

# The Right to be a Police Officer

SPRING 2018



## Where it all starts

The road to a career in law enforcement begins with the individual. It is not a righteous path, but still one that tests your character. Being self motivated, having a strong mental fortitude, and of course, wanting to help others is the foundation for an individual seeking a career in keeping the peace. My journey began with school, and with that, the opportunity arose to expand my knowledge via an internship with the Tucson Police Department. After a thorough background

investigation and series of interviews, I was accepted and stationed at

the  
Tucson



**Sgt. Dan Spencer & Officer Lori Pluchinsky**

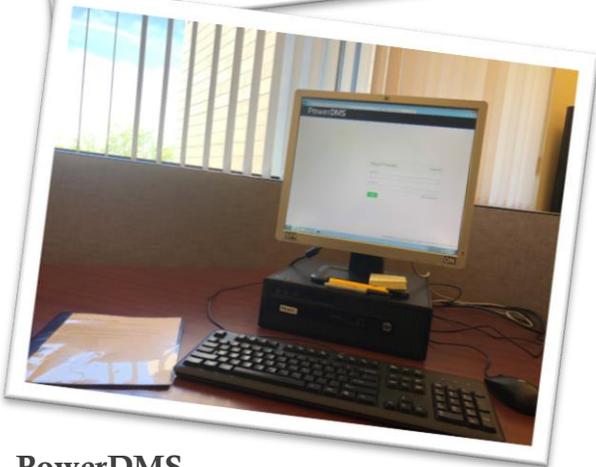
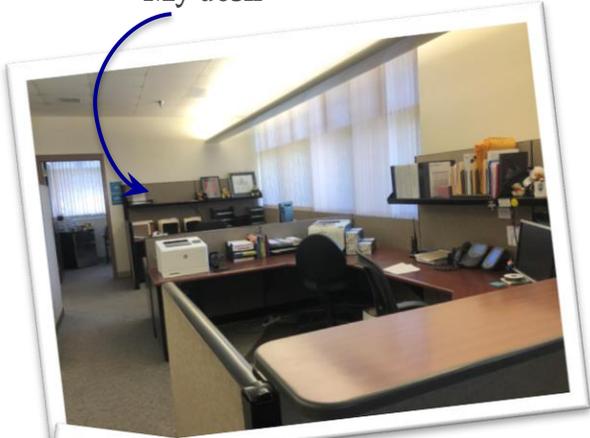
## Day one

January 31<sup>st</sup>, the internship began. I was overwhelmed with joy, but quickly intimidated upon seeing all the uniformed officers who towered above me throughout the station. Needless to say, my small height and timid personality did not make me feel any less anxious of eventually going through the academy myself. However, over the course of the internship, that same intimidation has motivated me to persevere and look forward to take on the academy headstrong.

## The process

The internship was not all glitz and glamour, but did give me a look at the work that happens behind the scenes of the academy. Typical of any internship, I spent a majority of my time on the computer and learning new programs. One of those programs, which quickly became my best friend, was PowerDMS that I used to build and create time slots for courses that

My desk



PowerDMS

police officers signed up for throughout the year. These courses usually involved online classes, quizzes, and for a large majority, hands-on training scenarios.

At the conclusion of the hands on training, it was my responsibility to go over the roster sheets and compare them to those who had signed up for that given session through PowerDMS. Once the names checked out, those officers would be awarded credit and a certificate to prove the completion of the course. To complete this process, I'd head to another friend of mine who was just as bulky and intimidating as some of the officers, the scanner. I would scan, organize, and input files from the courses into the computer system. Finally, once the certificates were printed, I would walk past my supervisor's office, make a left, and head into the filing room. There, I would run my fingers through the files to find the sworn officer's folder and slide in their certificates.

Though inputting names and filing paperwork seems easy, going through these processes were not always smooth. There would be times when the rosters to search for were nineteen pages long. Sometimes, officers did not date the session they attended which had me investigate when out of the twenty possible dates. Other times, sworn officers would not be in the filing system at all and required the creation of their folder. Then some days, PowerDMS, would be slow working and took up the six hours of my shift. Though my internship was not always actively engaging and at times, mundane, it actually encouraged me to keep busy. Being in an office setting enabled me to strengthen my relationships with the supervisors, and staff.

The scanner





## Hands-on training

During the internship, I got the opportunity to participate and assist with the hands-on training. These in-person courses required police officers to go through a variety of scenarios ranging from traffic stops to dealing with hostage situations. Participating in and watching these scenarios proved to be the most significant experience of my internship with the Tucson Police Department.

There was always a constant thrill during these exercises, even in low-level situations such as minors being stopped and questioned for being in a park after hours. My excitement while acting in the scenarios propelled high-risk situations like a runaway driver or a couple's dispute that ended with me being pulled into a room with a knife to my throat.

I learned a lot during this time, and got an insight on how officers should properly react during certain situations. I was able to listen to the

evaluators who questioned and briefed officers after performing certain actions. I also witnessed a wide variety of perceptions and reason deduction during the assessments from all the officers. This helped me realize that there isn't always a textbook response to situations, and a lot of it depends on the officer's intuition.

These scenarios were definitely the highlight of my internship and were without a doubt exceptionally educational. I was given a glimpse of my future, and a chance to better prepare myself through the evaluations of officers and acting in scenarios.

My internship with the Tucson Police Department will be something I will always look back to and forever be grateful for. This was a great stepping-stone in my journey to a career in law enforcement and further fueled my passion to serve and protect.

