Harry Stege

Third-generation law enforcement officer with a reputation for being a hardworking, innovative, and supportive leader.

Chapter 01 – 1:27
Introduction

Announcer: During Harry Stege's term as Tulsa Chief of Police from 1977 to 1983, five of the officers recognized at the Tulsa Police Officers' Memorial fell. One of the more tragic incidents was the helicopter crash that killed two officers. During Chief Stege's term, many new components were added to the Police Department. The Aviation Unit was one of those new components. Also, in his early days working I.D. or the 1970's version of "CSI", Stege was among the first officers to respond to Thurman Spybuck when Spybuck was shot and killed in the line of duty.

Harry Stege was born in Tulsa. As a teenager he left Tulsa Central High School before he graduated, joining the Navy and finishing his GED early. After a stint in Korea during the war, he returned to Tulsa to work a few odd jobs before joining the Tulsa Police Department in 1955 as a third-generation law officer. After several promotions he was appointed police chief by former Mayor Bob LaFortune.

Among his many accomplishments, Chief Stege is credited with upgrading the department with computers in police units and computerizing the records management system.

After his retirement Harry, along with Tulsa homicide detective Mike Huff, created an organization dedicated to solving cold cases.

Harry Stege was 86 when he died January 30, 2021.

Detective Mike Huff joins Harry in this oral history interview recorded for *VoicesofOklahoma.com*.

Chapter 02 – 7:00
Four Generations

John Erling: My name is John Erling. Today's date is August 8, 2013. Harry, if you will state your full name, your date of birth and your present age, please.

Harry Stege: My name is Harry William Stege. I'm 79 years old. I was born May 31, 1934.

JE: We're recording this interview in the recording facilities of VoicesofOklahoma.com. Joining us today is retired Tulsa Police Department homicide detective, Mike Huff. Mike, tell us how your career connected here with Harry.

Mike Huff: I first ran into Chief Stege when I was a 19-year-old kid that just got hired under a federal program to be what they called a "cadet" while I was going to college, before I was old enough to be a policeman. Chief Stege was Lieutenant Stege at that time and was my first boss in the records division. Former city councilor, Rick Westcott – he was a civilian working in the records division...so we crossed paths with Chief Stege. I think one of the first things we did together is that we busted the glass door at City Hall and it was my first time where I was really on the hot seat. I think that Chief Stege questioned our story a little bit and maybe rightfully so because we were playing around. But he has been a wonderful guidance, a great friend, a wonderful professional. We teach together at the Police Academy. We founded the International Association of Cold Case Investigators together. If I go a week without talking to Chief Stege, it's a bad week.

JE: Well that's pretty nice, a pretty nice endorsement. Let's go back here to where you were born.

HS: I was born in Tulsa on May 31, 1934. An interesting story – My mother developed appendicitis in her 8th month of pregnancy. She was operated on while she was pregnant and went into labor shortly thereafter. My father, when we came home from the hospital, had hired a young black woman to be a house mother, a house nurse really, to take care of us. Her name was Tennessee Washington. My dad's name was Harry and I was always little Harry. The day that I became Chief of Police, my secretary, the chief's secretary, Lucille McFarland, buzzed me on the intercom and said, "There's a woman on the phone that sounds like from the accent she might be black and she wants to talk to little Harry." (laughs) And I said, "Well that is Tennessee Washington, put her through and if she ever calls again, don't even hesitate, just ring her through. She's like a second mother to me".

JE: That's great. Your mother's name, what was her name?

HS: My mother was Ruth Greene Stege.

JE: Was she from this area?

HS: She was born in New Mexico but she and her family moved here sometime in the 1920s and she met my dad. The story that they tell was that she was walking down the street

returning some empty pop bottles that were in a paper sack and dad was at that time a police officer. We had police officers standing on the street corners directing traffic. My mom had deliberately wet the paper sack so that the bottom would fall out and she got to meet that handsome policeman (laughs).

JE: (laughs) And what was his name?

HS: My dad's name was Harry Leroy Stege. My grandfather's name was Harry Edward Stege. We're all three members of the Tulsa Police Department. We were all three attorneys. My grandfather was a traveling CSI guy in today's parlance, because at that time, the method of identification was the Bertillon system which was made up of body measurements. My grandfather installed the Bertillon system in the police departments in Oklahoma City, Kansas City, Dallas and Tulsa, and he finally settled in Tulsa. In 1913 when he became a police officer, the Spoils system was in place and with each new election, there could be a complete turnover in the police department. People bounced up and down in the ranks. He left the police department and began practicing law in Tulsa.

JE: There are four generations here – Harry Edward Stege, 1913 and 1916 he was chief; then we have Harry Leroy Stege, 1930-61. Who was he?

HS: He was my father.

JE: OK. Then we have Harry William Stege…

HS: That's me…

JE: 1955-83.

HS: And my oldest son, Harry Gerard Stege is still a serving police officer and I don't remember his start date…

JE: 1977.

HS: '77, that's about right. An interesting thing, about a year and a half ago, Gerard called me on the telephone early one morning and said, "Hey dad, you want to feel really old?" I said, "Not especially, what do you have in mind?" He said, "I just wanted to remind you that your youngest son retired from the Army 2-1/2 years ago and today is my 25th anniversary on the Tulsa Police Department". I said something that he probably didn't appreciate and hung up on him (laughs).

JE: (laughs) Yeah, it was pretty much a given, I guess, that you were going to be in law enforcement.

HS: No. I joined the Navy and came back to Tulsa and enrolled at TU in an aeronautical engineering program. That was what I wanted to do and then I found out that my math background and aeronautical engineering didn't match. My dad said, "Well, as long as you're going to school, why don't you apply for a job at the police department – we have a lot of people that are working for the police department and going to school". That's how I came to be a member of the police department. I switched my major shortly after

that when I discovered through my grades that I was never going to be an aeronautical engineer to pre-law and worked as a police officer. I enrolled at TU in 1955 and graduated in 1966 with a bachelor's degree in English and criminal justice and a law degree. It took 11 years to get there.

JE: Yeah but you got a lot of education there, didn't you.

HS: Yeah. I have a master's in public administration as well.

JE: OK. When did you join officially then as a police officer on the force?

HS: November 11, 1955. Just in time to live through the 1956-57 federal grand jury that resulted in the chief of police, the police and fire commissioner, several members of the vice squad, and several bootleggers being convicted in federal court of violating Oklahoma's liquor laws and other kinds of violations.

JE: Some names that were attached to that?

HS: Paul Livingston, who had been Chief of Police for about 5 months. Jay Jones, a former police officer who had been Police and Fire Commissioner and lost an election and then was re-elected. I don't remember the names of the rank and file, just those two principals.

Chapter 03 – 4:55
First Job

John Erling: Tell us back in the '50s what you did when you first came on.

Harry Stege: I was working midnight shift, which I preferred because I was going to school, in a two-man car downtown. We had just switched to a one-man car system throughout the city except in the downtown area. At that time, the police training program was one day a week, Saturday, eight hours a day, and it was an ongoing thing because we didn't hire people en masse, we hired them one at a time. As an officer was hired, he worked his 40 hours, would go to school on Saturday, and where if he happened to be working on Saturday, that would be his work day. It was ongoing so you could jump in and be in the middle of the training program but you had to go through the complete cycle until you'd gone through all of those Saturday classes. That was one of the problems that occurred with the election in 1955 that Jay Jones became Police and Fire Commissioner, he abolished that program. There was no training at all then for probably a year or 18 months until the new regime took over, new city administration even.

JE: Any stories in the '50s or in the '60s that you might think of?

HS: I was working, as I said, in a two-man car with Officer John Avrett two days a week and Officer Hugh Greer. When John was two days off, I worked with Hugh Greer. Interesting

stories with each of them: Just shortly after the first of the year in 1956, it snowed really deeply and the watch commander told us don't have wrecks, go out in the street and make your rounds and if you see something important, take care of it but don't drive very much and don't cause a wreck.

While we were making our rounds, at that time 11th Street was Highway 66. We were just south of 11th and Main. A guy turned off of 11th Street towards us, stopped beside the car and was asking John for directions. I was just sitting there listening to John and looking north on Main Street. It was probably 12:30-1:00. Bars closed at 12. I saw two guys come out of the bar that used to be on the northeast corner of 10th and Main. They got in the car and drove north and they didn't turn their lights on. Kind of strange. When John took care of business with the tourist who needed directions, I told him about it and he said, "Well let's go check them out". We caught up with them at 3rd and Main and lit them up with the red lights. They just stopped in the middle of the street.

I walked up on the passenger's side and the glove box door was standing open and there were several packages of Pall Mall cigarettes laying on the open glove box door. I asked the passenger to step out of the car and he did...calm, quiet. John asked the driver to step out of the car and he did, and he said, "Go around and see that man over there", talking about me. He came over there and John walked around and asked the driver, "What kind of cigarettes do you smoke?" and the guy said, "Camel", maybe Camel, I don't remember exactly but it was not Pall Mall. John said, "Well what are those Pall Mall cigarettes doing there?" and the guy, who had been maybe · turned toward John turned away from him as he was answering "I don't know" and John reached out and pulled his shoulder to turn him around to face him and his shirt popped open and cigarettes just flew all over the place.

The two guys had burglarized the bar and had stolen everything including a coin box that had been on the bar for donations to one of the major diseases. They went to court and pled guilty to the burglary and the judge was outraged that they had stolen the charitable donations and they were sentenced to the maximum for second-degree burglary, which at that time was seven years in the penitentiary.

Now fast forward a couple or three or four or five years, I was still working midnights but I was a general assignment detective and I heard a young officer come on the radio and ask for a record check on a man and I recognized the name. He was one of those two guys and I asked, "Where do you have him?" and he told me. It was at 2nd and Detroit. I went over there and, sure enough, it was the same guy and he was driving a new Lincoln Continental. I asked him if he remembered me and he said that he did vaguely. I asked him where he got the car. Long story short, he had been released from the penitentiary in McAlester that day, rode a bus to Tulsa, went to a bar, had several beers, walked down

to 8th and Boulder, stole the Bishop's Lincoln limousine and got from 8th and Boulder to 2nd and Detroit before he got stopped. He asked for a trial and went back to the penitentiary on that auto theft charge.

