

IGNITE

THE FIRST RESPONDER'S LIFE GUIDE
FEBRUARY 2022 ISSUE NO. 2

COP'S WIFE

Buckshot-
Policing, Coping,
and Outer Space

NO STRANGER
TO GRIEF

Never Give
Up, Never
Back Down

Scarlet Fever Can
Be Dangerous

UNITING FIRST RESPONDER FAMILIES

YOU MATTER!

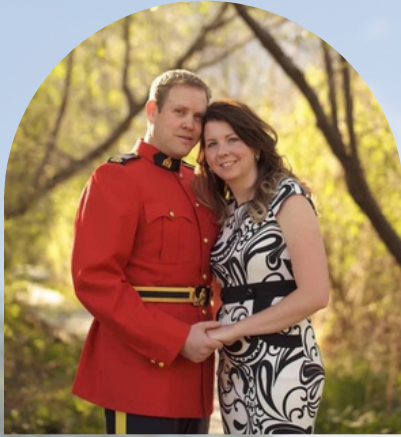
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"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends".

- John 15:13

**JENNIFER MCLEAN**

Jenn is inspired to find the positive and joy with being a police family. Our family has had many ups and downs with this journey, I hope to share some of these stories with my writing. I strongly believe that “mental health matters” and we need to take care of ourselves and others. I hope I can make others smile and laugh, find some joy where we can, and make the most out of this journey.

**Will Gilbert**

I come from a family of mariners and social justice advocates, and I grew up with fifteen siblings, twelve of whom are adopted. I was a carpenter for fourteen years before I joined the RCMP, but I’d reached a point in my previous profession where I wanted to have a job that might be more meaningful than building fancy homes for rich people. It’s up for debate whether I’ve found any more meaning, but the job has been interesting, occasionally fulfilling, and it’s provided a great deal more stability for my family and I than contract work ever did.

POLICE LINE-DO NOT CROSS

**MISSY WORTON**

Missy Maxwell Worton is an award-winning author, speaker, and Coach. She writes across media, not only as an author but also as a film and television writer. Missy speaks on courage, identity, walking in authority and adoption. She is an advocate for the orphan, the unborn, enslaved and trafficked. She is a devoted wife, and deeply invested in the lives of her four children. Missy lives with her family in Franklin, Tennessee .

**CORINNE KLINE**

Constable Corinne Kline was born in Edmonton, Alberta , Canada. She is in her twenty first year of policing with the Edmonton Police Service. Currently she is working as part of the Community Engagement Team. She has three children, is married, and her husband is also a Police Officer, a Staff Sergeant in Crime Scene Investigation Unit.

POLICE LINE - DO NOT CROSS

**BRITTANY KLASSEN**

Brittany is a blogger and a writer who has built a following on making no qualms about who she is. Average. A millennial raised to believe she could achieve anything she wanted, she's found herself knocked-up and washed-up, asking the same questions she had since she was a preteen. Who am I? What do I want to be when I grow up? Am I enough? Was *Nsync really the better boyband?

Married, with three children, anxiety and a book on the way, Brittany will make you laugh as she explores her journey to survive average, and the decision to embrace average as a choice, and not just a consolation prize.

SHATTERED PIECES

BY EDITOR: LORIE GURNETT

Do you know what it feeling like to have the rug pulled out from under you? Or perhaps the wind knocked out of you? Life can be a rollercoaster and can sometimes be very difficult to navigate.

Have you ever dropped a porcelain bowl on the floor? Do you recall how the pieces shatter and scatter? My life has felt like this many times. It is very difficult to clean up all the shattered pieces without cutting yourself, plus if you try to put it back together, it never appears the same. I have learned that when I shatter, it is not my job to pick up the pieces. You see, I need to trust God to pick up those shards of my life and discard the pieces that are no long needed. He is refining me and shaping me. He is the great potter; I am just the clay in His hands.

I have a strong fear of falling, what God has been teaching me is that when the rug is pulled out from

under me and I fall backwards, I no longer need to fear. I am not saying that I don't fear, but that God's protection is greater than my fear. I can fall into His loving arms and trust He is holding me and refining me into something more wonderful than I could ever imagine.

One of my biggest prayers is for God to give me the heart of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the faith of Samuel, the strength of Samson, and the trust of Ruth. I want to become a woman after God's own heart despite the darkness that is threatening to destroy me. He is holding me and He has the victory! I only need to crawl into His loving arms and allow Him to heal me. He is the one who is in control, I only need to trust.

When the shattered pieces of your life scatter, crawl into His lap and allow Him to hold you. He will never give up on you and He is the great protector and creator.

"Its breaking is like that of a potter's vessel that is smashed so ruthlessly that among its fragments not a shard is found with which to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern." - Isaiah 40:14

C O P ' S

W I F E

BY: Jennifer McLean

“Oh, so you’re the cop's wife” is frequently heard by wives of RCMP officers. Even before you have a chance to build an identity away from your spouse’s employment, you are identified as his wife. You could have a spectacular career, be a determined home-schooling mom, or even own a winery (I am just dreaming here) but you are, first and foremost, a cop’s wife to the people you meet. It’s hard to maintain an identity away from your spouse’s career when you married to a man who enforces the law, sometimes even begrudgingly. I was with my spouse for just





"the identity of someone is far greater than the title they have, some of the strongest women I know are just "cop's wives"

over 5 years before he left for Depot, the RCMP training academy in Regina. Our first posting was a community of 9,000 just outside Edmonton, Alberta. I was a young, naïve and VERY pregnant 24-year-old. I had ZERO idea of what it meant or entailed to be a cop's wife or what it would involve to raise "bacon-bits", as police children are often jokingly referred to. Somedays I wish I could go back to being that person.

