat up all the time.”

Most Significant Obstacle

This is a finding that could not be determined. Too many various responses made it unclear and often the women only talked about one obstacle they have faced. Individually, that likely was their most significant. However, there was not a majority agreement as to the most significant obstacle. Not even considering the very first obstacle each participant mentioned following the question would provide a clear answer.

Reaction to Women in Law Enforcement

If there were any findings that were obvious effects of Machismo, it focused on the stories several of the women told about incidents that involved the public, almost all men who responded negatively and derogatively to the women in uniform. Clearly the incidents four (4) of these women discussed in detail involved disrespect of women in a position of authority simply because they were women.

However, it was obvious the women also felt confident in their importance as law enforcement personnel, especially when they discussed some responses they receive when out in the public and when going on certain calls. Several of them mentioned some men and women preferred to speak with the female law enforcement as opposed to the males due to what they said was a softer response, ability to listen and less aggressive demeanor.

Limitations and Future Research

The most obvious problems regarding this thesis is the sample size and the researcher's reliance solely on the opinions and responses to questions to these women in law enforcement. Along with the number of participants being limited, it also is not a random sample of women in law enforcement in a Hispanic culture population. Those interviewed were mainly located through snowballing and requests to top law enforcement women, who then passed along the researcher's information with a request that they be involved if they were interested. While the ages, lengths of service and ranks differed to create a relatively varied sample, those with between three (3) and 10 years of experience are lacking, while more than half of those interviewed had more than 15 years of experience in law enforcement.

Another issue revolves around the matter of determining whether these same obstacles face women in law enforcement who are not living and working in a Hispanic culture. While most participants agreed Machismo exists, the significance and scope of these affects within the law enforcement department cannot necessarily be determined. Are the actions of male officers Machismo or just the male-dominated nature of policing and law enforcement?

Further research in this topic could focus on trying to find the answer to that question by potentially researching if there are differences between women in law enforcement in non-Hispanic cultures with those in Hispanic cultures.

Another limitation of this study could have been improved through observations of the female officers and agents through ride-alongs and interaction with fellow officers in training and other situations in which both female and male officers are involved. This would have allowed the researcher to view these interactions and make subjective evaluations about the veracity of the information obtained during the interview process. It may have also provided the researcher the ability to experience what it is like to be a female officer in a male-dominated profession. The hope would have been to witness behaviors and experiences that go beyond what the women were able to describe during the interview process. However, time and hurdles were too much to overcome regarding this observation effort. Due to the care taken in law enforcement to keep their efforts and workings confidential, there was significant reluctance to grant open access to the researcher.

An ethnographic study of women in police departments could potentially complement this study to determine if what the women say they are experiencing is occurring the way they see it, especially when it comes to dealing with the public and their fellow male law enforcement counterparts.

Overall, the in-depth interviews proved to provide deep and honest responses from the participants despite the location of the interviews. A total of eight (8) were performed via telephone, while five (5) were in person, including one (1) each at a home, a business office, two (2) at Starbucks and one (1) at a restaurant. Regardless of the location or method of interview, a majority of the women were happy to tell their stories to the researcher, talk about their obstacles and situations openly and freely. Often, it seemed cathartic for the participants during the interview process. However, that created a varied interview as these women wanted to tell their whole stories and often would stray from the questions being asked. It was difficult for the researcher to ask the questions the same or in order. Because of that situation during the interview process, the interviewing experience and gender of the interviewer, this would be a difficult study to replicate.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Some of the women in this study have risen to top levels with local Rio Grande Valley police departments and the U.S Border Patrol. Among some of those interviewed included women who attained ranks as high as police chief, police union head, border patrol officer in charge, captains and lieutenants. At the same time, several are agents and patrol officers.

Women continue to integrate into various law enforcement agencies, however the rate of that is slow moving. Also, based on Border Patrol figures, the percentage of women in that agency is much lower than that of street police officers. Some of the obstacles cited in this research could be the reasons why.

These findings based on the interviews could be used to educate law enforcement leaders as to the obstacles women face in the field with hopes to make changes to the way women are viewed in the law enforcement profession.

This study contributes to the understanding and awareness of what women deal with and how they deal with being female in law enforcement and in a Hispanic culture. However, in the end, we can't determine in this study the lone impact of Machismo on women in law enforcement.

While this key question can't be answered, this study provides valuable information and opens the door to further research of this topic.

REFERENCES

- Archbold, C. A., & Schulz, D. M. (2012). Research on women in policing: A look at the past, present and future. *Sociology Compass*, 694-706.
- Billler, H., & Weiss, S. (1970). The father-daughter relationship and the personality development of the female. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, pp. 79-93.
- Burlingame, D., & Baro, A. L. (2005). Women's representation and status in law enforcement: Does CALEA involvement make a difference? *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 391-411.
- Cachia, M., & Millward, L. (2011). The telephone medium and semi-structured interviews: A complementary fit. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 6(3), pp. 265-277.
- Clutter, A. W., & Nieto, R. D. (n.d.). *Understanding the Hispanic Culture*. Columbus , Ohio.
- Cooper, F. R. (2009). 'Who's the Man?': Masculinities studies, Terry stops and police training. *Scholarly Works at UNLV Law*, 671-742.
- Donaldson, M. (1993, October). What is Hegemonic Masculinity? *Theory and Society, Special Issue: Masculinities*, pp. 643-657.
- FBI. (2016). *2016 Crime in the United States*. Criminal Justice Information Services Division.
- Fragoso, J. M., & Kashubeck, S. (2000). Machismo, gender role conflict, and mental health in Mexican American men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 87-97.
- Franklin, C. A. (2005). Male peer support and the police culture: Understanding the resistance and opposition of women in policing. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 1-25.
- Greater Texas Foundation. (2011, February). South Texas Regional Overview. Retrieved from <https://www.greatertexasfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Research-TRAP-South-Full.pdf>

- Investigation, F. B. (2016). *2016 Crime in the United States*. Criminal Justice Information Services Division.
- Kurtz, D. L., & Upton, L. L. (2018). The gender in stories: How war stories and police narratives shape masculine police culture. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 282-300.
- Lonsway, K. A. (2007). Are we there yet? The progress of women in one large law enforcement agency. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 1-48.
- Mayo, Y. Q., & Resnick, R. P. (1996). The impact of machismo on Hispanic women. *Affilia Journal of Women and Social Work*, 257+.
- Miller, S. L., Forest, K. B., & Jurik, N. C. (2003). Diversity in blue: Lesbian and gay police officers in a masculine occupation. *Men and Masculinities*, 355-385.
- Morash, M., & Haarr, a. R. (2012). Doing, redoing, and undoing gender; Variation in gender identities of women working as police officers. *Feminist Criminology*, 3-23.
- Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 13-22.
- Pena, M. (1991). Class, gender and machismo: The "treacherous-women" folklore of Mexican male workers. *Gender and Society*, 30-46.
- Rabe-Hemp, C. (2008). Survival in an "all boys club: Policewomen and their fight for acceptance. *Policing: An international Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 251-270.
- Rabe-Hemp, C. E. (2008). Female officers and the ethic of care: Does officer gender impact police behaviors? *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 426-434.
- Shjarback, J., & Todak, N. (2018). The Prevalence of Female Representation in Supervisory and Management Positions in American Law Enforcement: An Examination of Organizational Correlates. *Women and Criminal Justice*, 1-19.
- Sklansky, D. A. (2006). Not your father's police department: Making sense of the new demographic of law enforcement. *The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 1209-1244.

Winter, G. (2000). A comparative discussion of the notion of 'validity' in qualitative and quantitative research. *The Qualitative Report*.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT LETTER

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Hello,

My name is Lisa Seiser and I am a student from the Department of Communication at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). I would like to invite you to participate in my thesis research study to analyze the obstacles impacting women in law enforcement in Hispanic and male-dominated cultures.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

In order to participate you must be 18 years or older. Participation in this research is completely voluntary, you may choose not to participate without penalty.

As a participant, you will be asked to engage in an in-depth interview asking about your experiences and hurdles you have overcome as a female in the field of law enforcement as well as how it impacts you in your day-to-day mission. Some of you may also be asked to be observed during your law enforcement shifts, to include a ride-along or just observation as you interact with your fellow officers in the office. Also, some demographic information related to you will be collected.

However, all data will be treated confidentially and coded as no reports will identify you directly. Only I will know your identities as tied with the responses you provide. That information will not be shared with anyone as it will remain in a safe, secure computer only I have access to. However, even despite these efforts, it is possible that someone could figure out a way to find out who you are using a computer.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please contact me via email at lisa.seiser01@utrgv.edu or via text message at (956) 238-0082 to set up an interview time. Interviews can be performed over the phone or in person, whichever is more convenient. Interviews will be an in-depth back and forth that will take about an hour.

If you have questions related to the research, please contact me by telephone at (956) 238-0082 or by email at lisa.seiser01@utrgv.edu

Thank you for your cooperation and I hope to hear from you soon as a participant in this study.

Lisa Seiser

Student

UTRGV – Communications

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Factors and obstacles impacting women in law enforcement in a Hispanic and male-dominated culture

Consent Name: Interview/observation participant

Principal Investigator: Lisa M. Seiser

Telephone: (956) 238-0082

Key points you should know

- We are inviting you to be in a research study we are conducting. Your participation is voluntary. This means it is up to you and only you to decide if you want to be in the study. Even if you decide to join the study, you are free to leave at any time if you change your mind.
- Take your time and ask to have any words or information that you do not understand explained to you.
- We are doing this study because we want to learn how becoming/being a female in law enforcement in a Hispanic community has affected and impacted you, the obstacles overcome to be in law enforcement and how it impacts your families, fellow officers and the people you come in contact with every day.
- Why are you being asked to be in this study?
 - You are a woman who works in law enforcement in a Hispanic culture
- What will you do if you agree to be in the study?

- An in-depth interview will be scheduled and potentially observation time of the participant will be scheduled.
- Participation in this study requires audiotaping of all in-depth interviews, only. By signing this consent form, you are giving us permission to make and use these recordings for the study.
- Can you be harmed by being in this study?
 - Being in this study involves no greater risk than what you ordinarily encounter in daily life.
 - Risks to your personal privacy and confidentiality: Your participation in this research will be held strictly confidential and only a code number will be used to identify your stored data. However, because there will be a link between the code and your identity, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
 - If we learn something new and important while doing this study that would likely affect whether you would want to be in the study, we will contact you to let you know what we have learned.
- What are the costs of being in the study?
 - None
- Will you get anything for being in this study?
 - You will not receive any payments for taking part in this study.
- Could you be taken out of the study?
 - You could be removed from the study if you fail to show good faith in answering interview questions or fail to show up or make contact when the interview is set scheduled.

Can the information we collect be used for other studies?

Information that could identify you will be removed and the information you gave us may be used for future research by us or other researchers; we will not contact you to sign another consent form if we decide to do this.

What happens if I say no or change my mind?

- You can say you do not want to be in the study now or if you change your mind later, you can stop participating at any time. You can refuse to answer questions during the interview process.
- No one will treat you differently. You will not be penalized.

How will my privacy be protected?

- We will share your information with nobody.
- Your information will be stored with a code instead of identifiers (such as name, title, age, email address, etc.).
- Even though we will make efforts to keep your information private, we cannot guarantee confidently because it is always possible that someone could figure out a way to find out who you are on a computer.
- No published scientific reports will identify you directly.
- If it is possible that your participation in this study might reveal behavior that must be reported according to state law (e.g. abuse, intent to harm self or others); disclosure of such information will be reported to the extent required by law.

Who to contact for research related questions

For questions about this study or to report any problems you experience as a result of being in this study contact Lisa Seiser at (956) 238-0082 or lisa.seiser01@utrgv.edu.

Who to contact regarding your rights as a participant

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Texas Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protections (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at (956) 665-2093 or irb@utrgv.edu.

Signatures

By signing below, you indicate that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and that the procedures involved have been described to your satisfaction. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own reference. To participate, you must be at least 18 years of age. If you are under 18, please inform the researcher.

Participant's Signature

____/____/____

Date

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Explained prior to each interview

As indicated on the consent form, your responses will be confidential and only I will have access to them. Furthermore, to prevent omitting pertinent information the interview will be audio taped. However, these recordings are for my purposes only for transcribing and will be deleted at a later date. You do not have to answer any questions which make you feel uncomfortable, but I am asking that you be open and honest during this interview.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant questions list

Age, title, years in law enforcement and entity

1. Family history? Where did you grow up? What did your parents do? Where are they from? Brothers and sisters?
2. Upbringing? What was the attitude in the house regarding careers and gender roles? What careers did your siblings follow?
3. What was the reaction of your family when you told them you were going into law enforcement?
4. What was it about law enforcement that made you interested in that career? What was your perception of the law enforcement field when you started in the career? How has that changed over the years?
5. How would you describe the Hispanic culture? Anecdotes to support that description.
6. Do you believe you grew up in a machismo culture? Why or why not? Does it still exist today?
7. What does it mean to be a woman in this career field? How would you describe relationships/ability to work with your fellow male law enforcement personnel?
8. Describe any obstacles you feel you must (or already have) overcome to succeed in your law enforcement career? If so, how do those obstacles affect you on a daily basis as women in law enforcement?
9. Which do you see as the most difficult obstacle to overcome as women in law enforcement?
10. How have these obstacles affected you during your career in law enforcement?
11. How would you describe your reaction to any of the obstacles you have faced regarding being a woman in law enforcement?

12. What are the benefits of being a woman in law enforcement?

13. Is there anything you want to add that you may not have discussed during this interview that would be pertinent to this study?

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

BP#1

42 – Border Patrol agent – 18 years

Family history – El Paso grew up. Both parents born in Mexico and became naturalized citizens. My dad worked as a kitchen cook and manager. And my mom worked at a factory and then at a moving company to pack up houses. Older brother is a teacher. Remember both of them always working. Financial need.

Upbringing – gender roles – my dad was super machismo. Brother was 2 years older. It is because your brother is a boy. I would often rebel when he told me that. I would want to go out to the movies with friends or walk home with them and it was always ... no you can't because you are a girl. I am not too sure what he meant. It pissed me off. I was the baby of the family. I was the only girl. He wanted to protect me, I guess. He never said I couldn't do anything because I was a girl. Oh, you are a girl, I need to protect you. I think he was machismo in a different way. He would be like you need to go help your mom to clean and I would be the smart ass and ask why my brother didn't have to help. Oh, just listen to me. I had to learn because I was a girl. I think he wanted me to do the womanly things. He was trying to get me ready for it. With my brother, come help fix car, do the yard. He wanted us in those roles. He was raised far worse than we were. Brother is an elementary school teacher.

Reaction of family in law enforcement – mom was fear and dad was shock and disbelief. I never showed an interest in law enforcement. Always wanted to be an attorney because I liked to argue. That was through all my high school years, that was my goal to be an attorney. Went to Texas Tech for orientation. Never once was law enforcement something I had an interest in. When I told them, it was like "what?" who is this person in our house? I went with brother to a career fair for support. Had nothing else to do and go to lunch. I was 23 years old. I was still in college. Had about a year left. We went and I was there for my brother. My goal was still to graduate college. Border patrol – 2 male agents. Asked hey was I interested. I said, no. they said we need females ... just apply. It was the only place I applied. Sure, why not? Next thing you know, I am taking the test and heading off to the academy. Never had an interest and then there I went. I didn't finish college. Six months for the application process and off to the academy, but I did finish schooling 2 years ago.

Why law enforcement – I honestly don't know. I knew who border patrol was. Knew what they did, knew they were around. Don't know what made me fill out that application. I wasn't looking for a job or career. Get my degree and go to law school. Maybe because it was easy to fill out the application.

Perception of law enforcement – I always had a high respect. Was always taught to respect, listen, they are here to help. They are the good guys. They were in great shape, calm, smart. I always had them up on a pedestal because they are the ones who protect us. It had changed a little bit with all these cases where officers are caught doing things they shouldn't be. Planting evidence, overreacting. But I stand by they are trying to help. That is what we are here for. That is what we risk our lives for every day.

Hispanic culture where grew up – I think for the most part, being a female in any type of law enforcement depends on their upbringing. You will have your respectful men who overall respect law enforcement. And then your machismo man who will see a woman in uniform and attempt to make the cat calls. I have had that with people detained in our station. You walk by a cell and you will hear whistles from the men, or they call you mamacita. No, I am in uniform. I am on duty. I have a gun and you are custody. It happened a couple months ago. We are holding a lot of the unaccompanied juveniles and I was walking – they are in tents and I could hear them whistling at me. Then you have the Machismo men who feel women belong in the home. They don't respect us. They don't listen to us. That is detainees and general public.

Machismo culture – No, I don't think I grew up in that. Dad was protecting me. These are things men do and these are things women do. You both have to know how to do both so you can take care of yourselves. You need to learn this son because you will be man of the house or you need to know this because you will be the woman of the house. Of course, it didn't help I wanted to learn other things. Like changing a tire. He did because he said he didn't want me to rely on a man. You need to learn how to make tacos for him, too.

Machismo in the area – among family and friends – a lot of my friends' fathers. A lot of them were hard working, man of the house, supporting family, but didn't treat their daughters any different than son. These were all good families. I never had any friends that came from a crappy family.

Being a woman in career – I just see myself as an agent. Not as a female agent. I really don't see male agents or female agents.

Relationships with your fellow male personnel – it is different in a sense that more open with personal stuff with a female than a man. As far as working, depending on who the agent is. Trust

male over female or female over male based on strengths and character. When I got here, I was the fourth female. So, a majority of my career I have been around men. So, they are going to be my closest friends.

Obstacles you have to overcome to succeed – the biggest obstacle was during training. I observed the three females prior to me. Just based on experience at academy and the little in the field, these girls aren't going to cut it. Their officer presence wasn't really there. A couple of them were like worried about their makeup. Training officers would tell me, you better prove yourself. I knew who I was and what I brought to the table. And I saw them working and didn't want to be grouped or compared to them. I know it is wrong, women have to stick together, but I thought, no, agents have to stick together. I saw one of them in action and was like what are you doing? The hardest was not to fall into that stereotype of a female not being able to do it. I felt like I had to prove myself.

That strength came from my dad. The weirdness of that. It is the four of us. Whatever you do, give 100 percent and never give up. If someone tells you, you can. Nothing will be handed to you for free. Work hard. Have pride in yourself. That was the one thing. Always have pride in yourself. Him telling me you're a girl, you're a girl, got a lot of my kickass from him.