JE: Amazing.

Chapter 04 – 3:00
Thurman Spybuck

John Erling: As a young officer, you were working, I guess, the '70s version of CSI and you were among the first officers to respond to Thurman Spybuck?

Harry Stege: It just happened I was a lieutenant at that time and I was going to lunch. I heard the call come out. I was fairly close and I drove up there. I believe I was the first officer of any sort to respond to the scene. Dave Bean says that he was the first officer. I can't argue with that because I wasn't paying attention to things over there; I was paying attention to things here.

JE: And where was the location?

HS: I don't remember the exact address but it was on the west side of town, west of 25th West Avenue and south of 45th Street.

JE: Thurman Spybuck was a police officer?

HS: Sergeant Thurman Spybuck was in charge of the narcotics detail at that time and they had executed a drug raid at the house of Truman Trowbridge. I wasn't there so I can't verify this but the story was...as one officer went through the front door, Trowbridge fired a shot at him and ran out the back door. Charlie Jones was one of the investigators. They set up a 45-degree pattern. Charlie was at the back north corner of the house and Thurman was at the front south corner, so they each had two sides of the house in view. Truman ran out the back door of the house and saw Thurman in front and fired a shot running and it hit Thurman Spybuck in the right side of the chest and I was told later it hit at the compression stroke on the heart and just caused Thurman's heart to explode. In fact, he was alive when he left the scene but Sergeant Spybuck died on the way to the hospital.

Mike Huff: One of the guys involved in that raid was an ATF agent by the name of Bill Buford, who worked in Tulsa for a long time, later transferred somewhere else. But he is one of the ATF agents that was wounded in the shoot-out in Waco, Texas.

HS: The last I knew about Bill, he was stationed in Arkansas. I think he was special agent in charge of whatever the office was, I don't know where.

MH: I believe when Thurman Spybuck rolled into the St. Francis emergency room, his wife was a nurse in the emergency room when they brought him in. Small world.

JE: Wow.

HS: One of the guys who was in the raiding party was Officer Jess McCullough. Jess had worked for me in what we would now call CSI. I saw him the next day and I asked him how he was. He said, "Well I was okay till I got home". What do you mean until you got home...you mean decompression or something? He said, "No, I got home and I started to go to the bathroom and I reached down to unbutton the fly of my jeans and I found that a bullet had gone through the overlapping piece of fabric on the jeans". It had left a scorch mark on his penis.

JE: Wow, amazing.

Chapter 05 – 9:20
Helicopter Crash

John Erling: As Chief of Police from '77-83, five of the officers recognized at the Tulsa Police Officers' Memorial fell during your term. One of the more tragic incidents was the helicopter crash that killed two officers. Maybe we can talk about that because wasn't it under your direction that a helicopter would come into play, the police helicopter unit?

Harry Stege: Well, the helicopter unit I put—with obviously the permission advice, consent and appropriations of the City Commission—I put the helicopter program in place. It was a start-up. One of the things that we felt was necessary was to convince the rank and file officers that the money spent for the helicopter program was worthwhile. We started observation rides for rank and file police officers to see what the helicopter people could see. Chance Whiteman and Kelly Smythe...Chance was the pilot. He had been a helicopter pilot in the Vietnam war. Kelly Smythe was unusual; he was a police cadet when he was 14 years old. That was a volunteer position. He wanted to be a police officer he thought, and it gave him a chance to explore the position. At 18, he became a formal police cadet, a paid cadet, much as Mike was when he entered the program. At 21 years of age, he became a police officer. Both Kelly and Chance died in the helicopter crash. It could have been the end of the program. Police Commissioner Roy Gardner and I decided that it was kind of like riding a horse – we'd get on it and do it again. The helicopter we were using was a helicopter we had leased from the Oklahoma City Police Department. It was completely decked out. The success of the program up to that point and with the assistance of Mayor Jim Inhofe who is, as you know, an aviation advocate, really kept the program going and it has been a success since then. I want to say one more thing. I remember very vividly Commissioner Gardner and I went to Mr. and Mrs.

Smythe's home. He was living at home with his mother and father. At 3:00 in the morning, I remember vividly that I was sitting on the floor in their living room having delivered the bad news that their son had been killed. Kelly was their only son. Mrs. Smythe, in what has to have been one of the darkest days in their lives, said, "Chief Stege, I don't want you to worry about Kelly dying under your command. Kelly died doing exactly what he wanted to do. He came to me when he was 12 or 13 years old and said he wanted to be a police officer and I said oh no, you don't want to do that. But then he found out about the cadet program and he got into that and I let him because I knew that would change his mind. Then when he turned 18, he asked my permission to join the paid cadet program. I let him do that. And when he was 21, he came to me and said mom, I'm going to be a police officer, I'm going to start". And she said, "Kelly, I don't want you to be a police officer". "Well mom, I want to be a police officer. I have a calling". They were a very, very religious family. "I have a calling, I want to be a police officer". "No Kelly, I don't want you to be a police officer". "Mom, God has called me to be a police officer". And Mrs. Smythe said, "Kelly Smythe, God didn't discuss this with me!" (laughs)

JE: (laughs)

HS: My feelings about that…in her darkest moment, she was trying to comfort me. And she attended every police memorial service that we had until she became physically unable to do so. The helicopter flyover part of the closing of the ceremony always touched her very, very deeply.

JE: The circumstances…the helicopter was involved in a chase over north Tulsa at night…

HS: The helicopter was involved in a ground pursuit by police officers of a car proceeding at high speed. I believe that Chance lost perspective and didn't realize that he was coming into an area where there were rising hills and he hit a tree and the helicopter crashed and killed both officers. They were killed instantly when they hit the ground.

JE: Tell us about the entire police force, the feeling that they had and how that affected them.

HS: I know everybody was saddened and everybody wore the mourning band on the badges. I've said this many times. You pointed out that during my time as Chief of Police, five police officers were killed. One was the only female officer who has ever been killed, Officer Fabrienne Van Arsdell who was burned to death when her car was struck from behind rupturing the gas tank and sparks set the car on fire. I've never suffered the death of a child. I have six children and two of them are police officers, one is a retired soldier. All I can say is if the death of a child is any more painful than the feelings I felt with the death of each one of these police officers, I hope my children all outlive me. It's extremely painful knowing that these guys were essentially following my orders and, for whatever reason, they died.

Mike Huff: Fabrienne went to the police academy with me, as well as Carl Kime. But Fabrienne was married to an OHP trooper and she was working midnight shift in south Tulsa. She had just communicated with her husband that they were going to go eat breakfast somewhere after she got through with this car stop on South Lewis. So he drove that way and arrived just moments after her car was struck and actually witnessed her burn to death and was there as the heat was causing her live ammunition to explode. I've had the occasion...somebody had stopped this young man that she had stopped who suffered some pretty severe burns trying to get her out of the car and they had stopped him for a minor traffic violation. They said is this guy's story right and I said, "It's so right (you know), let him go...thank him and let him go". And you know, that's what we need to do. Community involvement is a two-way street. We owe them; they pay us back sometimes.

HS: As Mike said, he witnessed her burning. I went over...he was sitting there in the car with the door open and I sat down on the threshold of the driver's door. We tried to talk to one another. He couldn't talk. He was so upset about his wife's death. He left the OHP shortly thereafter. We tried repeatedly to contact him. I'm a member of the Board of Trustees of the Tulsa Police Officers Memorial and we try to contact the survivors each year to invite them to attend the memorial service. Only recently were we even able to get a response from him, and that's been 35-40 years ago. Mike talked about Cark Kime, the first officer who was killed in my tenure as chief. Carl, maybe three months before his death, had purchased a bullet resistant vest and walked into a bar and was engaged in some police activity and somebody shot him in the vest. He felt he was living on velvet. To show you the depth of feeling, not this past year but 2012, Mrs. Kime, who has since remarried, and her husband and I believe it's Carl's child attended the police memorial service for the first time I'd seen them. When she saw me after the service, she didn't say a word to me, just walked up and put her arms around me.

MH: My sister, who is five years older than me, was in Carl's graduating class at Will Rogers High School. Carl was an all-state athlete in several sports, went on to play minor league baseball before he decided that that wasn't going to take him much longer and, you know, was just one of the most gregarious, outgoing, funny, sharp-witted guys. He was kind of like my older buddy in the police academy. We went through the academy together and he always looked out for me. I can remember his funeral. It was in November and it was a cloudy, rainy day. I was a pall bearer for his funeral. This past year, my son Jake was doing his Eagle Scout project and he chose the police memorial to work on and raise money for. It was the biggest project they have ever done out there privately. So they honored him at the police Memorial Day celebration and Carl's wife was there with her daughter and she came over and thanked my son for doing that.

HS: I didn't know that...

JE: That was Carl...

MH: Carl Victor Kime, but everybody called him Poncho – Poncho Kime. His dad was the principal over at Owen Elementary School, I believe.

Chapter 06 – 4:04
Crossbow Murders

John Erling: There's another story in January 1982 of the crossbow murder of Michele Powers. This was a former Tulsa policeman, Robert Doss, and all the recollections that you have of that case.

Harry Stege: The interesting thing about that is the first officer responding was Chuck Jordan, current Chief of Police. That was a love affair that went bad. Michele was intimately involved with a Tulsa police officer, had a child by him and demanded that the officer divorce his wife and marry her, and he wouldn't do it. I don't know and I don't think we ever found out if the shooter, who was a friend of the officer, actually conspired with him to cause Michelle Powers' death, but the shooter was a former Tulsa police officer who had been dismissed. Ironically, that was at a time when there was a great deal of publicity about postal employees going postal and killing people. The former police officer was working at the post office when he fired the crossbow.

JE: And his name?

Mike Huff: Bobby Stohler or Dean Stohler. I actually think he was in the alley along with...the actual shooter, I believe, was Butch Ensminger. Butch Ensminger also worked at the post office and was acquitted in that case. I can really, really say – and I look back on several cases – and I was just involved on the fringes of that murder investigation. But you wish you could go back and work cases with the skills and knowledge you know now as opposed to what you had back then because, you know, knowledge is cumulative.

HS: That's not to say that that case wasn't worked as well as it could have been with the capabilities that we had available to us at the time.