I remember the first day the reality of our new police life really sunk in. It was an early afternoon and I was rushing around in the chaos of getting 2 young daughters ready and my husband was slowly waking up from a night shift. I was nagging at him, maybe tired from still being up at night nursing, or maybe just typical wife nagging. He sat up in bed and said "Jennifer, I need to tell you something". Anyone

named Jennifer knows when the full name comes out it's usually serious. My husband proceeded to tell me about a domestic situation he had responded to on his night shift. The male occupant in the home drew a knife and my husband had to draw his gun in response. This was the first time he drew his gun aimed at another person and within the grounds to shoot if necessary. The incident was deescalated verbally; however, the psychological impact was done. There are no handbooks for what moments will become catalysts in your spouse's career and what moments you will need to rise to the

"THE MENTAL HEALTH OF A POLICE FAMILY UNIT AS A WHOLE IS OF UPMOST IMPORTANCE, THE DEMANDS OF A POLICE LIFESTYLE WEIGH HEAVILY ON ALL WHO SHARE THE HOME"



occasion
psychologically as a
police wife.

As a police wife, it does
become common to
socially to have to
defend your family life
dynamics. All police
families modify
schedules, routines,
activities to adapt to the
demands of shift work.
A friend once said to me



“well, we have family meals” in response
to the fact my kids were eating a snack
plate supper on that particular night. I am
sure the phrase was self-serving to her, in
the years of young kids it’s easily to want
to compare to others and validate the way
you are doing things. But the comment has
stuck with me to this day. No, we do not fit
into the typical routine of a Monday to
Friday 9-5 family. We don’t always sit down
together for a meal and we “move”
birthdays, holidays, and even Christmas. I
have had to explain that I am not single,
when I showed up to a social event alone. I
have had to defend the fact my husband
cannot consistently volunteer for our
children’s sports or activities due to his

**"SPOUSES AND CHILDREN
OF POLICE OFFICER'S
CARRY SIGNIFICANT
"WEIGHT" BECAUSE OF
THE PRESSURES ON THEM
BOTH PSYCHOLOGICALLY
AND SOCIALLY"**



work schedule. This consistent explaining can be draining to an often already limited social life.

I used to want to shout from the rooftops “I am my own person, not just the cop’s wife”. I wanted to rattle off my education, my career and aspirations, defend the family life I take pride in, talk about my hobbies and passions. I wanted to share all the draining aspects of being a cop’s wife, both psychologically and socially.

Now, I just agree to those who say “Oh, so you’re the cop’s wife”. A subtle smile and a nod, humbly knowing the demands of this title. I know I am so much more than just a cop’s wife. Those that become friends will get to know that. The real close friends will hear about life challenges, the mental health struggles that are experienced by a police family and maybe gain some understanding for “life” we live. The identity of a cop’s wife is so much more than most know, or really that some even care to know about. But I am damn proud it’s part of my identity.

Article by Jennifer McLean



BUCKSHOT- POLICING, COPING, AND OUTER SPACE

Will Gilbert

I shot a deer today. Not for food, or sport. It had been hit by a car, and it was suffering; so, I did what needed to be done. I watched as it stopped breathing and twitching to make sure it didn't need another bullet. This was the fourth or fifth injured deer I've put down. I didn't feel it this time, which was a first. No shaky hands, or hesitation. That was one of the most minor files I dealt with tonight, but it got me thinking none the less. I'm a police officer in a medium sized city on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, so putting down injured animals is part of the job, but only a very small part. We deal with the whole gamut of police files, from neighbour disputes about dog poop and grass clippings to knife fights and shootings.

Occasionally, my wife will tell me that I should see a counsellor, to talk about things. Take a load off. I tell her that I don't need to talk to anyone, because things aren't