Obstacles – I know some – hear stories from different stations the sexual harassment. Don't talk to her, she's a female. Others are female on female spreading rumors because one wants to be the queen of the station. A lot of our downfall comes from each other. That is very unfortunate. We are a small percentage in border patrol. Having to deal with men already not giving a crap or giving us too much attention, you would expect female agents to have your back. I haven't experienced the sexual harassment. When first started, made sure people know they couldn't step on me.

Daily basis – obstacles – it might affect them on a daily basis. Depending on how bad it is. Rumors cause a lot of damage.

Difficult obstacle as a woman in law enforcement – shift work and trying to juggle childcare is the biggest obstacle we face, especially if you are a junior agent. With no seniority (to choose shifts).

I have 2 boys 9 year and 5 year. I have made my sons my priority. When it was just me and my husband, it was easier with the shift work. Now, since oldest born, I have made sure if I could have holidays and weekends and stay on days. Details and training out of town not going to take it as my priority is my sons.

Different for males – I know there are some males. To me I see it they have it easier. They have a wife who makes the family the priority. They take the out of town details and training. They take that because mom is there, and she will be there to help. The way I see it is easier for them.

Career growth – not really. At one-point thought about promoting but is not something I want anymore. Seen supervisors take demotions because too much stress. I am at a place – 6 more years eligible for retirement. I don't need it. More money, but financially, we are good. Don't need that extra stress.

Day to day – family – boys – affect your work – I am a little more cautious. My alert is higher than when I was single. Was more daring, not that take risks, but there was nobody there at home waiting. Now, you have to come home. So now, it is a mama instance, but I take more precautions than I did when I was younger.

Any obstacles – I confronted everything good. I never saw any obstacles as why are you do this tome – because I am a girl? I showed them. Any obstacle, I just did it. I was never the type that felt – I am girl, that is why you are treating me this way.

Benefits to being a woman in law enforcement – As far as coworkers, they tend to be more protective. They see me as a sister. Because they are men and I am a woman. Hey, she is a mom, make sure she is taken care of. They see that side of me as well. She is a mom; she has to go home. They are kind of protective. they are respectful. Other guys say ... you are an agent just like me. Sometimes they will try not to cuss or talk about the women. Others will just say, I am an agent, I will say whatever I want.

Behavior of males vs. females – I think sometimes the men can overreact. They let their egos take over sometimes. Whether it is with the public or detention. They let their ego talk versus the females being a little calmer and defuse the situation. Females prefer a female agent. The detainees. They see us as gentler and kinder. We won't yell or treat us like a prisoner. Have seen males be rude or act like the tough guy.

Machismo with law enforcement in a Hispanic culture- Some women may have grown up with some Machismo and they come to the agency already with that mentality that the men are going to be the exact same way. They come thinking whatever is said, done, they automatically have the mentality that it is "because I am a girl." When in fact it is not that way. They were raised and brought up that way. Unfortunately, it becomes an EEOC thing. Gets all messy.

I do think they are more prepared – If they confront Machismo with confidence and strength, like I did with my dad. As I grew up and became responsible. My dad thought about it and changed his ways. It helped me deal with people saying it. I realized if he wasn't being 100

percent Machismo, once he realized I wasn't a helpless little girl, that is when I saw he was teaching me things. I think it just depends on how each woman sees it and looks at it. Some have it in their heads that the males are against and in most cases, that is not true. I see a lot of our males; they are willing to help us.

Machismo permeates your organization. I think it is very minimal. I see it a lot in the older agents, 25 plus years in the service. But those are the same guys who offer to help or say good job. I think we are proving to them that we can do it. But there are also women who are showing we are difficult to work with because we are complaining and crying about everything. It is more noticeable when it is a female.

I think the younger agents, the guys senior to me are very respectful, willing to work with everybody.

BP#2

Transcribed – Interview 1:02 – 8-2-19

SH – 45 – Border patrol – 20 years – Tucson sector

Family history – grew up in NH – we were 45 minutes outside of Boston. Parents Divorced when 7 or 8. Mom was an RN from a French Catholic, Canadian background, my dad was Irish from Boston, of course. He died when I was 24. A lot of the females in law enforcement, nobody comes from a typical background. There is a little chaos going on. He was a hardcore alcoholic. Not very present. No siblings.

Upbringing – my mom and stepfather, but they never married. Together for 37 years. He was tough. Worked in finance. Wasn't a touchy-feely kind of guy and that had more influence than anything else. I am not touchy feely. But he prepared me for the real world than coddled me.

Gender roles – because never had siblings. My mom was working mom. Didn't have the stay at home mentality. I don't really remember there being anything that led me to one thing. Latchkey kids.

Decide law enforcement – always loved cop shows. Loved Cagney and Lacy and Hunter. Always felt more in line with those careers as what I watched. In college, a friend of mine got me into X files. So that is where the federal law enforcement thought came. I am going to work for the FBI ... things went horribly awry (Laughter here) so when it came that was going to be my career path. History major in college. Went to college because that is what you did. Didn't have a path in mind. Then I found it. Kind of set my sights on doing that.

Reaction of family to law enforcement- they were fine with it. They were never ones to lead me down a path they expected. Grew up in NH but went to college in Georgia. She was always pushing me to go out and find myself instead of rather than stay at home. She wanted me to go out There was no career path expectation. They have been super proud. Stepfather very proud of how I chose my position. They always bragged.

What attracted you to law enforcement – I think I liked the fast pace of it. You get the idea that it is going to be way more exciting than it is. Something that not everyone was thinking about or doing. It was going to be something that was mine. Nobody expected.

Perception of law enforcement – I always thought I would be more in an investigative role. That was my goal from the beginning. I still had the idea that was where I would be eventually. I graduated from college and went to grad school. Didn't know what I was going to do. Law enforcement was in the back of my mind. I wasn't ready to commit to anything at that point. I was living in Boston and hated what I was doing. Applied with some agencies and did poorly on orals, etc. Came across the border patrol. Get me in the door and send me away from everything I knew. I never heard of border patrol in NH.

My two best friends living in Phoenix. Arizona and San Diego. Wanted to live near them. Got Arizona. Was 26 when I started. It wasn't as shocking, because I had gone from NH to Georgia. That was a big shock. My high school had a handful of minorities. So, going from that to Georgia was the biggest jump. Going to Arizona. It was more the landscape culture shock, not the community. Now in Virginia, just outside of DC. In Arizona – Douglass is right on the border. Town of Douglas.

Education about Hispanic culture. – I knew almost nothing about Hispanic culture but was immersed in it. There is no option than to learn about it. I think benefit is having so many Hispanic agents. You see them as brothers, family. So, when you see that and around it all the time as coworkers, the community isn't that much different.

Machismo – the wives. They were pretty. Not all of them. They are very cliquish. Not white, being a fellow coworker. I am their husband's peer and they are not comfortable with that. I can ignore the guys and find who I like to work with at work. Have plenty of Hispanic male partners love and work well with. Find the wives different. I think it is – culture stuck very much on gender roles. The men work and the women stay home. Anything that challenge that is unnerving. Not outwardly from the men, but you get the subtle. Don't want anyone else raising my children. When starting my family. It should be my wife staying home and raising. It is more subtle. The uber Machismo, they aren't going to work with you anyway. You know who they are.

Has machismo changed over the years ...? I think it stays the same. I just think people are more careful about what they say and who they say it to. The percentage of women in this career has

not changed at all over the 20 years. Maybe because I have been in so long, I ignore it. In the beginning it is tough. You're a girl from New Hampshire on the border along Mexico.

Woman in this career field – I enjoy it because I know how hard I have had to work to be accepted. And I know nothing in this profession is handed to you. It is such a unique law enforcement experience. If you are respected, you know you have earned it. Everyone knows who the workers are. Women have to work harder, but that is across society, I think. We do have to work a little harder to be seen as equals. When you don't belong to a clique, you find your own tribe.

Relationships – machismo, subtle. I am not going to let a woman tell me how to do this job even if she has done it for twice or 4 times as long. So, you have to ignore it. You will learn the hard way or listen to me. We are such a large agency, too. Figure out the people you can trust to be around. That is more the rule than the exception. The ultra-machismo guys, they go toward specialties.

Obstacles have to overcome – Definitely, not showing weakness. That was a big lesson to learn. Even if you are insecure about something, don't let them see it because they will seize on that even if it is in good natured ribbing. You protect yourself. You can be too familiar with each other. We are all in this remote location and relationships become incestuous because family circle, work circle and friends circle is all wrapped up in each other. Finding that balance, back off when you have to. Not always successful. I know when I struggled – K9 handler in 2005. There were no female handlers in the Tucson sector. Just getting over that insecurity, knowing I would be the focus of attention. I was going to be the one. It was a heavy burden to carry for a while. How I do will dictate. The instructor said females don't make good handlers. It may have worked to my advantage. Then I went on to do it for 14 years.

Had my dog for 2-1/2 years when expecting first child. That was difficult too. Had to make sure I had all my research done for being an agent. Regarding being pregnant and working.

Family - when first announced pregnant. Come out of the field. You hear rumors ... quit job to stay home. I hadn't even thought of that. Rumors of you start a family and not going to do this anymore. It was a lot of how are you going to do it? I just said, well how do you do it? We were a two-income family, husband BP agent as well, I saw the difference the most when I went back to work. Talking to agents, who had young kids complaining that their wives want them to help with the baby when they get home ... I know what you do all day, help your wife. ... that was a big difference. For some reason I was going to be empathetic to their plight. That is not how this works at all.

How being a woman affects - I only put in for one promotion? You see it is very cliquish of who they want to hire. There is just – If a woman gets promoted, the thought immediately is that she

was promoted because she was a woman. It's not work hard and did well in interview, you could use that as an option (laughing). We had one female supervisor in Douglass the five years I was there. We should have had more than one. That is a big thing right there. It is automatic. People just assume immediately, not because she worked hard and deserves it, but because she slept with someone or someone wants to sleep with her, or she got it because EEO or they needed a token.

On the field level, but now in headquarters, there are a much larger percentage of women. They gravitate more to leadership role once they get their foothold. The more women, the more come in. Field level – see it sector level details too, more female's percentage wise. In the field, much less representation of female managers.

The chief now, she promoted 3 years in. They knew from the beginning; she was going to be chief.

But the schedules are hard when you have a family. That was a huge reason why I never promoted. Lose seniority for shifts and days off. With two kids and husband with a more erratic schedule than mine, I couldn't do that. It wasn't important enough to me. Stability at home. That was my compromise and my sacrifice.

Most difficult obstacle to overcome as a woman in law enforcement – just getting used to being known. Do well or screw up everyone is going to know it. Your private life is not your private life anymore. You are always subject to rumor mill and whispers ... who is dating. Persevering through that and realizing no matter what you do people are going to talk. Not put up your real emotions. And get work done. It is rewarding once you get past that, but some women may just not have that in them. To do. That is OK. It is not a job for everybody, especially our crazy little culture. Earning people's respect is harder than people think it is going to be. For the guys, it is just assumed that they are going to be a good worker. If they are lazy, then they are a lazy agent. If we are lazy, we are a lazy female agent. There is always that qualifier.

Working with a lot of guys from the military. They have built up that camaraderie. They had that experience. I didn't come out. Just trying to fit into that culture, was just difficult. It may be difficult for younger men who don't have experience. But when have that military, they find that camaraderie with each other.

How have obstacles affected career – It's hard. More reflective of career because I am coming to an end of it. I did exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a K9 handler. I wanted to be a handler, good handler and not use it as a steppingstone. Wanted to stay there. It was something I loved doing, wouldn't give that up to do something else. I think it has made my tolerance for BS a lot higher. Made me a better person overall. I am not as emotional as I was when I was younger. I can detach myself from situations better. Try to think more logically. Not as girlie as I

used to be. Trying to talk to normal people – work friends vs. normal friends. Helped me in career, but in normal life, I have to tone it down.

Reactions to obstacles – I had a tough time at the academy and tough time at K9. My reaction was I can't give up on this. Because I can't fail. I can't fail because I am a woman. I don't want to be that one that quits or fails. Made me persevere even more. Good or bad, who knows. I didn't want to quit so bad because I didn't want to be that girl. A lot of us do have that. Some don't. they tend to stay more in administration. There are positions for everyone on the BP. I didn't want to do that, but others do. That wasn't me. A lot of women have that, and they have to. Especially in our world of law enforcement. You have to realize you live in a fraternity house, hate saying it, but it is just guys being guys. If you knit pick everything, they aren't going to accept you.

Benefits of women in law enforcement – female friendships are super, super, strong. When you find that group of girls, it is a sisterhood. Other women who absolutely get everything you have gone through. We are very loyal to each other. The thing with the guys, not as strong. Very little cattiness because we don't put up with it.

Women bring what qualities? – When I started we were catching a lot of people. They were running away. Because we don't come at it a certain way and read situations better, if you are not putting people detaining and arresting – if you don't make them feel defensive, they won't. This isn't some hot-headed agent coming at us, being all Machismo. We bring a little bit of softness and maternal ... especially with women, children and men. Approaching things from a more respectful position. We don't feel we need to show up another agent.

Mix of women and men? – You have to. As the culture changes and image of law enforcement changes, you need to have that – your clientele isn't the same anymore. Dealing with domestics. You need that voice not going to add fuel to the fire and we can do that more subtlety than men can. Not as intimidating or put on edge as much as others. We need to represent society and if you have an all-male – society wants to see them reflected in their protective services. It is a struggle to keep women. This job is so hard. If people want to be around their families a lot and when they want, this is not the job for you.

It is just hard job for that because so far away from everything in a culture you don't know. It is hard to say what we bring to the table because we have spent our career doing what the men do. Everything you have done has been to reach the same accomplishments. Everyone is an individual. Some men softer than the women. You have to have that mix.

Public perceptions of women in law enforcement – I don't think it is positive. The public has a skewed perception of law enforcement to begin with. Crazy ideas of how police should do things. I don't see a favorable image overall. They want big tough intimidating guys who can take down criminals and women just aren't going to be that. Don't know how to overcome that or change perceptions regarding that. It just is what it is. The public has the same perceptions as the wives. Those who want to sleep around and those who are lesbians. That is, it. Really that is where people draw the line on females in law enforcement. I think it changes just by having more women and hiring more women. Not just the black and white in terms of personalities. A whole range. Bumping into are these jobs women want to do. Are you only attracting tougher people? Never going to be a profession that has equal representation. not good or bad, just reality. It is hard.

BP#3

JBR Interview – Aug. 12, 2019 – 1:10 minutes

45 years old – 23 years in – Border protection/patrol – patrol agent in charge Tucson sector

Upbringing – family – Grew up in El Paso. Father was salesman. Mother was a comptroller for factory doing the books/accounting. Both are from Texas. Both from the border. 2 brothers and 1 sister who passed away. I think that I was very supported in being anything I wanted to be. I always had a strong personality and very competitive and there wasn't any stereotypical views of what I should be or what the future should look like.

Siblings – my brothers in business for themselves and sister was in Border Patrol, too.

Out of college when I joined the BP. Reaction – they were very supportive and enthusiastic. Father kind of pushing me for that kind of role. Good career. Went to school and studied medical industry and that was the intention. But after graduated from college, I thought that was a lot of schooling to go through.

From both dad and mom support. Younger than sister and she joined after.

Of course, family talked about concern the job I did and the things, being out there by yourself.

What about law enforcement that made it interesting? Had an uncle who was law enforcement PD in LA and I would go out there in summer. After he retired, he became a private investigator. He used to take me out on stakeouts. He was the law enforcement influence in my life who led me on that. It was that I always knew I wanted to be in law enforcement, but it was more – hey this sounds interesting and challenging and an opportunity. Let's see where this takes me.

Border patrol at that time, they were hiring a lot of people and that was just the opportunity. As soon as I graduated, essentially, that summer, I got in. Essentially, early.

Hispanic family - I think that I didn't come from traditional Hispanic family in the sense my mom was always harping on us to always not be a statistic. Do well for ourselves. Be independent and not rely on a man. And so, I had that constantly. Working in my mind and she reminding me. The way we are portrayed, perceived. Just push, push, push. My father was the same way.

I don't know if influenced too much by the traditional Hispanic family in that regard. The culture there is – I don't know if it is because I grew up there and didn't notice, it seems like a melting pot of all different people. I didn't experience, when I went off to college, noticed, you have the Hispanic and black and white neighborhoods. I don't feel like I noticed that, maybe naïve, maybe young. El Paso feels like a melting pot to me.

Machismo culture in home – friends – I was the only Hispanic among friends. Hung out with predominantly white people. I don't know how that came about. I think it may have been just due to the neighborhood I lived in, the school I went to. Didn't actively seek that out, but those were my friends.

Experienced Machismo in career? – absolutely, during career.

Describe – Oh, it is very alive in our culture. When they say Machismo, I think Hispanic predominantly. I feel like at the highest levels we are underrepresented as it comes to Hispanics. Feel there is a culture difference between men and women in the border patrol.

I think it maybe upbringing to maybe aggravate that culture a little bit. Tend to speak my mind. Not shy, intimidated. Feel strongly, I have achieved positions I have achieved because of that. Strong work ethic. Feel maybe the culture – outspoken nature I possess is not accepted or supported the way it should be ... they are very close-minded nature about it. That isn't just women. That is any alternative perspective that is not the majority. Culture of do what you are told. Don't ask why, that kind of things.

It is my nature to do those things. Given chain of command, you don't have the chance to question. But for the most part, at the higher levels, you should be able to.

Machismo – increase or decrease? I think it has become a little more evident to me at the higher positions. When younger, there isn't as much opportunity for discussions, you go do your job. It is very simple. But at the higher levels, you are dealing with complex issues that require communication and discussion and debate. It has been more evident to me. There is a fine line – something interesting, husband has achieved the same level. We have a lot of discussion of the perceptions of women and the struggles I have gone through. He gives me a lot of insight into how the men think and how I am perceived. And both good and bad. It is a very difficult path, to navigate and balance. Strong woman you walk that fine line of being assertive or being a bitch. It is difficult to navigate that.

Women in Law enforcement – it is about my focus on making it better than the way I found it, especially for other women. One of the things I am hugely proud of as agent in charge. In my sector of 4,000, there were only 2 women in command staff positions. That was me and another. Across the 9 stations in the sector. One day, I decided to see the representation of supervisor ranks and women. Most stations had 2 women. Some had none. Most had 1. My station had 11. I think that what I attribute. Some of those are – the outlying stations, women don't want to go to those, but also, a lot of times, men will look at women like their daughters or their mothers. You are doing a good job, but not quite ready and I think we sometimes to that to ourselves. We want to be ready and experts and really good, especially we are apprehensive to take it on. Men are good at it. even when they don't, they say, hey, I can do it. The way they look at us, whether try to relate us to. that protective – not ready for it. Some of it is our own fault.