MH: You know, the case, I think, was worked well and there was some good forensic evidence. I can't remember who the prosecutor was but, you know, it's a team effort and that kid, Butch Ensminger, walked away and kind of surprisingly went back to work at the post office. Robert Stohler was convicted and is still in prison. My brother worked at the post office also for decades. My dad worked there too. But my brother worked on the same shift as Ensminger and, you know, a bunch of men together are pretty relentless. They never called Ensminger by his name; from that time on, they called him "Killer".

HS: The officer who was Michele Powers' paramour was dismissed for refusing to cooperate in the investigation. He appealed that and I received an order from the Civil Service Commission to reinstate him. The next day, he was indicted for the murder of Michele Powers and I didn't follow the order to reinstate him.

JE: Yeah. She was shot with a crossbow bolt outside her Tulsa apartment about 10:45 in the evening, which was her regular departure time for work on January 21 and then she died six days later. It was a huge story in our community.

HS: It was a huge story and it was a vicious murder. I understand that the crossbow bolt had a poison bag attached to it as is sometimes used by hunters. The whole thing was terrible.

JE: When I was researching this, I saw all these cases all across the country involving crossbow shootings. It wasn't just here in Tulsa. There was a time that several were doing that.

HS: Well crossbows are a weapon of choice. They're silent. They're not licensed or registered. If a police officer stops somebody who is driving down the street and has a gun in the car, there are some serious questions – a crossbow...well I'm a hunter...that ordinarily is sufficient explanation. I don't know that it's as popular as it used to be but it was a weapon of choice by the military in some of the covert activities that the military used simply because it is a silent weapon and it is very effective at fairly close range. A crossbow shot can extend that effective range, but they're still good weapons to use if you're in the mind to silently kill someone or some animal.

Chapter 07 – 5:07
Hostage Taker

John Erling: I'm bringing up some cases here that may ring a bell – hostage taking at McCartney's at 71st and Sheridan.

Harry Stege: That happened in my last days as Chief of Police. I ordinarily would have gone to the scene but I believe that my successor had already been selected, hadn't been sworn in yet. I didn't go to the scene but I was informed of what was going on and I remember that. We had been trying to establish telephone contact with the hostage taker inside the store and the television reporter called and got the guy on the telephone and did a live interview on TV, thwarting our attempts to establish contact and attempt to negotiate him out. I spoke badly to that television reporter and to his boss.

Mike Huff: It was a unique situation. It was a three-ring circus. It was early days in our special operations team and hostage negotiation team. I believe that George Haralson was the negotiator that tried to negotiate with him. But that interjection by the news media

really gave a dangerous twist to it. You try to get everything down to the lowest baseline possible and keep those spikes from happening and this reporter would say something that would generate some real hate and anger and potentially danger into that. You know, it was a surprise that that happened – somebody acted so irresponsibly.

HS: The goal of the problem is still to negotiate a guy out.

MH: Right.

JE: What was his issue? Why was he holding hostage?

HS: It was an armed robbery that went bad.

MH: By the time he got his 15 minutes of fame, he threw everything but the kitchen sink in there as to what his issues were. It reminded me of that show with Al Pacino, "Dog Day Afternoon", where he got caught up in the middle of a bank robbery and turned it into a three-ring circus. It kind of reminded me of that.

JE: Is it true that all the channels actually went live with this in the 10:00 news?

MH: Oh yeah, it was wild and we couldn't do anything to circumvent that. It got out of our control and it just realy put a lot of peoples' lives in danger that didn't need to be.

JE: How was he eventually captured?

MH: I think they eventually did reason with him and, you know, anytime you can look out a window and see the fire power that had amassed in there – and we have a wonderful special operations team...anytime you're looking down that, there is a fear factor. And that's why we use that. These guys are trained to use everything that they carry, and they carry a lot of stuff.

HS: I think they're confronted with the reality that there are only two possible outcomes – they can come out shooting and be shot back or they can come out peacefully. It comes down to a matter of choice. There are some people that do that because of suicide by cop. It's not a common thing but it does happen where some people want to die but they don't have the courage or the initiative or the know-how to do it themselves and they commit some act that forces police officers to use deadly force. I spent 28 years with the Tulsa Police Department and another 10 years as Chief of Police at two universities. In my career, I fired two shots in the line of duty, both of them at the same incident, and both of those shots were fired at a guy who had emptied a 30-30 lever-action rifle at police officers. He was intent on trying to kill us and I had a clear shot and took it. It didn't kill him. I don't know what my reaction would have been had it killed him...but I can tell you, it was my personal belief that when a police officer took someone's life in the line of duty, first it was my duty to suspend him from active duty until the investigation was complete, and second was to sit and talk with him and discuss the case with him to the extent he wanted to. I was not an investigator. I was more in the way of a counselor. I don't remember how many police officers killed someone while I was Chief of Police but I know

that in every case, there was no happiness; there was no glee; there was no enjoyment in the fact that they had killed someone. It was a realization that they had taken someone's life and they weren't happy about it. It was a disturbing event. One officer sat and cried because he was deeply religious and he had taken someone's life.

JE: Let me interject something here because when Chief Drew Diamond was chief and police officers had killed someone, I must have said something flippant about it on the radio – I don't know what it was I said – but the Chief said, "I want you to come down here and talk to me about this". And so when I walked into the room, the room was full of Tulsa police officers. They were all standing around his desk behind him and the officers that shot, one or two, were sitting right there. I looked them in the face and I could see that they were hurting. What the chief wanted me to know and understand is these police officers hurt afterward. I've never forgotten that.

MH: That may be one of the only good things that Chief Drew Diamond did. I respect him for that but...

Chapter 08 – 8:45
Deadly Force

Mike Huff: I can tell you I've been in several deadly force shootout situations and, you know, the range of emotions span...

Harry Stege: I think the first feeling is, "God I'm glad that's over" and then the reality of the loss of a human life...

MH: I had the situation where I had shot a murder suspect named Ray Perry Wilburn after a high-speed pursuit. It was a wild thing. I was working nights and my wife at that time was also working nights at Hillcrest Hospital Surgery; she was a surgical nurse. I couldn't get ahold of her. And that's where he went. So she comes home about 3 or 4 in the morning, just shortly after the time I got off, and she goes, "Oh my God, you would not believe, we got this guy that the police shot up. Somebody had shot him with a shot gun and, you know, it was crazy. In fact, when we were undressing him to take him to surgery, he had a big belt buckle that said 'the right to keep and bear arms' and there was a bullet hole right through it". And I said, "Yeah those were my bullets". After I explained it to her, it was like oh my God, I'm so happy you're alive – you know, that kind of thing. But he was struck with multiple...you know, a 12-gauge buckshot throws out nine pellets. I shot three or four times. He had a lot of holes in him and enough dope in him to keep him alive. I think it was the biggest medical bill the city ever had to pay. I actually stood trial for a state civil rights violation.

John Erling: You?

MH: I stood trial, yes. And it was the only time the state...it was the only time ever that the state utilized that civil case of a civil rights violation; that's how they filed the charge.

HS: When was that, Mike? I was completely unaware of that.

MH: The shooting was in 1981. It was sometime after that before it finally got to court.

HS: It must have been after I retired in '83.

MH: Yes it was. Of course, it took the jury 28 minutes to figure out that there was no problem there, but it was an awesome responsibility of taking a life or trying to take a life or whatever. You know, you're just amped up with adrenaline, going crazy, and the things that are going through your mind – like your children and your loved ones and those kind of things. It's amazing how many thoughts travel through your mind at that time. And then over the years of 30-plus years in homicide, one of my most important responsibilities was investigating every incident of deadly force. We picked it apart down to the nano of a second. I mean, we tried to get in the officer's head, what he was thinking, what he saw...because we have to present the case to the district attorney and we don't want to have any unanswered questions. I can remember a case where a young man was chasing an auto theft suspect about 2 in the morning in a neighborhood around Admiral and Harvard. They were running through back yards. And you know that sounds fun, and it is fun if it all works out good. But he caught this guy, which was the good and the bad news. The guy was ready to kill him when he caught him – I mean, the bad guy was ready to kill the officer. The officer ultimately was fighting for his life and the bad guy jerked away from him, pulled away. As the officer initially starts to shoot towards his chest, he pulls his gun in a split second and he ended up shooting the guy in kind of the back/side of the back. The district attorney really, really considered filing charges on him because they look at it as a very simplistic thing – oh the guy got shot in the back. Well, there were some moments there that lasted maybe only a second or two that that officer had made that decision. So we ultimately were able to re-enact it; we did it on video. Everybody is open...I want to say transparent. You know, we're just looking for the facts; we're not looking to put a spin on it that makes it look good for an officer. We're looking for the bare facts, and ultimately did. But those kind of things where somebody uses deadly force – it's not a cowboy/old west kind of thing. I mean, the rules are so stringent. You know that you're going to be looked at on multiple levels. Not only is your life on the line, your job is on the line; your kids' food is on the line. Nobody wants to use deadly force unless they are just absolutely required.

HS: I want to piggyback on what Mike talked about. There are actually two parallel investigations being conducted simultaneously – one is a criminal investigation and the other is an investigation which really looks at the facts of the situation and actually

doesn't become directly involved in the crime scene and all that, but it's looking to see if the departmental policies on the use of deadly force have been followed. So the officer who pulled the trigger has to be aware that he is going to be investigated for a criminal violation and also investigated for violation of departmental policy on the use of deadly force. Really the use of deadly force, at least in the Tulsa Police Department, comes down to almost that split second decision – is it going to be me or him who walks out of here? I've never been in that situation but I have been frightened a couple of times (laughs), but it is serious business. To contrast that, my first sergeant on the police department told me about his first day on the job.

JE: His name?

HS: Vern Hedgepath. He retired probably in 1958, maybe as late as 1960. Vern told me that he was hired on a day and told to go to a department store downtown and buy a shirt and a pair of trousers and to go to Dick Barden's store, that was a combination of western wear and pawn shop, and buy a gun. He came to work and they gave him a badge and took him up to 4th and Boston and said direct traffic. He had been there maybe 30 minutes and people came running out of the bank yelling "bank robbery, bank robbery" and the guy comes out and Vern pulls a gun and shoots and kills him. That was it, and it was the practice at that time when a police officer killed someone in the line of duty to charge them with murder and take them to trial to prevent some political thing in the future of bringing him to trial after all the witnesses were gone. Double jeopardy had been invoked and it couldn't happen. Vern said he stood up there and nobody told him anything about what was going on. They read the charge document, the information, and he said, "Well, that sounds like the way it happened. I guess I'm guilty". And they recess court real quick and tell him Vern, we're supposed to have to prove that you're guilty of murder and in this case, we don't believe you are (laughs). But no training, no nothing, just hang a badge and a gun on him and sent him out on the street.