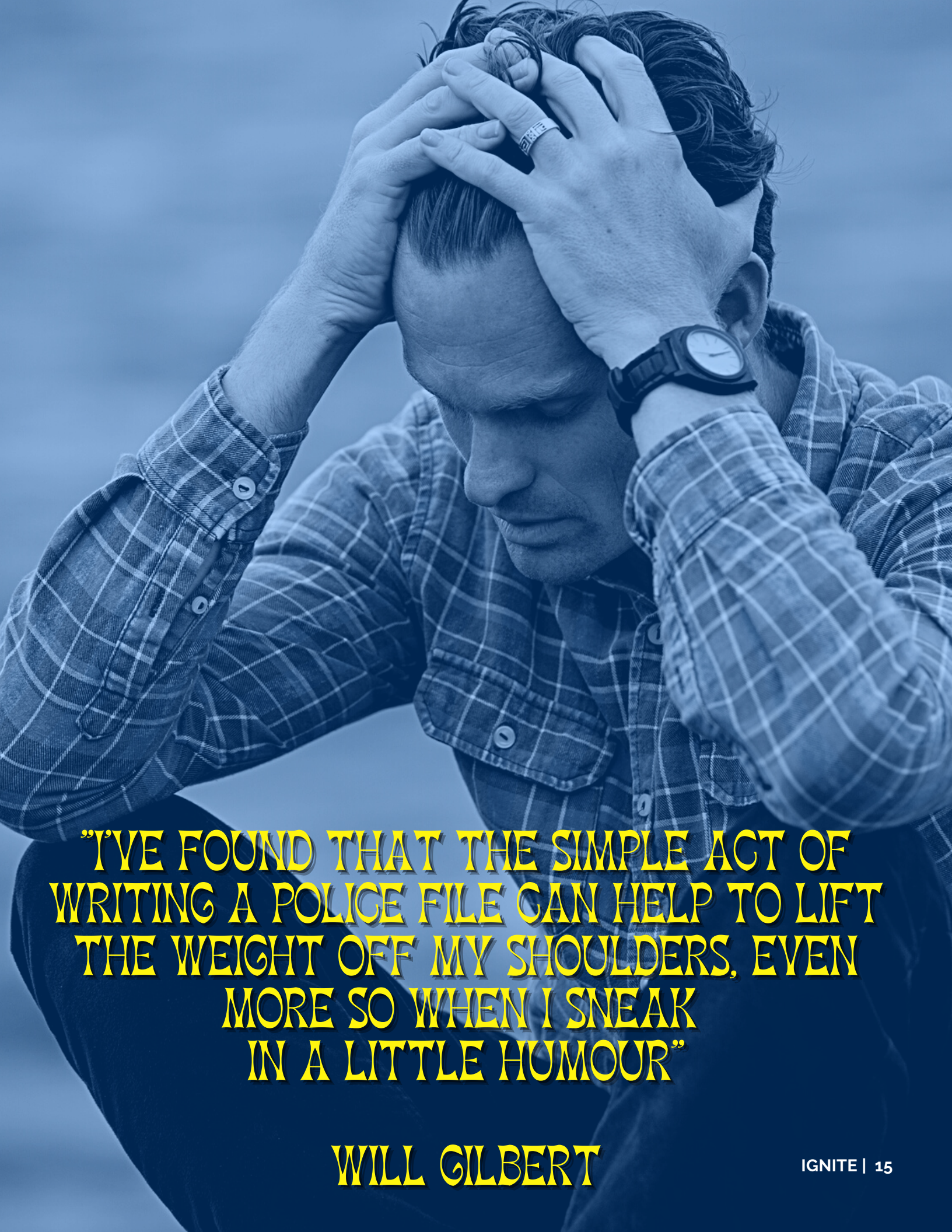
Key Points:

1. Coping with life and work as a Police Officer
2. Family/spousal support
3. Understanding self
4. Resilience

affecting me in an adverse way. I have this nice little compartment I put things in, and I can shrug them off and go home. At least I'm pretty sure I can. I can go deal with a slightly congealed dead person, and do a "next of kin notification" to their loved ones. I can put up with verbal abuse and threats when I try to move along a homeless person who has nowhere else to go, but they still can't stay under the front awning of that business. I can apprehend an addict under the Mental Health Act because he believes that he's a special forces general from the future who is just trying to find his son. But the hospital can't help him with his fixed false beliefs, those are probably there to stay. I can arrest a wretched asshole who assaulted his wife, only to have her take him back the very next day for another round of beatings. I can investigate a break and enter to a small business with the full knowledge that their surveillance is too poor to assist in identifying the culprit for court purposes, even though I know exactly who was responsible. I can try to help a young man who has just been stabbed, only to find out that he was stabbed in retaliation for beating up someone else's girlfriend. I can taser a suicidal man who has a knife to his neck, so that he won't cut his own throat or hurt one of my partners. I can deal with a belligerent drunk who just crashed his truck, but claims that he hasn't had anything to drink in days or years, yet he can't stand or speak clearly, and he's lucky that his dogs are still alive in the back of the truck. I can see the aftermath of car accidents, and roll overs, or industrial accidents, or drunken mistakes; and I see the people who were affected by those events.

I can go into a house to assess the safety of the children who reside there, only to see that the baby's diaper hasn't been changed in hours, and he has several torn open, soiled diapers in his crib with him. And there's shit on his hands, and shit smeared on the walls, and cat shit ground into the carpet, and blood on the door, and bed bugs on the couch, and cocaine on the coffee table where the other child plays, and needles on the floor. And I can make a call to have those children removed from that unsafe place. And I can be called a racist for





"I'VE FOUND THAT THE SIMPLE ACT OF WRITING A POLICE FILE CAN HELP TO LIFT THE WEIGHT OFF MY SHOULDERS, EVEN MORE SO WHEN I SNEAK IN A LITTLE HUMOUR"

WILL GILBERT



trying to help those children. And I can be called an asshole. And I can be told that all cops are bastards. And I can be told that I don't know what love is.