Because of those perspectives, we limit other people, especially women, of moving up in the ranks. And sometimes other women are our biggest enemies because we hold ourselves and each other to even higher standards. I was very proud of the 11 members within our supervisory staff at my station.

Relationships with male personnel – I have always been an easygoing, very personable, strongest attributes to get along with others. But went through difficult time this last year. This year more difficult to get along with. Had to do with frustration of leadership and divisions being made and targeting happening. I would say for most of career best attribute. More frustrated this year.

I think I changed my environment and left that position. Not dealing with those individuals. Before becoming a victim of circumstances, changed. More positive focus going forward now.

Obstacles feel – overcome – to succeed? I think that there are so many. I think they come as you go through different chapters when you are a young agent, it is proving yourself and to able to do the job. There are a lot of gentleman in this organization. But you have to recognize how you want to be perceived and hold your own. That is kind of difficult to do – that you are perfectly capable on your own. I would be dealing with someone and suddenly other agents would show up and throw them down and handcuff them and I was not there yet. Other times, they would come on my call and they would take control. I was still doing my investigation.

I had to assert myself. Show I had confidence in what I was doing. I think that as you navigate through the supervisory, you have to make sure your decisions are free from emotions. There are so many responsibilities that come with being a supervisor. You impact people's lives more than you know. The higher you move up. Take that responsibility very seriously and not let your emotions get the best of you. I think that happens a lot.

I think it is harder – When we get upset, a lot of times we have tears because we are upset, but not because we are weak. The automatic response that comes to us.

When it comes to ego, we have a better ability than men to keep that in check.

We can communicate better – men assert themselves – because I said so.

We both kind of come at problems completely differently.

Sometimes I felt like I was out on an island because I would be in a meeting with all men and I thought of the problem completely different than they did. We have to remember we are naturally different and have different qualities that are complementary and valuable. You just have to know when to add that value.

Obstacles women have as a gender daily basis – Stereotypical things. I have had two children. Both times I went to the end, had babies and was out 3 months. So, 6 months in 23 years. The second child, people said, she got pregnant just to get out of doing her duties. Yeah, you don't make a decision like that. Oh my gosh, she's pregnant again. Well, that was 5 years ago. So those were the little things that I heard.

One time got into it, there was another middle manager, comment, - these trainees are getting pregnant. They should have the respect to wait until they are done to get pregnant. What about all your male trainees. We have a different role at home, and it is different in every home. But, a career and family, the lifestyle that this is different.

Most difficult obstacle to overcome? People realizing that we add value. We bring something different to the table to add value and a different element to our approach. Maybe it is our fault that we don't explain ourselves better. Felt ignored and invisible.

I don't know if it is gender specific. Being ignored.

A lot of the comments – influenced to have only 2 children if didn't feel guilty regarding pregnancies. I chose this job, I own that. I think one of the positives, go out in the world and chase these obstacles. Been a role model and someone they can look up to and struggled and endured and fought the fight, kind of. My older daughter, too, wants to go into the military. ROTC. Some of the same struggles I have had, she will have, too. I am there for her to answer questions and give perspective.

This last year, being targeted and never filed an EEOC claim. Have had plenty of circumstances that warranted it, but never did. This time I had to make that decision to. I knew if I filed, my career would essentially over. Labeled as someone who does that.

Would be a long, drawn out process and a lot of opinions of me regarding it. Talked to husband about it. If I care about women left, I have to do this regardless. Decided to. My daughter read my declaration and it was so rewarding to hear her talk about this. It is a good thing you are standing up for yourself. That is kind of where I was at. Never had been pushed to that point.

Circumstances – started with my husband and I got to sector and held people accountable. It wasn't like firing people, but people got upset about it. Decided we were disrupting the norm for them. Fast forward, some of the rumors started that I was having an affair with my boss. So that went on for a while. Told leadership what was happening. Nothing happened. I know what is supposed to happen. I was super frustrated with the response. Asking them for help and they were doing nothing.

Affecting health, and everything.

Had a review – it wasn't good. He wouldn't let me meet with him. Had command of largest station in the nation. My peers would make me laugh. They said you are always setting the standards. All I asked was for a meeting why I got that rating and what do I need to do for the next. He wouldn't meet with me.

We are not allowed to say no. That was that.

Then, after that nitpicking everything I did.

Went through chain of command and did everything I could do, and they did nothing.

It was mostly centered against me. There are some people in that sector who are bullies and they have done it before. Put a female in charge of them.

Obstacles affecting career? The personal aspect played a big role. People alleged had affairs with boss to get the positions they have. Having those discussion with daughter and knowing you live in a small community. Having those conversations with coworkers. Not realizing how this affects everybody. Most women I knew of had had at least one allegation like this in nature.

How does that affect – I think that – I don't know. It would depend on if they knew it would be like that. I didn't expect it to be like this and be perpetuated at the highest levels. My biggest issue - in my position if there was any kind of rumor or allegation, anyone harming in any way. I was required to take action. And so, I think this frustration is the opinion that this is acceptable. Because at the end of the day, the employee is still supported if you tried to help them. Did whatever you could. When they try to say there is nothing we can do, we know better.

Benefits of women in the agency – We are good communicators. Have far less ego than the men. We have a different approach and perspective to a problem. Diversity when dealing with the complex issues we deal with every day. We have to be more representative of the society we live and work in. We are very far from that - 3 to 5 percent women.

When you have other state and federal when 30 to 40 percent. Why can't we get more women in these positions? Once we break that barrier. We can have more women show it is possible to have this career and have a family as well. You will be accepted and respected. Your value will be considered and appreciated. You will be able to – we are a long way from that.

Does Hispanic culture have a bearing – I would have to say yes. But some of it too is the type of individual that goes into law enforcement. Type A personality. So that is a big thing. If it is a Hispanic influence or not, I think that would be difficult to differentiate. I can't really say. I don't know and never really thought of that. In the sector that I worked in, before I was promoted, there were no Hispanics in the leadership. I guess maybe that is why I am having trouble. There weren't a lot of Hispanics in the leadership. Hispanics are underrepresented at that level and I don't know why. It may be just that sector.

You have to be able to see the goal to achieve it. At the highest levels, it hard to see ourselves reach that when they don't see others up there. I can't tell you how many people have come up to me and talked to me about – they are telling me; you are showing everybody else that job as a female and one day maybe we can hold that position. That is a difficult – demonstrate that it can be done and reach out and ask, how is it you were able to navigate the professional personal life. What advice. Reach out and answer their struggles. Once they see that.

Challenges and obstacles, it is good to talk to women. I call them and ask them what they did. They can relate and we have that relationship.

Several time during career, I felt like is this work. But. At the end of the day, this is a great job and great opportunity and lots of different things you can do. I have always weighed that. The job has been good to me. Yes, there are things that need to change, and I want to be a part of that. As women we stand out considerably. That is both good and bad. Everybody knows what you are doing, they are watching and criticizing you. If you are slipping up and need help, they are going to know it.

It also works to our advantage because there are a lot of opportunities because we stand out.

We work so hard to be equal and considered equals. Sometimes we forget that we are different. So that support system, talk to other females because they are going to be able to share and have that empathy because of their own experiences.

Some say, I am an agent. They need to understand, we are different, and we can't deny that we are different. Be supportive in that regard.

BP #4

54 years old – 27 years in border patrol – top patrol agent in charge

Family – mother and father both Hispanic. My parents are 9 or 10 years apart in age. Which not uncommon in their generation for the father to be older than the mother. Both have very large families. Both families come from Mexico so great grandparents on the maternal side. Grandfather on paternal side from Mexico. He came over and was a master plumber. So, my dad, growing up, they were in the higher income in the neighborhood and first to have a TV. They were in San Benito from Mexico. As was mother's family. So, my dad's family grew up in the same neighborhood as Freddy Fender. Grandfather gave him his first guitar. He used to play on the steps of a store just two doors down ... they hung out together.

Grandfather – told to me, he was a boxer in his younger years. Spend a lot of time on the hardwood floor of their block home, grandma making tortillas and beans and us sitting watching boxing. Spent a lot of time there. He was very quiet and liked his tobacco and pipe. He walked around in a white T-shirt and khaki pants. Grandma worked – kept a home with a bunch of kids and grandkids. That was the thing to do.

Grandfather would give us money for ice cream and my grandma always had cookies. Ceramic cookie jar. The family is just close, and it is a large family. Grandfather has many siblings. Huge family. 1,000 people. Very supportive. Aunts and uncles.

My dad and uncles were all military, so they had GI Bill pay for education. That was very important, but it was funny because it was emphasized more for the boys than it was the girls ... so all the girls spent more time becoming homemakers. By trade, one of aunts was a hairdresser in the back of her house. Even to this day, they talk about her. Passed away 2 years ago. She was into Bingo, too.

Fascinating – meals and nights over. We would be at the grandparents' house. That was typical in this culture.

Pullout couch in my grandparents living room and there must have been six of us there. We wondered where the boys where, they were outside trying to scare us. The cousins were all really close. Still encourage each other, etc.

Gender roles – I think so, it was to find a good man, get married. I think it was to them, just the natural thing. They were emulating what happened to the family. Grandmother didn't work outside the home. She was the caregiver. She was the disciplinarian. She was always there for the family, while my grandfather did his trade. I think they were emulating that.

One of my aunts actually played softball. That is why I liked you guys playing softball because I played softball. I would imagine that they saw that as a masculine and that is wasn't appropriate. Nobody talked about until we were adults about things they used to do.

The aunts – they're all very funny and have great sense of humor. More than the men. They are funny, outspoken. I think they were always like that. The person that gave them the courage to be that way was Aunt (removed name by researcher) (the hairdresser) she was outspoken and a little foul mouth. She didn't do that around her grandfather. People were afraid of her. She was

really tough. Strong. They are not afraid to state their position about something. It is really fascinating. It is funny to see, because the men tend to be more quiet and reserved. My dad you wouldn't know when he was even in the room. He just sits there.

I don't know what it was. Mom is strong and oldest of 7 in her family. She played caregiver a lot of times. My grandmother did not work outside the house. Grandfather was in the Navy. Spent a lot of time traveling the world doing his work in the Navy.

Mom spent a lot of time trying to keep – those were things I don't remember, this was when my mom was younger. She married at 23, he was 32. Women are pretty strong and outspoken as well. All of the siblings worked for Southwestern Bell. Mom hasn't worked since mid-30s. she has had little jobs here and there. Really for the most part. That was her choice. They divorced when I was 10. My dad – worked for the state, an accountant – comptroller. Then he was in Laredo. Now, they are living together.

It is just amazing to see how things have changed. Aunts and uncles – one uncle who is a laborer. No education. Trying to think if any of them went to college. Mom didn't –

Expect from you – my parents always told us – I am oldest of 3. They always told us we could do and be whatever we wanted. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, bankers, we could even be president of the united states. But they never talked about it. Not anything intentional, just wasn't – firefighter, police officer, astronaut, federal agent. They never thought of the non-traditional type of career.

4 or 5 years ago, my dad says ... having applied for border patrol. Knew my dad was police.

He said you are doing what I wanted to do. I applied for border patrol. I was in shock. They weren't hiring Hispanics then. You are living what I wanted to do. That is why I am so proud of you. My sister is a leader in her own field for Hispanic females. I am doing what my dad wanted to do and couldn't.

Females weren't allowed into the patrol until the 1970s. In my organization, 5 percent if lucky. That hasn't changed in the 27 years I have been in.

I don't know why – this is different. Street cop in the car or on the streets dealing with people. Here, you are going to be out in the brush, on foot where there are snakes and all kinds of wildlife. You name it and the bad guys are in the brush. You don't know what you are facing. It is very physical and very demanding.

You are in the elements. It is hot, seeing signs of big snakes – they are in there someplace. Ready. You just don't know what you are going to face. I think, husband – most times than not they are responding to a call, so they are getting an indicator of what they are responding to. PD has a tendency to have a little preparation and their backup is also available. Their tactics and techniques are intended to keep them safe and work as well.

You have the elements to contend with, sometimes your backup is not there. Anything can happen. Or you're out with the radio and it doesn't work because I am out in the boonies. It is crazy, it is very different.

Right now, with so much going on politically, it is going to be difficult with the generations now to have them come into law enforcement period, let alone anything to do with immigration. It is overall. Even less the females. The numbers aren't there. There are other professions more suited. More investigative, FBI, inspector general. Analysts. It doesn't involve the physicality, the danger and the stigma of law enforcement.

It is finding that right target – there are a lot of things that played into my life. From 7th grade on. Athletics had a lot to do with me making right choices. I think a lot of times, young girls don't understand the decisions they are making. You think they are frivolous, but your life depends on those decisions. I could have gone any other decisions, but these decisions led me to this. I have been proud of the work I have done. I have made a difference.

The reason I came in was because I had 5 little boys and drugs were coming into the United States and I wanted to get them off the streets. And keep them out of the hands of my boys and their friends, and their friends, friends. I wanted to make a difference and get the bad guys off the streets.

There are things you can do when you grow up. I have a friend who is a Texas Ranger. I wonder when she made the decision that led her to that. This is a field you should consider.

This could be a really good career. It is hard. Targeted ex-military, which the numbers aren't very large. Athletes. They have skillset that we need. Setting goals, athletic, physical. Many don't come back to the law enforcement after they have made up their minds.

Somewhere there has to be a way to reach women. Sister said she couldn't shoot someone if it came down to it. One or two things about something that they are not made for that. I want to be cop, but I can't be out in the boonies with the ticket, etc. I will I be able to pull the trigger.

Obstacles - Hard part, whereas, I want to say when I put the uniform on, I want to be treated no different, no better or worse because I am a female. But, at the same time, I have to recognize there are differences as we do function differently. Not necessarily the stereotypical gentle. Because I am not. I am authoritative, assertive, strong, commanding, command presence. Sometimes when I am not what someone, some men, and some women think I should be, oh, whereas I think I am being assertive, they think I am being aggressive. Where I am being authoritative, I am being bossy. I am not the sweet and nice and gentle motherly. I can be nurturing. I can be guiding. I can have a man or woman break down and cry and depending on the situation, I can break down and cry with them. Sometimes, I have to tell myself this is not the time to cry. Pushing a Kleenex box to them, that is not what they expected. The last several months, couple of men who are used to how women should be in their lives. Expecting me to be

the same. Mirror the kind, quiet, not have an opinion, not being assertive. That has made it very difficult.

I think in the more recent years, noticed it more. It has become a lot more stressful for folks. In their panic, they don't want to have to watch their Ps and Qs. Don't think you have to control me or find ways to coach me or mentor me. To support me, uplift, constructive criticism.

Literally told I was not acting like a GS15. If you were GS 15 you would know. I thought, just replace that GS15 with the word woman. I was not acting like a woman. What does that mean? I feel like they are literally telling me I am not acting the way they want me to act, so I am not fulfilling my performance. Thinking I am a rock star. I know I am doing great work.

I was told you don't have time you. I am not your wife, daughter. If I would have been a man, it would have been totally different.

For 2 years showed numbers and argued this point. About a month and a half ago, they swapped us. He goes over. He is moved after the 16-year-old died. He admits he was not ready for it. He goes and uses the same argument and data and he gets all his people back and then they pulled additional people from my new station. What is with you guys. Take it a white male younger, I made the same argument. I hate to say it, but the Hispanic brown female you can't stop asking when I am going to retire.

I believe I am really good at what I do. My leadership style is different. You want me to fit this mold and I think it is what their vision is of a female.

A few years ago, a boss was in the lobby of my station and said, you know when I can tell when there is a female patrol agent in charge at a station ... because they always decorate. I looked at him and said, chief, the staff decorates and there have been men here. But there are those subtleties. Then you look at her home life.

My grandmothers were strong women, they were raising their kids. Most of them, my mom worked outside, but aunts worked. One till works. I don't understand why they want to make me their version of. They have daughters.

Machismo – I think some of it is the Machismo.

I don't fit this mold. Trying to find this solution. I have had people tell me I don't like how they are treating you and I think it is because you are a woman.

I haven't experienced this before. When I was still an agent, there was one guy who was crude. He tried talking sexual to one girl and to me. We put him in place, and he stopped. I don't think this is across the board. For the most part I have not had any problems.

I did file an EEO – I don't expect anything to happen. It may be 3 or 4 years. There is nothing to gain. I just don't want it to happen again. One of the remedies, this supervisor gets some serious training about performance. You can't just say you are not fulfilling the role. He didn't help me. There was that and another female having similar issues. We are having trouble in these positions. The chief is under fire about stuff too.

How overcome – it is going to require men and there are men who are very supportive. There are fewer and fewer at the higher levels. Hope is not a strategy. Hoping DHS will help and address this individually.

I think we need to stop being one another's enemy. We tend to see each other as competition. Tear each other down rather than lift each other up. Facebook group that is intended to be very positive. A place where we can freely discuss with trust. We lift each other up, not mock each other.

Machismo – I think you have traditional, but women who are strong. You have more men comfortable with a woman who is more successful and earns more money. I am the provider in the house. Most times it comes down to the man. Are they comfortable with that and themselves? How the father maybe brought up the. You don't have to find a man to be the provider.

We wanted our boys to be self-sufficient. Cook, clean, be ... not depend on someone else to do that.

Father-in-law adores me, but there is part of him that was concerned that he wasn't working. He is supposed to be the bread winner. That Machismo piece. Husband would struggle with that. I am worried I am not contributing monetarily. He takes care of everything. He has made my life easy. But he is working so much harder, but different. You are helping me earn the money. He did 17 years of law enforcement.

We couldn't have done this. That is a lot of hard work. For Hispanic families, it is the woman doing that. And traditionally it is the women doing both, with outside employment. Cousins do both and it is expected. for (my husband) and I, he admitted, it would have been nice of you to be barefoot and pregnant making tortillas. But that is not who you are.

Daily devotionals. Everywhere I go, was facing a panel and competitors, all white and all males.

I remind myself – there is nothing they can do to take away my value. My capabilities, the things I have learned and the accomplishments. Nobody can take that away.

Self-affirmations. Just say, you are a rock star, you know you are. Don't let anyone create doubt. This woman is just amazing she is a rock star. She is just amazing. This woman sees you as a threat, but there is nothing she can say or do. He was glaring at me at a meeting. I sat next to her so she can't stare at me. Just be nice. If nothing else, it will get under her skin. She cannot take your value away.

When you mentor someone, everything I told you, I am facing too. I am going to be OK and you are too. Things that happen sometimes.

Don't ever doubt yourself. I briefed the President of the United States. I have seen my men and women through, I have done great things.