JE: OK, a couple of others that I'll just throw out here – the killing of Suzanne Oakley on the Riverside jogging trail.

MH: Suzanne Oakley was murdered in 1976, I believe. She just followed the murder that we'd had about six months prior to that in 1975 – Geraldine Martin murder from TJC – that ultimately came as the basis of why we founded International Association of Cold Case Investigators because after 30 years, a cold case detective in El Cajon, California put that connection together and actually found our murder victim. Geraldine Martin was murdered along the jogging trail. Again it was one of those cases that if you knew now what was going on then, that might have been a different story. It was very well investigated but forensically, that was 40 years ago. Forensically, today we might have some better information. That case remains open.

HS: Suzanne Oakley..

MH: Yeah, Suzanne Oakley. Somebody looks at it every year. There is something that comes in on it every year.

JE: So the shooter was not...

MH: Well she was strangled as she was jogging along the jogging trail. The consensus among the investigators is that was we had identified the suspect but never was able to gather the information. He was confronted and didn't confess.

HS: I remember the case was especially significant to us, not any more important than any other homicide, but she worked for the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, if I remember correctly, and was part of the family really. It was thoroughly investigated and it is painful to have to say to yourself, "I know that guy did it, I just wish we had more evidence to prove it".

Chapter 09 – 5:00
Serial Killer

Mike Huff: In the mid '70s when I first came on the police department in January 1975, I think one of my first real tastes of what I was going to get into was a couple weeks later when Geraldine Martin turned up missing from Tulsa Junior College and they sent us cadets. Ten of us were hired and anytime there was a problem that somebody else didn't want to do, we got assigned to go search dumpsters and under buildings and whatever, and so we did that with Geraldine Martin. I remember that some of these old time detectives, like Sergeant Roy Hunt who was an icon, the homicide supervisor that nobody could emulate ever. He pulled me aside and he called me "little buddy" all the time. He goes "hey little buddy, I want to tell you something". I said "what's that sergeant?" and he goes "Tulsa just hit the big time". I said "Why is that" and he said "we got visited by a serial killer". I said "wow, how do you know that" and he goes "oh about 25-30 years of working homicide". And he was right. It took 30 years later to prove that he was right with Geraldine Martin. A guy named Clyde Wilkerson was her killer and he was a truck driver and serial killer and lived about half a mile away from where she was ultimately found in northwest Tulsa. You know, the history of crime and of policeman is really unique. There are some wonderful characters.

Harry Stege: My first experience with homicide came before I went on the police department. I was joining the Navy. I was 17 years of age. I went to the recruiting thing, went through the whole works, and I had to have my parents' signature and I drove to the police station.

My dad was either chief of detectives or in charge of major crimes, one of the two. I went to his office and he said, "What are you doing here?"; I said "I need your signature" and he said "well come on, let's go". I thought we were going to the post office and we drove to a location on north Cincinnati. A woman named Dorothy Waldrop had been kidnapped from her home and taken up on top of what I think is Standpipe Hill. She was pregnant and she had been murdered and raped. I was not allowed to get close but it was the first time I'd ever seen a homicide victim. The guy who kidnapped her had clipped the bottom of several slats from a venetian blind and gone in through the window and had forced her out of there. My dad developed one latent print on the venetian blind and at that time, before the automated fingerprint identification systems, there was really no effective way to do a single fingerprint search. But dad searched that one print through the fingerprint files and finally identified the guy that committed the murder, who happened to be in the county jail at that time and was convicted. All of that happened while I was in the Navy and out of the country.

MH: I will say something just very generally along those lines. The police department has a lot of responsibilities from gaining trust of children and responding to 9-1-1 calls and this, that and the other. But there is nothing bigger than, of course, protecting lives. But then when a life is lost, there is nothing bigger than investigating that and getting some resolution because, you know, people pick up the newspaper every day or news reporters every day, you know...hey no news on this. People expect resolution. Through Chief Stege's tenure, I went into homicide in May 1980. You know, he came up as a working detective and he really installed this attitude/this culture at the police department that we are going to do everything possible on a murder investigation to have a resolution. Over the years, not to name names, some chiefs did not have that attitude. We became a different police department. Through my tenure as a homicide supervisor, we got that back and it was a battle nearly on a daily basis to tell people that outranked me to back off; we are going to do this; we have a job. And I do say that Chief Ron Palmer always was supportive of me in that attitude, but he was a former homicide guy himself in Kansas City. So I think it really does something for the culture of a police department when a guy who has worked homicide eventually becomes the leader of the place because they know our ultimate responsibility to the community is take these killers off the street Tulsa. We were very lucky. Some years we solved nearly 100%; every year we were above the 80% mark, and nationally it's about 57-58% of clearing homicide cases. That goes back to Chief Stege and Chief Purdie's era. They made that culture of the police department and it has carried on 40 years.

Chapter 10 – 2:22
Homicide Investigation

Harry Stege: The interesting thing is, something Mike left unsaid, the uniform field force is really the backbone of the police department. When I became chief, I wanted people who were being promoted to realize that and I put in place an order that is still in effect, I believe, that when an officer is promoted to the rank of sergeant, regardless of his current assignment, he goes back into the field as a uniformed supervisor and spends at least a year to reinitiate him what street police work is like. Well, along comes the Roger Wheeler murder case that was assigned to Mike Huff. Mike was a corporal and was promoted to sergeant and he violated the rule because he took the Roger Wheeler case with him when he went back (laughs) and continued to work it as a field sergeant.

Mike Huff: I took two – Janora Stevens, a lady that was murdered in May of '87 by a burglar, and Roger Wheeler. We eventually solved them both but for a period of 15 months there while I was a field supervisor, that became my hobby – working these cases off duty. We ultimately solved them both. We would, as a family, take family vacations based on where I needed to go, whether it be Boston or Florida, to follow up on some leads that I couldn't go and ask the police department to pay for that.

HS: And people don't realize the intensity and the amount of effort that goes into a homicide investigation. I want to skip around and tell you one thing completely out of sequence. I was teaching at Rogers State a course on police reports and I thought, "Gee, I'll call Mike and ask him to come up and be a guest lecturer and talk about the Roger Wheeler case". And I called him and said "hey Mike, about coming up to Rogers State at 8:00 in the morning and teach a class, a one-hour class, on police reports" and he said "oh I'd love to!" and I said "good, I'm also teaching a class following that on police report writing and they dovetail so why don't you bring the Roger Wheeler case with you just to show the people what police reporting does and how it boils down". And there was a pregnant pause and Mike said "chief, the Roger Wheeler case now takes up five 5-drawer file cabinets". I said "well, could you bring a summary". (laughs)

John Erling: (laughs)

Chapter 11 – 6:45
The Mafia

John Erling: Is there any reason to believe that the mafia ever operated in Tulsa or in Oklahoma?

Mike Huff: The traditional mafia like John Gotti that has the Italian social club in New York – because there's a large Italian population and they get involved in book making and loan sharking which leads to turf battles which leads to murder – that didn't happen. But I can say through my different investigations that the Italian organized crime has been here. Tulsa is not really owned...well, it was for a period of time underneath the Kansas City mafia group. And if you think back to the late '70s and the early '80s and the proliferation at that time of dirty book stores – and you've kind of got to look back historically – that was Kansas City's area of specialty and they brought that down to Tulsa. I can tell you that my uncle, Bill Curley, who was kind of a crime figure back in the '60s, became a big bootlegger. He had a night club on Skelly Bypass about where the T.L. Osborn place was there between Utica and Peoria on the south side. He was rolling in dough; I mean, there was a ton of money flowing through there. He was involved in corrupting government officials and things of that nature. And I can remember when my aunt was trying desperately to get away from him and he was very violent and abusive – she said that one day the mob showed up from Kansas City. He really thought that he was like the big man on campus. And they said "you owe us money" and he goes "I don't owe you anything". So after he got out of the hospital after they beat him nearly to death, he realized oh I guess I do owe some money. So he was paying the Kansas City mob and then became kind of accustomed and liking that little mob thing, so he participated. And I can't recall which casino in Las Vegas, but Kansas City was skimming money out of a casino...I don't know if it was a Stardust or whatever...but he was one of many that would just take a trip out there with an empty suitcase and come back with a suitcase stuffed with money and then literally a black Cadillac would show up from Kansas City, count the money, make sure it was all there, and take it; that was his contribution. I don't have many more stories than that since he was murdered and got involved in a little shootout. But we have had things...and even to this day. When we were investigating the Neal Sweeney murder – Mr. Sweeney was a member of a development board to help a particular tribe deal with their case, what they could do to benefit their tribal members. So we were looking into that, and in that, we came across another tribe that had been truly infiltrated by the New York City mafia and there was a multitude of federal indictments which really didn't hit the news out here. But it was a mafia family – I think it was the Lucchese's. The Lucchese family had come out to Oklahoma and infiltrated this little tribe that had casinos near the

Kansas border and they had gotten their hooks into it – because I found that there is no oversight…I mean, no real proactive oversight to guard the Indians…huge pots of money which attracts organized crime. So yeah, really the mob has been here a long time ago… recently…we just don't have it like New York City has it.

Harry Stege: Years ago, Tulsa was an open city – which meant it was not controlled or owned by any of the various mobs – and they used one of the more expensive hotels to hold the meetings of the hierarchy within the mob. Those were very closely monitored by law enforcement.

JE: Here in Tulsa?

HS: Yes. The meetings were held here at a hotel, which is still in business and I won't go any further than that. They weren't involved; it was just a convenient meeting place. Mike mentioned the dirty bookstore. While I was chief, we put an officer in as an employee at one of the dirty bookstores that's no longer there at Admiral and Lewis. He worked there for a year. At one point, he was told that a guy from back east was going to come visit him and the guy, who was obviously a mobster, came in an offered him a full-time job as the manager of two or three bookstores that were here in town because he was the only employee they had that came to work on time and didn't steal from them (laughs). Interestingly enough, after a year, I think 70-some arrests resulted – not in Tulsa but in Houston – all involving child porn. It was never broadcast or anything but information from our surveillance and working that bookstore, which is no longer in existence.