Now I'm not arrogant, or vain, or naive enough to believe that I'm not affected by this job. In fact, I am pretty good at getting introspective. At least sometimes. And it doesn't take a lot of effort to see the things that have changed in the six years since I switched professions. You know what I can't do now? I can't make myself watch drama movies, they bore me or they choke me up. I can't read books about real life. They're not real. Real life is pretty horrific for a lot of people. I can't read police fiction novels or detective novels because most of the time, they're nothing like what we actually deal with. I can't read the news. I see that shit day in and day out. I can expect that pretty much any children's animated movie will make me cry, but damned if I'm not going to watch those ones with my kids. I just sit at the back and try to blink back the tears before one of them looks at me. There are obviously more unfortunate changes that I

see too, usually a little too late. Like after I berate one of my kids for leaving the strainer out of the sink drain so that the drain gets plugged up with greasy food scraps. Or when I give them crap for leaving the hand towel in the bathroom sink instead of hanging it up. These are not big issues, but sometimes my police voice, and a slightly unreasonable amount of anger makes them sound like big issues. I drink more than I used to. I spend entire days being grumpy because of night shifts, and I let my feelings rule the roost a little too often. I don't like being in crowds. I don't like buying used things because they might be stolen, or the sellers might be criminals. I don't trust people.

But, I can also find solace in so many things. I have a wonderful and patient wife, who likes the same things I do. I have three beautiful children who love the outdoors. We have an ocean to explore on our boat with fish to catch and beaches to discover. I have a large, and caring family, and a lot of very good friends. I can read science fiction and fantasy, the more outlandish the better. I can watch movies about space or superheroes. I love 0 British comedy. I listen to a lot of music, and I occasionally play guitar. And I have my writing.

I've found that the simple act of writing a police file can help to lift the weight off my shoulders, even more so when I sneak in a little humour and hope that it'll make it by the reviewers and the supervisors. Sometimes I can even brighten those reviewers' days because they are also expecting dark and depressing shit. I probably write a couple hundred thousand

words a year in police files alone, and I discovered very early on that I love writing stories. Last year, I was at home sick for a couple weeks. My daughter was writing a story for school, and putting an admirable amount of effort into it, and I got thinking that I should take a page out of her book, as it were. I went to space, my favourite place to read about, and started writing. I started writing a story about a couple police officers on a space station, bumbling their way through an

investigation that was out of their league. I kept writing. A lot of days, I wrote five or six thousand words and only stopped because I also had to parent, or eat, or sleep, or go to work. There was such joy in that creative outlet, so much satisfaction in writing a silly story that would likely never go beyond my own computer. I wrote over ninety thousand words in about three months, and realized that I could call it a novel. Not a very good one, but a novel still. So, I started writing a second one, though I



had to pause on that one due to moving and renovating a new home.

I don't expect that either of my stories will ever see the inside of a publishing house, but I'm pretty sure that I was in a healthier mental state during my time sitting on the couch and writing than I've been in several years of living life the normal way. Going on unrealistic adventures with a pair of imaginary detectives who are basically an extension of my own psyche was my catharsis. Space was the place where I could open up the little compartment where I've been storing my shit, and just let it out. I'm not saying that I shouldn't talk to a counsellor. I probably should.

And I'm not saying that I've got all the answers. But, I'm going to keep doing the things that seem to work for me. I'm gonna work to live, not live to work. I'm going to try to think before I bark. I'm going to appreciate the little things, and I'm going to write. Because this job will carve pieces out of your soul as surely as that buckshot carved a hole out of that poor deer's skull.





NO STRANGER TO GRIEF

Missy Worton

I'll never forget, January 21st of 2018. It was around midnight. I was sound asleep when my phone lit up our bedroom. My husband, Mark rushed to pick it up before I could wake up. It was my brother, Steve. He was calling to deliver the unthinkable news that our brother, Paul had passed away earlier that day & his son had just found him.

My heart went to my throat & time seemed to go in slow motion. I couldn't rationalize anything. I kept saying, "I don't understand. I don't understand. Why Paul?" Maybe it had to do with the fact that three months earlier, my three brothers & I had gathered to bury our

beloved mother a little over a year after saying goodbye to our father. My brother's & I figured that we inherited some amazing genes & would probably have the longevity to live into our 90's, just like both our parents. But time is not promised to anyone, & God had a different time table for my brother, Paul.

I've realized something, I am no stranger to grief & quite frankly, grief is an uncomfortable topic to many. I recognize that people have a hard time communicating with individuals who have had such great loss unless they have sat on the front row of a funeral service of someone they love & deeply value. It's okay if people don't understand your pain. Make room for them & forgive them for not responding in the way you needed them too.

Grief expert, David Kessler says, "Love & grief are a package deal. Yes, you can go through loss without grief, but that would mean you have never loved. When you love someone, you will feel the loss."

I don't know about you, but life without love is not an option. When loss comes to your life, whether expected or unexpected we have a choice. We can let loss consume us, or embrace the journey of grief. Which starts by leaning into the pain, remembering why you loved



**“Love & grief are a package deal. Yes, you can go through loss without grief, but that would mean you have never loved. When you love someone, you will feel the loss.”
David Kessler**



that person so deeply, allowing yourself to express your raw emotions, celebrate their life, & continue to move forward with the fingerprint of that person on your life.

Their physical representation may no longer be here, but the spirit of who they are will always live on in the memories that you carry of them. No matter what your belief system is. I personally believe that death is a temporary separation from our loved ones.

Please remember this, there is no time limit to grief. Each person works through their loss at their own pace. I've included a few suggestions that helped me in processing my journey. While this may not be everything that you need to work through your specific experience, I hope that it brings relief & peace to your heart.

12 Powerful Ways To Deal with Grief:

1. Allow yourself to completely feel your loss in a healthy way that help you to process, based on where you are in the pain. (For almost a year I would walk to a nearby river & let the sound of the water going over the rocks sooth my soul, as I wept.)

