

## Interview with Linda

I'm a cop. So? Been out here, I don't know, a year or so. Love it. All of it? No, no one loves their job all the time. I've been challenged, of course. Do I want my boss' job? I'm not going to answer that.

Interesting, you bet. We meet all kinds of people out here in Point Reyes.

What made me turn to police work? Order, I guess. Safety. Keeping a watch over people. I'm good at it. I take care of my mom. For about five years now. She's got – yes, she's been diagnosed, but no, she wouldn't like me putting her business out here in front of everybody, if you know what I mean. She's not deteriorating, not much anyway, and let me tell you, we're both glad for that. Relaxed and happy, pretty much. I could say you could ask her, but she's a shy one.

Boyfriends? Just how personal is this interview going to be?

I grew up in Indiana and came out here, I don't know, eight years ago or so. I was married then. We wanted to make a clean start. I was in school, yes. Studying police work? No, not then. Sonoma State, yes. And the marriage, you ask? Gone. Husband? Gone.

I was homeless for about a year. He left me high and dry. I went out for a hike on Inverness Ridge. You know the place. Firtop, where you used to be able to see for miles. All you can see now are trees. Came home and he'd cleaned the place out, no furniture, no food, no clothes, no nothing. Now tell me, what would a thirty-year-old man need with a bunch of women's clothes? Nothing. You bet. He did leave me with something: debts. Since we were married, I was responsible. Unfair? You bet. The law? Right again.

It took me two years to get that debt behind me. That'll make you sit up and listen, ten k in the hole, middle of the school year. Yes, I had to drop out. You'd like him – everyone does. But there are people, like me, who know better. Where is he now? I have no idea. Boyfriends, me? Not so much, I'm not interested in girls, if you're asking .

I know the homeless. They don't want for food, around here, anyway. People are generous. I wish they'd leave off the drugs and alcohol. No, I was never tempted. Once I was on my own, there was no way I was going to go down that road.

My parents? Dad, he's an opinionated sort. No, I didn't ask him to help me when I was on the street, and would he had I asked? I wouldn't, so who knows? I got myself into that mess, and I got myself out. That's the right way to live, don't you think?

Dad is an old-fashioned kind of guy, way out of touch with the times. He wanted me to marry a rich man, someone who would take care of me, but that didn't work out so well. Then he wanted me to be somebody, a teacher, a real estate saleslady, not a street cop who carries a gun. He has his worries, as parents do. No matter how many times I show him my paper targets – where I hit the bull's eye six times out of ten – he still thinks I shouldn't mingle with criminals. He's protective. Like my boss Walter. It's annoying.

I used to be softer, kinder. But this job kind of gets under your skin. You ever been pulled over? Of course. Get a little nervous? Of course. Been arrested. No? Good. But that feeling of powerlessness that you feel, when we surround you, command you, or flood you with our lights at night, that's meant to intimidate you, to scare you. So I've become used to having that power – it's edged over into my natural sweet personality. Can't help it. The job grows on you, and into you. It makes you smart though, thinking of everyone as being a criminal. Watching for everyone's next move.

Yes, I've been embarrassed on my job and no, I'm not going to tell you about it. It's in my personnel file, unfortunately. Love to get that purged. Walter says in five years they'll throw that out. Meanwhile, I'm dealing with it. Deborah? I'm busy right now. You get used to everything, you know, even graveyard shifts. Deborah? Palace Market? Again? Sorry, I can't talk anymore. Gotta go.