MH: The internet had changed the landscape of organized crime activity. Bookstores – you don't need them anymore – you can get that crap on the internet, you can gamble on the internet, you can do so many things on the internet that it took a person to actually facilitate. Although there are still bookies and when there's bookies, there's still a loan shark that's going to collect some money.

HS: One of the big bookies here in town used to lay off his bets with bookies in Vegas. I had a good friend who was working that case and he charged the guy with operating an interstate gambling ring. The judge called the bookie a mom and pop operation and dismissed the charges against him. It was a bad deal. It should not have happened that way.

MH: For at least the first 8 or 10 years in the Wheeler case, anything that had an organized crime touch to it, somebody would send me a copy. You know, we had a bookie here that checked back to Meyer Lansky. He was one of the founding fathers of the mob money-making as we know it. I had gotten some information that one of the guys that was really well known in his era (he is since imprisoned), Vincent Gigante – they called him The Chin – he was the guy that famed mental illness where he would walk around the streets of New York in a bathrobe knowing he was under surveillance. He went to a really high level

mob meeting in the Grand Lake area that I had gotten some word about. So you know, anytime there's money...I mean, Carlos Marcellos was associated with Robert Sutton... you know, they named the baseball stadium after him for a while and then when all that association came to light, they took his name off the baseball stadium. So, you know, we've had it and will probably still always have something, but crime has taken its turn. The ones we've really got to worry about are the true street gangs that we have that are firing shots out there every night.

Chapter 12 – 4:40
Gangs

John Erling: OK, I was going to bring that up. When did you sense that the gangs were actually coming into Tulsa?

Harry Stege: I can't put a date on it but when I was Chief of Police, the gangs were moving into Tulsa and it coincided, I believe, with the popularity of crack cocaine. It was so easy to make crack and it was so profitable. The gangs really represent both a business organization and a social organization in many cases. We had gangs when I was a kid in high school...

Mike Huff: When we really got entrenched with the L.A. street gangs was in the late '70s. And I can't remember this guys name but he was very, very popular and high in stature in the Crips. He got a warrant out on him for a murder, I believe, and he would run to Tulsa to his aunt's. I can take you right to his aunt's house because I drive by there every night looking for something. His aunt lived out in Gilcrease Hills and she would actually hide him out. So as others learned of Tulsa – it's wide open territory...you know, the police don't know anything about gangs or this or that – they would come out here and then the birth of gangs started and we had a particular chief of police at the time that would not ever want to acknowledge gangs, which really allowed them to flourish for a number of years. And we really got behind in any kind of enforcement because you have to collect intelligence to try to figure out who is associated with who and when a crime happens, who to go talk to. He wouldn't let us collect that intelligence.

JE: I can say – it was Chief Drew Diamond who did not publicly want to acknowledge that gangs were in our town.

MH: Not only publicly, internally he wouldn't acknowledge...and we thought we got around it for a while. We would put in the system "Crip" or "Rip". In the computer system, you could pull up all the Crips. He found out about that, so then the gangs had different

colors – the Crips had blue and the Rips at that time were red, so we just put blue and red in the system. I think that worked for a while until he finally lost his job.

HS: I wasn't around for much of that but I remember reading in the newspaper at the time… the TPD uniforms were green and taupe trousers…I remember reading in the newspaper that said there was only one gang in this town and they wear green shirts.

JE: Under your command – Crime Stoppers…did you start that?

HS: I didn't start it. Crime Stoppers is a function of the metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. Susan Savage was the first executive director of Crime Stoppers. It worked out very well.

JE: And Alert Neighbors?

HS: Alert Neighbors is part of the Crime Stopper program. It is a program which attempts to get neighbors involved in their neighborhood activities. In those areas where it has been embraced, it has been very successful.

JE: And the Citizens Crime Commission?

HS: Actually, I misspoke. The metropolitan Chamber of Commerce formed the Citizens Crime Commission which formed Alert Neighbors and Crime Stoppers and the whole thing. It's interesting, there have only been two directors – Susan Savage and Carol Bush is the current executive director. Both of them did an excellent job. But when Crime Stoppers was first announced, we went for a long time that there were no phone calls. Then we finally got one and it resulted in the solution of a vicious, vicious armed robbery of a small hamburger joint operated by an older man and an older woman who were viciously beaten during the robbery. And we got the tip through Crime Stoppers and were able to solve that case. There are a hundred other stories like that over the years. Crime Stoppers got the information, passed it to the appropriate law enforcement agency…and Crime Stoppers is not just a Tulsa function, it's northeastern Oklahoma. Often time, Crime Stoppers gets no publicity and they're happy with that. They want to provide the information and see to it that law enforcement gets the information and can work with it.

JE: People are hesitant to get involved though, aren't they, to make that call?

HS: Yeah. And it's easy. For years, Crime Stoppers, in their attempt to assure the anonymity of the caller, contracted with a Candian firm to answer the Crime Stopper telephone calls. That was not very successful simply because the people didn't know anything about the crimes that had occurred; they didn't know anything about Oklahoma law, the Canadians didn't; and nothing about street addresses and things of that nature that were being passed to them. Crime Stoppers is now going back into answering their own phones essentially. It's more complicated than that but that pretty well covers it.

Chapter 13 – 7:15
Girl Scout Murders

John Erling: Was the Tulsa Police Department affected by the Oklahoma girl scout murders in Mayes County in 1977? The victims were three girl scouts between the ages of 8-10 that were raped and murdered, their bodies left in the woods near their tents at summer camp?

Harry Stege: One of the girls was the daughter of a Tulsa police officer. Yes, we were affected. I was deputy chief at the time. There was a major search for Gene Leroy Hart developed by the law enforcement people in the county. We sent a group of officers up there.

Mike Huff: There were 70 of us and I was one of them. I was pretty young and I was very impressionable. I remember we got on the turnpike and there must have been 40 Tulsa police cars. We blew through that turnpike gate doing 100 miles an hour. That's a pretty tight little spot there. Then when we got there, it wasn't very well organized. Tulsa police stood out. We had our area, literally the thicket was so thick that somebody could be laying 3 feet in front of you and you could not see them. I remember we all came back covered with stickers and ticks. It was very hot in the summer. Of course, we weren't successful. At that time, I had no idea about the hills of eastern Oklahoma, you know, where these Indians reside that were really giving aid to Gene Leroy Hart. Boy you talk about the no snitch rule – he could be standing behind the door and they wouldn't tell you. So yeah, we were very affected by it. Walt Milner – I had the honor to work with him for decades. I don't know how he came to work. That little girl of his was the light of his life and he came to work every day. He didn't complain. He gave the community good service, right up until about two weeks before he retired with 35 years on. There was a huge shoot-out in an alley at 2nd and Greenwood with armed robbery suspect where canine officer, Dick Hobson, died and canine officer, Steve Downey, was severely wounded. Two or three heroes ran into that alley. I have a friend that was sitting a block and a half away – Tim Bracken – on a perimeter, and he said it was surreal because it was pitch black. In the alley, this gun fire erupted and he said it looked like a strobe light. It was continuing gun fire. He said, "I saw three guys run into the gun fire" and he said "I though it was just gonna be a massacre" and he said "I could not believe these three guys doing it". I was at a training with the police academy that night on the shoot/don't shoot program which we had out at the fairgrounds that night. So I got down to the station and I said, "Hey, I hear there's three guys, who were they?" "Oh that was Jim Leach and Tim Pike and I don't know who the third one was". So I'm in my office area in homicide where everybody collects after a shooting. Over there sitting in the back of the room with his feet up on a desk was Walt Milner and nobody's around him. I went back there and I

said "Walt, you OK?" He goes "I'm OK". I said "well I hear that Jack Pike and Jim Leach were involved in this". I said "were you the third guy?" He goes "do I have to tell you, I'm retiring in two weeks". He was the guy that ran in and they ultimately killed the shooter.

HS: I heard a different story about Walt Milner, that he walked in there with a 12-gauge shotgun…bang, bang, bang, bang…

MH: Oh he was pumping that shotgun. And it was crazy. Walt had the shotgun, which those nine pellets spread out a bit. Dick Hobson's dog was chewing on this guy as he was shooting. Walt said when the guy would fire a shot and light up, he would see that dog either up high on the guy or down low on the guy. He goes "I had to adjust my aim every time so I'd miss that dog". And he did. Dino was the dog's name. It was just a miracle that somebody else didn't get killed. But here's a guy that is in his mid 50s that's lost the only thing important to him in life, his daughter, to a murder. He's two weeks away from retirement. He didn't have to get out of the car, but he ran out of the car to do that. Those kind of sacrifices…people just don't know. You know, they don't understand, you know, that…there you go.

JE: Yep. Gene Leroy Hart was in that wooded thicket area for quite a while but then he did stand trial for the crime and he was acquitted. Thirty years later, they conducted DNA testing and the results of those proved inconclusive as the samples were too old. There still is conjecture whether or not Gene Leroy Hart actually committed that crime.

MH: Absolutely, but in that particular county – and I think Buddy Fallis was the prosecutor in that case…he's a wonderfully talented man and a wonderful human being and I think that was the beginning of his end. Because he had overwhelming circumstantial evidence on this thing. And the jury of his peers had their minds made up before the first word was spoken in that trial. Yeah, DNA is inconclusive or whatever, but for those years of all of our development time, murder cases were made on circumstantial evidence. I try to tell people, you know, you walk in there and there are no piece of puzzle put together…but when you walk out, that 500 piece puzzle may have three-fourths of it together and you may know "oh gee, that's a rose garden". Well that's how circumstantial evidence worked. And you couldn't make it up…or at least an honest officer or prosecutor or whatever couldn't make it up. And it told such a story. Now it's like…well, where's the DNA? Well, DNA doesn't just…you know, us sitting here, if we don't sneeze, we don't slobber, we don't drink something, we don't leave some bodily fluid behind – it's just not there. I mean now they have touch DNA, but if you go in and you've got gloves on, you don't touch.