2. It's important you deal with your pain, not through logic, but learn to express how you feel in creative ways.

(ie..journaling, painting, boxing bag. Create a space to express your current emotion.)

3. Realize that others, until they have experienced great loss of a loved one may not understand what you need, or how to comfort you. Don't take offense. Forgive & don't let offense come into your healing process.

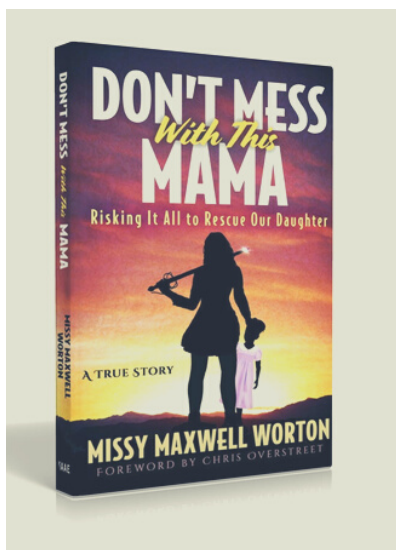
4. Don't be afraid to share with a close support group of friends that you're hurting, need prayer or help in your journey. (No time limit.)

5. Share a story of you & your loved one. A memory that is significant to you. In your journal or with a close friend who understands.

6. Seek out memories that others may have, who knew your loved one, and share. All of you may learn something new about your loved one and most likely, they are hurting too.

7. Be patient & gentle with yourself it takes time to feel normal after a great loss.

8. Self-care is never more important than when you are grieving. Do not be ashamed of doing something for yourself.



9. Remember all the little reasons you loved them. What they stood for, how they impacted your life. Make a memory journal complete with pictures, memories & how they made your life better.

10. Have faith that grieving leads to healing & personal growth. Try to find meaning in your suffering.

11. Be thankful that you had the honor of walking through part of your life, knowing them, being raised by them or raising them.

12. Continue to Live your life in a way that honors the treasure they left in you.





Do you have a hard time believing in yourself or that you can't make a difference?

If you are struggling with who you are, what your purpose in life is, or if you have value, I invite you to go on a journey of self discovery with me. Are you willing to set aside 40 days for transformation? You are worth saving and I want to take you on a study to discover your true self, pull out your inner strengths, and work through hidden fears that may be holding you back.

Sign up for my 40 day Kingdom Identity Course today receive the 40 day course, plus a signed copy of *Treasure Kingdom*.

THE STRUGGLE

- Feeling alone
- Feeling Invisible
- A victim
- Insignificant
- Feeling Fearful
- Lost
- Defeated
- Crushed

THE TRUTH

- Feeling chosen
- Feeling seen
- A victor
- valued
- Feeling courageous
- Focused
- Confident
- Determined

Are you ready to take back control and courageously step forward into who you are created to be?

Sign up today!

<https://www.authorloriegurnett.com/coachingandprograms>

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

-2 Cor. 5:17



NEVER GIVE UP, NEVER BACK DOWN

**CORINNE KLINE,
EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE**

It all started 25 years ago. I did not always want to be a police officer, as I was at the University of Alberta, taking Psychology and Sociology, and I was thinking of getting into the Criminology program. Recent movies such as "Silence of the Lambs", "Seven", and "Copycat" had piqued my interest in all things, serial killers. Canada had our own, Paul Bernardo, Clifford Olson, Robert Pickton, to name a few. I am also very self motivated, so after speaking to one of the Professors at the Criminology program, I was advised to





help with admission into Criminology, I should volunteer with the Criminal Justice System (the Law Courts) or at a Police Station. I chose the latter. In November of 1997, I started volunteering with my future employer. The Edmonton Police Service at the time had community stations around the city, and I volunteered out of Millwoods Community Police Station. I was hooked. I knew from my first day there I was going to be a Police Officer.

I had some hurdles though. Three years prior, I was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis, to the point that my doctor said I was going to be bedridden for life. I've never been one to back down, or give up, so that was probably the best thing she could have done for me. Was it hard? Yes, absolutely especially since I couldn't even hold onto a glass of water with one hand, turn a door knob, or otherwise seemingly easy tasks. My workouts started with Aquafit classes, guess

who was the youngest by about 50 years? But I had to start somewhere, and thankfully I had a wonderful rehabilitation team to help me.