Doubt – December 2015 read an article. Women wait until they are 100 percent ready before they apply for a job. Men can be 50 to 75 percent ready and they will apply and learn the rest as they go, or they will find people who can do the job. Other positions, my sister and husband both said, you can't be the subject matter expert anymore. You have to bring in good people.

Delegate – I can't read them all and I can't do it all. Have to have good people to make decisions. I can't get I the weeds and so I took that to heart. Need to figure out how to manage time.

Women want to do everything. I went for it. 2015. I was in Brownsville at the time, wanted to have a meeting with Padilla. We are at the meeting, when meeting broke, I had 10 minutes. I read an article they wait, and most men jump ... I also read women will regret not putting in ... I don't want to be a statistic. I am ready for new challenges and a position. All I want is an opportunity to interview. I understand you are already made a pre-selection. I didn't want to regret not having this opportunity to tell you.

He had already decided to select but decided to interview for the position. So, if you become top you will have the opportunity to interview. I wrapped up an acting position and go back to Brownsville and the phone rings. Had another opportunity. Come to sector. Build the foreign operations branch. He wanted me to raise his baby. This was the assignment I had avoided. My Spanish is not very good. Beyond field work. Oh, what have I got myself into? I successfully built it, so much so, they have structured everything. The team has done great. Raised his baby and his baby is beautiful.

In all my years, everything learned is leading me to this position and it is my position. Talked in terms of the job was mine and you are going to be happy you chose me. Told myself I didn't want to be a statistic. We find ourselves – don't wait to be ready. You will have people around you.

That becomes part of the problem – you have a small number of women. Then maybe they become supervisors. Some say it is not for me. Don't like what it does to their family life. There is nothing wrong with picking the family. Male and female and the wife is the one burning their leave for the childcare.

So, the pool for higher echelons is fewer and fewer, convincing the women to from applying. Your boss is going to be less qualified than you. Trying to convince them to keep going up the ladder. Because you do have to sacrifice. You do have to move out of state. We moved all over.

Kingsville to McAllen – I drove 3-1/2 hours a day for 3-1.2 years. It was rough. But I did that to keep the kids in the same school and same house. I waited until the youngest was out of high school ... to go to DC. So even then I put my career on hold for family choosing family over career. I could have been Carla provost, I could have been the chief, but I waited. So, every time making those choices, it is the priorities. Or I don't know.

It is not easy. Then you have male female where the woman is just tagging along, and her job is secondary. Have seen some of that occur. It is odd thig and I is difficult to get women.

Take women supporting and convincing to keep climbing. There are pockets of support.

As a leader, I have concerns the best people aren't being selected. I will have 20 candidates and not a single woman. I know they are qualified, but I don't know why they aren't applying.

I even tell the women to apply, apply, apply. Whether they will, or not I don't know. Some don't want to relocate, some may not have the high score, it is just hard. And there is not a pool of women up there. That is what makes it more frustrating. When I am in the pool and more qualified, why am I not chosen?

Positives women bring – We have a tendency to be more brain than brute and brawn. I haven't had to shoot anybody. There have been very few times I have had to get physical with anybody. Been able to talk them into doing something. Even the explaining. There is an act. If there is victimization, apprehended. We identify them and we have to separate them and preserve evidence.

The auditor – he tells me the only station where they have explained to victim what is going on. Why do you think that is? I said I am a big explainer. I find myself everything is a teaching, learning moment. We will explain things. This is why we do this; this is why we do that. Want them to learn. Do all this explaining. Find myself with different skills at times, different strategies on how to deal with human behavior. Strategies used with boys that used with them. Is this because I am a woman that I am doing this. I think I have been able to do a lot of things in career, see male counterparts go in, guns blazing. Just settle down, you don't even have to get out of your car, they are coming right here. Be smarter. Calm down, they are coming, they will be right here. Smarter instead of harder. See that ... the women can be just as effective and come back with cleaner uniform. And I have laid in trails, because that needed to be done. I find that part is easier.

Also seems that the employees seem to trust. They will come and tell me about the most personal things, and I will ask them if they talked to commander or deputy, but they don't want to talk to the man. Maybe they were afraid to show their soft side or weakness. They were ok doing that with me. For some reason, they do. When I talk to colleagues, they have a tendency to talk. Maybe more approachable.

Maybe they feel they can open up to her. If I open up to my Machismo friends. What are they going to think? We use our brain to solve critical thinking versus brute strength. We can find an easier way to do that.

BP#5

Interview transcript – 8-23-19 – 1:00:34 - 37 years old – worked in that environment 8 years – Federal – DHS – enforcement and deportation – homeland security investigation as well – Researcher observations - Strong, opinionated, tough, speaks strongly, doesn't take it.

Born and raised in Brownsville. Dad born in Mexico; mom born here in the Valley. Dad was – his big thing, he dealt with warehousing. Fisher price plant in Brownsville. Distribution. He was the bookkeeper. He had a degree in that. Mom she was stay at home mom and then worked and then became para at the school district. Brother – he is a teacher. High school.

Grandfather was the definition of Machismo. My grandma didn't drive, etc.

Upbringing – careers and gender roles? Now that I have my own kid. I feel like mom was married, but she was like a single mom. She was the caretaker of he and I. Not that my dad wasn't available. But he was the one. It is night and compared to my relationship and my parents. That was always just the way it was. I'm sure it was machismo – it also came from – my grandmother was a – she married – when she was 39 – he raised both uncle and my dad. She kind of overly protective. I don't know about mother and their sons Hispanic. They are expected to live in the home until they are 30. Some of my people my age. That has something to do with it as well.

I remember we were in school when mom went to work. Not sure why ... Another Hispanic culture thing – don't talk about money. Don't talk about death. I learned – have a motley crew that I hang out with.

Gender treatment – I think in the sense that he treated different because he chose it, I was very much a Tomboy. Into sports and my brother wasn't. Dad and I had that athletic connection because he was that. There wasn't a typical gender role. I felt like I overcame any of that.

Masculine - There is a big gap – women just don't gravitate toward law enforcement. Everything my husband tells me, if you are educated – bachelors, you go to academy or branch, and you are a female and speak well and write well. You will promote every one or two years and run the whole thing at some point. Not as many women agents and the ones who could, just don't want

to because of the extra stress. Or being sent around to DC for 18 months. Or sent somewhere else. Sent on details, the job description ... as needed part of the job.

It was never something that came up. I first wanted to be a teacher and then there was a shift. You get a really good class and then some years you don't. So, decided against teaching. Got my degree in English. At some point you split into directions. Never started down the teaching pathway. Then thought a writer or a journalism. English major, minor in communications. Never pursued it.

Then got on with DHS – it was – I had a degree, what do I do. Husband said, just look at DHS – if you have a degree, you are qualified. Back then, they would rate you. Assessment online. Give a score. Scored well. I said, OK. They offered me a position in Raymondville. Then came over here. I was here for 7 years.

I just never see myself working shift work. Everything else seems so great. The research, etc. reports. The rare intel positions. Shift – I just feel, part of it - every 6 weeks they are changing shifts. Your body adjusts. Don't really have a choice on that unless you are on the higher end and have. If lower you have to ride it out 4 or 5 years. Until you get seniority.

Should get pregnant right away while on probation if they want to have a family. That is coming from men. Saying that. You are on probation and then get pregnant within first few months.

Reaction of family to joining – It was a good job. I think the biggest reaction was when I had to go to DC for training. For intel. I had to go – leave everything to the last minute. Hispanic panic. Wait to the last minute to tell them.

They never thought to ask how long I would be gone. Before I left, how long gone. About 1 -1/2 months. So, they are looking at husband. What are you going to do? He says work and take care of the dog.

They were worried about where I was staying. It was long term furnished. It was a nicer part of outside DC. They were a little worried about that situation. You will be by yourself. What is this place you are staying at? All it is – I don't know ... she said. 180 of the 200 rooms were like security, etc. etc. intelligence, law enforcement.

Some of it was like, you're leaving your husband behind. It is Hispanic culture.

If brother would have done the same thing, it would have maybe been worse. He was single, not leaving anyone behind.

Hispanic culture – it is hard for me to tell if it is a Machismo on daily basis. But overall absolutely in law enforcement and worse because they have badges. They are all babies. I am assisting anywhere to 40 to 60 agents. The workload wasn't as demanding as it could have been.

I always thought I was doing their job better than most of them for half the pay. That starts with management. If they allow that. Do as I say, not as I do.

Hispanic vs. white – how treated – felt like in some cases, partnership ... asking for help. Hispanics were expected – you are there to serve them. What makes it worse than that, some of the other females in the office, it was like Hispanic and agent and management, no matter what they were going to side with the agent. Even if it was their screw up ... he is the agent and look the other way. Never felt there was never inappropriate.

Not easily offended. There was always inappropriate stuff being said. I don't get offended, just becomes background noise. There were some people saying, we should not accept the locker room talk, it is everywhere. It doesn't matter who is running the country, state, etc. It's always going to be there. They had their war stories.

There were guys who had girlfriends everywhere and their wives. I think that is Machismo. The badge and Machismo. I have to go work and you can't do anything about it. I gotta go to work, we are doing this ... It happens a lot. It doesn't just happen on TV; it happens in the RGV.

Ability to work with the men – the guys from out of state were different. They were vaginas.

I got invited to the happy hours.

Chew them out and they would get Red Ass for a couple days and not talk to us. Hispanic guys would get butt hurt and they had the latest gossip. It was like high school. All assistants were females.

Obstacles – initially, when I first got in with DHS deportation. More of it was just being able to handle the stress of having – it was different there. You had a docket and you had to handle the inmates -everyday there was something to handle. The good thing was you were paired with an officer. There were more assistants vs. 60 or 70 officers to 1 assistant like later on. I didn't feel like obstacles regarding men.

It was 50-50 Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic. The issues I had was more with the female officers. I have no idea. I don't know if it was about being threatened. Maybe they were trying to prove something. There was only 1 female supervisor out of 7. I thought that was bizarre.

There's something more important than this job. Agent/supervisor told me that.

Let's just say, people fight over you. Can't put a really good assistant with a good agent.

Big part of machismo- being coddled by mother. The woman's role is to coddle and take care of the men. Not to say there aren't good Hispanic agents. They had a lot of knowledge and they weren't the type that had the girls. You could just tell the difference.

For the most part, it wasn't negative. I felt I knew stuff. Put in awkward positions with wives. Etc.

I loved my job. I will never say anything bad about it. I think a person can only take so much of do as I say, not as I do. Bad management. You have to be kidding me. I got fed up. Knew something would happen and that would be the straw. Physically and mentally draining. Constant shift of management. People came here just looking for where they were going to go next.

PO#1

Interview 8-12-19 - 41 minutes long

45, not currently an officer. Was for a year. Hidalgo PD. Patrol officer

Family – Grew up in the Valley. My dad is retired border patrol agent. My mom worked in banking. She was a loan officer when retired. She started as a teller and then ended as a loan officer for more than 30 years. Dad was born in Edinburg and raised here. She was born in Miami and moved when 5. So, she is from here.

Younger brother deceased.

Upbringing – Both my parents worked, so my family wasn't that traditional like a lot of people in the Hispanic culture where the women don't work and want to stay at home, even though my grandmother, she didn't work when mom and her siblings were younger, when they got older, she went and worked. My dad's family, there were only two kids and grandmother didn't work. She stayed home and took care of kids. On my mother's side, my maternal grandfather, his behavior was very stereotypical and that made me decide that I was never going to be that stay-at-home wife or mother. I rebelled from a very young age, that I was going to work. How he raised my aunts and uncles, the difference in how he treated the women, he expected them to do all the household stuff and – cooking and cleaning – and my grandma always had to look beautiful, cook dinner and take care of the kids. I just hated that.

Reaction – they weren't surprised, so I already had been in the military. I was the first grandchild - only female for about 12 years. They expected me to conform to the being a lady, wear dresses. I was not, I was a tomboy and played around with the boys. I was the only girl. First me, then brother and cousin and everybody after that were boys. Played baseball and stuff, and the neighborhood – was all boys. It was just natural.

Military - graduated from high school and had a child a year after graduated. Only way to get out of the valley and support my son. Joined the military – 6-1/2 years. Then had second son and got married. We raised kids. After got out of military, my husband was killed while on duty and then moved back to the Valley. Then went into law enforcement. In Yuma, Arizona.

Why go into law enforcement? Medical field- husband was in medical as a combat medic and mental health. I only wanted to do one enlistment to use GI bill. Always wanted to go into law enforcement. Wanted to be in the FBI. Maybe I was around 15, when I decided. My dad, he retired BP. And he had friends in DEA, customs, FBI and saw all through my father. It just fit my personality perfectly.

Husband goes into law enforcement - had been in a little under a year when killed. We moved back to Texas. Came back and went to school. Got my associates in criminal justice and joined the police academy. I liked the job, but not the pay and I definitely didn't like how females were treated. It was like the military without the benefits of being in the military.

It is overall. It is very male dominated career field. And you have a lot of Alphas. Too many alphas and an alpha female, you have to be that, but they don't like it.

Anecdotes – not every person in there, that would also be conforming to the stereotype. That would be generalizing. Happens that smaller department – magnified. There were several who cheated on their wife. They had girls in town and girls on the side. They were divorced or on second or third marriages. Single guys just getting whoever. Then in the department they were going with each other. Then, there were some using sexuality to get promoted or treatment or you were a bitch because you weren't going to do that. You didn't want to screw everybody. If you don't .. they say, you think you are too good. I don't like to play games.

Sat with the captain, told him what goes on. Knew he was aware of it. He had someone on the side in the department, too. He told me I just needed to get a thicker skin. I said, no, sexual harassment, unwanted contact in a sexual nature is sexual assault. That stuff happens. He dismissed it. People asked me how I could tolerate it and I just got to a point where I didn't have to. I think it is all of it. It is a problem. It was a problem in the military, and it is a problem pretty much in the world. A lot of females don't talk about it because unfortunately, you would spend all day complaining about it. Never going to get anything done. That is why so many of the women were hard core bitches because of what they had to do with their bosses and coworkers and the public.

In public, they tend to try to challenge you and in this community where women aren't always valued as much, it is even worse as a female officer or agent. There weren't a tremendous amount that were disrespectful, but there were quite a few and when they were, it was blatant.

Example- we were doing crowd control for a parade in Hidalgo. There were officers stationed along the street. In my area, it was me and 10 yards down was a female and the other side a male. There was an older man 75 to 80. He was just belligerent ... calling me names and just

cussing in Spanish and I didn't say anything. Thought what a horrible example because he had his granddaughter there with him. And she was watching this whole thing. Then, they wonder why there is such a culture of disrespect for women and law enforcement. This is the perfect example of why that is.

Hispanic culture – not all are bad. I am Hispanic so I grew up with it. When I was in military, saw bad examples just as I did good. I know a lot of Hispanic males who treasure their wives and families. Just ignorance.

Machismo - Yes. On one side the family. My dad's side, there was a lot of respect. But my uncle, expected me to educate myself and not let anyone disrespect me and stand up to myself. They taught me that. My great aunt did, too.

Culture – I have seen a huge reduction, thank God. Not a lot of women will tolerate it anymore. But, also seen the women go the extreme on the independent side. They don't value a relationship and are quick to tell people, I don't need you. I am the mother of 4 boys.

What it means to be a woman in law enforcement – difficult and challenging and you have to be aware to the example you are setting to other females and how you carry yourself. Make it very obvious you are not going to be a mattress or somebody that can be verbally or physically abused or intimidated just because you are assertive doesn't mean you are bitchy. Just because you are in law enforcement doesn't mean you are dumb or didn't have any other options. That is what a lot of people think about law enforcement. You had no other options, too dumb to make it in business or medical field. They tend to stereotype people in the military. Highly intelligent in the military and law enforcement.

Fellow officers – I got along well once they saw I wasn't going to allow myself to be treated with disrespect and once they found out I was smart. You have to prove yourself and do your job 10 times better than a male. So, you have to work even harder. It is just a lot of tests they give you.

Training officers – he had been hitting on me since the beginning. I had been warned about him. I didn't like the fact I was stuck with him. We pulled over a guy for speeding or expired license plate. He had me handle this one, he was watching from the passenger side. The guy at first calm, I am tall and bigger, but this guy was 7 inches taller and outweighed me by 100 pounds. He started to get upset. He was speaking all Spanish and the officer didn't realize I knew Spanish. He thought it would be – sees this guy talking to me in Spanish, getting upset, and I am having to de-escalate. Gave the guy a ticket and he is literally crying. I calmed him down, but he was yelling and irate. He said you handled that well, but you sat here and watched him get angry and almost violent. He said I just wanted to see how you would handle yourself. I told him I didn't appreciate him putting me on the spot. I told him not to test me like that again and I reported him. He would not have done that to a male. He had only done that because I had

rebuked his advances. He was being like that because passive aggressive. Then he would make comments like ‘when you are a bitch, people tend to drag their feet to back up.’”

Once I made it clear I wasn’t going to accept their bad behavior, it made my life a little harder, but they didn’t mess with me.

We all got treated the same. Some had it worse than others.

Obstacles – I was older when went into military and older when police officer. Behind the curve with age. Had the obvious wasn’t as strong as male. Had to work together. Had a bunch of physical injuries from the military.

Overall perception of women – I just became angrier and more aggressive. Had a friend, he told me he didn’t like the person I was becoming. Aggressive and confrontational.

Being a mother – impact – ultimately, it is what led me to leave. It was still very fresh and once leaving. Always ended up getting the shitty shifts. 3 to 11 p.m. never got a day shift the entire time. We weren’t making much. They paid the least, even though we had most dangerous job. Illegals, shootings and drugs.

Example – Before you go out on the streets. We would get reports there were bounties on the law enforcement. Along the river. We know there is a bounty on law enforcement, especially females. They were talking about capturing and holding them. I was used to it because of my dad and husband who told me stories. Any spouse of law enforcement, that is something we know happens. The general public doesn’t know. It is important to get it out there. With the bad rap people give the BP, they have no idea.

Most difficult obstacle to overcome as a woman – For me, it was the guilt of knowing that I chose this career field even after my husband was killed and to see the toll it has taken on my family. It was a tough childhood because I saw my father was always gone. I went to my share of law enforcement funerals. I saw the toll it took on my dad every time one of his agents was killed or hurt. Took calls in the middle of the night, those things stick with you. To see and know all that and still go in as my kids were still suffering from the trauma of my husband’s death. The first time they saw me in uniform, they were proud, but then they were afraid I wasn’t coming back. If I am gone, they don’t have anyone. I attained the goal, and did it and it wasn’t worth it. I wasn’t getting respect and I wasn’t helping people. There were people undoing what I was doing. Not sacrifice my family or their mental health for something that isn’t going to change in my lifetime.