HS: Well the television program "CSI" has raised public expectations beyond belief because first, there's no laboratory in the world that has all of the equipment that they show being used on any minor case even; and second, often times there is simply no physical evidence of any type. You may have some footprints in a carpet but they're unidentifiable.

You may have some marks on a window sill and they're not identifiable ordinarily. Oh, and the results are not instantaneous as they're shown on television. So it's raised expectations unbelievably and, I think in many cases, to the detriment of law enforcement because people walk in, as Mike said, and expect you to have DNA in every case…

MH: I am sure in the closing arguments of Whitey Bulger the defense attorney would say "there's no DNA". Well, no, there's absolutely no DNA. But to somebody, that's going to resonate.

HS: Yep, and many of the crimes that Whitey was involved in were before 1987 and that's when the first use of DNA in a criminal trial took place.

Chapter 14 – 3:45
DNA

John Erling: OK, I was going to ask you that. So were there cases back in the day when you were on the force, both of you, that if you had DNA, obviously it would have solved the case? You didn't have that tool then.

Mike Huff: No we didn't have that tool and other things. You know, many of these federal programs, these cold case funding programs, are for people to go back and pull their evidence and see what DNA…

Harry Stege: If it was possible to resurrect DNA out of whatever physical evidence was kept. In many agencies – and I can't say all and I probably shouldn't say many – but once a case was declared closed, physical evidence was discarded. They knew it was never going anyplace and they just threw the evidence away.

MH: Now there is a state law that says any forensic evidence – even if there's a conviction – you've still got to keep the evidence.

HS: That's right, in case there's an appeal.

MH: A lot of agencies are going through looking for that low hanging fruit to find those things. Up until the past few years, CODIS…

HS: …the national DNA database…

MH: …yeah, wasn't there. So you would have DNA but you'd still have to come up with a suspect to match suspect with crime scene DNA. Now CODIS is going through an evolution and it's a very hard fought battle to expand the usage. There's a lot of problems with it. I want to say it's probably over-regulated. The United Kingdom has got much better usage. They consider it a tool that they can work with…you know, in looking for family members, if you will, of the DNA…say OK here's DNA left from the crime scene,

we'll run it through the database...wow, this guy's gotta be the brother because of the DNA markers. So you go and you find that guy...hey, who's your brother...well, the brother obviously isn't in the system so you've just used It to develop a lead and then you match DNA to DNA. But in the United States, the FBI doesn't want that to happen. Some states have done it...have legislated themselves to be able to do it. California is one. They had a guy that they called the "Grim Sleeper" who was a serial killer who they found through his brother. But the way the system is organized, things are pushed through the cracks, fall through the cracks, whatever...so, as a mission of the International Cold Case, we're trying to bring that awareness out and help with some legislation in different states to try to circumvent some of these things.

HS: I think the root of your question really was – given the development of technological advances and changes in handling evidence, etc., could we have solved more cases back in the day? Yes we could have. It's almost unbelievable today to look back and think of some of the cases that perhaps could have been solved if we had just had this technology or that technology. Having said that, there was a federal study two years ago on the use of DNA evidence in property crimes. It's not very often used in property crimes – maybe in armed robberies or maybe in some other crimes. But one of the results of the study was that if DNA were to be used in property crimes, the result would overload the criminal justice system and therefore it should not be used. And that says a terrible thing about our ideas of what the criminal justice system should be doing and where we should be going with it.

MH: One of the things that we see still to this day is with all of this technology – like DNA and automatic fingerprint identification system and the ballistics tracking systems – case clearances are still at 58% on murders. It's a slightly downward trend, even with this technology, so that's one of the things that we're trying to combat with the International Cold Case is some training, some familiarization to resources, how to pool those resources and then train you how to recognize what you have and match it with the resources out there.

Chapter 15 – 2:50
Concealed Weapons

John Erling: How do you feel about guns that are now on the street more – we have concealed weapons and all. You didn't have that back in '77-'83. It seems like murder rates have increased over the years, not only maybe here where that goes up and down but in the United States.

Harry Stege: I think the murder rates across the United States have declined and I don't think that the gun laws have anything at all to do with it. Several years ago, I was working on a master's degree program and there was a part of the program I interviewed a woman with the National Institute of Justice about the use of firearms. She said, "I want you to understand something. I am a dyed in the wool gun hater. I believe every gun in the world should be melted down. But I also understand that it's not the guns that are the problem, it's the people who use them". And I agree with that. I own guns and I use guns. I was a firearms instructor at one time. I was around, and so was Mike, before the change in the gun laws in the state of Oklahoma and the only law really was that it was unlawful to carry a gun concealed on your person or in your saddlebags. Then we changed the law. The court said over the years that the trunk of a car was the equivalent of a saddlebag (laughs). But the change in the laws permitting people to carry concealed weapons, so far as I can tell, has had no real effect. The open carry law – I've not seen anybody openly carrying a gun except police officers, law enforcement people. It comes back to the idea that in order to prevent the kinds of violent crimes that we've seen that have raised the level of intensity of discussion about firearms comes down to the issue of the mental stability of the people that have the guns. And I don't know how you measure mental stability and I don't think anybody else can really predict that you, John Erling, will or will not grab a gun and start shooting somebody. I remember when we were talking about psychological examinations for entry level police officers. One of the arguments against it was a case in one of the southern cities – I don't remember which one – where a young man had applied to become a police officer, had passed all the tests, was given a psychological examination, was accepted and issued his equipment and told to report to the police academy the following day. He went home to his apartment and sat in the window and popped off firearms and shot at people as they walked down the street. Maybe there have been equal advances in the health services to have screened that guy out but, even so, you don't know. People are unpredictable. I've seen some police officers do things with firearms that I thought were wrong. They shouldn't have done it – it was legal but it was not something that should have been in terms of handling a gun or in terms of the way they used the firearm.

Chapter 16 – 8:05
Cold Case Investigations

John Erling: You have founded the International Association of Cold Case Investigators – both you, Mike, and you, Chief – both were involved in that. Talk to use about that.

Harry Stege: Mike came to me and said "there's a lot of cold cases", so we formed a corporation – the International Association of Cold Case Investigators – obtained a 501c3 nonprofit status. The IRS is not the easiest organization to work with, even before the current brouhaha, and we were not involved in anything political at all. It is merely an organization attempting to provide training and education and perhaps leads for cold cases and communications between agencies. Mike has carried the ball on that.

Mike Huff: It's an organization that does not promise that we're going to work somebody's cold case, investigate it, because that's just unimaginable. But we're there for networking between agencies because these killers travel from one county/one state/one nation to another. We knew it had to be on the international level. So we network, we share information – and that information may be on new methods, may be on model legislation. It may be on serial killers that have been caught and we know that all of their murders are not discovered to this point. And then as training. We found a tremendous void in this area because cold cases are unique and they don't just involve investigators. One of the things that we knew we had to be different when we founded this is to open this up to be an inclusive organization to not have only law enforcement people but to have prosecutors, to have forensic professionals, have educators, survivors who are a tremendous resource and have been disregarded in this process.

HS: Not only disregarded but, in some cases, actually pushed out.

MH: ...as well as the news media, because if you have a responsible news media outlet source – whether it be entertainment like the "Cold Case Files" or John Erling who is telling the morning news – getting that word out there is huge. We have found it to be a much needed organization. People have very high expectations of us. Our problem continues to remain to be how do we raise funds? You know, if a policeman knows how to get money from somebody, he's probably not the policeman you want...

HS: (laughs) Right...

MH: You know, that's never been our forte. And so we're trying to kind of branch out and go for some different fund raisings. But we do have – just next week, as a matter of fact – coming to the police academy, we have an internationally known woman that deals in water fatalities and murders...not just drowning but drowning someone to murder them, and that's a really unique and...I don't want to say easy way to get away with murder...but it is a way that is very hard to prove that as a murder. So she is coming to the academy. We have about 175 people signed up. That's a success story right there. So we're doing that; we're trying to make very affordable training for just the rank and file or whoever it may be. In this, we also have some serial killers that have agreed to tell us how they got away with murders. We're trying to set the stage for a national conference and not glorify a serial killer but use them for what they are. Just...how did you get away with murder?

How did we not find you for 20 years?

HS: A migratory killer. Mike talked about the Geraldine Martin case and that really was the seed from which the idea grew simply because the investigator in California had solved his case. He didn't have to do what he did, but he realized that he was dealing with a serial killer and he got the company logs covering this over-the-road trucker, then made a chart and contacted each law enforcement agency that he'd been in or near to see if they had an unsolved homicide. Do you know how many homicides he cleared as a result of that?

MH: It's still going up but I think it's up to around a dozen now. This was early 2000. The internet was not quite where it is now. Very few police departments had websites and then put their unsolved cases on there. So he called me up one day and I remember it – it was on a Friday. He said hey, here's who I am, here's what I'm doing. You guys had a good website and I think that this guy might have killed Geraldine Martin. By that afternoon, we had the DNA techies on the phone and had made an initial match. What we realized was…wow, the power of the internet…an internet organization. And then we said wow… does the federal government have anything like this? No, they don't and they never will because they are over-regulated, there's too many turf battles, and people are tired of promises that they can't keep. So we thought you know what, we could do this ourselves. And it was a pretty simplistic thought that we could do it ourselves because it has turned out to be a really hard ride. But we realize that agencies that put their open cases out there…it's like fishing with a trot line…you get more hooks in the water and bait, you're gonna get some bites. So we did and Geraldine Martin was solved. We are talking right now with people in Los Angeles about a show that may highlight this whole process – not highlight us that did it but just here's our business model, if you will. And because we're detective that have worked murders for 30 years, we know how to do it. We're not constrained by bureaucracy now. So we look for more successes.

JE: There must be unsolved crimes that probably…I don't know if either one of you think about and you just can't understand why they weren't solved. I often…when I go into an airport or maybe go to a big football game or whatever…the thought always occurs to me…I wonder how many people in this airport have killed somebody…that out of so many thousands of people that you're around, that maybe somebody has killed somebody there and they got away with it.