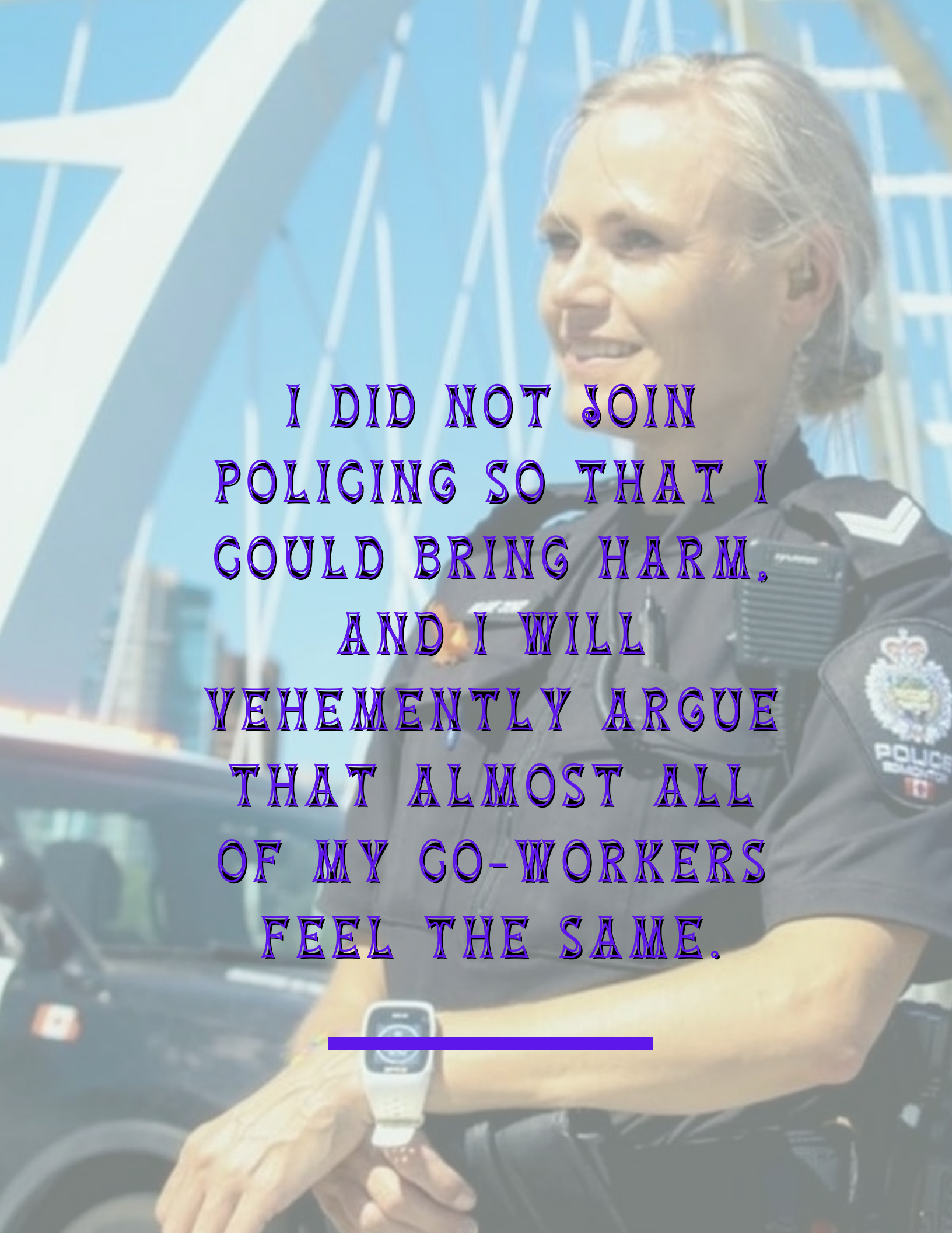
Fast forward to the year 2000. I was no longer in university (another discussion for another time), but instead at Grant MacEwan College (now MacEwan University) in Edmonton, taking the Police and Security Program, Police major. Remember, I'm

"I knew from my first day there I was going to be a Police Officer."

extremely goal driven, so I began the application process to the RCMP, and Calgary Police Service, leaving Edmonton too, April of 2001. One fateful afternoon, members from the EPS Recruit Selection Unit attended our program to, well, recruit. Most people headed over to the Sergeant, but I saw one massive police officer, and chose him to speak to. After filling him in on how far along the recruiting process I was in Calgary, I was told to attend EPS Headquarters the next day for a physical. After passing the physical, recruiting officers then transferred my CPS recruiting file to Edmonton, and in May 2001, I received the phone call I was waiting for "Corinne, welcome to the Edmonton Police Service, you are pre-hired".

A lot has changed since I was hired. Back when I was first hired as a Police Officer at 24, I was never getting married, and never having children, as I am a very independent soul. Now, I am first and foremost a mother of three, a wife, a daughter, and a Police Officer. I do not have just one thing defining me. Don't get me wrong, I love my job, and I love the camaraderie of teams and units that I have worked with. We share bonds that yes, some people outside of policing would not get. Policing has also changed. We are under constant scrutiny. Recent years show just that, with the defund police movement, and ACAB. I did not join policing so that I could bring harm, and I will vehemently argue that almost all of my co-workers feel the same. Yes, there are individuals that become sworn police officers that should not be doing this, as they are not in it for the right reasons. In class, we had to recite our oath, and at the time our motto of "honesty, integrity, and





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accountability", to which rings so true to police officers today.

I've always been a positive person. It is just not in me to see things in any other way.

Recently, one of my coworkers said to me "Corinne, you are the type of person that if your house was on fire, you would say, okay then, lets roast some marshmallows!" He is correct. 100% correct! Don't get me wrong, there are times when things bother me, but I have three children that myself and my husband are raising, so I

pride myself on not complaining, always thinking about the bright side, and realizing that things can and will change at any moment. So, have I had challenges? Yes. Have I overcome them? Yes. Will I continue to have challenges? Yes. We are humankind, we will be faced with some type of adversity. It is how we deal with it that matters.

"IN CLASS, WE HAD TO RECITE OUR OATH, AND AT THE TIME OUR MOTTO OF "HONESTY, INTEGRITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY", TO WHICH RINGS SO TRUE TO POLICE OFFICERS TODAY."