Change – it will, but not quickly. It would take a lot of well-educated and determined women to lead it and men willing to be advocates for women. That is zero tolerance of misogyny and sexual harassment. Women compared to men, that has to be enforced every single time. Chief doing the harassing or dispatcher, or a civilian harassing, it has to be enforced.

Reaction – it took a long time to honestly evaluate. After a while, called the guy a big baby. after a couple weeks. Tell me what it is that you see. I asked a lot of male friends and what differences they saw in me. I have always been assertive and dominant. I hadn't seen it. They were right. Without a doubt. I didn't realize it was that bad.

I was still working, but after I left – wasn't as frustrated. Still dealing with a lot of stuff. Needed to work on.

Positives – benefits – when go to calls and putting in situations – this trainer told me, I was a role model and example in the community, to young girls. We had gone to a call and there was a girl in the house. She was just watching me, how I spoke to her family. When we got back, he said, the girl was watching you and smiling. I always remember that.

PO #2

41 years old – law enforcement since 2004 –supervisory role

Grew up here in Falfurrias – left when I was 16, because I knew everything. Quit school, moved to San Antonio. Ended up getting married at a very young age. I love my parents but grew up in a very abusive family. It was more – my dad beat my mom up. Thought this was an opportunity to get out because I was already headed down the wrong path, hanging out with the wrong people, not doing well in school, was skipping. So not doing good here. Opportunity to leave, but quickly found out I was young and so naïve. Had no education. I ended up getting GED in San Antonio. Went to Palo Alto college when 17. Went for child psychology. Made the dean's list.

Then moved to Houston. Was there for about 5 and half years. Had first son at 20. In 2001, went back to SA. Decided to try out corrections. It was federal facility. Worked there a year or so. It wasn't for me at that time. Instead of looking, I became security at Sea World. Most fun job ever. Worked there for about a year and went back to school. San Antonio College for Criminal justice.

Going through courses, left class and saw accepting applicants for police academy. Law enforcement academy. Filled out application, they called me. Need to go through everything.

In January 2004, I started at the police academy. It was long. It was a year. Started to fall in love with everything we were learning. Interesting because growing up, who likes cops, right? Considering my family's background was run ins with law enforcement.

Blew me away that I fell in love with it.

December 2004 graduated – passed exam on first try. Started applying in SA. Offered a reserve position and had that for a month and then full-time position and was there for 2-1/2 years. Pregnant and had twins. So, left there.

Mom and dad – came back in 2011. Started working with the BC Sheriff's department and first female deputy there. Saw a lot of stuff. Deceased illegals – human trafficking.

Came to (City removed here by researcher). Offered a job. 2012 – I knew the city. 2 years on patrol here. Promoted to sergeant and first female sergeant. First female LT and first female assistant chief. Waiting to see what happens if get the first chief.

When I was growing up, my dad had his moments. One time did see the officers here they ended up beating my dad severely. I was 6 or 7. I despised police officers for a very long time. Saw a lot of bad things growing up. We were poor. Dirt floor until I was about 4 or 5 and no indoor plumbing until I was about 8 or 9.

Change about Law enforcement – 9-11 happened. Believe it or not. We were in SA. My friend passed away a couple weeks earlier. I remember my ex-husband, called me, and came downstairs. As soon as I started watching, that was when the tower came down. And that stayed in my memory. Watched all the policemen and firefighters. The first want to help, was going to apply for the air force. My mom didn't want me to. Had a 3-year-old son. She begged me not to go. So, left it alone. Decided not to join.

But then wanted – criminal justice – what am I going to do. I knew I wanted to that, but not what I wanted to do. Lawyer, whatever. Then, I worked that security and while in academy – security jobs. When I walked out of that class that day, I will give it a try. But I think that is what made me fall in love with it. It took some time. But I eventually, even on my third day on patrol, working nights with TO. Driving through these dark roads. Had no idea what I was doing. Kept getting lose and turned around. Is this even what I want to do. I started doubting myself. What if I get shot at? Had all these thoughts.

First couple weeks, hesitant. Actually scared. Once went to calls, and it just became – after 3 or 4 months, I was excited to go to work. Getting into car chases. I don't see myself now doing anything else. This is where I need to be.

Looking back – considering I ended up having to work with some of the officers who beat up my dad. Told my sister, she remembered the officers. She told me about it. That burned in my head. That was traumatizing. Here were like 5 or 6 officers on top of my dad. They threw him in the old jail, he was in there 6 hours before getting medical attention. Not saying dad was an angel. These were big guys.

Brought back all that anger. Addressed one of the officers who was involved. Another apologized.

Incident with father stayed and haunted me for years. I worked with the guy. That is something that broke me when I was a kid. Had been there like 1 month. Then it got ugly between us.

Going through all that, knowing you have animosity. I love my fellow officers but doesn't mean I have to like them.

Males and females – being the first – obstacles – yes. I have been tested a lot. When in SA there were other females. It wasn't so bad. In Kirby only female. It was good there.

When came back here, I guess it is still the mentality of the older folks, the older ways. That is kind of this is a man's job. I was tested a lot. I did earn my respect. When I first came to PD here, some officers told me stuff when promoted to Sergeant. They had been here longer than I had. Some of them didn't have the right attitude, they didn't care about the community. Majority were not from here; they were from the Valley. One officer after being promoted came up to me and said, "is this the way it is going to be. If I am going to be getting the short end of the stick, maybe I should just leave. I have been here longer than you and they gave it to you." That was the mentality – seniority, seniority, seniority.

He told me that. After that the ones who had been here, were giving me a hard time. Both a female and male had made comments about me not being here as long. I have even had someone tell me that someone else was saying that ... the only I am at where I am at is because I slept my way to the top.

It is still going on. When I was a lieutenant. They would freak out. Still get it now. She is a chief, assistant chief. As a female. Now going through that now. Through all the years, had chiefs leave and the assistant chief would just get it. Now, this time, they wanted to open it up to other applicants. Now that this chief returned. Now accepting applications. I think it is because I am a female.

Machismo – Yes, my mom was not allowed to work. Now it is different. My sisters work.

Even my brother, when first working, and going through the academy, he would say that "Why are you doing that that is so stupid. That is a man's job. You should let men do it." That was years ago but changed now.

There have been several times, older men will come to the office. They want to speak to the chief. The chief isn't in and I go up as the assistant chief. Then they don't want to talk to me. Once they see who I am.

I think it is a little less. A lot of the citizens have accepted me. I have a great group of guys. They are respectful. We BS now and then. I feel they respect me more than the previous chief.

They guys here convinced me to put in for chief. It is hard. It is frustrating. I know for a fact because of what I have been told. The only reason why this is happening because I am a female and he doesn't believe I can handle the job.

Obstacles – sexual harassment – One incident led to an EEOC complaint and that officer being fired. This was the last straw. Wrote the grievance. Sent it. Not putting up with it anymore. I didn't realize it was sexual harassment. Slandering my name, I thought. Me being a supervisor. Makes me look bad. That was my mentality.

It has happened. It has been around. Had female officer leave because she didn't like the way they were talking around her. It bothered her. It wasn't toward her.

The guys here, I have known some of them for a long time. I am their supervisor, but they are comfortable enough to BS with me. I tell them sometimes to cool it. It is family and us. They do treat me as one of the guys. They are terrible sometimes in their group chats. That is good because I know they respect me, but comfortable as part of their family.

The officers are younger. I think they are comfortable. 'We can go to her if we need something.' That is a bond that is needed in every department. Proud that I am a female and yet they are willing to trust me like that. I have come a long way.

It has been a hard life. Had neck and knee surgeries. I would be on my own and getting into fights with people. It is a hard world out there. It has gotten worse.

Twins are 11 now. They say mom, just stay home. Don't be a cop no more.

Throughout my years, I have missed a lot of his life. With my job. My son knew and I made time as much as I could. Sometimes it would get me in trouble, because they would need me to come in, but I didn't have a sitter. So, yeah I had a lot of obstacles especially when they were smaller.

When they were younger. I regret it. My oldest son is 21 and now he is saying he wants to be a cop. I told him, there are so many other things you can do to help people. There are so many ugly things I have seen, and I still want to protect him from that. But, I know I can't. told him I would support him in whatever he chooses.

Makes me proud because he wants to be like his mom. But at the same time, I just don't know if that is what I want him to do.

PO#3

– 33 – years in law enforcement – 10 years – various agencies – now a police officer.

Family – history – Born in Edinburg grew up in Edinburg.

Mom from ranch in Weslaco - moved to Tampico – where she met my father. And my father was in the Army. They got married and came here. Mom was a housewife for most of her life. My dad served in the military for 27 years. Had a bronze star and cavalry infantry. Four tours in Vietnam. Proud of my dad.

He continued – humble people. Always wanted us to continue our education, especially bilingual because it would one day help out in careers. It was instilled in us since little kids. He worked at Aviation in McAllen. Then worked for Immigration. Every day he would drive from McAllen to Brownsville. Not sure how many years. After that he retired he was still working. He was a very hard worker. Pretty much said he can't stay home. Have to continue working. If you sit down, you are going to get old and sick.

He ended up working for HEB. When he came from Tampico, he moved to Harlingen with his mom. It was only them. So, I believe she worked for HEB. My dad was born in 1939. My parents are older. Mom born in 1949. Dad passed away a few years back. He loved to talk and became a greeter.

Mom was housewife. Everything we needed, she took care of the house, financial stuff. Kept everything in order. And my dad was the breadwinner of the house. As far as – 4 of us. They are all older than me. Brother has been in law enforcement for 20 years. Different parts of the country and even in Canada. Degree in criminal justice.

Sister- Bachelors and masters in speech pathology. We are very different. Resides in Houston.

Oher sister – she also has her bachelors in speech pathology. She lives in Edinburg.

We are all educated. My dad instilled hard work. Want something ... work at it. You will eventually get there.

Careers and gender roles – there was no Machismo. I know there is a lot of that here in the Valley. I see it at work. It is prevalent. I see it in the communities. Here in my household, female or male, want to go into the Army, he didn't want us to go that route because he went through so much and it came with issues, but it was never that because you are a female, you have to be a teacher or a nurse. That was never in the household. Go to school.

Mom a homemaker – she just always when young, she lived on a ranch. I would ask her, they weren't poor. At one point, he was a maid and then met my father. She doesn't drive. She always finds a way. Went up to 4th or 5th grade and then worked for the lady. When she moved over. They had an apartment. Stay here, I have orders to be in Germany. She didn't know what Vietnam was.

She always wanted to be the one taking care of the home. It wasn't him making her do that. She studied cosmetology and just found it wasn't for her. She said the other day, she thought she could have been a police officer.

Career – ever since I was little, I guess we were always – my dad had a lot of respect for country. That to me, always help someone out. When you are young, you want to help everybody.

When saw my dad go to immigration and my brother to customs. Ever since little, wanted to be in law enforcement. Not an officer, that was one thing I wasn't sure about it. Wanted to be a federal agent. During high school, I started looking at careers. I have always been very goal oriented. Academic. Good student, always trying to achieve more. Get grants to go to school. We weren't rich, but not poor. Didn't want to burden them. Tried to get scholarships. Took a class in law enforcement and did teen court for McAllen PD. Saw that – took part of it being part of a jury. It kind of showed me the consequences of getting in trouble. Want to be part of law enforcement career.

Graduated in 2004 from high school in McAllen – registered at UTRGV. Criminal justice and psychology. Did that in 4 years. Graduated. Dad passed away the last year. Did affect my grades. I needed to finish because he wouldn't be happy if I didn't finish what I started. Then went on to master's program.

Finished in 1-1/2 years, it is supposed to be 2 years.

Right away was applying for places. Wanted to be a Marshall.

Didn't have enough experience. At the beginning, I was hired as a civilian. Was doing CSI stuff. October of 2010. Worked with them. They found out I had a masters. Investigations for the pd. I thought those were only for officers. A really good opportunity. So, I did it. To me you have to learn. Everything is an education. I have always had that thinking.

Did the CSI for 7 years. Pretty much did everything an officer would do. Don't carry a gun, don't arrest and ... would work right with an officer. Partnered up with one.

Carry yourself, work ethic, they determine your success. Do your own thing. Serving warrants, more. Going to autopsies. We were also going got court. I had a lot of fun. If I could do it again, I would ...

Worked in autopsy, it was very interesting, but I wanted to be out in the field. Talking to people and stuff. Came back.

Started to get accepted to DEA and others. Become an officer because pay as an officer is more. Applied, picked and took a job with federal probation just before going into the academy – my

main goal was to work for the feds – hard to get in – 700 applied and only 7 were selected in the USA. That was like, wow.

They are in charge of supervising felons - once they get out – process to integrate them back in. once they get out of the halfway house, they have to meet with the probation officer. You need to know everything about them, who they are with, etc.

Family reaction to career choice – I know my dad would be proud. My brother would always be helpful, telling me about agencies hiring. I have always been very independent. I get that from my parents. Can't depend on everybody. My sisters respect what I have chosen to do, but for them it is different and is hard because of the officer getting families. Hits close to home. Another officer. They have always been very supportive, but they say to be careful. They are very proud of me. My mom, whatever you want to do, I am not going to tell you no or try to stop you. I know it kind of does - I am her daughter. She knows I am strong, and I love my career.

Hispanic culture – describe – as far as calls, there are a lot of domestics. Poverty out in the rural areas. Here there are a lot of programs and they get help. Sometimes I get calls – parents not very responsible for their children. The way I was raised, there are some things, how are you a parent. There are cases of abused, negligence. There is a lot of abuse as well. A lot of people are scared of disciplining their children. That is a big thing here. I think it is cultural. But I think it is kind of everybody. Scared of what the child will say at school. If I spank them. If you overdo it, then it is abuse. But there is a lot of abuse of women. I feel a lot of women – I am not sure because not exposed to see whether it is more prevalent or not in other cultures. Overall, there is a mixture and a lot of domestic violence overall. We see it more because we see the Machismo. There are men who get abused but they don't report it. I see a lot of domestic violence.

Mom or dad said I just need to find a man to take care of me and pay my bills and everything. That is Machismo culture coming through. That is bad. I am not perfect, and every time I heard it, I talk to them and tell them they can do so much better. You can change. Just because they tell you, it doesn't mean you have to be like them. You can break that cycle and be better than them. When they see a female officer, it's kind of – they get more emotional. Even men. A lot of men, they cry because I talk to them bluntly, but with respect. That is what I hear a lot about. Very professional. Bluntly. But with respect.

That is what my parents instilled in me.

I think of a man as being, the norm for them. It comes. They have to be the tough one. It is like we are playing a role. If it is calm, it is calm. If a call there's chaos, you become a little more authoritative. Some might curse, some in other character that they usually don't do to fit that voice. Officer safety type of thing. We have each other's back and can't be lackadaisical. It is just like playing a role. The way I see it.

Other areas in the valley, they have used it for their authority. We are trying to be the good ones.

Relationships with fellow males – not to toot my horn, but they respect me because of past experience and a lot of years of experience. The way I carry myself at calls, they sometimes say ‘wow and I would have never thought to say this or that.’ We have that motherly instinct. They do respect me. Have those moments.

They are supposed to send two officers to each call. I usually don’t ask for assistance because I carry myself really well. If I have to call for backup, they know something is not right.

As a female – I think not so much, treated differently. I think they see me as one of the guys. I think it is more with some people, the ranks or if they have a little bit of jealousy. Or envious. Due to education or experience. Some people are like that. When I came back, the people from ranks, said how stupid I was for coming back. Our benefits are nothing compared to the federals. My main thing is I am happy.

Some people are just rude, you know. She said you will get used to it – mom said. To this day, I don’t go around flaunting degrees. Or where I have worked.

I think it goes with if you are a rookie and don’t have any experience, they see the way you react. If it becomes an issue where another officer has to take care of you too, it becomes an issue. Risking your life and you have to protect someone else who should be able to handle themselves. I see that with some females. I try to help them. Sometimes they don’t like it or get upset about it.

Obstacles to overcome – since overachiever, everybody knows me, that I did all this.

I think – My back injury was a big obstacle for me. Did have surgery. Right now, have other problems, but going strong. I guess some people are envious. I see it in our community of Hispanics. Instead of getting the good job, keep going, being positive. Some are envious and they say why did you apply there, or why did you go there, etc. I think I have overcome that. I don’t pay attention to that anymore. That was a big thing in the beginning. Due to having education. I would also see it as a female. I guess a male sees it as they should be better than the female. Now females have done so much. Furthering education. It becomes a competition within the positions within in any department or career.

Like SWAT – there are some females in SWAT out there. There are some positions that I want to do before I move up the ladder. I am a female in law enforcement and have overcome. That is just another goal.

Obstacles right now – myself not. If you are not learning

Always been a person to help. Push yourself physically and mentally. Passed my exam and physical that was a big obstacle and best day.

Benefits of being a woman in law enforcement – One of the benefits is we have that mothering and ability to nurture. Sometimes men just don't want to talk to another guy. The Machismo type of thing. They are not there to fight with them, but they are agitated. The majority of times they say want to talk to your partner, I want to talk to her.

You have to be a good listener. You wear a lot of hats. Paramedics, officers giving first aid. Psychiatrists, counselors. They just want you to hear them. Because they can't talk with their partners.

Sometimes the men are macho and they say they don't want to talk to you, and they will call you a name.

Disrespect? – Honestly, I don't mean to show off, but a lot of people, they freak out because a lot of people respect me. It is how you treat them. Being on patrol in the field, something could be messed up, you may not have gone through that, but, gang members, etc.

Don't look down upon them.

Other female officers how they are treated? Depends on the female. There are different ones, but there are professional ones and others that want to wear a uniform and badge, etc. there are some females that feel- it comes back to – depends on work ethic. If I see something, if you are a female officer, it doesn't matter if not. The males are wanting to take care of the females. But we don't pay attention to male or female, it is more about how you handle yourself. My question is are you going to have my back ... not whether male or female. I think that stigma a lot of people look at it. Because she is a female she can't do it. The way I see it is how you carry yourself at each call. How professional and if you have my back. That is where the respect comes.

At the end of the day, wear all brothers and sisters. I am there for you.

South side – Tex-Mex and the north side is very different. I work on the south side.

Live by different standards.

Different world out there on the streets. Can't learn that in school.

Plans for a family – has that been hindered? Yes, it has. I honestly never wanted to get married or have children. That was me. I don't have patience for kids. People say I have patience for all those others. I think I could do an awesome job as a mom, but not really. I think it has affected me as a female. I am very goal oriented and focused on career. I don't have as many goals now. I have achieved several.