MH: Hey we're haunted by that. You put the numbers to it – 58% of the murders are solved, that means 42% aren't. That means some of these guys that are killing people…so many victims have been abducted and killed and their bodies have been disposed of somewhere…I mean, that's a silent disaster right there. They're not even a murder number. You know, they've been reported missing and will probably never be found. I

think it haunts us daily...I mean, I think about it everywhere I go, every minute. It's been my life and you can't change that.

HS: Years ago I contracted with an organization in Washington, D.C., and I did management studies of law enforcement agencies all over the country. My practice was to go into the city at least early in the afternoon before I was to meet with the police people and just walk around the streets...wander through. If you know what to look for, you can pretty well decide what kind of a police department they have and can go into the meeting saying well I know you've got these problems, this problem and that problem. And it's surprising how many police managers will deny that they have these problems. This ties back to the thing that Mike has talked about and that we've talked about repeatedly and that's the need for training to make people aware of some of the things that cold case people know and have worked with for years. It's a difficult task because we all are pretty comfortable in our own environment and for some stranger to walk in and say "your problem is this and you can solve it by doing this" just goes against the grain. It's better if it comes from within, so if you have a training program that calls for one or two guys from an agency to go to a training program and they could come back with some ideas and they're the kind of people that can do the things that Mike Huff does and talk to people and push the ideas forward within the organization, it's a lot easier than having a stranger come in and try to tell somebody how to do it.

Chapter 17 – 4:35
Merit System

John Erling: Both of you had so much influence contributed to the Tulsa Police Department. As we look back and here we are in 2013, does Tulsa have a reason to be proud of this Tulsa Police Department?

Harry Stege: I think so. I think the best thing that you can say is yes there have been problems within the police department but every one of those problems has been met by the citizens of Tulsa and the community and the elected officials and managed within the police department with changes that have been better. For example – and this one stands out in my mind because at the time, it was the worst thing that have ever happened to the police department – and that was for the chief of police, the commissioner and all of the other people to be indicted... Well, let me back up...the republican city commission in 1954 had passed a city ordinance establishing a merit system for personnel which required promotionally testing and dismissal only for cause

and things of that nature, in effect a merit system. The plan was that if the trial program worked out, they would put it on the ballot for the public and amend the city charter so that it became a permanent fixture of the organization. Well, the incoming administration campaigned on the promise to repeal that ordinance and, not just because of that, but one of the results was the great scandal and the problems within the police department that caused all of us who were in no way involved to have to deal with the public in two ways – one, gain their confidence. But the good thing that happened is the following year, the city commission put on public ballot the merit system, which is still in place. When the new city charter was adopted, it made some changes but it essentially abolished the idea that you could be chief of police one day and a new political administration comes in and you'd be walking the beat. At least there's continuity. As a result of that whole thing, Jack Purdie became chief of police. A lot of people don't like Jack. I was fairly close to him and worked with him as deputy chief and then as chief when he was elected police and fire commissioner. He was a courageous and an honest man and I never had any reason to doubt that he had the best interests of the department at heart and the best interests of the city of Tulsa at heart. I think he was chief of police for almost 15 years. The average tenure for a chief of police in the United States is 5 years. Jack was a good man and people say he had no sympathy. I know differently. If you went to him with a problem...I know an officer who said that he had made a mistake...he was a good officer who had made a bad mistake which could have resulted in dismissal. Purdie called him in and said, "This investigation is complete. You really screwed up. I'm gonna put this in this file drawer right here and hold it for a year. Come back and see me in a year". And at the end of the year, he got to witness that investigative file being torn up. I think the current consent degree would prohibit that kind of handling but that speaks to different issues. I think that the department has grown, changed for the better with each of the scandalous things that have occurred. I know I'm an insider and I tend to have an insider's view, but I also try to be very objective when evaluating the department.

MH: I think a lot of people look at the police department and they say, you know, it's just not the way it used to be, and it really isn't but there's the same good people. But nowadays, police work is turned into an impersonal job that has built on technology. You've got a computer in the car; it's going to tell you where to go. You're so under-staffed. You can only go from call to call to call. When I came on, the area I worked, I didn't even have a walkie talkie and that was fine with me. You'd get out of your car and you'd meet people...

HS: You were on your own...

MH: ...and you were on your own. I mean, it may cause you to say "OK I'm in a fight by myself, nobody knows where I am. Somebody's going to look at this later on and say maybe I hit this guy with a stick too hard", but it was either do that or be killed or get beat up

ourselves. But nowadays, guys are a walking electronic robot. You know, they might have cameras on them, tape recorders on them, cameras in the car, computers to answer to, and so they don't get that opportunity for that interaction with the community like we used to. So people have a different opinion of them. It's not that they're dishonest. It's not that they don't care or whatever. They just spend their day feeding technology. So it's a little bit different.

JE: Yeah.

Chapter 18 – 10:15
Advice to Future Police Officers

John Erling: Students will listen to this. This is an education resource tool. So if somebody is thinking "maybe I'd like to serve my community in the capacity of a police officer" – Harry, what would you say to that young person?

Harry Stege: Welcome to the club. You meet the minimum entry standard; they vary from agency to agency across the United States. Tulsa Police Department is one of the few cities in the nation that requires a college degree for entry level police officers. I was instrumental in that. When the National Advisory Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Goals made its report back in 1970, they recommended that every entry level police officer in the United States should have a baccalaureate degree. The requirement should be there by 1982. I think I was in planning and research at that time and I took that to the chief and said this is the recommendation. The chief said OK (laughs), you sell it. And it took a long time. It was an incremental increase. Now to back up for a minute, in the late '50s/early '60s, the city had offered a 5% incentive for officers who obtained 60 hours of undergraduate credit and then a couple years later an additional 5% for officers who obtained a college degree. So the incentive to obtain an education among police officers had been there for a long time and it wasn't a hard sell. Probably the biggest questions that I had were from rank and file members of the department. James Earl Jones and Kevin Costner said, "If you build it, they will come", and I take the same position on the rate of pay, realizing that college educated people would be competing with a lot of industries and the city will have to realize that if you put this in place, it's going to cost you more money. And I hearken back to June of 1966 when the Supreme Court handed down Miranda versus Arizona; Time Magazine ran an article on the decision shortly after it happened. The closing paragraph in that article was "all of this means that cities will have to hire more and better police officers,

a fact which many cities may not be willing to acknowledge". I used that phrase in the sales pitch I made. Jack Purdie had a high school education and a lot of experience in the military that benefitted him, but he pushed for it and we appeared before the Civil Service Commission. They agreed to the incremental increase. Then in 1981, there was an attempt to stop it because the next step was the baccalaureate degree step. We went before the Civil Service Commission and asked for a year's delay to make the degree requirement occur in 1982. The reason for that was we wanted to gather data and be able to show that it was worthwhile. I guess it was 1982 that we went before the commission because I retired in 1983 and it didn't go forward until Ron Palmer pushed the degree requirement through in about 2004 or something like that. I teach a class on the history of the Tulsa Police Department probably because I've been associated with the police department since I was born. Mike and I review with the officers on their last few days in the academy the background and history of the officers who have been killed in the line of duty, and I'm impressed with the quality of the young people that are coming into the department. I remember very vividly I was hired in November and started in training in January. One of the guys in our rookie class was moonlighting selling liquor out of his car at a dancehall outside the city limits (laughs) and thought it was OK if he did it outside the city limits. He found out differently. I think we attract a better quality of employee. I've heard comments that in many cases, we employ people who have spent their formative years being educated and they have no practical experience. I heard Chief Jordan say we are seeing some changes in that with people coming back from the military. They have a college degree and they have been in the military; they've been exposed to the real world. I celebrated my 18th birthday off the coast of North Korea (laughs) during the Korean War. I came back to the police department and the military nature of the organization was totally familiar to me. I think in general…and generalizations are generally wrong, you know that…but in general, I think that we have probably the best quality of recruits that we've ever had and the 26 weeks of training in the academy goes a long way toward outfitting them to deal with the things that they're unfamiliar with and that's what it's really intended to do.

MH: You know, I'm dealing with that on a very personal level. My son is going into being a senior in high school and has the brain power to be a doctor. I mean his science and math skills are just through the roof. And he wants to be a policeman. What can I say? I mean it put foot on our table and he has been involved or witnessed so much from me. The only caution I have to give him is you can't do it like I did it – not that I did anything wrong. The rules just don't let that really happen any more. That's why being a homicide detective was so good because you know the rules; you don't break the law but it allows you to think and be a free thinker. But in my last couple years, you know, I had a couple death

threats. I had the SWAT team living at my house for a couple weeks. My son saw all this. Plus most of his life, I was a single parent and when I got called into work and he's 8 years old and there's nobody else to take care of him, he came into work with me. You know, I had his sleeping bag and a pillow at the station and he went there to sleep there a lot. He just grew up in that thing just like you did, I'm sure. I've just got to say hey, more power to it. If you want to be in law enforcement, it's a great job. You really get to help people. Some of these people that have this concept, "I want to do something for the good of mankind...you look and see what they're doing and you think really...that's all you're doing?...well good for you that you got that thought...but you can be a policeman and you can change somebody's life that night...and that's what it's about. Helping people is what it's about.

JE: When I'm driving down the highway and I see a police officer and he's stopped a car, in that moment that he walks up to the driver's side, I look at it as so vulnerable. Because he doesn't know when that window comes down what's going to come back at him.

HS: It's the second most dangerous event in a police officer's life. The most dangerous is a domestic violence call. But that traffic stop and that approach and the training is that you do certain things and if you do those, he – the person who wants to do you harm – is at a disadvantage. If you don't do those, you're a dummy. My oldest son is a field training officer and one of the things he does is have some friend drive and he's prepared to see what the rookie does when the friend doesn't respond the way a normal traffic violation would.

JE: So there are ways an officer, through his training, is protecting himself as he's walking up to that car door.

HS: That's right. Just for example...and I know with new lighting systems and all that, it may not be necessary...but I carried a five-cell flashlight. I would walk up on a car at night and just casually shine my flashlight in the back seat. Who's back there? I never was surprised. An officer who has been properly training and follows the training will stop behind the door post so that the violator has to look around at him and he can see the hands. There's a host of things that officers are trained to do to make it at least safer, if not entirely safe. I don't think it can ever be entirely safe.

