

"HOT WIRE"

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SOLD
to Emerson

Most working people have what is commonly referred to as "routine" working days -- but in the life of a law enforcement officer, there is no such thing. Each day is met with a fresh challenge of new encounters and strange dilemmas. This is the story of one such experience that I ^{hope will} never have to ~~face~~ ^{relive} again.

The day began in a quiet tone with a ~~the~~ glorious sunrise displayed for the benefit of the early-risers. I sipped on ~~the~~ ^{my} cup of hot steaming coffee as I tried to shake the drowsiness ~~that still clung heavily to me~~. The monotonous drone of the dispatcher's voice echoed through the veil of ~~that~~ ^{that} quiet softness that still separated night from day. With a sudden jolt ~~the~~ ^{at the dispatcher} voice boomed the magic formula that sets my mind in motion. Car -- Respond to -- ~~Code~~ ^{Code} ~~blacks~~ ^{code} liquid -- ~~is~~ ^{is} a poor substitute for coffee -- ~~then~~ ^{then} the car in ~~reverse~~ ^{gear} as I sped towards my first run of the day. --- my day had started.

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- but

Every police officer can tell you there ~~is~~ are no

Danger can be laced with silvery edged words
or wear many forms of disguise. Police officers
are certainly aware of this. more than anyone

ordinary ^{runny} calls because you never know
~~what you're going to find when you get there.~~
where danger ^{maybe} is waiting for you. The little
old lady that has a "prowler" call
just may turn out to be a decoy for an
armed robbery. It has happened before.

Some people ask me why I chose
this hazardous position and I have to
admit that I like it. Each day is a
fresh challenge and when the old
adrenalin starts pumping --- there's
no feeling comparable. You can have the 9 to 5
routine. I'll settle for this
any day. ~~It's my~~ I guess you could
say that "I'm just doing my thing"
because for me - it's right and it's where
"fit".

The ^{first} call of the day ~~was~~ turned out
to be a sad comedy ^{was}. The old man
called in ^{the station} his wife was beating him
with a skillet. Apparently she was like
because he had spent his paycheck the night
~~before in a bar.~~

Most men like to drink now and
then but not all of them have a wife that
stands 6'1" and can outbox them. I'll go
on him

After ~~we~~ put the old guy in the hospital and placed ~~her~~ ^{him} under arrest - ~~we~~ ^{we} cleared ~~the~~ ^{the} station and started on our regular patrol again.

By 10 o'clock the sun rays started dripping through the layers of scattering clouds and for the time being, erased the previous threats of showers. I settled back and relaxed as my eyes scanned the familiar streets. A girl shipping rope waved enthusiastically at me as I passed. I smiled and returned her wave. ~~The~~ Despite the warmth of the morning sun - now playing peek-a-boo with the ~~the~~ ^{put forming} clouds - the air turned cooler and I ~~we~~ rolled the window up on the cruiser. Yes - winter was nudging its way in. Autumn had come and gone like footsteps on a sandy beach and now winter was making its ~~own~~ ^{fresh} path. I sighed in resignation.

10:30 a.m. - Hill was quiet. Each neighborhood appeared to be wrapped in early morning slumber. I yawned and stretched ~~lightly~~ ^{vigorously} as a restraint on my impulse to ~~go~~ ^{go} in the sleepy neighborhoods. Yes, it was a lazy day.

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10:45 - The sun retreats in silent defeat.
Rain clouds cover the city with a dark blanket.
The dispatcher ^{voice} continues to invade the
quiet atmosphere of ~~the~~ the cruiser. Automatic
I mentally register each call. Perhaps ---
I tighten my grip when I hear my call ---
"Car --- stand by." I feel my muscles
stiffen. The reflex is at work. I wonder if
athletes feel this way before they enter a
major event? ^{At this moment} I feel like
I could run ^{the full yardage} in a track meet --- and
"Car --- Disregard" I slump in
~~on~~ the seat - the race is over.

11:00 - The rolling wheels make a hypnotic
sound on the pavement. I suddenly realize
that I am ~~close to home~~ ^{in my own} in my own
neighborhood. "Maybe I'll just drive to

11:05 - A passing car flags me down.
"Officer" the man ^{speaks} is panting and out of
breath. "There's been a terrible accident
back there - just barely missed me."
This is the beginning of my living nightmare.
The air is still and fear penetrates my
thoughts. I had heard the loud "thud" and
I knew it would be bad but I wasn't prepared.

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for the sight that greeted me. The sirens whaled and red lights flashed, as I turned down my street, I could see the flames jumping and cutting through the tree like an expert logcutter.

A truck had struck a utility pole and hit ~~but~~ a transformer. This was bad enough in itself but it had overturned and ~~fell on~~ the cab of the truck was on top of a car.

~~The~~ ^{fallen} electric wires were ~~on the~~ ^{scraped off} ~~van of the~~ ^{truck} ~~of the~~ and were burning in a red fiery glow. ^{in midair} Beads of perspiration broke out on my forehead - - The heat from the hot wires ~~was~~ could be felt ~~and~~ but ~~the~~ ^{it was} fear ^{that} ~~caused~~ launched the trickle of sweat that covered my body. I knew what would happen if those hot wires connected with the truck. I uttered a small prayer as I swiftly went into action.

Curious spectators swarmed the area like ants at a picnic. It was almost ~~an~~ impossible to keep them away from the area. The area was sealed off but they kept slipping through the barricades.