The men feel intimidated. Educated female. She probably has more courage than I have.

It has become a competition. They may not see it but that is what it is.

I haven't found the one yet. That is a main issue. A lot of people think I am married.

When you work in law enforcement, some friends may not want to hang out with you anymore. It is different. Hours, shifts changes, scheduling. Can't really go out as much. Stay home more because everything going on. You start hanging out with your law enforcement families and their wives and husbands. It is very different. It is a culture within itself. Law enforcement.

Single mothers – there is a high divorce rate in law enforcement. That is a topic too. Another topic is suicide and PTSD.

PO #4

age -37 – 3 years - before that a high school teacher

Family – upbringing – Born and raised – in Laredo. Have an older sister. Mother retired teacher and principal – retired. Single mother.

Home life – she worked a lot. We were at school we got older and went to school. No male role model in the home.

Gender roles – in careers – no never felt. She had an open mind.

Career – how got to into law enforcement – When I was younger, going to college. National guard. I met my spouse. We got married young at like 23. Moved to Brownsville. When finished, moved to Brownsville and loved it. I needed a stable job and teaching, I tried it. With background. Fell into teaching. Did that for almost 10 years. By that time, we had house and 3 kids. By fifth year, was bored with teaching, it never was something I felt I wanted to do. For a while I loved it, but then I didn't want to just keep doing it because I needed a job or insurance or like the days or summers off. I was not happy. So, I quit my job and opened a small business. Did that for about 3 years.

I had taken police exam when in my early 20s and hadn't passed it. So that was just something to try. I thought to try again hadn't really gone for it. Wanted to really try it. There were like 400 people. And they took top 12 scores. Every time, I got further, I was getting more excited. In the end, they hired five of us. So, it was very exciting. Every day I have been very happy. Like what I do. That is how I ended up getting into this area.

My kids are supportive, and my husband works overseas. It is something I enjoy.

What do you like about police work – on patrol. Here are so many aspects of law enforcement. So many different directions you can go. You can try to be a part of. K9, SWAT, sex crimes, CSI, I am very drawn to patrol and felt it is the backbone to the department. It is different every day. Some of the calls are the same, but the people are different. I like being a first responder.

Dealing with issues. Making quick decisions, authority to arrest and that is taken very seriously. You want to make sure you exercise sound judgement. You see so many things, go into homes. Everybody has issues and we have to step in and help.

At the end of the day, I punch out and I go home. I don't take it home with me. I don't talk about the calls. Have had tough ones. My personal attitude in life, if I am not happy. I quit. I give it all up. If I am not happy or enjoying it, I am done.

Reaction from people about her career change – I am not married and not very social. My close family, they knew my personality. But the people I left behind who I worked with at the school, they were surprised. How could you give up at that schedule and have holidays off and summers? They don't feel the way I feel. They don't understand. I told them there are many people in employment. I work with teachers who are unhappy who just stay because they are close to retirement or need the insurance, or whatever. They teach in a manner they are not happy with the kids and the kids aren't happy. I would not forgive myself for being that person. So, my coworkers were most surprised.

Military background – male dominated – they like the structure, not the uniform to wear, but the uniformity. Because you all look the same. There are little things military background, some of chain of command have impressive resumes. How speak to you and presence. They enjoy that vs. other things. Everybody is different.

Experienced – obstacles – women in male dominated – in my work wise as an employee, I haven't. I keep standards high for myself like my physical fitness. My appearance, demeanor. Work hard at them. I think when those things are on point, your employer doesn't see male or female. They see this person is squared away. I myself, haven't.

If you go to a call and you have a suspect, they may feel like this is female, I'm not scared of her. They may feel like that. They see that. We have a lot of training and tools on our belt.

Disrespect? – I have had the opposite. They say they feel more comfortable talking to a female. Have been called out of the field to do that. But they wished to speak with a female. That was both men and women. Maybe they think they can open up more to a woman or they are more understanding.

I have had disrespectful situations. They call you all kinds of names, lesbian, because a female. They see my male partner and they won't be so mouthy with him. I am very calm person. Let them say what they want to say.

Comments – you don't belong here. My partners and fellow officers back me up. I am just quiet ... it takes a lot to get me.

Hispanic culture – Machismo- It doesn't exist as much as it used to. But there definitely still is a large percentage of domestic issues. Male on female violence, it is bigger in this area. depends on the area. Machismo is more prevalent in some areas than others. Sometimes you go to the same house 2 or 3 times in a month. She will refuse to move out. That goes back to the women feeling inferior, it is not as much as it's perceived on TV, but it still exists.

Never had an issue – I have this one male. Arrested him twice. He is very aggressive with only females. Violent with women. He threatened her. He had never really been punished. Went to his house – he didn't let me in. he was verbally abusive and the wife, he was telling her to record. Tried to get him outside. Started to place him under arrest. My male partner said nothing,

He was very disrespectful. As soon as my partner started moving toward him and addressing him, he changed ... suddenly, it was "yes sir, yes sir, etc." I talked to the wife and she said he was like that.

In the car, he was the most disrespectful, calling me a cunt, and on and on.

A couple of months later, on a shift, I find them in the parking lot. He saw me and said "not you. What the fuck." Turns out he was drunk – he was arrested for public intoxication, fucking bitch, what the fuck do you want,

As soon as the male comes over, he says, "yes, sir" and is abiding by that officer.

He is so disrespectful to females, but as soon as a man got in his face it was different. That is real Machismo. Only to females. Does it exist, yes, why, I don't know.

A woman in law enforcement – In my department, they don't see you as a female. You don't get judged. You don't want to be the officer that nobody wants to be assigned with.

Your work ethic defines your personality around here. They don't see us as male or female. Sometimes they ask for us, taking precautions, won't let all females in one area. You are an officer or a sister. Nobody says anything. Your work ethic defines your character.

Obstacles – not as an employee. Never been turned down for something I applied for simply because of my sex or gender. I have never had that happen that I know of. As a female, they look at the entire package when deciding. I have never had a problem at work.

3 kids – is that an obstacle – the way I see it, it is tough, and I just want my kids to see that they can do whatever they want to do. Whatever they feel. I don't want them to feel pressured to conform to a norm because and have that shape their ideology. They can do whatever they

want to. Their careers are based on their passions. There are sacrifices that I won't be home, or I won't make it to that event. But I have gone to many performances, so I never beat myself up for my career choice because I don't see my kids. I never make myself feel bad. My kids have never expressed any – mom, you are never here. To them, it is normal. It is part of who we are.

I don't feel the need to conform to please anybody. Other than myself. I do what I can when I can. That is how I feel about that.

Obstacles – physically, emotionally, etc. – I think being more emotional is a benefit. A while back, my department had specialized units. EOD teams, etc. bicycle patrol. So out of those specialized, they had an opening. They asked if I wanted to be a part of it. I turned it down, didn't have enough time on patrol yet. Wanted more time on the streets to learn. Then, commander, he was part of the explosive teams, they asked me if I wanted to apply. I was chosen. Part of that for quite some time. That was very physically demanding 90 pounds suit in the heat. They were excited to have a different perspective. They said females bring in a different view of things than men because of that emotion. They were pleased with that. Have friends from other specialized teams to join them. Try out because some have never had a female. These departments encourage women.

I am trying to get the young female officers to know there are so many opportunities and ways to distinguish yourself as a female. Because you are a female. So, I want them to know that and follow areas where they can excel.

Only one female sergeant right now. She is encouraging other females everybody is all for it, and positive. 6th largest department in Texas – about 10 to 15 percent women in the department.

How can that improve? – Starts with people applying. Goes back to mentality of female don't apply because they are scared. They want to stay home. The mentality. I am all for having as many. The young ones are impressed with the uniform. You tell them, hey, you can do this too. I believe in you. The mentality. There are always one or two,

Some comments – on FB – standards are lowered for the females. That mentality is still there but is minimal. Thinking – you get what you want because you are a female. It could be favoritism. It was something that I requested. It is because of this or because you are a girl.

They don't have what it takes to do this. They do it to the males too. Not just against females. They make them – jealousy.

Other women – I am super optimistic and super positive. Hardly anything bothers me.

Most of the women, they are happy to come to work. It hits everyone differently. We don't see each other very much. A lot of it goes back to your outlook and perspective.

Some of it goes back to chain of command. If you quit, they are extremely hard. If you can't handle pressure, it is not for you. This will really test your emotional, your self-worth. You get put on the stand and your decisions as a first responder get ripped in front of the jury. If you can't even pick yourself up. You could cost your partner their life. There are a lot of issues.

Have friends who work federal – pretty sure, fraternizing is everywhere. In every work. I don't take part in that. I do my shift and then I leave. The most I talk about work after work is if my partner is calling me about a case. Other than that, ... learned the hard way my first-year teaching, worked for a poor school – saw so attached to students and felt like a mom and spent my paycheck on them. They didn't have shoes or clothes. My husband told me I had to detach; you are not their parent. You have your own family. That is work.

Mom being abused by son. I arrested him. He had never been arrested. He always gets off. They were thankful that I did that. After that, I wanted to go check on her. Make sure she didn't go back. They told me I can't. that I should detach. You're a patrol officer and you did your job. You had other calls. You can't get attached. I get home, if there is something amazing that happened I will share it just little things. My kids want to know what happened. I tell them little things. That time is over, and it is time for homework and family time, etc.. My husband is deployed 9 months a year so when he is home, it is family time. But I think women take this home. When they deal with my calls, involve a child being raped, they have to do the whole thing. It is very tough as a mother to hear. They cannot go home and shut this off. That is why they are stressed. As a patrol officer, I am done, and I am going home. I finished what I could and going home. I can't go home and dwell on it. But sure, for detectives it is very stressful. This is what works for me.

I think it goes a long way. Stand by that. Went to a call and this guy was stranded. Myself and this other officer. There was an officer that wasn't in shape. You gain weight the first year, you are eating a lot and it is stressful. I said we can just push this car to the sidewalk. He said, you aren't strong enough. I said just put it into neutral and steer. We pushed it onto the sidewalk, and he said 'wow.'

Common aspect that you see in Hispanic community. You are weak. Then you show them, if you can show them, that you aren't or that you will arrest them. I am just as trained as the men. That goes a long way. I tell my daughter and other female partners, if you really take care of yourself on a personal level. Mental healthy, physical health, you will go a long way in any career. Being a mom and a working mom, men have no idea how much resilience a woman has. Or her body has. Without any words, take care of yourself and family. That has helped me in the long run in any career aspect. Physical fitness started at 30, I used to be skinny and weak. That goes a long way in the aspect so the career.

Uniform is heavy. The belt is heavy, the vest is heavy. It is tough.

PO #5

38 – 18 years in law enforcement, including police - 15 years of patrol – 2 as dispatch

Family – What I can recall as a little girl – my mom was working at a factory – she would be part of the assembly line for sewing. Grew up in a one parent home until I was 10. During first 10 years, my biological father was in and out of my life for the first 10 years. When I turned 5 years old. He was arrested. And to date, he is still incarcerated. Grew up in Las Lipas (South Pharr) – because of environment. It wasn't good for us. When my mom had us.

I was 10 and sister 5 when moved to Donna. She dated and met my dad. He is my dad. Once he moved in with us, he helped support up. Then, grew up in two parent home and moved out when I was 30.

Gender roles – It was really at the time, there were no gender roles for us. My mom's experience with biological father, she said don't depend on a man because you don't know when you will or won't have one. Do things on your own. She taught us how to change tires, change oil, little things that we could do on our own. My house was dominated by females. My mom, there are four of us, me, three sisters and my dad was the only man in the house.

The only expectation family put on us was they expected us to graduate from high school. Of course, they wanted us to go to college, but if we did, we would have to pay for it on our own. I am the oldest, only one who left home for college for two years. It was hard, not used to being without parents. Managed to get my associates and came back home. Beeville – Coastal College.

Interest in law enforcement - I don't know. I really don't know where it came about. When I was a sophomore in high school, wanted to do law enforcement. DEA. Probably because of where grew up, that was where my heart was set. Go into criminal justice. Got a scholarship to go to the school as a senior in high school. That was why I was able to go to college. It paid for it.

Academy – the college I went to in Beeville very law enforcement oriented. Going through the steps. Becoming Police officer – then detective. It was very police focused. That was when I knew I wanted to be a cop.

Reaction – nobody really liked it because of the dangers. Got lucky, both parents supported me 100 percent of the way. Whether they liked it or not.

Machismo culture growing up? I want to say yes and no. no because my mom taught us how to be independent and do things on our own. For ourselves and not expect these things to be done by men.

But, then yes, because at the time very close to cousin and they are all boys. They were very protective of me. That is where the machismo, the protective males – we are all within 4 years of each other. The tis where the machismo- they wanted to be the hero and the protectors.

Machismo culture – that is not how I would describe a Machismo culture, but that was as Machismo as it got.

Describe Machismo – Your traditional I would see as always being male dominant. The male is in control, always make the decisions, rules. Tell women what we have to do. Women being dependent on a man physically, emotionally, financially. That is how I would describe your typical Machismo.

Does it exist today? Sadly, yes. And because I have seen it in my line of work. Not saying it like that is sad that she has to go through that. I am married and I believe my husband is the man of the house and he has the say so to make the final decision. I am fortunate my husband allows me to do things.

I have seen where households with a lot of Machismo. Women aren't even allowed to give their opinion unless she is given permission.

Story – this family who was living in that situation. The husband just left for the mistress. He left his wife and family with the house, but she has no money to pay the bills, buy food. She has no way to provide means for the children.

On a call? Reaction from men? It really depends on the situation at hand. Because believe it or not, as the younger generation and things are changing. Through the years of experience, there are men who try to talk down to us because we are female and depending on the situation, have had men respond to me with all full respect and then you have others who try to because you are a woman.

I think it is because you are a female. Have seen a male officer back me up, they change. They don't talk down to me anymore. It is completely different

Machismo changing? For the Machismo attitude – it has decreased. I think it is now more disrespect toward law enforcement. Not just a female thing.

Interaction with fellow male officers? As ugly as it sounds, it is a relationship you really can't explain. You are in a male-dominated career and facility, a lot of it is guys joking around. My husband calls it sexual harassment. One we have to prove ourselves to them. We can be the ones to file sexual harassment or tell people he was saying this or that. But being in male dominated career, we have to work hard or harder than they do so we can earn their trust, knowing that 100 percent we will be there to back them up. We still have to stand our ground, or it is disrespect. Walk a very, very, fine line.

Obstacles? A lot of it is more about proving ourselves. We have to prove we are strong enough physically, mentally and emotionally. One thing, as women, I say I am just as strong as a man is. But in reality, we all know I am not going to be as strong as a guy. I will not be able to do everything he does. But I will always try my best and hold my own. That is something that is one of the hardest things to prove. I can't prove it by telling you, you actually have to do it. That is how you show your worth and dedication and strong, let the men know we are in this with you to the fullest extent. Just because we are female doesn't mean we are the weakest link. At the same time, we are kind of that mama bear figure.

Obstacle affects – I don't know how to explain. Husband says it is respect ... you are just a bitch. You always are looking at people and you are profiling. Unfortunately, it is true. Never thought about it – everything you see. You no longer sympathize with everyone. You grow emotionally cold. You really do. After 15 years of doing this, what our portion of the world is about. You become emotionally cold and it is hard to sympathize and empathize. You grow emotionless.

To succeed in this job, you have to. It is changing now with the community policing aspects. That is a recent evolution. It is something you have to learn. The way it is when entered. It is part of your job. Emotionless.

I think it is harder for us to do that because men are supposed to be the stronger ones. The ones that don't get phased versus the female weaker link, the one that can't handle it all. Harder for us in that aspect.

Most difficult obstacle – toughest part is earning respect and proving yourself. Sadly, in this job, just because we work together doesn't mean we can trust one another. It is hard for women because we are not as strong.

Do you have to prove yourself even more? The way it is now, it is both ways. Millennial personality. We have to be careful what we say and do. We don't know these rookies and females. Both of you all have to prove to us. The way they are coming into our career. It is very delicate because everyone is very offended with what we do and what we say and how the men joke around ... the thing we say, the jokes that are made. So, it is both men and women coming into this career choice. Have to try very hard, but we notice they don't. It is a job to them.

Obstacles affected? Yes. They have. When I came into the force, like 18 years ago, dispatch was in the same building. We had a lot of contact with the officers. It was where everything starts. It prepares you for everything.

The language, the joking, got a little tougher. Now, you are one of the guys and have to deal with that a little more. Going back to back then, they were a lot harder with us. They would make you prove yourself through fights. Teach you how to use presence better, mental state, grasp and learn from everybody. The way I was taught made me a stronger person. Has taught me how to prove myself. They know I will get down and dirty. But, also as a supervisor, I have to sit back and watch them and teach them how to do things better. Force our mentality on them but have to be sensitive to them because they get offended. they say you can't talk to them that way. We have to show them how to stand our ground and take charge, but keep in mind their needs and how they talk.

Supervisor – October 4 years as a sergeant.

When promoted? Reaction? Right now, have another female lieutenant and another at sergeant. I was pushed by two captains and husband. They were pushing me to test so I could promote. Because they knew the type of worker I was. If something had to get done it would. I guess they saw the leader in me. When I tested and promoted, I got a good response.

Any issues – with leading – one officer causes a problem, borderline two. Has shown some attitude. I am his immediate supervisor and he hasn't shown much resistance. I do have another one, not on my crew. Whatever he has to turn in, I am in charge of him for a moment. On several occasions I have talked to him about his reports. He said it is always been done that way. He said he wouldn't change. I tell him how it needs to be done. He argues with me. Three or four times, sitting in the supervisor office and other I a male supervisor., he says you need to do it like this and this which was the way I said to. He turns and oh, yeah, you are right, and he does it. He is one of the old school. Older than me kind of things. He is the only one I have had issues.

Why no issue the people around us, I am up there with everybody who has been there. In the department 18 years, many from 15 to 18 years. There are a lot of 8, 5, 3, there is not much reason with seniority and because I am a supervisor, they don't resist too much.

Benefits women bring – Something we bring is sensitivity, our means of understanding. Helping them with females – a lot of it is our natural sentiments to nurture. It is so weird, we still have that nurturing, we have to act like the men. We have to. Us girls are worse than the guys, it is a rapport we have to go through.

Reaction to obstacles – I am that type of person - very driven. Don't tell me that I can't do this. I will surpass the limits. That is what has gotten me where I am at. I will show that I can and will. Especially coming in, I was 23. At the time, the youngest one. They would say I was just a pup. You have to. Kind of survival of the fittest. Throw you in and that is the way you are going to learn.