MH: I'll tell you, we're so short handed here in Tulsa. You know, you may be at 56th Street North and Cincinnati and your closest car may be coming from 11th and Lewis. A whole lifetime can begin and end in that time. It is one of the scariest things ever. You know, the majority of the time, it goes very smoothly and people are very cooperative and very nice...but you get one or two bad things where something just erupts. Gus Spanos pulled over a car at 54th Street North and Cincinnati and Anthony Kimbrough literally stepped one foot out of the car, swung his right arm around out the door and just popped a

shot off which miraculously for his benefit hit Gus Spanos in the head. He didn't know it was coming. It just happened in a split second. You know, that stuff...you can go on the internet if you're keyed into the right searches...every night somebody has got something like that going. I'll tell you, I got sworn in on my 21st birthday. I'm a small guy and I was confronted so many times, just being tested. It can really scare you to death. It can make you not want to be what our job is. But on the flip side, you can say what a great challenge...what a good adrenaline rush...boy I handled that good, nobody got hurt...right down to literally my last weeks on the job at the police department. Myself and another detective were interviewing a guy in the interview room, which is supposed to be safe...a guy that was handcuffed in front. We thought his son had killed somebody the night before...actually he was the killer...but I mean just in a matter of minutes, he attacked us, tried to get the other officer's gun out of his holster. I retired on a Friday; on Monday, I started my first of two shoulder surgeries and I got a broken neck out of it so I had a neck fusion. It just shows you that that's the nature of the job, you know, and after about 50, you probably ought to find something not quite as physical.

Chapter 19 – 6:22
Another War Story

Harry Stege: I'll tell you a war story. I was working midnights. This particular evening, my sergeant and I had been someplace on the west side of town. As we approached the intersection of 4th and Denver, the light turned green for us and a car northbound on Denver ran the red light. Fortunately, he turned and we weaved. We lit him up. My sergeant got out and walked up on the driver's side. I did what the second officer is supposed to do – I stayed back and observed. The woman passenger in the front seat was doing something funny. I couldn't tell what it was but she was wiggling around. I walked up to see what she was doing. I couldn't tell what she was doing. But by this time, she quit wiggling around and she was looking up. I opened the car door and she swung around and she had a gun that had a muzzle about that big around in her hand. I grabbed the gun and her hand and I jerked. My sergeant in re-telling the story over the years – the distance that she went out of the car had grown from right beside the car across two lanes of traffic and she landed on her butt and swung around like a top.

JE: (laughs)

HS: It wasn't quite that bad. But I ended up with the gun. It was a 380 automatic. It was loaded and primed. Fortunately I had grabbed her wrist and the gun at the same time.

If I'd have grabbed the gun and pulled, if she had her finger in the trigger, it would have discharged and I don't know where it would have gone. Now the rest of the story is… the driver of the car – he was a businessman in Tulsa – and one of the things that he did every evening at the close of business was take money to the bank. For that reason, he had a gun in the car. But the previous afternoon…this was after midnight…he had entered a plea of guilty to some commercial felony. It wasn't a violent crime at all. It was something like bad checks or something like that. In the discussions with his attorney, he had been warned about possession of a firearm after a former conviction of a felony. He understood that it was another felony. And we lit him up and he said "oh crap, I've got that gun in the car", and he handed it to the woman and said "here hide this" and she had been trying to sit on the gun. That was the wiggling I saw. There was no evil intent. There was nothing. Now what should we do? Should we put him in jail? Should we put her in jail? She pointed the gun at me; she didn't intend to but she did. The net result for us was OK, no blood, no foul. "I apologize ma'am for throwing you out of the car and all that. We're taking this gun. It'll be turned in to the police department's property room. You, sir, are the owner of the gun and you're the only one who can claim it and here's what you have to do. You have to come to the police station in a car and somebody else comes to the police station in another car. You claim your gun. Don't touch it. Have him pick it up, take it home/your home, and that's it. And ma'am, again, I'm sorry for throwing you around". I never heard anything about it. It's one of those kinds of things that could have resulted in a complaint of police misconduct because I was rough with her. I jerked her out of there and I think probably the fact that she was wearing a tight coat is the only thing that kept me from dislocating her shoulder. You don't realize how strong you become when that mass of chemicals we used to call adrenaline pops in.

MH: And it was just another day…here's a guy that ran a stoplight.

JE: Yeah, I wonder if officers go out during the day and their loved ones tell them goodbye. They feel that we're going to war that day.

MH: Well, hopefully you don't think that. You go through a kind of a cycle in your career of your attitude…initially you may have that 'us versus them' mentality…but then you mature past that and you know that you're going to have certain conflicts that may be challenging and you really isolate it on…OK, it's that guy. Because literally, you can go out there and get in an altercation in a neighborhood and more people will be on your side than you can imagine. I mean, I've had a situation where I was carrying two guns; one gun fell out in a fight and it was rolling around on a sidewalk and some people were threatening to pick it up and shoot it. I was just trying to hang on to the one remaining gun I had. And a lady picked it up and backed off the crowd. You know I still have people that call me to this day that I met 30 years ago…we became friendly…and they may not be…some people

might say the most upstanding citizens...but they were good to me. So hopefully it's not an 'us versus them' mentality.

JE: Well I want to thank you, Chief Harry Stege, for the time you put in to this city. Fourth generation now...you've got your son in it too...goes way, way back what you gave to this community. I thank you also for giving your time to this and the same goes to you, Mike, for what you've done for this community. It makes us proud to know that people like you are around and still are around to influence us. So thank you.

HS: I listen to the things that Mike Huff has done and I'm amazed and appreciative. I worked a lot of homicides as a young detective. But in those days, we worked them at the scene and turned the paperwork in and the follow up was taken care of by somebody in the homicide squad. Mike has followed the tradition that was started first by a guy named Bob Bivens, who was a homicide investigator. He was a sergeant in charge of the homicide detail and brought homicide investigation to a new peak. He was followed by Roy Hunt. Roy Hunt is in his 80s now and his physical condition is that he is brittle. He brought it still to a higher peak, and Mike brought it off the charts. I think you call Sergeant Hunt your mentor and trainer. Mike Huff did something that I thought was really fitting. He had all of the homicide people get into a photograph, a color photograph which he had made into a Christmas card that said "Merry Christmas from Homicide" which he sent to people that had been convicted of homicides in the city of Tulsa (laughs). There has to be a little humor brought in with dealing with some things that are tear jerking, literally tear jerking.

Chapter 20 – 5:12
Sad Memory

Harry Stege: I went to breakfast yesterday at a restaurant on the north side and I told the good friend that I was with that jus being there this close brought back memories that I hadn't had in a long time. It was Wednesday after Thanksgiving about 1964 as best I can recall the date. I was working in what we now call CSI at the time and I was called to an old house that had been made into a duplex. The call came in from neighbors who hadn't seen the family out and about since sometime before Thanksgiving. We were there. We could see two little boys that were flitting around and finally got them to open the door and let us in. There was a living room that opened into what had probably been the dining room before the house was converted to a duplex. It was now a bedroom and in that bedroom was daddy and mommy and a 3-month-old baby who had died from

carbon monoxide poisoning probably overnight Wednesday night/Thursday morning before Thanksgiving. We set that time by the fact that they hadn't been seen and, second, there was a turkey that had been frozen on the drain board beside the counter. In the bathroom, there was an old cast iron tub with a rubber stopper. It was full of water and another little boy was floating around in there face down.

MH: You know you can see one thing like that and you try to repress those memories and they come back like they were yesterday.

JE: That was in '64?

HS: Probably '64.

JE: I thought that's what you said, and here it is obviously affecting you today.

HS: Oh yeah. We were concerned about the reason that the children survived and the parents and the infant in bed with them did not survive. The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning and in the front room of the house, which is where the boys stayed, there was an open gas heater. Later it proved to be the source of the carbon monoxide poisoning but even that didn't explain why they didn't succumb to the poisoning. The windows in that front room and the door were so loose and aged that there was a lot of fresh air flow from the outside. And since that was the boys' room, they didn't go into the rest of the house except probably for food or water. They were out of the carbon monoxide environment and survived. The kitchen counter was covered with debris from cereal boxes and there was a broken glass. These kids had apparently tried to wake mommy and couldn't...tried to wake daddy and couldn't. They lived on cereal and water. One kid...the stopper had no doubt inadvertently been put in place and the water was still running very slowly. I can't imagine the slow death that kid suffered.

JE: Well, thank you, and that brings reality of what you guys do and we need to hear those stories. So again, thank you so much for giving us your time and for telling these stories.

HS: Thank you. I think it's a great thing you're doing, not just because of this but the Voices of Oklahoma is a great concept to put forward and the people that you have that you have interviewed and plan to interview is really impressive.

MH: I know I've said this before but I can't listen to the morning radio anymore. I mean, I've tried. It just doesn't matter which station it is, it doesn't work. It's not happening. That's a real tragedy.

JE: I think the radio...they've lost their soul and become utilities is what they're doing. They're feeding information and that's basically it. There's not the soul that we had. I always had a sweet spot because I was there for 30 years. When I first came, I had 10 minutes of news on the hour, 5 minutes on the bottom of the hour, and it was up to me to fill in the rest of it. Well that's how we got involved in the community and did interviews and raised money and did all of those sorts of things which they can't do right now.

MH: Yeah, it's a shame because there's a huge void.

JE: It would be interesting, though, if anybody could come back and do that. You'd probably have to do it with somebody who has deep pockets and they don't care if they make any money or anything. You know, it could catch on and it may not catch on – you don't know.

HS: Well you attracted sponsors.

JE: Oh we did then but that was the prime time. If you tried to come back now to do it again, could you do it, I don't know.

HS: It seems to me that the television news people have just gone completely bonkers and they don't fulfill the mission at all. Instead of reporting news, they interpret the news and they put their own personal or organizational spin on the news. I took a couple of journalism courses. I wanted to learn to write reports and I took some journalism courses just to understand what was going on. One of the instructors was then a working reporter and the whole point was to tell the story as it was, support the facts, be prepared to defend the story. I don't think that happens today.

JE: No it has changed, there's no question about that.

HS: Well, us old timers look back at the good old days and then we talk to the rookies and realize that they'll be as old as we were and these days will be their good old days (laughs).

JE: Right, if they're lucky, they get to be our age!

Chapter 21 – 0:33
Conclusion

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