



Police Women: Life with the Badge

Sandra K. Wells, Betty L. Alt

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It is often said that a woman must do a job twice as well as a man in order to get half the credit. This is particularly true of women in law enforcement. Women have been involved in various forms of policing for the last 100 years, but it wasn't until the Equal Employment Act of 1970 that women could move from the job of meter maids to patrol and detective work. Yet less than 1% of all top-level cops are women, and there remain significant obstacles in the career paths of women in the force. This book looks at the history of women police officers and provides first-hand accounts of women at every level, including those who drop out. It addresses discrimination, competition, lack of mentoring, differential treatment and sexual harrassment, examining what issues play into the decision to stick it out or leave that many policewomen face. It also considers the family issues these women return home to at the end of the day.

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Unlike other treatments of the subject, Alt and Wells show how women have changed police work into a more community-oriented model of policing, reduced police violence, served as a strong force to promote a more effective response to domestic violence within police departments, and helped with community-police relations. With a combination of first-hand accounts, careful research, and lively analysis, the authors are able to convey the actual experiences of women who have made their careers behind the shield.

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