PO #6

Age – 51 – Started in 1992 – police officer – now supervisor

I guess I wanted revenge. I was a battered wife. Domestic. Ex-husband broke my jaw, ribs, it was horrible, just horrible. And I was very submissive all my life.

Family – upbringing – type that you married him; you have to take it. Grew up with a single mom. She had daughters no boys. Very close knit. Mom was mom and dad; she was a very strong woman. Never yelled at us, but just the look of disappointment was all it took.

Grew up in San Benito – mother from Mexico. Father is a horrible person. Don't like to talk about him.

Very loving and supportive family. First of all, my family, police officer. Nobody took me seriously. Nah, you will never amount – you are too short, you are a girl – they said this to me when I was in the academy – cousins and other family members. Uncles, everybody.

Machismo - it is something I had to ignore and on my own find a way to be determined and – show my ex that you are not going to mess with me. Even after being divorced, he was harassing me. Calling, I was very determined.

My mom told me I could do it, but she said police are treated you worse than what your husband treated you. I told her; I can take that from anybody. She believed in me. The day I graduated; she was so happy. It is hard because my roots are all Hispanic, true, true, true, Hispanic people and the mentality is the wife and women are property. That is the way my ex-husband was. You are not going to wear this, and he was so controlling. I always had a mind of my own. Athletic type, you tell me I couldn't bat, or pitch and I did it. But I couldn't get past the controlling thing he had over me until I ended up in the hospital.

Why chose him – I was young when got married. We were secretly married. My mom didn't really like him very much. I know I should have listened to her. I was 19 and he was 22.

I had wanted to go to college after high school but ended up getting married and he wouldn't let me go to college. He said you graduated from high school, that is all you need. I would say but no, I want to do stuff. I wanted to further my education.

I can't say I loved him. Maybe the thought, you graduate from high school and you get married. It was another step to take. We got married with a judge. Went to convenience store run by a judge.

I told my mom. She was devastated. She said she wanted to be there. I ended up staying with her mom. Felt bad about. I was working at Levi's inspector ... she told me he wasn't going to let me work. I said I was working now. Why I married him, I don't know.

1992 – I had it. I was in the hospital. I couldn't tell her what happened to me. I was on top of the house and I fell. She didn't know. I think we were married 2 or 3 years; he was a full-blown alcoholic. I didn't know because we weren't living together. He was snorting cocaine. I didn't know any of those things. I didn't know what cocaine was. It got worse as time went on. It was too much.

I kept on thinking about paybacks. I knew someday, I wanted to arrest him. To have that, I couldn't arrest him for all the things he did to me, but I could arrest him for catching him doing something. Here I am, in academy, mom so happy. He called looking for me, we were divorced.

He tells her, all those times he beat me, she really deserved it. What, you laid a hand on her? Why didn't you tell me? You told me I chose him, and I had to take that. That's what you chose, and you have to pay the price. She told him that is the last time you call this house.

About 1994 or 1995 – he used to live in the projects. For a fight in progress. It was him beating up on a woman, his girlfriend or wife. Aww hell, I got you motherfucker. Get there and the sergeant says you can't. I said, look at her. He said you can't arrest him. It will be conflict of interest. You can't arrest him. All these years, the academy and everything and I can't arrest him? The sergeant did it for me. I watched it.

He saw me, he said – WTF, he was so rude to me. He knew I was an officer. When I got divorced, I didn't know you could ask to have maiden name back. So, I still had his last name on my uniform. He said ... don't forget you are wearing my last name and this and that. He wound up getting arrested and convicted.

Later on, I found he had 5 or 6 DWIs ... I am glad I got out. Initially, I had to fight that cousins and others in that Machismo – they stopped talking to me for a while. They do now. But, then, she is a cop. I had to deal with that. Also had to deal with the PD – started in SB in 1994 – was the only woman. I had – the obstacles gone through. Initially, sworn in – protecting my community. Get there and the major, I walk in one day, wearing a little purse, have feminine things in there. Finish the meeting and they say I have to go in and talk to the major. Scared wondering what I did.

He tells me, young lady, in this police department, officers don't wear purses. You need to keep your purse at home. You can't wear a purse on duty, I said I wasn't wearing it on duty, just. Had some products. He throws a wallet at me and says, all you need is a wallet, ID and police license and PD credentials to be a police officer. I can't bring a purse. No. I don't want to see you with a purse. Had tampons in my uniform pocket.

Back then, men and women had to share bathrooms. Had very limited time to do your business. I requested a little box with a lock and put my feminine stuff in there. They gave me a box, but one of the officers breaks into box, all the tampons and pads, were put all over the bathroom. I

had been there about 3 years when that happened. I was still being that Machismo thing ... she shouldn't have a badge. She shouldn't have that authority. That type of mentality.

The way I saw it and took it, they were testing me. That was what I was thinking. If I can't handle those issues, how am I going to handle the issues outside. I didn't do anything. I just took it.

Time went by and had to deal with a lot of sexual harassment. If you go out with me, you will become a detective. I said I wanted to be in the streets. Constant flowers and things and I am glad I never - they are idiots how they approach women.

I just told myself if I give in, this guy will tell this guy, and this guy. These guys talk explicitly about their encounters. I didn't want to be part of that. When I would walk out of rooms, I was told, he talked about me etc. I didn't trust anybody. The ones I talked to, they wanted to go out with me.

I just think they are testing me. They want to see the tough person that I am. As they found out I wasn't going to give in, they had bids on who was going to bang you first. I can't believe these assholes. They would be real nice and try to take care of you. I said forget that, I take care of things on my own, I have already. I just wouldn't give in. It hurt, because they didn't take me seriously. I was told I looked very nice and attractive in my uniform and they wouldn't take me seriously. Went through a phase – shaved my hair to look unappealing. I started getting women who were interested. But I learned at first – really – prisoner women I would arrest. When I shaved head, my best friend – called me GI Jane. Now, everybody calls me that.

Better over the years? I would say now, in these years, in the 2000s, they have learned how to conceal it better. They don't verbalize it. When all that happening with the bathrooms, I rushed in to go to the bathroom, but had a pending call, sat in urine. Complaint made to city manager. They came down regarding a female bathroom. Had three bathrooms. One for dispatchers, one for brass and one for officers. To me it mattered to have my own bathroom. Finally, city manager gives order – designate women's bathroom. I was allowed to use the dispatcher's bathroom. The guys would say ... now you have your own bathroom. I took a picture of it. As time went by, I was still getting treated.

I wound up marrying a fellow officer – we kept it a secret – 19 years. It was awesome working together. But, they found out and they moved us. Got pregnant. Not allowed to take time off. I was 8 months pregnant and still patrolling and chasing bad guys. At graveyards, I would take off my shoes. Would be barefoot and when a call, I would park and put my shoes on.

They wouldn't give a maternity uniform. This is about 17 years ago.

Things have slowly, slowly changed. I am kind of the -if something happens and something was wrong, the guys would say (name removed by researcher) rules. Policies would change based on issues coming up because of being a woman. Hired two women 6 to 7 years ago.

Arresting a Hispanic male – one from Mexico – they aren't going to be arrested by a chick. I call in someone else. They won't be arrested. Having to deal with that. The administrators, the guys.

Has it hindered your career – I feel like as a woman police officer, strong, independent beliefs knowing that women can accomplish anything because I have lived it. So many obstacles, so

many things. I overcame it all. I am telling my daughter if you let it get to you. I have seen a lot of things, suffered anxiety, PTSD, you have to keep your mind straight. Anything you don't see or observe, it comes to your life.

For the rest of your life, men are going to be this way. Regardless. You are going to have to deal with it. Learn when and when not to choose your battles. What is going to make a difference. I feel like I have made a difference. When they built the new PD, they gave us new bathrooms and locker rooms. How far it has come. They knew it was an issue and I am glad we have a more co-ed type of department. That we have gotten over it. Some of the guys, that I knew early in the career, they support me.

Just 2 years ago, beat up really bad. Looked like a boxer. Guy overpowered me. It was horrible.

Husband saw me and said you need to retire. I told him he needed to retire. We have been in the same amount of time. I looked at my face, I looked like the elephant man. I told him, sooner or later. We need to put daughter through college before I retire. He is one of the guys I trusted when going through everything. I didn't want to report it because I ... glad I stood my ground.

I have noticed in bigger departments; women are actually heard more. They pay more attention, but in smaller departments, they bring them down and don't believe in what we can do and our abilities. They just shoot them down. I know women going through that now.

Describe – Hispanic – machismo culture – It does exist. But I think we are not where we are supposed to be. We could be in a better situation where the Latino culture – it doesn't matter, but it is still on the backburner. You still go to calls and get the types; it depends on the individual. Every household is different with different beliefs, so nowadays, I feel like it is controlled. It is still there, but not as bad as it used to be 15 to 17 years ago.

Being a woman in law enforcement – I bring like the nurturing type and understanding, compassion. I think I can talk to people at a better level. When they see women in law enforcement, they think about their mom. Sometimes, now in this day and age, they prefer to talk to women. Especially with battered women I seem to relate to them. They tell me things. That is where compassion and understanding and being a survivor. I tell them I was in their situation years ago. I was submissive, mad, scared, everything. you don't have to be that way. There is a better way of living than this type of household where you don't have a voice. I feel like I bring that. They understand so they open up. I think I have an advantage. 90 percent of the time the perpetrators are men beating on women. They don't want to talk to a woman. It is minimized, I wish it would completely, but I wish it would.

Obstacles – affected on a daily basis – I have to when I am at work. I tell my daughter; I have two personalities. I have GI Jane and I feel I have to initially; I have to show that authority. When off duty, I will – see a commercial and I will cry. I have to – once off the clock. I am a mother and grandma. When on duty those 8 hours, I don't even address my husband as my husband. He is just a sergeant. You have to be professional. Because I am a supervisor and have to show that

with them. I would want them to see the squishy girly girl. They know when I am there, I am there. I will call you on it or counsel.

Now, it is pure respect. I have earned respect. You have to have different. I can't interact with my family members during a parade or something. I have to keep it separate.

Let's say I pull someone over and treat them like their kid. They are going to take advantage of anything they can to get away with it. if you go and show authority. That is different. You have to remain assertive.

Taking on supervisor positions- started as a patrol – one day there were no supervisors, and I was there in line. They said you are running the ship. Because they saw in me, that I could discipline, going to be fair to everyone. That was in 1998 or 1999 – the reaction – they asked why she was the leader and all these guys are – they saw me as the tender type of person. They have seen me get in a bar fight and chase people. Once in a while, those same guys who were bidding, they would start to compliment something that I did. I finally gained their respect through my work ethics.

I am the president of the union, so I feel like finally it has come – finally we have a woman president. It is pretty awesome. I tell the women, hey, you need to be involved. Make a better union. Officers elect you. They nominate and they vote on you. That tells me that the guys are confident in what I do and my work ethic. It tells me a lot. I had been nominated other years. It was something – when I was elected I couldn't believe it. Didn't know what to do. Was running against department captain.

Title – patrol supervisor. Below captain and lieutenant.. whatever shift I am on; I am the supervisor. I have to go to every call and make sure they are handling the call properly.

I would rather just go to calls and take care of those and people. As a supervisor, you have to review and look things over. The Sergeant looks at it and if something is missing or wrong, it is on me.

Most significant obstacle – I think the most difficult thing is being disciplined for something that a male officer didn't get disciplined for. That is something that is difficult. You know that there is documentation that can sustain that. When I did it, oh my goodness. It is something that is always very difficult. I think it was because I was a woman. I appealed it and I won. If you are going to discipline, you have to discipline the males as well. It happens with me a lot. I think with me it is because they have written policy because of things I have suggested. They changed a building to add a woman's bathroom. The way I see it, to me, I know I am right, you have to prove to me that you are right. Every disciplinary status has been ruled in my favor. Because we have made a point. This affects your career. The worst part is the person handing the disciplinary – has a history of asking you out and sending flower and has that sexual harassment aspect going on.

Sometimes when a female officer does something. I am in uniform and I meet you, Hispanics, when we meet, we hug and kiss on the cheeks, when you say goodbye, same thing. When a male does that to a woman, there is a one perception and when a woman does it to a man, it is a double standard. When we do it, it is perceived as having an affair with the man.

Misinterpreted – horrible had to go through. Why would they think that? It was with a boy who was like my nephew. Best friend's son. Was discipline for that. Because it didn't look right.

I am the keeper of all records – back then, when accused of that, there were two women who came in to file a complaint – he was having an affair with this woman. They did nothing. They brushed her off. But when it came down to me, I was apparently having an affair. I showed them that complain. I was just saying goodbye to this boy. Those are things that are special, being accused of something. The boy was 18 and he had to testify. That was pretty difficult.

I have overcome them. Glad the women coming in, don't have to go through the same things I did. Now have maternity leave and things like that.

Things had to learn and suffer through it, but we learned.

Why so few law enforcement – Nowadays women are smart, and they prefer to go into a safer field with better pay and they have better benefits and programs for school. Etc. If you don't love this type of field it is not of interest versus getting beat up all the time.

It maybe has something to do with the male domination of this profession.

Society still sees women as the minority, weaker and I think in that society, they would prefer someone stronger.

Maybe if more women were in charge, there wouldn't be so many shootings. When women are involved, they try to talk down the subject rather than go the other direction like men do.

PO #7

27 years old – 1 year, but also a jailer – police department

Researchers observations: Tough, strong, energetic, passionate, excited about law enforcement – knowledgeable about jailers – she is funny and entertaining

Family and upbringing – exactly why I joined law enforcement.

Dad side Mexican, mom side Cuban. They actually met through their – both families in the cartel business. They were transporting. Mom's side transporting cocaine to this side of Texas. Dad's side his dad was buying a lot of land in Texas. It's just land. Before I was born.

Dad has big record. Proud of him now. He is a student advisor at UTRGV. From the path he went to it is totally 180. So somehow they met. Through the family and work.

Moms side – oranges and grapefruits and transporting that way. Help us help you, etc. so eventually, mom didn't want to do that anymore. Was pregnant. She got away from it. DEA – they came to the house and told us to stop. Sometimes they would take away the horses and goats. They went through a lot. Cops – grandpa was incarcerated many times. Eventually I learned that wasn't what I wanted to do. Saw dad less and less and mom was having to go to school and work full time. It was hard for her. Two kids and try to stay on the right path. She graduated with a CJ major. It was hard for her to pursue something in that. She did 2 years in National Guard. Stayed with grandma for a long time. Dad was incarcerated. Mom really, really, really did try.

After grandpa was murdered for a drug deal gone bad, the family business started to go away. A lot of blood loss. It was 1997. So about 2nd grade. At that time, I didn't understand what was going on. Someone bad did it. Didn't tell me much. Later figured out what the family business was. I didn't want anything to do with that. There were still some family members doing it. I wanted to be better than that. It was not a good lifestyle. I saw parts of it growing up.

When got in high school, dad got his life together. He went back to college. Got his degree.

Sometimes parents would lose custody of us. Went to state and foster care. Grandma couldn't always get us, too. I didn't want that for my children. Foster homes, last one was recruiter.

Is it going to help me – Alpha female – you want a better future. Get custody of your sister. Federal job, she is responsible. Joined the Marines. I was 17. They had to sign off. Then I was gone.

Gender roles - My dad was all about work, work, work. Both of us male and female.

At the bottom but work and bust your ass to move up. Not Machismo.

Adamant about no drugs. It was his shame. We also had abuse and avoid it. There was abuse. One of those things, you don't want that for you.

It made me numb. Scared to spank her. I didn't like it, don't want to do it to her. Also, will go over the top sometimes. Need to back off a little bit. Certain areas, I assume she can handle it, but she's just a kid.

In the military - communications – set up wherever. The female engagement teams. At that time, females weren't able to join the grunts. Learned the Muslim culture – beliefs and after 6 months, harder than boot camp. Tired, hungry. It is male dominant and always trying to prove, better faster stronger. Eventually you learn and engage with the females there and bring that information back.

I like engaging with people. At that time married. This is my second marriage. He went to Afghanistan, came back a different person. It was hard to talk to him again. Meet him on a one-to-one base. He was a different person.

Plan was to do DEA – like engaging with people. In the office and out. Major in criminal justice. Got along with them. Returned to Texas to have family help.

Worked at Juvenile Detention Center. – there were cases in there, abused beat up, drugs. I remember the girls, they wanted to be like you one day. That was initiation. I wanted to do law enforcement. That was my calling. Living in Donna going to SB. Hen going to school in Edinburg.

Uncle was a jailer – at Weslaco PD. Interview on a Thursday and started on Monday. Only female – only jailer. The others were officers, but they said, you were a marine. You have proved yourself. Ever since then, law enforcement my calling. Let me do things as a jailer that typically officers do.

Had a raid in Weslaco and I was allowed to bring them in. female or not, I have proved myself worthy. They said, yes, one was a female. A lot of the older generation males. Sometimes had other female girly girl – they try to get out of things. That makes the rest of us look bad.

You can run, you can chase, you can pat down.

Some of the other females were girly. Never had a female jailer that willing to get their hands dirty. Had to overcome that. We did the raid for the gambling casino – there were 40 arrests. I really liked it. Sometimes you would get cocaine and sometimes you don't.

Strip searched this woman – wasn't having any of it. I said, I was told to strip search you and that is what I am going to do. She said OK, let's go. I said. Bring it. She eventually had her spread her cheeks. Pop a squat so if anything in you. I could see something. eventually pulled out and handed me this flashlight. Yanked it out and handed to me. And said you want to eat this too. Hu ha. The flashlight had crack in it.

He couldn't believe I pulled that out of her. I said I didn't, she did.

I enjoyed this and it was exciting. That is when I decided it was what I wanted to do.

Response from family – my uncle the border patrol and he reinforced the behavior. He will tell you, I used to be on that side of the fence. I had to help and didn't have a choice, but you have a choice and you have a path. It is a good thing to go into the Marines. We didn't want you to go. But you had no choice. You are very strong to go on your own. You made a path, not only as a person, but as a female.

In our family culture, where you stay at home and do what your husband tell you. You are very home bodied.

When I came back, I knew I needed to do something with financial security, keep me out of bad light, keep me off path used to be. It has been good.

Father wasn't ready to be a grandpa – he said .. you are doing so well on your own. You didn't need a man; you didn't need to get married. You are that female that can do better by yourself. You didn't need that. I found somebody and fell in love. He just didn't like it. Also didn't like I kept having to book in family members. They kept calling him to see if I would help. What can Leslie do? There's nothing I could go.

I booked them in, DWI, assault, even booked in my own mother. That was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. Hadn't spoken to her in years. She didn't know I had gone into the marines, she found out where working and she kept showing up. Asking for me.