11:45 - The utility company has been notified

and a truck in route to disconnect the power." Oh-please hurry," I mutter. The crackling sound of the hot wire rips through the air mixed with the odor of burning wires. "If that tree limb breaks - ^{someone shouts} the wire goes with it ---" I gulp - back ~~that~~ the apprehension that has become a heavy cloak. ~~I know what that means too. We all go with it.~~ "Oh - ^{who my} God - if that wire hits the truck - we're all gone with automatic motion, I go about my duties but my mind is occupied. "Please Lord" I pray. If we ever needed You - it's now 11:30. The car under the truck is barely visible. The driver of the truck is in shock but unhurt. Up until this instant, everyone surmised that no one was in the ^{pushed} car, this was a false assumption on our parts. A hand ^{is} the first to see it. A hand ^{is} slightly against the crushed windshield. "Oh my God!" My scream echoes over ^{the} crowd as a ^{low} groan rumbles through the crowd spectators.

With careful precaution - I measure each step as I inch under the truck and pu

myself up to what used to be the car window.
 "Is anyone alive?" I whisper hoarsely.
 Two voices answer me. "My hand is hurt
 but I think I'm all right." The other
 voice is weaker - "Yes - yes - I'm okay.
 Can you get us out of here?"

The wire snaps and rattles. My heart
 stops beating as I scramble out from
 under the truck.

"There are two people in here" I
 shout. "Let's get them out." The
 wire has fallen approximately another foot.
 It is getting nearer to the truck. Now
 we have a fresh worry to add. There are
 two lives at stake. ^{They could be extinguished.} I crawl back
 under the truck and inform them of the
 situation. There is quiet reflection before they
 answer me. ~~I know they are praying, too~~
~~hear them praying softly.~~ Then - - "okay -
 it's okay now. Do what you can." The man's
 voice is resigned. The woman is sobbing.

^I I want to rip the car apart. I want to
 throw the truck off and release them from
 their metal prison. Instead I speak
 with false ~~conviction~~ ^{conviction} - - "Whatever you do -

don't touch anything metal - just sit tight. We're going to get you out of here."

The wire is still burning as I make my exit from under the truck once more. I check my watch ---

12:05 - "Where in the hell is that Electric Truck. They should be here by now." ~~A~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~company~~ ~~answers~~ ~~nothing~~. "They're on their way." I'm informed. We can't wait much longer. The wires are almost burned in two. ~~A~~ ~~fireman~~ ~~grabs~~ ~~one~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~fireman~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~arm~~. "Let's find out if that factory back there has a electrician crew that can cut the power." The fireman nods and hands orders to his co-workers who scatter in pursuit of such a crew.

12:15 - The grinding sound of the power ~~plugs~~ ~~flashes~~ ~~with~~ ~~flashes~~ in with the ~~narrow~~ ~~tonic~~ ripple of thunder flowing overhead. "Oh no. Rain! That's all we need. Hurry up guys - ~~that~~ ~~isn't~~ ~~going~~ ~~to~~ ~~help~~. Where is that truck?" ~~break~~

12:45 --- The flames are shooting 20 ft in the air. The tree limb supporting it ~~starts~~ ~~to~~ ~~go~~ ~~down~~ ~~in~~ ~~its~~ ~~own~~ ~~way~~.

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"Watch it!" ^{we shouting in unison} The sizzling wire crackles and pops. Everyone present ^{is} looks up the extremity of the dangerous and perilous ^{situation confronting them} confrontation. The curiosity seekers even back away. "Oh God, help us!" My mind seeks comfort in this simple prayer - while I continue to go about my automatic functions. Somewhere in the midst of the humming noise I hear someone say - "Easy does it now. We have her free. That's it. Slow boys. She's unconscious. Get that ambulance over here - fast damn it!"

The woman is free. "Thank you Lord." My relief is mixed with apprehension for the safety of the man. "Could we ask two favors, Lord?"

1:15 - Still no ~~to~~ electric truck. The man is trapped between the steering wheel and the door. The power saw buzzes with relentless fury. Miraculously - the hot wire has not made contact with the truck although the tree limb is beginning to sway. "Clear the area - everyone please clear the area

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The loud speaker barks out unheeded commands. Why don't they move out? Don't they understand what is happening here? If I live to be a hundred, I'll never understand people. "If I live" — The phrase bounced off my mind and lingered in my thoughts. With sudden realization — I know that I could be killed in seconds by this ^{very} hot wire. A surge of fear cuts through my pretense of bravery.

1:30 — The electric truck is in view.

God! "What in the hell took you so long?" I ^{do scream at them}.

Their only reply is a shrug of the shoulder. If I wasn't a lady — I'd punch one of them. ~~The other emergency people~~

You see — I'm one of ^{the} city's first women police officers. No — I wouldn't shoo. Even after this. I like being a "cop."

1:40 — ^{the} wire starts to move as the tree limb snaps. At the same ~~time~~ simultaneously — the current stops its vicious flow and the hot wire extends a smell of burning wires — but the danger it threatened has ceased. ~~Engine~~

The rain clouds finally let loose with torrents of rain. I stand silently in the cool wind - grateful the calmness that overflows in me. ^{with long lines of relief mixed} with the rain drops that ⁽¹¹⁾ gently ~~smooth~~ my face, after a few moments - I climb in my crawler - ^{enroute to County Hospital} -

~~The limb cracks~~ ^{snaps}

We all watch horrified as the tree limb falls and the electric wire falls with perfect aim on the cab of the truck. If this had happened a few moments earlier, I wouldn't be around to relate ~~to~~ my story. ^{it's day}

The Lord ^{must have seen} was tuned in on us because we were ~~at~~ saved. The man was eventually freed and taken to the hospital. ^{was part of} ^{at the hospital} ^{learned that they} The man and woman suffered only minor injuries ^{and they} but were soon released ^{to go home} from the hospital. I shall thank God every day for this blessing. The trapped man and woman were my parents. For you see the man and woman trapped under this live hot wire were my parents.

J.F.F. END