Article by Corinne Klinet

SCARLET FEVER CAN BE DANGEROUS

BRITTANY KLASSEN

In 2013 I wrote a post about surviving the first few years of the RCMP life.

It hit a chord with spouses everywhere- the learning curve of navigating a relationship with a newly minted police officer is universally difficult. The waters aren't just unpredictable, they're treacherous, and sometimes you don't even recognize the boat you left shore on. But I learned as I went that as long as everyone on the boat kept talking, remaining clear on where they were heading, calmer waters were just up ahead.

I knew then I certainly didn't have it all figured out- I still don't. Having been around both successful RCMP marriages, and watching the unnerving ends of others, I saw that my future was not just on the shoulders of the two people who took the vow to be married to each other. Saying 'I do' to a police officer meant being inextricably intertwined with one of us, ALSO swearing to serve and protect. I wrote the last post as my husband started his career in plain clothes units, where he still is now. I didn't know then how this new branch of policing would affect our lives any more than I thought he looked hot in dress clothes with a gun and badge on his belt.

But friends, our boat was about to go from a small raft to a speed boat crammed with three kids, a dog, and the unexpected baggage life throws at you.

I found myself in a whole new chapter of "the RCMP life".

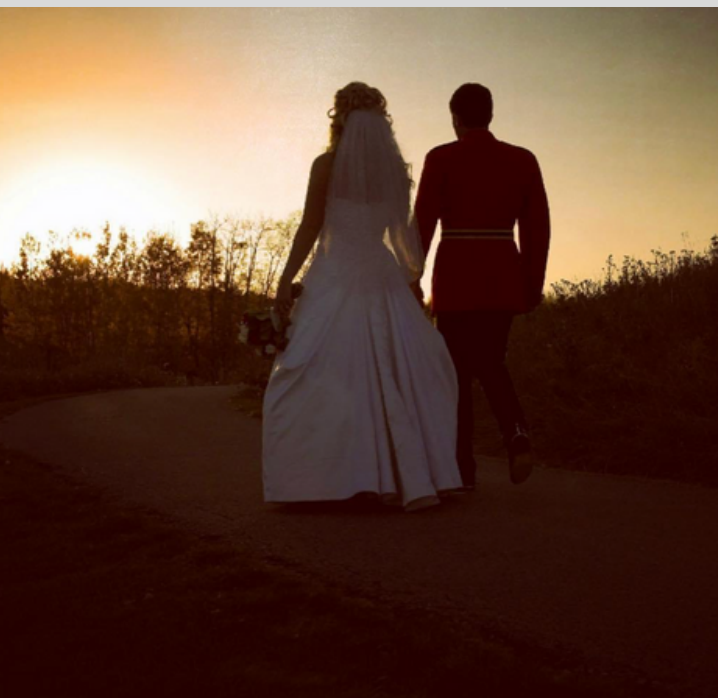


Standing next to any member can sometimes make you feel like you're invisible. We can sometimes feel like a supporting actor in a much more interesting story. Since he began his career, and people found out what they did for a living, it felt like his profession began to define us both. Then... he took a job with Major Crimes.

No one wants to know the cool story behind how you got the lasagna made, the house cleaned AND binged a season on Netflix when you're married to a homicide cop. No.

In a crowd of people that don't know you well (because those that do would never ask) they

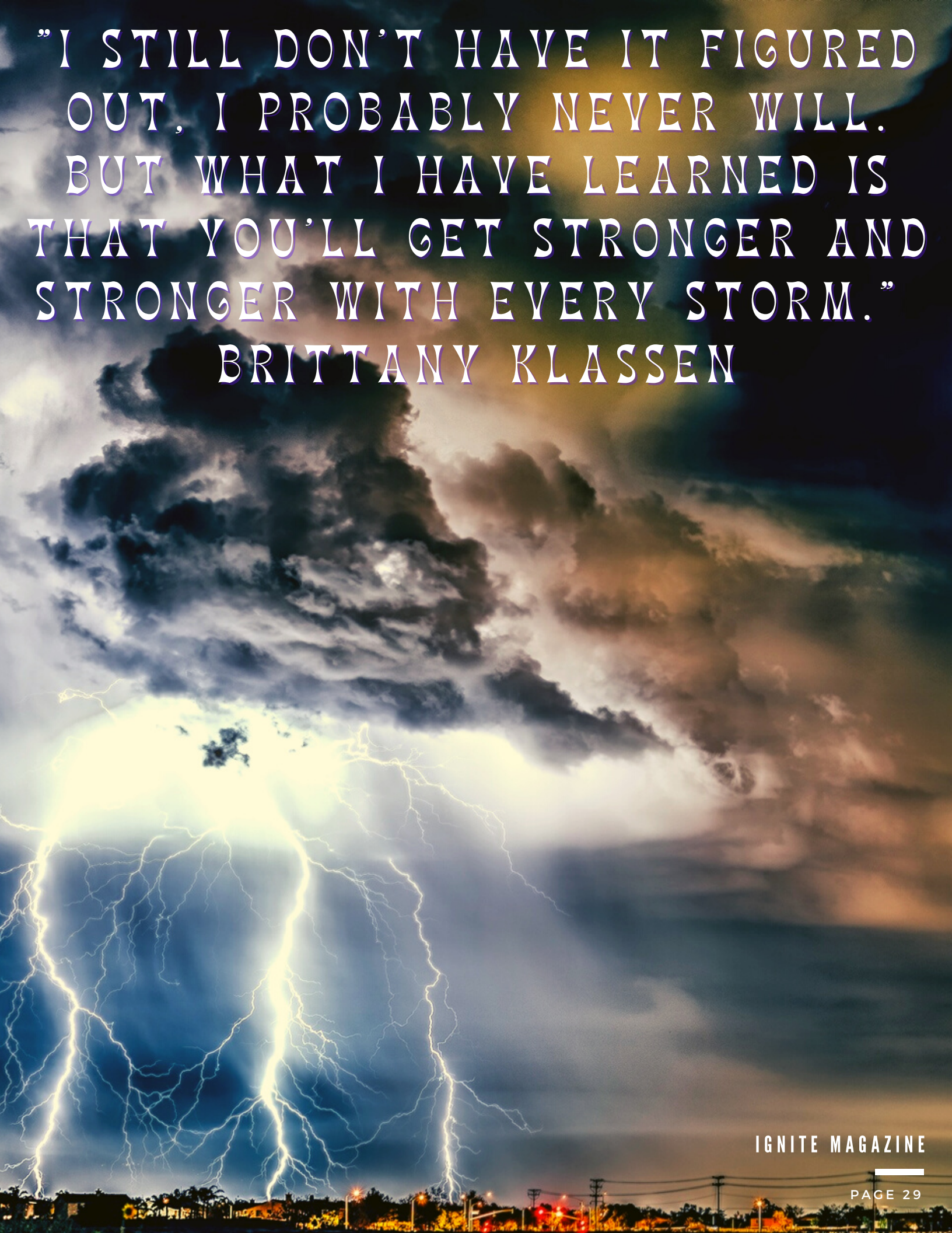
want gritty details, they want anecdotes to take to their next cocktail party, and they want real-life true crime coming from the star himself. And the truth is, it's easy for people to think from the number of podcasts, Netflix documentaries, and generalized obsession with true crime that real homicide detectives want to talk about what they do and what they've seen. Let me tell you on behalf of my husband that they really, really don't.