Found cocaine on her. It got so bad to book her in, we had to notify assistant chief. He saw the video – nobody should go through that. I was booking other people in at the same time. He said handled it well. It was a crazy day.

Attitude toward her - For a female – you can throw down, you are good. I was the only female on the shift. That is how much they trusted. Me.

No matter how chaotic at the end of the day, it is what you want to do.

Grandma didn't want me to be in law enforcement because she said it wasn't the female thing to do. But you have already done everything a male can do and I can't stop you.

My aunt was telling you – family of 18 and the wives stayed at home and cooked, husband goes to work. That is the way it is supposed to be. I feel proud, I have a little sister, she is working 3 or 4 jobs to make ends meet. Have had to detain her and bail her out.

Break the cycle - I want to say she wants to play the victim card. You have the choice to get out. takes a lot of guts and sometimes cry, you have to push through, or you are going to end up on the same path. I can't help you anymore. Do everything I can. If it wasn't mom, it was dad.

Left Weslaco – applied to DPS and Edinburg PD- McAllen – April 10, 2016 and left April 10, 2017 – had to go on and go to the Police Academy – for McAllen. Was there until August and unfortunately, I failed two of the tests. By 1 question and 2 questions.

Wes really happy and knew what I wanted to do. I came back to civilian world.

I am going to try again and finish my degree. Too much going on at the time. Not a lot that I missed it by. A lot of things. Maybe didn't study the way I should have. Was a good cadet, leadership skills, etc. not afraid to get dirty. You are great.

It hurt for a month. I felt I was a loser. Literally left my daughter with my grandmother for a month.

I was conceited when I came to Texas. I felt invincible. Felt like that in the academy. When I hit, I am kind of happy it happened because it jumbled me. I am nobody. Chill. It made me closer to my family too.

It was an, it doesn't hurt to ask. Had the jailer experience.

Relationships with other males – a quick connection. At first. They would say ... a female .. no. I would say, like no, bitch. Because of the military. They break you.

OBSTACLES – you have to stand your ground. You can't ... perception is everything. You can't be seen by yourself with a male officer talking. What are you talking about ... he's married... we were talking about work. Little things like that. You have to remind yourself that no matter where you are, it is so popular here where males are taught the man is in charge. Even in law enforcement, they have the mentality.

HOW OVERCOME - She is one of best friends now. She is a sergeant. When first met her. I showed up to work in a bun, no makeup. See these long lashes and bright green fingernails and makeup. I was thinking no way. Earrings. At that time, I didn't know she was a community officer. Which is what they want. See the chief and walking toward him and he said something like why don't you do your hair like the jailer. I thought it was a compliment. She did hers straight and ... she said well I am not a marine. I took it as a negative. I said good, because my sergeants never painted their nails green. The assistant chief starts laughing. Since you brought that up, h said your nails and eyelashes are in violation.

I was so cocky at that time. I wouldn't want you to be in charge of me. He said never met someone witty and strong and quick.

Very tomboy, that is just who you are. I wear makeup. But females who dress and express themselves girly, oh, she can't do that. That didn't help, the longer I worked there, the more stories I heard about – passes off work because she is pretty. She asses off her work. That is why it is hard for females in law enforcement. I would tell her; you are a shitty officer.

It's not about a badge. It's not about a pretty uniform. It is about making sure the person to the left and right of you get home safe. Cause there are random shootings. There are all kinds of people on drugs coming in.

If you don't carry yourself as a strong, Alpha female, you are going to get walked on. Especially in a Machismo central area where men are raised that they are better than females. So, you are either one of the guys or you are female. And you have to be stern and firm about everything. It is what it is and that is it.

OBSTACLES – I think the hardest obstacle was proving to family that I could do law enforcement ... that I could be a mom and do law enforcement. Grandma, why can't you be a teacher or a

nurse. I want to be a good example for my daughter. She said work was always going to come first, you would always be on call.

Do you want me to sell drugs or be a stripper? She said why can't you just go to college. Apply for housing? No, pride. Not going to do that. Proving to them to do the job in law enforcement. Couldn't wait to go to work. 12-hour shift. I liked it.

I loved going home and feeling like I did something good. Especially coming from that background. Liked that I was contributing to society.

If you act too girly, it causes trouble. Some put themselves into limelight that they don't need to be in that.

HISPANIC CULTURE - Very male dominant. Stepdad is a recruiter. He is Hispanic. His wife is white. He doesn't everything, he goes on hundreds of deployments just to make ends meet. He said you take care of kids and the house. When she asks him for help, he says no, I am bringing home the bacon. Very male dominant. Why it is that way, I don't know.

The shiny color badge makes it worse because they realize they have more power, more control. Leniency toward them. Officers get in trouble and it just brushed off. There are things that are what it is. You stay clean and just do your thing. Ignore it.

Machismo toward me – I think they have accepted me. There's always someone military around and they say, she is a Marine. Give her a chance. You will see. Some women were treated differently. I think they targeted the prettier, feminine ones. Try getting her drunk after work. The prettier they are the more they stand out. the other women, they would talk about. It didn't help that some put themselves in that predicament. If a male does it, why is it more acceptable. Keep love life on the low. I learned that in the marine corps. Pretty ones, everybody had her.

Just the way you carry yourself is the main thing.

Benefits – qualities – why good women are in the field – set a good example for daughter. Want to be a good role model for my daughter. She was strict but was good. Be a good influence on other females. Some have said, they need more females like me.

OBSTACLES - Missing picking your daughter going to events. Wow it means the world to her. Is it worth it? Did things happen for a reason. K, X, L and M. the money is great once you move up. But you are never home. You are always on call. If you aren't somebody messed up that you are in charge of. Then you have to go and take care of it.

See their character and family drama and how one wants to move higher than the other. You are not only competing against each other for spots, but also keeping friendships. A lot of men

down here, the women are at home. You and I have the same job. Why can't I have a beer after work. There are a lot of family things to deal with it.

You kind of have to choose between family and career.

Men in the department telling you, you can't do that. – one detective said women get complacent because of that. Taught whatever a male says, you are going to do. These females feel threatened and only feel that they are good enough or patrol. I am only good enough for community. I am only good enough for that.

PO #8 - 37 – 19 years in law enforcement

My sister was hiring at the Sheriff's department. Had gotten out of school. Noticed the Machismo then. I had just graduated. I was wearing a skirt and sandals in the valley. The only time I could go was after class. I went there and there was an older secretary there. Came by to pick up an app. It was 1 page. As I was walking out, she stopped me and said they wanted to speak to me right away. OK ... like an interview. I said I wasn't even ready. It was a long room and table and chairs – chief deputy, two investigators. They were all there – all men. About 7 of them. Didn't even know the job, whether qualified, nothing. I am sitting there looking at all these men. Just graduated in 1999 and I like law enforcement. Did criminal justice in high school. Helped out with the police department doing communications. They said OK. I just got back from school, at Pan Am for criminal justice. They asked if I could start tomorrow.

I can but working night shift at the convenience store. I could feel the looks up and down. I was young. 120 pounds. They did nothing. There was no paper to read. They were looking for a position in dispatch. I did feel weird. This was foot into law enforcement. I started the next day at 5 p.m. I was told come in and the dispatch sergeant will help. Or you can work the jail. I did that.

Hired in 2000 and pregnant in 2002. Married daughter's father in 2003 and in 2004 had another daughter. Then he and I were both in law enforcement. That is how we met. I stayed there until 2007 as a dispatcher.

I could tell law enforcement I was not aware – women are like prey. To anyone who walks in. they look and are interested in anybody. From what I see, any woman. I used to have officers tell me things and I would say I am married; he didn't care. Other officers would say this guy couldn't wait to finish a call so he could sit with me in dispatch. There are females who don't care, and they go along with it.

I think this is overall and it is not just law enforcement. I have always had the mentality that term, I do care what people think about me. I do care if they -sometimes have to force myself to be mean so they would stay away from me.

My husband was sleeping with an officer from his department. I did change and was not going to let them tell me what to do. I went to academy. I became an officer. I decided I couldn't be in

this relationship. We divorced about 2016. It is very easy to cheat. It is the badge; I have that power. If you need anything, I am here. I used to have women call and ask for the guys to come over. They would come back with cookies and stuff. You can be strong.

You go to the academy to be a patrol officer. Put me with the guy serving warrants. Stayed with him because of the hours, etc. help him with the courts. I started in 2007 and was assigned to him. He introduced me to all the judges and everybody. He was Monday to Friday 7 to 3 weekends and holidays off. I had kids. I just started; most police officers don't get that.

There are a lot of women who are just like men they aren't all – there are men who treat you like a woman and they don't mean disrespect. They aren't trying to get in your pants.

Just stayed on with the courts. In 2009, he tells me they want him to be Lieutenant. About 2 years later, he was going to quit. People told me he was a womanizer. I had a mija relationship with him. He was old enough to be my father, but people thought.

Thought I might get my boss position. I was making 27K as a deputy. Maybe get this raise.

They gave it to the other guy while I was on vacation and gave the raise. They gave him a made-up title. I was so upset. So mad. Nobody told me anything. I was really upset. I just noticed that guy ended up being the sheriff's right-hand man.

If they wanted Thanksgiving or to decorate, it was me. Giveaways, etc. for Halloween and representing the sheriff's department.

There were times that I was called the sheriff's pet. I dealt with a lot of that. I said I didn't do anything.

Pick up inmates all over. When walk in nobody.

I joined martial arts after an incident. We can't compare to a man's punch or a man's hold. After that struggle in 2010. I love it. It is my passion. Kung Fu, kick boxing, tai chi. I am going to be smart, but if we are going to fight, I am going to go down fighting. Being alert. I made that decision. I chose it.

Sheriff hires someone with a degree and I respect that. But not the way to go about it is point at it when I walk in the room and say I am smarter than everybody else because I have that. Didn't ask how to handle things, just came in and dictated. My job is to protect the judge. "You're supposed to protect" bailiff. Yeah, but she's short. Have black belt in martial arts. My job is to protect, be alert and I can hold my own. That is all I need to know. I love the job.

I have had men test me. If you are going to start barking in my face. Start bringing them into the cell and left. I have had others tell me they can't get these jailers to listen. For a long time, I had that respect from the inmate. They like to test you. Glad I have that respect. I deal with that with the men. Had to deal with men who don't even want to talk to me.

Judge pushed for 10K for. Sheriff didn't want to pay that. So, I was defeated. I didn't get the raise. Well, she got 5K.

Upbringing – 19 years

Parents and family all lived together. Migrants. Born in Michigan and they would go back and forth. Caravans during the winter season. Younger sister. Machismo back then I would see it my mom – dad's coming, make sure that cup of tea is ready and the tortillas and salsa and whatever he was going to eat is there. I love my dad. My mom worked helping migrants find jobs. She had an office. Back then, my mom making 2K to 3K per month in the 1980s. that was high at that a time.

Dad would come home making \$800 every two weeks. Mom had to be dressed nice meeting with people and he didn't like that. He allowed her to work. But he did not like it. Sometimes she would be home late. Had her own car. I would be ta the office with her. Hear her talking to people. Helping them. I remember those things. Her radio and Gloria Estefan.

We would go back and forth. In 1990, we stayed after grandma passed away. Back then, cheating they still stayed together. Dad did it to mom. And it was like, I am mad at him. I always went with my dad and she hated it, but I didn't know it.

He started dating someone – Isabel was cleaning house, didn't have food and not clothes.

Mom came to Texas – there was physical abuse and we just dealt with it. Under the rug.

My mom went through so much. My dad then left, and we didn't hear anything from him – 13 years old. During that period. His girlfriend would call the house and tell my mom what he was doing for her and her kids. We went with him and there would be McDonalds toys in the back, and they weren't for us. Because we didn't go anywhere. My mom filed for divorce. My job was to look after my sister. I didn't trust men because of that. My mom had a goiter removed. I was going into seventh grade. If we wanted food, the owner put it on a charge for us. He would have stuff for us.

Here, they wanted her to have a degree. After radiation she can't be around anyone. So here I am in sixth grade rocking my 5-month old brother to sleep having to get up in the morning. Aunt would make food and put it by my mom's door, and she would just grab it because she couldn't be around anyone.

So, I always had to take care of them. My dad came back and they got remarried and it was like nothing. At 16, I had to find a job.

Gender roles – I did the man roles when my dad wasn't there. I cut the grass. At night, I would be out checking the fence line to make sure nobody was getting in. made sure the doors were locked. That was my role. Dad always a farm worker until he found a job with the oil rigs. My mom is an at home mom. I told her I didn't think I could do what she did. I have seen the pattern of the men in the oil rigs. They are gone for so long. They come back and are tired of –

they get here, and you have a list of things for them to do. They say every time they come home; they have to do this stuff. There are arguments.

Law enforcement – when mom was pregnant with my brother, he would hit her stomach. Sometimes we didn't have electricity. She didn't have the money. He wasn't giving her child support. I remember seeing that. I am 16 or 17, dating, older, helping out the PD and going to college. His girlfriend was outside ... My dad got upset and wanted to go after my mom. He went toward her, so I get between them and tell him "You are never going to fucking touch her again and if you do, I will have you arrested like that because I know people." He gave me a look that I will never forget. Since that day, my dad has never looked at me the same, but he respects me. My mom even said it. Your dad respects you.

He doesn't respect anybody. It took for me to do that. This happens in my home; it happens in many homes and there are daughters where they don't have anyone to talk to. She wants to be that person. It is not right to live like that. You have options. Anything can happen in seconds. It could have been different.

Reaction of family – They were really surprised. Only one in law enforcement in the entire family. Nobody is. First in the family. They are really proud of me. My dad brags to his friends, my mom tells me, but he hasn't. He just won't tell me.

Hispanic culture – Machismo- I see it exists. It is just more modernized. I see it – cups waiting for dad for food. Now, I see it – getting WIC and food stamps so get this for me. I am the man of this house; we are here because of me. I can't interfere. You are the woman; you are supposed to be at home.

I see it in my sister and the younger generation. Kind of like dad, but more modernized. I see drinking, which is another thing my dad did. It is the same thing. Repeating the same pattern dealing with mom. He comes home and you all go out to eat every day. Daily duties at home. Spending money and then at the loans. See it somewhat similar. You don't do nothing, here all day. He won't talk that way in front of me. I have gone to houses, see beer cans all over walking up the walkway. He barbecues and is the man as long as he is home, he is not doing anything. There is no more wanting to progress from that. Want to be with someone who supports you.

See the male gender role - I am the man. it is how you treat people. I have heard, I'm here and don't want to go home to wife because she will nag. I pay the bills so I will go home when I want.

I am right here and given you 19 years. Done everything. these people just allow in.

I was good enough to be hired on the spot.

Obstacles – overcome the respect that I wanted. I can walk into a room and I am not looked at like she isn't going to do anything. When I get calls or looked for, it is because I have the respect. I have men who come and ask me questions or advice. I have the respect. I had to build that. You can't come and say – you have to use different skills. It is not to impress guys; it is about doing the job. When you talk, you have to know what you are talking about. I can talk to them.

Work family separate from social media unless I have really connected with me.

Address the woman first so they don't think I am trying to get their man.

Respond yes sir, yes maam. Martial arts did that to me. You are all the same to me.

Have had to do that to prevent ... I am not here to get a man and I am not here to use the power most men do. I have seen it. Isabel's a bitch or making it really clear.

Most difficult obstacle – I think a lot of men don't want to hear women talk back to them because of the Machismo. So, we have to find a way to talk to men, but men have to find a way to talk to women that is right.

One thing I don't do is tell personal life. They don't know much about me. These people come and go. You don't know how long they will be there.

Reaction to the obstacles – they have changed me. Made me grow. Made me know that I had them and tougher in job. It happened for a reason. Open up your eyes. My whole life in this small county. We don't have traffic; we are small department in a poor area. I think it has changed me to grow. Because I tell my mom a lot of things. She says I am bitter. Hurt, upset, freaked out, disappointed. But I am happy when do the job. Being in an environment that I have been overlooked so many times. It has changed me. It's always something. Gave the new guy a raise.

Try to overcome. Overlooked for promotion 4 times. They make up titles for other people.

It stresses me out. kids see it, family sees it. I am not as happy as I was. Don't attend cookouts anymore.

This department hasn't been hit with change. Am I the one to do it. It is not that I don't know how to do my job. I have reached my limit. I have changed in a different way.

I help people. My dad and the pressure growing up and my husband. He broke me too. I was pregnant with my daughter. When I found out he was cheating.

The day you had your daughter, he went to see her to tell her he wouldn't be able to see her for a while.

I called him on it, and it was the last time he called me Babe.

3 months later, we were separated. He was in an accident – he has been pinned. Trying to get him out. he was still alive. I was numb. Get there, 50 to 100 units out there. Helicopters. I didn't go near him. I was numb. He broke both bones waist. Could not walk for a year. Mom said you

go home and take care of your husband. Taking care of a man you hate. Had to suck it up. I didn't sleep in a bed for a year.

21 years old this time. I did everything. I had to suck it up. Put up with so much stuff. Deal with it.

Forced to feel like I am nothing and I know I am something.

The things dealt with it has been to break me.

If I see you on the side of the road, I will stop. I will help. If I see you walking. I just have to help you. I think of battered women, human trafficking, you just never know.

I don't blame anybody, and I don't regret anything. I just believe that everything that has happened has helped me be where I am at and I am here for a reason.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lisa M. Seiser, a native of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, received a master's degree in communication from the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley in 2019. She received her Bachelor of Science back in 1995 from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, following receipt of a general studies associates degree from the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha in 1993. With a major in journalism, focused on print and a coaching minor from Whitewater, she went on to spend nearly 25 years in the newspaper industry as a reporter and later the top editor of newspapers in three different states during a 14-year span of time, including her latest stint for four years as Editor of the Valley Morning Star in Harlingen, Texas. She spent seven years as the editor of the Lake Geneva Regional News in Wisconsin and then three years as the editor of the Daily Union in Junction City, Kansas. She has received numerous first-place reporting and writing awards in all three states. She also was enlisted in the United States Army Reserves, receiving several awards and being honorably discharged in 2000.

In 2017, Seiser decided to embark on a goal of obtaining her master's degree in communication with the ultimate desire to become a lecturer teaching undergraduate classes in journalism, such as reporting, copy editing, and other communication courses related to journalism and writing.

Now residing at 8321 Lago Drive, in Harlingen, Seiser is currently working as a grant consultant for Educational Research Institute in Harlingen. There, she writes grants for nonprofit organizations, evaluates training sessions and evaluates grants and writes reports that will be submitted to the granting agencies or foundations.