So, yes. Sometimes being the "other"-whether you feel significant or not, has you wondering what exactly you signed up for in this beautifully messy RCMP life- even 13 years after you navigated the first set of rapids together.

Listen, I willingly put my hand up and said I was along for the ride. I married a Mountie and knew that saying 'I do' also meant saying 'I won't'.

I won't put down roots in any one place for too long, I won't have a husband that is home every evening and weekend, and I definitely won't google the salary range for other police forces late at night.



"I STILL DON'T HAVE IT FIGURED
OUT. I PROBABLY NEVER WILL.
BUT WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IS
THAT YOU'LL GET STRONGER AND
STRONGER WITH EVERY STORM."

BRITTANY KLASSEN



But it's becoming evident that while I focused on the 'I won't's at the beginning, as his career continues to demand more from him, there's a whole lot more of 'I will's that are beginning to float to the surface.

I will see how it's taken a toll on him. I will notice the bags under his eyes, the increased salt and pepper sprinkled throughout his hair. I will feel the tossing and turning next to me on the long nights, and the tight hugs he gives to our kids that seem more for him than them.

I will spend weeks alone while he's away for work, I will create a Wonder Woman-esque schedule for myself and the kids that means everyone gets to all their activities, while I sit in my minivan and wonder how I'm gonna do this again next week.

I will meet people and live places that will stay in my heart long after the moving truck took the things. I will hear heartbreaking stories, and stories of triumph against all odds that can only be mined by a life spent in places I would have otherwise never travelled.

I will try my very best to understand that he is always on-call, even on the weeks when he's not being paid, and that his colleagues are far more than coffee conversations and water cooler chit chat. But I will call him out if he fails at being as on-call for us as he is for work.

I will have a place to crash from BC to Nova Scotia, I will love the kids of our RCMP family

like they're my own nieces and nephews. I will never forget how deep, and how vast 'Red Serge Proud' reaches, and I will wish to never see the black and blue memorial pin ever again.

But most importantly, of all the things I started off knowing, and all the things I am learning with time, I will not lose myself, or my marriage, even in the heart of the storm.

So, six years later I'm reiterating the same ending I did the first time.

This RCMP life isn't easy. You'll fall off the boat, and feel like you're floating away when suddenly the rope hits you on the head and you'll pull yourselves back into the boat soaked, but together.

The truth is that if you want the spectacular views we get with this life, you have to weather the storm- sometimes shouting to be heard through the noise.

I still don't have it figured out, I probably never will. But what I have learned is that you'll get stronger and stronger with every storm. And



when anxiety rises, and the unknowns pile up as I envision our future while naively trying to anticipate what could be around the next bend, I take peace in reminding myself that one day, God-willing, we will have seen all we wanted to see, and will sail off into the sunset together. Or as Mounties call it- retiring to the Island.



IN HONOR OF OUR
FALLEN HERO'S:

- ANDREW HARNETT
- SHELBY PATTON
- DOUGLAS LARCHE
- DAVE ROSS
- FABRICE GEVAUDAN



A HERO

"My own heroes are the dreamers, those men and women who tried to make the world a better place than when they found it, whether in small ways or great ones. Some succeeded, some failed, most had mixed results... but it is the effort that's heroic, as I see it. Win or lose, I admire those who fight the good fight."

— George R.R. Martin